SPRING 2014
Capstone Course for Women’s & Gender Studies Program

Advanced Topics: Transnational Feminisms: Weaving Scholarly Perspectives and Narrative Evidence in Assessing and Understanding the Social and Economic Status of Transnational Women’s Lives

SC 593
Wednesday 3-5:30pm
Mc Guinn 415

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the 1980’s, Western feminist Robin Morgan envisioned a global sisterhood—a network of women from around the globe working together toward addressing women’s issues. Yet as the decades progressed, the idea of a global sisterhood failed to address the profound differences among women with regard to race, class, sexuality, and nationality, differences that often served to divide rather than unite women. Theoretical conceptualizations of women’s lived experience tended toward a Westernization of women’s concerns and issues.

Transnational feminism challenges the view of “global/international” feminisms that erases differences within and between nations. There is a tendency toward a Eurocentric/Colonial viewpoint that melds difference into one “feminist mold.” Transnational Feminisms highlight the varying contexts of women’s lives looking at multiple frameworks of difference. Transnational Feminists focus on the link between women’s situated lives and the ever-changing relationships in which they are engaged in terms of movements of people, capital and ideas. This course will challenge Western feminists to examine their own standpoint within a global system.

Within each text, we will examine the ways in which place, nationality, and culture and other differences impact women’s lives, as well as analyze the varied ways in which power and social control at the state level enter women’s everyday lives that impact their sense of identity and well-being.

We hope the course will assist with building theoretical bridges as well as research links across the global/transnational divide. We will pay special attention to the issues of different women’s standpoints across geographical and cultural borders, and will also consider the cutting edge research being done in transnational global issues.
REQUIRED READINGS
(Books are available at BC Bookstore and are On Reserve)

Required Books:

2) Kristof, Nicholas D. & Sheryl Wu Dunn. *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*
3) Yousafzai, Malala with Christina Lamb. *I am Malala The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*
4) Lloyd, Rachel. *Girls Like Us*
5) Boo, Katherine. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Multicity*
6) Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*
7) Wilentz, Ann. *Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter from Haiti*

Required Articles:

All articles required can be found on Blackboard.

Recommended Readings

All assigned excerpts and articles will be available via Blackboard. *You do NOT need to purchase these recommended books.*


5) Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*.

6) Alexander, Jacqui M. & Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures (Thinking Gender)*

7) Ehrenreich, Barbara & Arlie Russell Hochschild. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex*
Workers in the New Economy.


### IN-DEPTH DESCRIPTION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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<td>Attendance and Class Discussions</td>
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**Class Attendance: Expected as a Class Member**

Your attendance and participation in the colloquium is vital and expected. You are expected to participate in informed discussions - to ask questions, offer critiques and analyses of the readings. The format of the class will be primarily discussion-driven.

*Attendance Expectations:*

1) **You are expected to attend class regularly.** If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining notes, assignments as well as handouts from another student before the next class meeting. Class attendance is required and roll will be taken. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence during the semester. **You are responsible for missing class notes. PLEASE NOTE: Two points (2) are deducted from your final grade for any unexcused absence.**

2) **You are expected to complete the reading for the day that it is assigned.** It is important not to fall behind in the readings. Your class participation and writing assignments depends upon keeping up with the reading assignments.

3) In order to be fair to everyone, I will stick to deadlines. **Late assignments will be graded down a half a letter grade per day late.** Please let me know early in the semester if a problem should arise or if you have any special needs.

4) Please take advantage of my office hours. I would like each of you to stop by early in the semester so we can talk about the course and I can get to know you. If you cannot come during my office hours, you can always set up an appointment to see me.

**READING RESPONSES (~200-300 words per entry): 35%**

You are required to respond weekly to a question posted to the course’s Blackboard site. The questions will invite you to specifically engage with the readings on a meaningful and critical level. You will be asked to consider the ideas presented by specific authors, the ways that you have integrated the readings...
into your thinking, and the ways in which your personal experiences relate to the issues raised in the readings. **Questions will be posted to Blackboard by Friday evenings at 5pm and you will be expected to respond by 9am the following Tuesday morning.** In addition to the first question, you will be asked to write a “post-reflection” in which you consider how your previous reflections are impacted by the class discussion. **The post-reflection will be due by that Thursday morning at 5pm.**

**LEADING (2) DISCUSSION GROUPS: 10 %**

In keeping with feminist pedagogy, each student will lead TWO classroom discussions of course material this semester as part of an individual or group assignment. Classroom discussion can be organized in several ways, but all discussants should be sure that there is equity in participation from class members. You are expected to provide discussion questions for the class session.

Here are some discussion-leading tips:
You might begin by reviewing the week’s readings. This should not be a summary, but if you choose to summarize don’t spend more than 3 minutes doing so. Be certain to raise the critical questions and issues in each reading. How are these readings connected? Compare and contrast readings, etc. Come to class with a handout that outlines your overall class discussion plans and provide enough copies to give out to all students.

All students are expected to bring the readings to class, and you should refer to specific passages of text where applicable. Textual focus is essential to class discussion. Discussion means *discussion*, not lecturing. The discussion should move towards a very clear understanding of each reading and its complex context.

The role of the discussion leader is to move the discussion along and on topic, making sure all of the readings get covered. Be sure to create an open environment where all points of view can be heard and students can feel safe to express their opinions. Do not favor one discussant over another. The discussion leader must take a strong role to ensure that the discussion covers the material and that there is equity and continuity in the discussion. Be sure discussion stays on the readings.

**BOOK REVIEW (3-4 pages): 15%**

You will be expected to complete a book review and present on one of the assigned texts. In 3-4 pages, you will be asked to critically evaluate the text, drawing parallels to the topics and issues raised in class. You will then have the opportunity to give a short class presentation on your review and prepare some discussion questions around the issues it raises.

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**OPTIONAL: BOOK REVIEW EXTRA CREDIT**: You will have the option of completing a review and presenting *on a book of your choosing* that is related to the course content. **The book will first need to be approved by the instructor.** You will be asked to prepare a short summary and an excerpt of the book one week prior to your presentation so that your instructor and classmates are familiar with the text. You will then prepare a 3-4 page review in which you critically evaluate the text and draw parallels to the topics and issues raised in class, as well as give a short presentation.
FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (15-20 pages) : 40 %

Due Tuesday, April 30th You will be expected to prepare a final research paper on a topic of your choosing related to transnational and global feminisms, 15-20 pages in length. You will be expected to engage critically with secondary sources and will submit a short abstract and annotated bibliography mid-semester.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Week 1: January 15th
Introduction to interdisciplinary and transnational approaches to Women’s Studies
Theories of Globalization versus Transnationalism. The power of Narratives as Evidence
Discussion Leader: Prof. Hesse-Biber


Week 2: January 22nd
How to women go about studying subjugated knowledge/women’s lives?
Discussion Leader: Prof. Hesse-Biber


   - “The Practice of Feminist In-depth Interviewing.” (Pgs. 111-148)
Week 3: January 29th
Decentering Western Feminism: What is Transnational Feminism compared with Global Feminism?
Discussion Leader:


Week 4: February 5th
Overview: The Status of Women in a Transnational Context
Discussion Leaders:


Week 5: February 19th
Studying Women’s Lives: Critical Agency and the Claiming of Selfhood
Discussion Leader:


The Next Several Weeks will focus on a range of aspects regarding the role that violence plays across the diversity of women’s life cycle in the Third world

Week 6 February 26th
The Role Violence Plays in Young Girls Lives: One Lived Experience

1) Malala Yousafzai, *I am Malala.*


March 5th:
NO CLASS—SPRING VACATION!!!
**Week 7th March 12th**


Take a look at the website, www.catwinternational.org, and come prepared with some observations and discussion points.

**Discussion Leader**


**Total Pages: 179**

**Abstract and Annotated Bibliography Due**

**Week 8: March 19th**

The Business of Violence against Women: Discourses and Dilemmas across National Borders.

**Discussion Leader**

   -“The Business of Human Trafficking.” (Pgs. 112-140)

   -“Female Infanticide” (Pgs. 1-6)
   -“Female Infanticide in Modern China” (Pgs. 117-126)


**Total Pages: 83**

**Recommended Reading:**

   -“Asian Trafficking” (Pgs. 141-173)
   -“Human Trafficking in Eurasia and Eastern Europe” (Pgs. 174-200)
   -“Trafficking in Europe” (Pgs. 201-228)
   -“Human Trafficking in Latin America and Africa” (Pgs. 265-294)

**Week 9 March 26th**

The Global Economy: Third World Women and the Politics of Development

**Discussion Leader:**


Total Pages: 92

**Week 10: April 2nd**

Part II The Global Economy: Transnational Women as Workers and Consumers

Discussion Leader:


**Week 11: April 9th**

The Politics of Western-Led Development and Aid: Role of NGO’s and Charitable Organizations

Discussion Leader:

1) Ann Wilentz,, Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter from Haiti
**Week 12: April 16th**

Women’s Health Dilemmas and Issues in Transnational perspective
Discussion Leader:

1) Pande, Amrita. “Commercial Surrogacy in India: Manufacturing a Perfect Mother-Worker.” *(Pgs. 969-992)*


4) Carpenter, Laura M. “Gender and the Meaning and Experiences of Virginity Loss in the Contemporary United States.” *Gender & Society*. *(Pgs. 345-365)*


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**Week 13: April 23rd**

Media Representation
Discussion Leader:

1) Abu-Lougoud, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*


Recommended Readings:

Alcalde, Cristina M. “Ripped from the Headlines: Newspaper Depictions of Battered Women in Peru.” *Local Violence, Global Media*. *(Pgs. 46-64)*


Boyle, Karen. “Gendered Narratives of Childhood Sexual Abuse in Fiction Film.” *Local Violence, Global Media*. *(Pgs. 201-221)*

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**Week 14: April 30th**
Challenges and Possibilities of Transnational Feminisms & Women’s Organizing within and across borders.
Discussion Leader:

FINAL PAPER DUE


2) Naples, Nancy A. & Manisha Desai, eds. Women’s Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics.
   -“The Challenges and Possibilities of Transnational Feminist Praxis.” (Pgs. 263-278)
   -Mendez, Jennifer Bickham. “Creating Alternatives from a Gender Perspective: Transnational Organizing for Maquila Workers’ Rights in Central America” (Pgs. 121-141)

Recommended Reading:
3) Weber, Clare, “Women to Women: Dissident Citizen Diplomacy in Nicaragua.” In WAG Ch. 4, (Pgs. 45-63)

Final Meeting & Dinner party!!!
Friday, May 2nd at 6pm in Carney 272. Be prepared to talk informally about your final paper.