WGSS 585: TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS
Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Oregon State University
(4 credits)
(this course will meet for approximately four hours each week)

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(This course is intended for graduate students in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.)

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

In this interdisciplinary graduate seminar, students will be introduced to themes and theoretical principles of transnational feminisms, with special emphasis placed on feminist movements of the global South. We will explore colonialism, globalization, nation-building, representation, global economies, militarism, human rights, and politics of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What constitutes transnational feminism(s)? How do members of communities in various parts of the world understand and articulate their relationships to feminism and feminist organizing? How do activists in specific cultural contexts resist multiple forms of oppression and transform understandings of gender, citizenship, and nation? In this graduate seminar, students will be introduced to various themes and theoretical principles of transnational feminisms, with special emphasis placed on feminist movements of the global South. Examining the ways in which women of the global South and feminist movements have been imagined, constructed, regulated, and represented in various discourses, students will be asked to contextualize such bodies and movements and to locate connections between and among various politics and transnational projects. We will explore themes of colonialism, globalization, nationalism and nation-building, representation, global economies, war and militarism, human rights, and politics of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation. As we do so, we will attempt to develop a framework for analyzing experience through location, and for exploring the intersections of feminism, transnationalism, and social justice.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of having taken this course, students will be able to:

• assess and describe women’s and feminist movements in transnational contexts.
• analyze the politics of terminology regarding transnational women’s and feminist movements.
• synthesize general concepts and themes in global and/or transnational feminist scholarship.
• recognize the interconnectedness of U.S.-based feminist movements and movements for social justice and human rights in other parts of the world.
• interpret and analyze the gendered dynamics of colonialism, globalization, and militarism.
• evaluate the ways in which women’s movements around the world have been configured in distinct ways, shaped by specific cultural contexts and international relations.
• develop greater sensitivity and critical awareness about women’s experiences in various parts of the world.
• design a research project in the area of transnational feminist studies, exploring a set of theoretical questions according to their area of interest.
These objectives will be assessed through each student’s participation in class discussions, in-class presentation, and final research paper.

**REQUIRED LEARNING RESOURCES**


Additional readings will be posted to the Blackboard site, noted as [Bb] in the syllabus.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

1. **Attendance/Participation (15%)**

   Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate fully in class discussions. The reading load is challenging but manageable, and students are expected to complete all readings. As a student in a feminist class, you are responsible to your classmates as well as to yourself for the success of our joint teaching and learning. You demonstrate your commitment to the class by contributing consistently and respectfully to discussions, and engaging enthusiastically in learning activities. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings with carefully thought out critical observations, comments, and/or questions. Please note: Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies has a departmental policy that if a student misses more than the equivalent of two weeks of classes during a ten-week quarter, a letter grade (for the final grade) will be deducted for each additional absence.

2. **Facilitated Discussion (15%)**

   Most class meetings will begin with a short (approximately 30 minutes) collaborative student presentation, engaging and highlighting key themes of the reading assigned for that week, connecting the authors’ arguments with other readings we have discussed, and offering a starting point for our collective analysis. These discussions may include critical comments, comparison/contrast, discussion questions, and/or in-class exercises, and should be respectful of the time limit (no more than 30 minutes). Your notes/presentation slides should be submitted online on the day of your scheduled facilitated discussion, to be shared with the other members of this seminar. You will have the opportunity to select dates for presentations during our first class meeting. Please note that once scheduled, these presentations cannot be rescheduled.

Grades for facilitated discussions will be based on the following rubric, for a total of 100 points:

- explicitly engages key themes in the assigned readings (20 points)
- connecting the readings and/or themes to other readings and/or themes already discussed in class, when relevant (10 points)
- equal and well integrated collaboration (10 points)
- well organized facilitation (20 points)
- engages class in critical discussion and thought (20 points)
- appropriate pedagogical approach (10 points)
• presents within time limits (no more than 30 minutes) (10 points)

3. Critical Essay (20%)
You are expected to write a short critical essay (6-8 pages, or approximately 2000 words), discussing and analyzing at least three course readings. You may select any of the following suggested topics, to develop into a more focused set of questions or themes.

• What are the politics of language in relation to various terms and terminology, and in relation to rhetoric, for transnational feminisms? Why is it important to develop definitions and critiques of terms? Who generally defines such concepts as “feminism,” “transnational,” “third world,” etc., and how do questions of terminology intersect with questions of power and privilege? How do certain terms or phrases take on symbolic meaning?
• Who/what constitutes “third world women”? In what ways have women of the global South been represented by western feminist writings and theories? What are the politics of the production of this particular knowledge?
• Several of our readings stress the importance of writing and/or representation for women of the global South and other marginalized groups of people. How are writing and memory forms of resistance according to these authors? Why is it important to document women’s experiences?
• How are feminist struggles for many women of the global South intricately intertwined with struggles for national independence or nation building? Focusing on a specific context, discuss the ways in which such connections shape both feminist and anti-colonialist agendas and movements.

Please remember to fully and properly cite the readings and films. Critical essays are due Friday of Week 5 by 5:00 PM. No late essays will be accepted.

4. Review of organizations (15%)
For the course, you should explore the work and objectives of at least three transnational women’s or feminist organizations. (You may do so by exploring their websites and/or other literature, or through discussion or correspondence with their staff or volunteers.) Discuss your findings in a short (approximately 600-800 words) essay, explaining what the organizations do, how they do it, and what effects their work may have on their various constituencies. These reviews are due Friday of Week 7 by 5:00 PM.

5. Contemporary Issues Discussion (10%)
In order to explicitly connect the themes of this course to the world around us, each student is asked to identify a contemporary social issue or event to discuss with the rest of the class. You should lead an informed discussion about your chosen topic, applying a transnational feminist framework and analysis. You are not expected to be an “expert” on your chosen issue or event; however, you should be able to ask questions about it, reflecting your understanding of transnational feminist theories and frameworks. These discussions will take place during the last 15-20 minutes of each class meeting. Students will have the opportunity to sign up for days during our first class meeting.

6. Research Paper/Project (25%)
You are expected to complete a research paper or project for this course on a topic directly related to transnational feminisms. Papers or projects may address themes from our class, or may relate to themes that were not covered in this class and about which you would like more information. Students are required to cite at least six scholarly sources in these research papers or projects. All topics must be approved in advance by the professor. Papers/projects will be due Monday of finals week by 5:00 PM. As part of this assignment, you will offer a brief (10-15 minutes) presentation about your research during our last class meeting. Late final papers cannot be accepted.

Students will be expected to make a brief (10-15 minutes) presentation based on your final paper during our final class meeting, Monday, June 2.
• **Paper Proposals Due Week 4** – Paper Proposals should be 1-3 pages in length, explaining your topic, research questions, and methodological approach (10 points)

• **Annotated Bibliographies Due Week 6** – Annotated Bibliographies should include brief descriptions of the key sources for your research paper, including at least 10-15 scholarly sources (10 points)

• **Drafts Due Week 8** – Initial drafts should be approximately 10 pages, including a clear thesis and solid structure for your paper. These drafts will be shared with classmates for a peer review process (20 points)

• **Presentations in Week 10** – Presentations are to be 10-15 minutes, and may make use of powerpoint, prezi, or another format (10 points)

• **Final Papers Due in Finals Week** – Final Papers should be 15-20 pages in length, and must be submitted via Blackboard (50 points)

**Note on Incompletes**
Incompletes (I) grades are given only in documented emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of a child, etc.), and if the student has completed the majority of the coursework (in other words, everything but the final research paper). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please do not wait until the end of the term; contact the professor immediately.

**Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities**
Our program is fully committed to making our courses accessible to students with (dis)abilities. Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

**Fragrance Free Policy**
In order to ensure the health and safety of students with allergies, asthma, Gulf War Syndrome, Multiple Chemical Sensitivities, immune disorders, and other illnesses, the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program has a policy that no scented products should be worn in class or in the WGSS office. This includes perfume, cologne, essential oils, aftershave, scented soaps, scented detergents, scented hair products, etc. You can find more information on how to be fragrance free at: [www.peggymunson.com/mcs/fragrancefree.html](http://www.peggymunson.com/mcs/fragrancefree.html)

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty**
Many students do not understand what academic dishonesty is. It is important to become familiar with its different forms and the University's definitions.

At Oregon State University academic dishonesty is defined by the Oregon Administrative Rules 576-015-0020.1.a-c as:

*An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work.* Academic dishonesty includes:

• **CHEATING** - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids or an act of deceit by which a student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment or using prohibited materials and texts.

• **FABRICATION** - falsification or invention of any information (including falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data and listing incorrect or fictitious references).

• **ASSISTING** - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, or taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else (or allowing someone to do these things for you). It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an education assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

• **TAMPERING** - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents.
• **PLAGIARISM** - representing the word or ideas of another person as one's own OR presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own. This includes copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project, then submitting it as one's own.

Academic dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units (collection of evidence and documentation of incident, meeting with student regarding the situation, determination of responsibility and academic penalty) but will also be referred to the Student Conduct Coordinator for action under the rules. For more information on student conduct, see [http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses](http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses).

In an academic community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity and respect. Disruption of teaching, administration, research, and other institutional activities is prohibited by Oregon Administrative Rule 576-015-0015 (1) and (2) and is subject to sanctions under university policies, OSU Office of Student Conduct.

Finally, students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules Division 015 Student Conduct Regulations.

**Diversity Statement**

The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program strives to create an affirming climate for all students, including underrepresented and marginalized individuals and groups. Diversity encompasses differences in gender, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, citizenship, religion, socioeconomic background, physical or mental ability, veteran status, and sexual identity and/or orientation.

**Religious Holiday Statement**

Oregon State University strives to respect all religious practices. If you have religious holidays that are in conflict with any of the requirements of this class, please see me immediately so that we can make alternative arrangements.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

| Week 1 | Introduction: Defining “Feminisms”/Mapping the Transnational: Theoretical Frameworks
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| | • Nancy Naples and Manisha Desai, Preface (Naples and Desai, vii-viii)
| | • Naples, “Changing the Terms: Community Activism, Globalization, and the Dilemmas of Transnational Feminist Praxis” (Naples and Desai, 3-14)
| | • Desai, “Transnational Solidarity: Women’s Agency, Structural Adjustment, and Globalization” (Naples and Desai, 15-33)
| | • Naples and Desai, “Women’s Local and Translocal Responses” (Naples and Desai, 34-41)
| | • Michael Schwalbe, “The Costs of American Privilege” [Bb]

| Week 2 | • Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminisms*
|---|---|
| | **Student Facilitators:**

| Week 3 | • Robin Riley, *Depicting the Veil: Transnational Sexism and the War on Terror* |
## Student Facilitators:

### Week 4
- **Stephanie Guyer-Stevens, “Telling Stories Far From Home”**  
- “Outer Voices” (The Untold Stories of Grassroots Women Leaders)  
  [http://outervoices.org/public/#.UVL0dbSrCa4](http://outervoices.org/public/#.UVL0dbSrCa4)
- Pulitzer Center, Selected Women’s Narratives  
- “Telling Stories in the Land of Far Away” Stephanie Guyer Stevens  

### Week 5
- **Ania Loomba and Ritty Lukose, “South Asian Feminisms: Contemporary Interventions”** (Loomba and Lukose, 1-29)
- Anannya Bhattacharjee, “Feminism, Migration, and Labor: Movement Building in a Globalized World” (Loomba and Lukose, 117-135)
- Laura Brueck, “At the Intersection of Gender and Caste: Rescripting Rape in Dalit Feminist Narratives” (Loomba and Lukose, 224-243)
- Toorjo Ghose, “Politicizing Political Society: Mobilization among Sex Workers in Sonagachi, India” (Loomba and Lukose, 285-305)
- Ashwini Sukthankar, “Queering Approaches to Sex, Gender, and Labor in India: Examining Paths to Sex Worker Unionism” (Loomba and Lukose, 306-330)
- Ratna Kapur, “Hecklers to Power? The Waning of Liberal Rights and Challenges to Feminism in India” (Loomba and Lukose, 333-335)
- Mrinalini Sinha, “A Global Perspective on Gender: What’s South Asia Got to Do with It?” (Loomba and Lukose, 356-373)

### Week 6
- **Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity**

### Week 7
- Jennifer Bickham Mendez, “Creating Alternatives from a Gender Perspective: Transnational Organizing for Maquila Workers’ Rights in Central America” (Naples and Desai, 121-141)
- Jessica Livingston, “Murder in Juarez: Gender, Sexual Violence, & the Global Assembly Line” [Bb]

### Week 8
- **Winifred Poster and Zakia Salime, “The Limits of Microcredit: Transnational Feminism and USAID Activities in the U.S. and Morocco”** (Naples and Desai, 189-219)
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<th>Week</th>
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| 9    | • Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” [Bb]  
Student Facilitators: |
| 10   | • Leela Fernandes, *Transnational Feminism in the United States: Knowledge, Ethics, Power*  
Student Facilitators: |
|      | FINAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS |