COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will explore the way the field of Transnational Feminisms has developed over the past two decades, with a particular emphasis on how it has been articulated in relationship to Latin America (with nods also to Asia and Africa). It is organized around several distinct genealogies: (1) the interventions of the mid-90s into WGSS by Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan, and Chandra Mohanty; (2) Feminist Queer and Sexuality Studies; (3) Postcolonial feminisms (with particular debts to India); (3) Feminist Activisms (with debts to Latin America); (4) Scholarship and activism around neoliberalism (4) indigeneities; (5) the enduring issues that motivated the 1980s splits between First World and Third World feminists in the 1980s UN Women’s decade process, that animated British and US imperialisms (and state feminisms): “the” veil, genital cutting, reproductive politics.

DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS OF THE COURSE

Academe has trained us all to think of learning as a competitive affair. One scholar right, another wrong; students compete against each other for the highest grade. In truth, though, all learning and thinking takes place in the context of intellectual communities—written, virtual or face-to-face. Institutions of higher education like this afford us the privilege and pleasure of reading together and learning from each other. Our job in this seminar is to create an intellectual community, one in which all are enriched by each others’ readings. And some of this is difficult material, without a doubt, which is why we need each other’s help to read it as well as to try to understand how it can (or fails to) speak to our situation in the world. This imposes on each of us the responsibility of reading carefully, speaking up about our insights and questions, and listening respectfully to each other (which is not to say always agreeing).

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Option one: Reading (Generally for MA students or early-career PhDs)

class participation: 15%

papers: Four 2pp reading response 5% each
Two 5-7pp papers 20% each
Final paper: 25%
1. Write four 2 pp. reading response papers. These will be frontloaded in the beginning of the semester to help you get quick feedback and help on your reading and writing, and correspondingly less pressure to speak up in class than on more advanced graduate students. Due dates: 1/29; 2/5; 2/12; 2/19,

2. Write two 5-7 pp reading-response papers bringing together at least two of the readings in the weeks prior to the paper. Due: 3/5; 3/26.

3. Write and present a 9 pp. conference paper that includes original research on a subject of your choosing related to the course material. Subject matter might include historical research (relying on an archive of published or unpublished sources), a reading of a novel or a play, a reading of public policy problem or feminist issue using fresh sources (that is, tell us something new that we did not already know, based on your own research). This list is meant to be suggestive rather than inclusive. Due 5/5.

Option two: Research (Generally for advanced graduate students)
   Class participation: 30%
   Research paper: 70%

Research paper. Use the theoretical material in relation to something else, perhaps a thesis or dissertation topic; 15-20pp. Due 5/5.

Attendance Policy

You're expected to come to class with the reading done. If you must miss a class, email the instructor. Two absences are a cause for concern. If you miss three or more classes, plan on meeting with me to discuss options related to making up the work, taking a grade reduction, or repeating the course.

WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Week One: January 22. Course Overview

Week Two: January 29. Genealogies


Option one: 2pp reading response paper

### Contemporary Queer Feminisms

#### Week 3. February 5


Option one: 2pp reading response paper

#### Week 4. February 12


Option one: 2pp reading response paper

### Postcolonial and Decolonial Feminist Studies

#### Week 5. February 19

Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak”

Oyeronke Oyewumi, “Decolonizing the Intellectual and the Quotidian: Yoruba Scholars(hip) and Male Dominance” in Oyewumi, ed. *Gender Epistemologies in Africa: The Gendering of African Traditions, Spaces, Social Institutions, and Identities* (Palgrave 2010)

Option one: 2pp reading response paper

### Latin America

#### Week 6. February 26

The Western Mass. School of Transnational Feminism


#### Week 7. March 5

Mexico, Drugs, and the Question of the Narco-State


Option one: 5-7pp paper due

The Cultural Politics of Neoliberalism

Week 8. March 12

March 14-23 Spring Break

Indigeneity

Week 9. March 26
Jodi Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*

Option one: 5-7pp paper due

Splits in Feminism

Week 10. April 3. Histories: Second and Third Worlds


Week 11. April 10. Liberalism and Secularism: Islam, Gender, and Feminism


Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Professing Selves*, introduction and chapter 8
Week 12: April 17. Israel/Palestine
Judith Butler, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*

Week 12: April 23. Transnational Adoption: Children and Mothers as a Site of Violence

Final Papers due: May 5