

## Gender, Social Justice, and Transnational Activism

### Description

Transnational feminist activism has a long history, dating back at least to the suffrage movement. But undeniably it has taken new forms under current socioeconomic, political, and cultural processes of globalization. Robin Morgan's famous book, "Sisterhood is Global," (1984) envisioned a worldwide network of activists working together for women's rights. Yet this utopian vision of global sisterhood has been consistently interrogated, examined, and reimagined. Not only has the world changed dramatically – through rampant globalization, the rise of social media and the everpresent Internet, and new forms of neoliberal social control - but "Third World" feminists in both the global north and the global south increasingly question Western conceptualizations of feminism and women's solidarity. These feminist activists and scholars examine differences *among* women around race, class, sexuality, and nationality, and locate these differences in complex systems of identity, political economy, and knowledge production. This has revealed deep divisions, but also radical possibilities for sustainable social justice. Transnational feminists focus on the connections between women's situated lives and their changing relationships with the movement of people, capital and ideas. In this course we will contend with the politics of difference, debate its challenges, and imagine possible futures for transnational gender justice.

### Objectives

- Introduce students to key issues, themes, and debates in feminist transnational theory and practice.
- Interrogate the relationship between the local and the global, the production of knowledge, mobilization, social justice, identity, and socioeconomic conditions.
- Examine the impact of globalization, neoliberalism, violence, and relations of domination and resistance on gendered politics and relations.
- Improve critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

### Requirements

1. **Research Paper:** One of the major requirements for this course is to write a **8-10 page** research paper. The paper should be double spaced, and written in 12 pt. font. It should be well written, grammatically correct, and without misspellings. You should cite properly and include a bibliography using a standard academic style, such as Chicago or MLA. This research paper should be a focused in-depth exploration of a topic related to the course. You will be expected to draw on ideas and information gathered from current, relevant sources as well as your own knowledge and insights. Your paper should consult at least 8 sources, excluding encyclopedias and other reference works. These sources should be evenly divided between Internet materials (this involves taking the time to ensure that your sources are yielding reliable information), academic articles, and printed books. You should plan to spend a substantial amount of time on this project. The final paper will be due on **12/14** via Turn-it-in on Blackboard. You can turn in your papers early, but no late papers will be accepted: exceptions will only be made in case of a documented emergency!
  - a. **Proposal:** To get your final research topics approved, submit a **1-2 pages** double-spaced (12 pt. font) long proposal with a clear description of your proposed topic. Explain (a) what you already know about the topic, and (b) how you intend to approach it. End by listing 3-5 questions that you will want to investigate in your research. These questions should form the foundation of the paper and be key to the topic under study. Provide an **annotated**

**bibliography: 2-4 sentences for 5 key resources** (books, articles) that you will use in your final research paper. Annotations should be descriptive and evaluative. Summarize the main argument of each resource, and evaluate its quality and relevance to your research topic. The proposal with the annotated bibliography will be due in the 7<sup>th</sup> week of class.

- b. **Presentation:** The last 3 class sessions will be used for final paper presentations. You may choose to do a poster or power point presentation or use audio-visual aids, handouts, or any other creative technique. You must come prepared to answer questions.
2. **Response Papers:** Submit **two 3-4 pages** double-spaced (12 pt. font) analytical reactions to the readings and topics already discussed in class. Do not summarize the readings! Analyze and evaluate the readings, state the argument, discuss if you agree or disagree, connect readings and issues, and formulate questions. You may include personal experiences and discuss current events only if they are relevant to the readings and the class.
3. **Class Participation:** Since this course is a seminar, it requires students' active participation and engagement. You are expected to come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Please be punctual and read ALL assigned material before class. You are responsible for ensuring that our seminars are productive and intellectually engaging. If you do not feel comfortable speaking aloud in class, then please discuss the issue with me early on in the semester.
4. **Discussion Leading:** In pairs of 2-3, students will briefly introduce the assigned readings by presenting the main argument and themes, followed by at least 3-5 well-thought out questions designed to kick off group discussion. You will be meeting with me in advance of your presentation.

## Expectations

This is an upper-level seminar. It is reading-intensive and you will be expected to participate actively, make presentations and facilitate discussion, produce response papers, and carry out independent research. You should attend class regularly, complete all readings and assignments, and come prepared to discuss the material. Although I don't "take" attendance, I do note who is coming to class. Students are reminded to be respectful, and open to diverse perspectives.

## Policies

1. **My availability:** I will be available during office hours (time to be established) and you are welcome to stop by during that time. However, I recommend sending me an email to reserve a slot in case many people stop by that day. If you are unable to attend my office hours, please email me and we will find a time to meet that is convenient. I encourage all students to meet with me during the semester, although I strongly encourage you to do so if you are having any difficulties with the course. Email is the best way to reach me.
2. **Attendance:** As a seminar course, attendance and participation matter. If you are going to be absent, you must email me before the class session. If you must leave a class session early, then please mention it to me before class begins.
3. **Class Protocol:** Turn off all cell phones before coming in the classroom. No computers in the classroom.
4. **Late Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted unless permission is granted before the due date. No late final research papers will be accepted.

5. **Pass/Fail and Incompletes:** If you wish to take the class pass/fail, first, please see your academic advisor to determine if you are eligible. If you are eligible, you must notify me in writing. For the pass/fail option in this course a grade of 65 and above is considered passing; 64 and below is considered failing. Please take note of the university deadline for this option. Incompletes will only be granted if the student has fulfilled 2/3rds of the course requirements.
6. **Plagiarism:** I take plagiarism very seriously. As noted on the library website (<http://www.osccr.neu.edu/policy.html>), the NU Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "intentionally representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own in any academic exercise without providing proper citation."  
Examples of plagiarism include:
- Quoting someone's words from the Internet, a printed article, or an interview, without acknowledging the author.
  - Copying part of the content of a work into one's own paper without citing the source.
  - Copying or buying a paper and handing it in as one's own.
  - Falsely creating a citation that doesn't exist.
  - Failing to credit and cite someone else's thoughts or ideas when paraphrasing.
  - Paraphrasing in a way that relies too heavily on another's language or syntax.

Avoid plagiarism by learning how to cite. When in doubt, ask for help. Become familiar with documentation guidelines, such as APA, MLA, etc. When quoting or paraphrasing ideas, theories, data or words that were created or authored by someone other than you, make sure that you both cite them in the text, and document them in the "works cited" or bibliography at the end of your paper. Any students engaging in dishonest academic behavior will receive an 'F' for the final course grade, including administrative notification of the action.

6. **Student Services & Special Needs:** Northeastern provides a number of academic resources to support students. These include the Writing Center, the Disability Resource Center, and the College of Arts and Sciences Tutoring Program. For more information on any of these resources, visit the myNEU Academic Guide at <http://www.advising.neu.edu/>. If you have a learning disability, illness, or other condition that may affect your performance, please come talk with me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we can determine how best to support you in this class, including making any necessary arrangements with you and the DRC.

**Required Readings:** We will read large sections of the following texts.

Moraga, Cherríe. [1983] 2000. *Loving in the War Years*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Thayer, Millie. 2010. *Making Transnational Feminism: Rural Women, NGO Activists, and Northern Donors in Brazil*. New York: Routledge.

### Assignments

4 Response Papers

1 Group Discussion Leading

1 Final Paper (including proposal & annotated bibliography, presentation and final write-up)

### Final Grading

20 %	Class Participation
15%	Group discussion leading
20 %	Response Papers
45%	Research Paper (including proposal, annotated bibliography, presentation and final write-up)

### Grade Scale

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	Below 60

**Schedule** (subject to changes throughout the semester)

## **Week I**

### **Class 1**

Introduction to Course

## **Week 2: Theoretical Foundations**

### **Class 1**

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty. 1991. "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism" in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. **(pp. 1-21)**
- Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, eds. 1994. "Introduction" in *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. **(pp. 1-36)**

### **Class 2**

- Breny Mendoza. 2002. Transnational Feminisms in Question. *Feminist Theory* 3(3): **295-314**.
- Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar, eds. 2010. "Introduction: Theorizing Transnational Feminist Praxis" in *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Albany: State University of New York Press. **(pp. 1-20)**

## **Week 3: "I Refuse the Split": Border Politics & Transnational Gendered Identities**

Group Discussion Leading

### **Class 1**

Gloria Anzaldúa. [1987] 2007 *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, third edition*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

- Chapter 3: Entering into the Serpent **(pp. 47-61)**
- Chapter 7: La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness **(pp. 99-120)**

Gloria Anzaldúa. 2015. *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Chapter 4: Geographies of Selves— Reimagining Identity **(pp. 65-94)**

### **Class 2**

Cherríe Moraga. [1983] 2000. *Loving in the War Years*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

- La Güera **(pp. 42-51)**
- Lo que nunca pasó por sus labios **(pp. 82-133 & pp. 142-168)**

## Week 4: Challenges & Possibilities: Gender & Transnational Mobilization

First Response Paper due

Group Discussion Leading

### Class 1

- Nancy A. Naples & Manisha Desai, eds. 2002. *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*. New York: Routledge.
  - Manisha Desai. "Transnational Solidarity: Women's Agency, Structural Adjustment, Globalization." (pp. 15-33)
  - Nancy Naples. "The Challenges and Possibilities of Transnational Feminist Praxis." (pp. 267-281)
- Sonia Alvarez et al. 2003. "Encountering Latin American and Caribbean Feminisms." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 28(2): 537-579.

### Class 2

- Valentine Moghadam. 2000. "Transnational Feminist Networks: Collective Action in an Era of Globalization." *International Sociology* 15(1): 57-85.
- Maylei Blackwell. 2015. "Translenguas: Mapping the Possibilities and Challenges of Transnational Women's Organizing across Geographies of Difference" in *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Americas*, edited by Sonia Alvarez et. al. Durham: Duke University Press. (pp. 299-320)

## Week 5: Inequality & the Production of Knowledge

Group Discussion Leading

### Class 1

- Chandra T. Mohanty 1988. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review* (30): 61-88.
- Raewyn Connell. 2015. "Meeting at the Edge of Fear: Theory on a World Scale." *Feminist Theory* 16(1): 49-66.

### Class 2

- María Lugones. 1987. "Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception." *Hypatia* 2(2): 3-19.
- Uma Narayan. 1997. "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and 'Death by Culture': Thinking about Dowry-Murders in India and Domestic-Violence Murders in the United States" in *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminisms*. London: Taylor & Francis. (pp. 83-117)

## Week 6: Third World Women & the Politics of Development

Group Discussion Leading

### Class 1

- Gita Sen & Caren Grown. 1987. *Development, Crisis, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*. New York: Monthly Review Press. (pp. 15-49 & pp. 78-96)
- Naila Kabeer. 1994. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. London: Verso. (pp. 1-10)

### Class 2

- Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison, and Anne Whitehead. 2007. "Gender Myths and Feminist Fables: The Struggle for Interpretive Power in Gender and Development." *Development and Change* 38(1): 1-20.
- Ananya Roy 2012. "Subjects of Risk: Technologies of Gender in the Making of Millennial Modernity." *Public Culture* 24(1 66): 131-55.

## **Week 7: Gender & the Politics of Translation**

Project Description & Annotated Bibliography Due  
Group Discussion Leading

### Class 1

- Kate Rushin. [1981] 2015. "The Bridge Poem" in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Claudia de Lima Costa and Sonia Alvarez. 2014. "Dislocating the Sign: Toward a Translocal Feminist Politics of Translation." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 39(3): 557-563.

### Class 2

Discussion of Millie Thayer book

## **Week 8: Indigenous Feminisms**

Second Response Paper Due  
Group Discussion Leading

### Class 1

- Maylei Blackwell. 2006. "Weaving in the Spaces: Indigenous Women's Organizing and the Politics of Scale in Mexico" in *Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas*. Austin: University of Texas Press. (pp. 115-154)
- R. Aída Hernández Castillo. 2010. "The Emergence of Indigenous Feminism in Latin America." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 35 (3): 539-545.

### Class 2

- Mercedes Prieto et. al. 2010. "Respect, Discrimination, and Violence: Indigenous Women in Ecuador 1990-2007" in *Women's Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. (pp. 203-218)
- Sarah A. Radcliffe et. al. 2004. The Transnationalization of Gender and Reimagining Andean Indigenous Development. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29(2): 387-416.

## Week 9: Gender, Sexuality & the Politics of the Body

### Group Discussion Leading

#### Class 1

- Inderpal Grewal & Karen Kaplan. 2001. "Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7(4). (pp. 663-679)
- Pascha Bueno Hansen. 2015. "Queer/Lesbiana Dialogues among Feminist Movements" in *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Americas*, edited by Sonia Alvarez et. al. Durham: Duke University Press. (pp. 321-339).

#### Class 2

- Rosalind P. Petchesky. 2015. "Owning and Disowning the Body: A Reflection" in *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*, edited by R. Baksh and W. Harcourt. New York: Oxford University Press. (pp. 252-270)

## Week 10: Transnational Gendered Labor & Violence on the Border

### Group Discussion Leading

#### Class 1

- Jennifer Bickham Méndez. 2002. "Creating Alternatives from a Gender Perspective: Transnational Organizing for Maquila Workers' Rights in Central America" in *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*, edited by Nancy A. Naples & Manisha Desai. New York: Routledge. (pp. 121-141)
- Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano. 2010. "Introduction: A Cartography of Femicide in the Americas" in *Terrorizing Women: Femicide in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press. (pp. 1-31)

#### Class 2

Documentary *Maquilapolis* (1:08) & discussion

## Week 11: Sex Work & Women in Trafficking

### Group Discussion Leading

#### Class 1

- Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, et. al. 2012. "What is Human Trafficking?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37 (4): 1015-1029.
- Thanh-Dam Truong. 2015. "Human Trafficking, Globalization, and Transnational Feminist Responses" in *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*, edited by R. Baksh and W. Harcourt. New York: Oxford University Press. (pp. 295-320)

#### Class 2

- Kempadoo, Kamala. 2001. "Women of Color and the Global Sex Trade: Transnational Perspectives." *Meridians* 1(2): 28-51.



- Kimberly Kay Hoang. 2011. "She's Not a Low-Class Dirty Girl: Sex Work in Ho Chi Minh City," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40(4): 367-396.

## **Week 12: A New Frontier? Digital Technologies & New Media**

Group Discussion Leading

### **Class 1**

- Gillian Youngs. 2015. "Digital Transformations of Transnational Feminism in Theory and Practice" in *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*, edited by R. Baksh and W. Harcourt. New York: Oxford University Press. (pp. 857-870)
- Elizabeth J. Friedman. 2005. "The Reality of Virtual Reality: The Internet and Gender Equality Advocacy in Latin America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 47(3): 1-34.

### **Class 2**

- Laura Agustín. 1999. "They speak, but who listens?" in *Women@ Internet: Creating New Cultures in Cyberspace*, edited by Wendy Harcourt. New York: Zed Books. (pp. 149-155)
- Deborah Johnson. 2010. "Sorting Out the Question of Feminist Technology" in *Feminist Technology*, edited by Linda L. Layne, Sharra Louise Vostral, and Kate Boyer. Champaign: University of Illinois Press. (pp. 36-54)

## **Week 13: Final Paper Presentations**

Thanksgiving

### **Class 1**

Presentations

## **Week 14: Final Paper Presentations**

Last day of class Wednesday December 7

### **Class 1**

Presentations

### **Class 2**

Presentations & wrap-up

**\*\* Final Paper due @ noon via Turnitin**