

WGS 242: Transnational Feminisms**Professor: Clara Román-Odio****Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 - 4:30 p.m., Ascension Hall 110****Email: romanodioc@kenyon.edu****Tel. (740) 427-5275 (office)****Course Description:**

This course will examine feminist theories, practices and methodologies in relation to globalization and transnationalism in a variety of contexts within the U.S and around the globe. Transnational feminist theories and methodologies destabilize Western feminisms, challenging notions of subjectivity and place and their connections to experiences of race, class, and gender. The course builds on four key concepts: colonialism, development, cultural change, and democratization. Because transnational feminisms are represented by the development of women's global movements, the course will consider examples of women's global networks and the ways in which they destabilize concepts like gender, sexuality, citizenship and rights. We will also examine how transnational feminisms have influenced women's productions in the fields of literature, film and visual art. Key questions include: How does the history of global feminisms affect local women's movements? What specific issues have galvanized women's movements across national and regional borders? How do feminism and critiques of colonialism and imperialism intersect? What role might feminist agendas play in addressing current global concerns? How do transnational feminisms build and sustain communities and connections to further their agendas? Prerequisite: WGS 111 or permission of the instructor. Offered every other year.

Primary Texts:

bell hooks and Amalia Mesa-Bains. Homegrown. Engaged Cultural Criticism. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2006.

Enslar, Eve. Vagina Monologues. N.Y. Villard, 2001.

Román-Odio, C. Sacred Iconographies in Chicana Cultural Productions. N.Y.: Palgrave, 2013.

Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar. Playing with Fire. Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India. Minneapolis, London: 2006.

Román-Odio, C. and Marta Sierra, eds. Transnational Borderlands in Women's Global Networks: The Making of Cultural Resistance. N.Y.: Palgrave, 2011.

Films:

The Shape of Water, Bhavnani, 2006.

Visual Art

Ester Hernández

Juana Alicia Montoya

Yreina de Cervántez
 Liliana Wilson
 Consuelo Jiménez Underwood
 Marion C. Martínez

Secondary Sources in ERES

Álvarez, Sonia. "Latin American Feminisms 'Go Global': Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium." Culture of Politics. Politics of Cultures. Revisioning Latin American Social Movements. Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar, editors. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998. 293-324

Badran, Margot. "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s. Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond." Journal of Middle East Women's Studies. Vol. 1, No. 1, 2005. 6-28.

Bhabra, Gurinder. "Postcolonial and Decolonial." Postcolonial Studies. Vol. 17, No. 2. 115-121.

Huma Ahmed Ghosh "Dilemmas of Islamic and Secular Feminists and Feminisms." Pp. 1-19; Chowdhury. "Introduction: Engaging Islam" p. 1-17.

Kim-Puri, H. J. 2005. "Conceptualizing Gender-Sexuality-State-Nation: An Introduction." Gender and Society, 19.2 (2005): 137-59. (Online resource, through Ohio Link and JSTOR).

Lugones, Maria. "Towards a Decolonial Feminism." Hypatia. Vol 25 No. 4 (Fall 2010): 742-759.

Narayan, Uma. "Contesting Cultures. 'Westernization,' Respect for Cultures and Third-World Feminisms." The Second Wave. A Reader in Feminist Theory. p. 396-413

Mayfair Mei-bui Yang. "From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women's Public Sphere in China." Spaces of Their Own. Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China. Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang, editor. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press. 35-67.

Mohanty, C. and J. Alexander, "Introduction" to Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures XIII-XLII.

Mohanty, C. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in Feminism without Borders, p. 17-42.

Moraga, Cherrie and Gloria Anzaldúa: Writings by Radical Women of Color, Eds. 4th edition. Albany, NY: State University of NY (SUNY) Press, 2015 (Selections)

Oyèrónké Oyêwùmí, “Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects.” African Gender Studies. A Reader. African Gender Studies. A Reader. Oyèrónké Oyêwùmí, editor. New York: Palgrave, 2005.

Quijano, Aníbal. “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.” In *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, ed. by Walter D. Mignolo & Arturo Escobar, Routledge, London & New York, 2010. Pp. 22–32.

Quijano, Aníbal *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America. International Sociology.* Vol. 15, No. 2. 1-18.

SANGTIN WRITERS “Still Playing with Fire: Intersectionality, Activism, and NGOized Feminism.” In *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Albany, NY: State University of NY (SUNY) Press. 124-143.

Trinh T. Minh-Ha. “Difference. A Special Third World Women Issue.” The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader. Amelia Jones, Editor. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. 151-174

Grading Criteria:

Class Participation **10%**

You are expected to come to class fully prepared (with texts and notes in hand). Contributing to discussions, asking questions, and giving feedback are additional forms of participation. The goal of our class is to build a learning community where everybody will support each other in their efforts to learn and grow in new understandings of the issues discussed. For this reason, only two absences will be allowed in the event that an illness, sport activity, or family situation prevent you to attend class. This attendance policy is set in place in order to protect the integrity of your commitment to our class and our learning community.

Short Response Paper **20%**

To ensure everyone has an active voice in our discussions, you will be required to do a short response paper and give a 15 min. presentation on one of the authors we will discuss this semester. Your presentation should include important background information about the author, such as biographical information, main works, theoretical and methodological contributions, and a comparison with other relevant authors discussed in class. The purpose of the short response paper (**2-3 pages in length, typed double spaced**) is to critically reflect on a class reading and our overall learning. You can do a reading summary, explain the article’s thesis and methodology, pose questions, and respond to the main ideas expressed in the reading, responding in an essay format to the following questions:

- What is the main information proposed by the author? Do a summary
- What is her/his thesis / main argument? Is it clearly stated and demonstrated throughout the piece? How? Re-state the thesis / main argument:

- What is the author's methodology? How does it relate to the specific reading scheduled for class discussion?
- What are the author's contributions to the discourses and practices of transnational feminisms? What do you see as the author's most interesting contributions? Link the piece to class discussions.
- What is your response to the thesis? Can you restate the thesis and propose a supporting or opposing argument? What contributions does this author offer us? What are the shortcomings of the piece or the views proposed in it? What did you learn? Make a critical assessment.

Oral Presentations

10%

Your oral presentation (15 min.) should include important background information about the author, such as biographical information, main works, theoretical and methodological contributions, and relevant connections with other authors discussed in class.

Handouts

10%

Please bring a handout that includes the main points of your presentation so the class can use this document as a source of preparation for exams and papers.

Mid-Term Exam

20%

This will be an in-class mid-term exam. The goal of this exam is to discuss key concepts and practice your capacity for synthesis and analysis in a relatively short period of time; an important skill to learn as part as your undergraduate education.

Final Collaborative Class Project

30%

The final collaborative class project will be a digital-based / text-based research project on women's organizations from around the world, including collection of data about such organizations. The importance of this assignment is to experience teamwork, as in transnational feminist practices, where each person expresses her/his individual voice but, like in a choral performance, these voices form an integrated whole. Thus, it is important you act with responsibility and accountability in all the tasks that pertain to the group. The primary learning goal is to develop research skills to investigate women's movements, feminism, and/or forms of social / political activism by women from around the world (Afghanistan, African countries, Argentina, Caribbean countries, Chile, China, India, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Perú, Puerto Rico, Turkey, feminist movements by U.S. women of color, etc.) following the steps below:

1. Your group will choose one country or region and collect information about demographic, political and economic context, colonial and post-colonial experiences, culture and issues of the women's movement and its relationship with the West. The project will require student engagement with both traditional research tools (i.e. women and gender studies specific indexes and databases) and other information resources listed in our WGS 242 library resource page

(<https://kenyon.libguides.com/wgs242>), including Women Watch, Global Feminisms Projects, as well as specific webpages by feminists or women's movements.

2. Evaluate the information using transnational feminist theories and methodologies introduced in the course, paying special attention to feminist practices, ideas of citizenship, the construction of subjectivities, location, the relation between the local and the global, community work, its relationship to the nation-state, and intersections of race, gender, and class.

3. Prepare a report on your findings (2-3 pages long) and present this content and critical evaluation to your classmates in a creative and original way. Your group may choose any digital platform to share outcomes broadly.

The last week of classes will be devoted to group presentations. Each student will have 10 min. to present his/her section of the project. The presentations should come together in any digital platform your group chooses to be shared broadly.

Program

Unit 1: Theories and Methodologies of Transnational Feminisms

January

15 - Introduction to course objectives and methodologies

17 - Mohanty, C. and J. Alexander, "Introduction" to Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures XIII-XLII; Román-Odio and Sierra. Introduction. Transnational Borderlands in Women's Global Networks. p. 3-19.

20 - Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality." In *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, ed. by [Walter D. Mignolo](#) & Arturo Escobar, [Routledge](#), London & New York, 2010. Pp. 22 –32. C. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in Feminism without Borders, p. 17-42 (ERES)

24 – **Class Cancelled. Read** Maria Lugones. "Towards a Decolonial Feminism." *Hypatia*. Vol 25 No. 4 (Fall 2010): 742-759.

29 - Román-Odio, C. *Nepantlismo*, "Chicana Approach to Colonial Ideology." In *Sacred Iconographies in Chicana Cultural Productions*. NY: Palgrave: 2013. Pp. 51-74. Visual Art. Uma Narayan. "Contesting Cultures. 'Westernization,' Respect for Cultures and Third-World Feminisms." The Second Wave. A Reader in Feminist Theory. p. 396-413

31 - Sonia Álvarez. "Latin American Feminisms 'Go Global': Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millenium." Culture of Politics. Politics of Cultures. Revisioning Latin American Social Movements. Sonia E. Álvarez, Evelina Dagnino and Arturo Escobar, editors. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998. 293-324

Unit 2: Contesting Subjectivities

February

5 - Bhabra, Gurinder. "Postcolonial and Decolonial." *Postcolonial Studies*. Vol. 17, No. 2. 115-121. Quijano, Aníbal *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America. International Sociology*. Vol. 15, No. 2. 1-18.

7 - Román-Odio, C. "Chicana Theory in the Flesh: A Bridge for the Transnational Feminist Movement." In *Sacred Iconographies in Chicana Cultural Productions*. NY: Palgrave: 2013. Pp. 19-49. Visual Art.

12 - Cherrie, Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, Eds., *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. 4th edition. Albany, NY: State University of NY (SUNY) Press, 2015 (Selections)

14 - Kum-Kum Bhavnani *The Shape of Water* (Film) and Oyèrónké Oyêwùmí, "Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects." *African Gender Studies. A Reader*. Oyèrónké Oyêwùmí, editor. New York: Palgrave, 2005.

19 - Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang. "From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women's Public Sphere in China." *Spaces of Their Own. Women's Public Sphere in Transnational China*. Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang, editor. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press. 35-67.

21 - Trinh T. Minh-Ha. "Difference. A Special Third World Women Issue." *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Amelia Jones, Editor. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. 151-174

26 - Kim-Puri, H. J. 2005. "Conceptualizing Gender-Sexuality-State-Nation: An Introduction." *Gender and Society*, 19.2 (2005): 137-59. (Online resource, through Ohio Link and JSTOR).

28 - **Exam**

Unit 3: Development and Communities

March

2-17 -Spring Vacation

19 – In class research workshop with Jenna Nolt, Digital Initiatives Librarian,

21 - Huma Ahmed Ghosh "Dilemmas of Islamic and Secular Feminists and Feminisms." Pp. 1-19; Chowdhury. "Introduction: Engaging Islam" p. 1-17. Badran, Margot. "Between Secular and Islamic Feminism/s. Reflections on the Middle East and Beyond." 6/28. Visit Prof. Rima Sadek.

26 – Sangtin Writers “Still Playing with Fire: Intersectionality, Activism, and NGOized Feminism.” In *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Albany, NY: State University of NY (SUNY) Press. 124-143. Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar. Playing with Fire. Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India. Pp. IX-XLVII.

28 Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar. Playing with Fire. Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India. PP. 3-30 Visit with Richa Nagar

April

2 - Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar. Playing with Fire. Feminist Thought and Activism through Seven Lives in India. Pp. 31-90

4 – **Class Cancelled. Read Playing with Fire. Pp. 91-155**

9 - bell hooks and Amalia Mesa-Bains. Homegrown: Engaged Cultural Criticism

11- bell hooks and Amalia Mesa-Bains. Homegrown

16 - Kimberly Williams, “The Vagina Monologues: Theoretical, Geopolitical, and Pedagogical Concerns” in Transnational Borderlands p.203-219. Vagina Monologues

18 Vagina Monologues

23 - Oral Presentations

25 - Oral Presentations

30 - Oral Presentations

May

2 - Oral Presentations

The Writing Center is on the ground floor of the library. The Writing Center is now open Sunday 2-5 and 7-10, Monday through Thursday 1-5 and 7-10, and Friday 1-4. Appointments are available at <http://kenyon.mywconline.com>, where you can see who is working when.

TITLE IX

Kenyon College seeks to provide an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have been the victim of sexual harassment/misconduct/assault we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty member, she or he must notify our college’s Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). For more information about your options at Kenyon, please go to: <http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-equal-opportunity/sexual-assault-and-harassment/>

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Students who anticipate they may need accommodations in this course because of the impact of a learning, physical, or psychological disability are encouraged to meet with me privately early in the semester to discuss their concerns. In addition, students must contact Erin Salva, Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services (740-427-5453 or salvae@kenyon.edu), as soon as possible, to verify their eligibility for reasonable academic accommodations. Early contact will help to avoid unnecessary inconvenience and delays.

DOCUMENTATION IN PAPERS

Any form of ACADEMIC DISHONESTY is a serious offense in an academic community. It is therefore important for every student to know when and how to acknowledge intellectual indebtedness. The provisions in the regulations against cheating must be understood to include **all forms of misrepresentation** in academic work, such as:

1. Failure to acknowledge ideas or phrases used in an essay that are gained from another writer (see below);
2. The submission of a single paper in more than one course, unless explicit permission from the instructors has been obtained in advance;
3. The use of work prepared or corrected by another person, by a translation program or grammar checker, or by a hired ghostwriter.

Most difficulties in this area arise from a failure to acknowledge sources. Plagiarism is using the work, words, or ideas of another person as if they were your own. What is and what is not plagiarism in a given instance can, however, pose a problem, since a great deal of what anyone writes can be traced to one source or another, and since many facts and ideas are too commonplace to require footnotes. When should you document your debt to another writer? Here are three rules of thumb to help you decide:

1. The first is to give whatever citations you think will help your reader. Give a reference whenever your reader may ask such questions as "Where did s/he get that?" or "Where can I find out more about this?"
2. The second is to consult your own feeling of indebtedness. If you incorporate a phrase, an idea, or an argument of someone else's work into your essay, then you owe that writer an acknowledgment. If you think you have been able to do a better job because of the help from someone else's work, then give that writer credit in your text, footnote, or bibliography.
3. The third rule is to err on the safe side. When in doubt, give the reference. You should, of course, avoid needlessly distracting the reader (for example, by citing Freud every time you mention the unconscious, or by giving book, chapter, and verse for every Biblical reference or quotation). But it is better to be distracting or overcautious than to risk plagiarism.

