Feminist Jurisprudence
Prof. Amy Adler
Fall 2005
Tentative Syllabus

Prof. Amy Adler
VH 314-K
adlera@juris.law.nyu.edu

Assistant: Rosemary Simon
VH 416
212-998-6183
simonn@juris.law.nyu.edu

Please note that this syllabus will be revised occasionally as the semester progresses.
Please see the course overview document for more information about this class.
We will be using two books: BECKER, BOWMAN AND TORREY, FEMINIST JURISPRUDENCE, and DIANA T.
MEYERS, FEMINIST SOCIAL THOUGHT: A READER. The other readings will be available on blackboard or on
reserve in the library.

I. Introductory Texts:

A Glimpse of The Past: (blackboard)
Genesis Ch. 2 (Adam and Eve)
Hesiod, Works and Days (Pandora)
Homer (Medusa)

A Glimpse of the Present: (blackboard)
Excerpt from Adler, Girls Girls Girls, “What is a Woman?”
Patricia Williams, excerpt from The Alchemy of Race and Rights

The Silent Woman (An Introduction):
Women and Legal Education, casebook pp. 984-98
Patricia Williams, Mirrors and Windows, An Essay on Empty Signs, Pregnant
Meanings and Women’s Power, Meyers pp. 331-340
Catharine MacKinnon, Consciousness Raising, casebook pp. 92-96
II. Formal Equality

*Introduction to Liberal Feminism:*
Wendy Williams, The Equality Crisis, Meyers, pp. 696-713
Hon. Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Barbara Flagg, Reflections on the Feminist Legal Thought of the 1970’s, casebook pp. 119-121

*Postscript:*
Wage Gaps In America: The Costs Of Gender And Motherhood (New America Foundation Report) June 2005
Notes on the Harvard controversy about women in science:

III. Dominance Theory

Catharine MacKinnon, various essays, casebook pp. 105-118
Background reading: Catharine MacKinnon, Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory, Meyers pp. 64-91

IV. Cultural Feminism

Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice, Meyers pp. 549-582
Notes on Difference, casebook pp. 100-101
Nancy Chodorow, Gender, Relation and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective, Meyers pp. 8-20
Joan Scott, Deconstructing Equality Versus Difference, or the Uses of Post-structuralist Theory for Feminism, Meyers pp. 758-70
Catherine Mackinnon, Difference and Dominance, casebook pp. 108-116 (review of previously assigned essay)

V. Intersectionality

Sojourner Truth, Ain’t I a Woman?, casebook p. 9
Angela Harris, Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory, casebook pp. 169-77
Mari Matsuda, various essays in casebook pp. 203-208
Elizabeth Spelman, Woman: The One and the Many, Meyers, 161-79
Cheshire Calhoun, Separating Lesbian Theory from Feminist Theory, Meyers pp. 200-
VI.  Introduction to Postmodernist Feminist Theory

Excerpts from Michel Foucault, History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. I (blackboard)
Jane Flax, Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory, casebook pp.160-62
Carol Smart, The Quest For a Feminist Jurisprudence (and notes), casebook pp. 162-69
Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, Meyers pp. 113-28
Judith Butler, excerpt from Gender Trouble, pp. 1-18 (blackboard)
Judith Butler, excerpt from Bodies That Matter (blackboard)
Paris is Burning (film)

VII. Introduction to Psychoanalytic Feminist Theory (blackboard)

Toril Moi, Representation of Patriarchy, Sexuality and Epistemology in Freud’s Dora
Freud, Notes on Medusa’s Head
Helene Cixous, Laugh of the Medusa

VIII. A Feminist Sexuality?

Casebook Chapter 4, pp. 223-266
Michael Warner, The Trouble with Normal, Ch. 1, excerpt (blackboard)
Excerpts from Carole Vance, Pleasure and Danger (blackboard)

IX. Pornography and visuality

Catharine MacKinnon, excerpt from Only Words (1993) (blackboard)
Casebook, pp. 458-499
Background: Patricia Mann, Glancing at Pornography: Recognizing Men, part 3, Meyers, pp. 424-28
Laura Mulvey, Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema (blackboard, external link)
X. Child Sexual Abuse

Casebook, pp. 356-383

XI. "Sex Work": Prostitution and Stripping

Casebook pp. 430-453
Excerpts from "Whores and Other Feminists" (blackboard)
Adler, "Girls! Girls! Girls!" (blackboard)

XII. Student Presentations

XIII. Conclusion: The Limits of Feminist Jurisprudence?

Gender, Sexuality and Power: Is Feminist Theory Enough?, 12 Colum. J. Gender and L.
601 (excerpts from Janet Halley).