Course Description

The course is an introduction to issues and controversies in the field of the psychology of women. The theoretical orientation of the course is feminist-psychoanalytic. Psychoanalytic perspectives include both theories of gender development and theories of social psychology, with each of these applications of psychoanalytic theory informed by interdisciplinary perspectives on women. Initially, we discuss the basis for dialogue between feminism and psychoanalysis and how feminists have made use of this tradition to develop a "depth" psychology of women. We then turn to one of the most contentious mental health controversies of the 1990s, one that has far-reaching implications for how we think about the psychology of women: the debate over recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse. While we take up the competing claims surrounding this debate, we also make use of it to open a wider window onto gender dynamics and culture and to build a theory of female psychology.

Readings

Chodorow, N. Femininities, Masculinities, Sexualities: Freud and Beyond. (Available at In Other Words: Women's Books and Resources, 3734 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.)

Haaken, J. Pillar of Salt: Women and the Perils of Looking Back. (Selected chapters of book manuscript. Available at Clean Copy, 1732 S.W. Sixth Ave.)

Course Requirements

1) SIXTY POINTS: Each Thursday, you will receive study questions relevant to the assigned readings for the upcoming week. Bring your informal responses to these questions to class each Tuesday. For both the midterm and final exams, you will submit three of your responses to the questions distributed during the previous month of class. The responses are to be in the form of short essays (about two typed, doubled-spaced pages per question; total of about six pages). You should choose no more than one question from each week. Grading is based on the following criteria: clarity, organization, logical development, use of relevant readings. The mid-term is due February 11; the final is due the last day of class, March 13.