This class is a “two-fer” covering how to be a feminist teacher and a feminist scholar to advance your own interests and career. The strategy is to introduce you to the theories and practices of feminist pedagogy by studying the scholarship of feminist pedagogy. Coursework includes a lot of active teaching and learning to build confidence and skills—and have some fun. You also will learn tips and tricks for reading academic writing, which also will improve your writing. By the end of the semester, you will be able to employ the values and practices of feminist pedagogy. You will be encouraged to pursue your own scholarly, professional, disciplinary, and research agendas with the classroom community.
Feminist Theory meets Queer Theory

To what extent is gender performative? What is the connection between gender, race, and sexuality? How are each connected to inequality? If gender is a social construction, can it impact the size and shape of physical bodies? What is the relationship between queer theory and feminist theories? This course complicates the nature/nurture binary by investigating how bodies can become gendered, racialized, and sexualized, investigating social constructionism at many levels of focus from intimate interaction to global economics. Organized in seminar fashion, this course will critique the major theories of gendered and racialized embodiment, including but not limited to ethnomethodological approaches, queer theory, Gender and The Body, Black Feminist Thought, Marxist Feminism and the relationship between feminist theory and gender theory. While we will explore the depths of feminist theory and queer theory, a previous study in feminist or queer theory is not assumed. All graduate students are welcome.
What are the politics of motherhood? How do we negotiate contested understandings of what it means to be a mother or to engage in mothering? Who are mothers, and what are the parameters of mothering that conscribe and envelope this role/identity?

Let’s take Rich’s quote, above. What Rich stated so powerfully and poignantly in her treatise Of Woman Born we now know is not true, thanks to transmen who have given birth and shared their experiences with us. And, we know from surrogate mothering that having the womb that nurtured a fetus until birth is insufficient to always grant one the status of “mother” in the eyes of the law. We also know the travails some women of color experience asserting themselves as mothers, as good mothers, and as valued mothers. From all this we understand that who mothers are is problematized (made political). At the same time there is increasing evidence that what mothers do is being discussed, analyzed, critiqued, negotiated, surveilled and punished more broadly and more forcefully within the public and cultural worlds. The iconic occupation of motherhood is in flux.

In this course we will approach the topic of motherhood by emphasizing its contested and political nature. We will consider research on mothering from maternal studies, and relate these academic discourses to historical and contemporary narratives as mothers articulate their own lives. We’ll be sorting our way through the experiences, identities, policies and agency of mothers and those who seek to manage them. We’ll debate feminist considerations of motherhood, from the critical to the fawning. We’ll read calls to action and complaints of inaction about, by and for mothers. We’ll debate responsibilities, mythologies, and guilt. We’ll embrace non-motherhood as potentiality within compulsory motherhood and confront the inadequacies of absent language as we struggle with the concept of “choice.” We’ll even query the relationship between motherhood and fatherhood in contemporary policy and discourse. At the end of our journey, I hope we’ll understand more about the shadow/light of motherhood that insinuates itself into our social (and sometimes personal) worlds.