Course Description

This course is about the framework of transnational women’s and gendered activisms and scholarship. We will survey the field of transnational feminist research and praxis, locating structures of power, practices of resistance, and the geographies of development at work in a range of theories and social movements. The course will not only examine the implementation of feminist politics and projects that have sought to ensure some measurable social, cultural, and economic changes, but also explore the ways conceptions of the ‘global’ and ‘transnational’ have informed these efforts. Students will have the opportunity to assess which of these practices can be applicable, transferable, and/or travel on a domestic, global, and transnational scale. We will focus not only on the agency of individuals, but also on the impact on people’s lives and their communities as they adopt strategies to improve the material, social, cultural, and political conditions of their lives.

The relationship between academic theorizing and community organizing for productive social and political change is a vital, complex and ever-changing source of feminist inquiry. We will build on this relationship by interweaving activist social and political work with the theoretical interventions as well as feminist research methodology. We hope students will gain a fuller picture of the ways the framework of the “transnational” has informed and transformed theoretical, social and political spaces in both productive and problematic ways.

In this course, I expect students to have an opportunity to focus and deepen their understanding of these issues by working on a specific individual research paper or collective small group research project (details will be distributed). This should be an original and specific research project, but must also link to the key themes of the course and broader general education studies. Students will be presented with information about the proper use of the Library Data Base as well as using Information Technology to enhance their learning and prepare for their research projects. (One undergraduate student, versed in technology, will be working with the faculty on the E-Portfolios). Students can use this as a practical tangible resource for further studies or work.

Enrollment Requirements:

Although this course is open to juniors, it is intended as a culminating experience for WGSS seniors. Ideally students will have completed most of the requirements for the major, but at the very least 301 (the theory requirement) and two other required WGSS courses (the introductory General Education Course should practically be one of these). Without these pre-requisites, it may be difficult for students to keep up with the scholarship of the course.
Capstone and Integrative Experience:

This is a **four-credit** Women Gender Sexuality Capstone course, which fulfills the major’s Integrative Experience (IE) requirements. This course provides:

1. A context for students to reflect on and to integrate their learning and experience from the broad exposure in their General Education courses and the focus in their major.

2. The opportunity to practice General Education learning objectives such as oral communication, collaboration, critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspective taking, at a more advanced level.

3. A shared learning experience for applying their prior learning to new situations, challenging questions, and real-world problems.

WGSS majors will work together on a shared intellectual project, and situate their general education coursework and scholarly studies into conversations with each other. The seminar will be discussion, reading and writing intensive. It will also emphasize a collective learning process from student led discussions; creating a Portfolio of required course work; written assignments; a final research paper or project; and a final in-class presentation with invitations to other WGSS students and faculty. As an IE requirement, the course will provide WGSS seniors with the opportunity to reflect on and make use of the knowledge base they have acquired in the major and **UMass General Education Courses**.

1. Integrate and synthesize acquired breadth of knowledge in a variety of scholarly modes and contexts as well as information technology.

2. Demonstrate (a) knowledge of self in diverse cultural contexts, (b) recognize diverse disciplinary viewpoints, (c) understanding of diverse perspectives, and how different cultures and groups relate in a diverse global and transnational context, (d) and work effectively and collaboratively in groups.

3. Communicate clearly, concisely, persuasively, and effectively orally and in writing.

4. Think critically and creatively and conduct self-directed projects.

These issues will be related ultimately to the student’s “location”, personally, and professionally in his or her own space. The expectation is that students will expand their worldview and allow the course material to be transferable and applicable both personally and academically. Choices for research papers and projects should reflect individual interest, growth, and practical vision.

Interdisciplinarity:

The content and core of Women, Gender Sexuality Studies is always interdisciplinary. We will be engaged in doing and reading multiple research methodologies, literary analysis and performance theory, development theory (economic, community, social, transnational), cultural anthropology, post-colonial theory, and praxis of Internet Technology.

Course Requirements, Academic Honesty, University Policies, Class Guidelines

- Reading assignments must be completed by the class period for which they are assigned.

- Regular attendance and occasional in class exercises are mandatory. Attendances cannot be made up unless there are extenuating circumstances, which will then involve contracted assigned work. Since class meets once a week, there will be only one unexcused absence. You will lose one point for every unexcused absence. Class discussions will provide the opportunity to listen carefully,
talk critically, and engage in the analysis of readings and topics. You will be expected to have completed and thought about all of the readings for each class. University guidelines will be followed. If you know that you must miss a class session please consult with me beforehand, but be clear about the difference between excused and unexcused absences. Please take time to plan your semester.

- Religious Observances. It is the University Policy that each student must inform the instructor prior to the scheduled class session of any religious absence. This is an excused absence but it does not relieve you of any due assignment. You must inform me about these absences and arrange to have course work and assignments completed. You are responsible for knowing when assignments are due (dates will be outlined in the syllabus) and submitting them on time.

- We will probably be using MOODLE this semester for class materials and supporting documents. All required readings aside from the texts, will either be distributed or on E-Reserve.

- If you have special needs, please discuss with me and obtain the relevant paperwork so that necessary accommodations can be made. You must inform me promptly at the beginning of the semester. To ensure that you obtain the support you need to get the most from the course and to give your best performance. Please understand that you must submit assignments and attend class in order to be successfully graded.

**Course Requirements & Written Assignments**

*Please remember that all papers must be typed, double spaced, Times Roman 12 with 1” margins.*

1. **Preparedness and active class participation.** This is a reading, discussion and research-intensive course and requires full engagement of all participants. This means arriving at class prepared to discuss assigned readings, actively stepping up in-class to raise questions and share insights, full participation in class exercises, and constructive peer feedback. Students *must* adhere to all class meeting times and all writing materials must be ready by the due dates. You will be working with your own literature review, research resources, and other relevant materials. Timely revisions of your work are essential for successful completion of the course. Students will be working individually with the faculty and also with peers as needed. (15%).

2. **Two Critical Analysis Papers (3 pages each).** Papers must be coherently and concisely organized in response to selected assigned readings. These should not address each reading individually, but should reflect the ways they are in conversation with each other. (i) What is the theoretical basis of the readings? (ii) In what ways can the theoretical be translated into the practical and what possible practical applications are suggested by the readings? You may also include observations and reflections on personal process of integrating empirical, theoretical and experiential knowledge. *Due in class on Tuesday February 16 & Monday February 29, 2016* (20 points).

3. **Portfolio on Research and Self-Reflection on Learning.**

   - The research/internet literacy assignments are attached to specific themes of the course. Each student will be expected keep an up-to-date research and self-reflection journal for the duration of the course. It should be used to keep notes from readings and class discussions, in-class writing activities (as outlined in the syllabus), research notes and details, as well as thoughts and insights about the course particularly as it relates to your overall intellectual experience at UMass
and in WGSS. You must get in the habit of regularly writing in your journal to include responses to videos, websites, in-class assignments, analysis, new insights, and thought processes. These must be structured and probably not more than two (2) pages and at least once a week. Your journal will reflect your learning and research process over the full semester. For graduating students, your portfolio will include completing an End of the Program report that is required of all WGSS majors, with an added annotated transcript of General Education courses and a reflection on how these experiences and courses might inform your future both personally and professionally. The journal should be available for my evaluation on Tuesday March 5, 2013 and for class discussions on Monday, April 20, 2016 (20 points).

b) Each entry must be dated and titled with reference to the assignment.

c) Focus on an evaluation of sorts to include any new insights, any new learning, limitations, and ideas for further readings or research. What’s applicable and what’s transferable?

d) You can write both personal and theoretical insights. You can also use this as a vehicle for writing any other thoughts throughout the course.

e) You do not need to make this complicated but I will be paying attention to the number of entries, relevance to the course material, and thoughtfulness of your entries.

4. **Author Report.** Choose one of the authors of the readings from the course to prepare a biographical report. This is not an analysis of a reading by the author but instead you are required to provide a background on the author to include some brief biographical information as well as some context for the author’s theories and work. You will probably have to read some additional work by the author. Some questions to inform your report are: what is the author’s larger argument? How does it connect with our specific reading? What is her/his intellectual background? How does this work link with perspectives from other interdisciplinary general education courses? What does the author contribute to the project of transnational feminism? This need not be longer than 3-5 double spaced pages and is due no later than Monday, March 21, 2016 (15 points).

5. **Video Documentary: Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai.**

6. **Final Research Project or Paper.** A 15 to 20-page research paper or project. This paper will include (a) a 5 page literature review with relevant and selective bibliography with no less than 15 references drawn primarily from scholarly journals, books, reports and/or literature from established NGO’s (Non-Governmental Organizations) and political organizations. Web sources may be included, but should not constitute more than 25% of the bibliography and must be readily verifiable; (b) the final paper or project must include clearly posited analysis with applicable and transferable conclusions. Confer with me if you are doing a project so that we can discuss the appropriate guidelines. Due in class on Monday, April 25, 2016 (30 points).

**WGSS Final Research presentation.** If logistics allow, presentations that outline the key arguments and insights of your final research paper or project will be scheduled during the last week of classes and will be open to the WGSS community of faculty and students.
## Final Grading Scale

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<td>A–</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C–</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>(59 or below)</td>
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*Additional readings will either be on E-Reserve, MOODLE, or distributed in class.*

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## Course Calendar

**Mon. January 25**

**Course Requirements & Expectations**


**Readings:**

[Handout]–Transnational Feminism: A Range of Disciplinary Perspectives. [http://www.history.ucla.edu/dubois/transnational%20Feminism.html](http://www.history.ucla.edu/dubois/transnational%20Feminism.html)

[Handout]–Transnational Feminism. [http://www.affinityproject.org/traditions/transnationalfeminism.html](http://www.affinityproject.org/traditions/transnationalfeminism.html)

**Class Exercise:**

*Taking stock of relevant courses that have addressed a transnational or global feminist framework. How have these courses conceptualized transnational? How were the frameworks similar or different? Is there a universal framework for defining the transnational? Is that different from the global?*

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**Mon. February 01**

**Surveying the Fields. The Geography and Landscape of Women’s Leadership: Re-defining Power, Re-assessing the Political**

**Readings:**


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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Readings</th>
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***Critical Analysis Paper 1 Due in Class*** |
| Mon. February 29 | **Sexualities: Crossing Borders of Control, Power, and Politics** | Howe, Alyssa Cymene. “Undressing the Universal Queer Subject: Nicaraguan Activism and Transnational Identity”. *City & Society*. XIV.2  
***Critical Analysis Paper 2 Due in Class*** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon. March 07</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Scholarship of Activism: Decolonizing Transnational feminisms, Practicing Solidarity</strong></td>
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<td>Mon. March 21</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Audre Lorde’s Transnational Legacies</strong></td>
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<td><em><strong>Author Report Due in Class</strong></em></td>
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<td>Mon. March 28</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Audre Lorde’s Transnational Legacies</strong></td>
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<td>[Text]-Selections</td>
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<td>Mon. April 04</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Dialogical Journeys</strong></td>
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<td>[Text]-Richa Nagar, Part 11.</td>
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<td>Mon. April 11</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Educational Capital: Pedagogy and Praxis</strong></td>
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<td>[Text]-Richa Nagar, Part 111.</td>
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<td>Mon. April 18</td>
<td><strong>Holiday - Patriot’s Day</strong></td>
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<td>Wed. April 20</td>
<td><strong>Student Portfolio Reflections and Conversatuions</strong></td>
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<td><em><strong>Portfolio due</strong></em></td>
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<td>Mon. April 25</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reflections and Implications for Further Research and Practice</strong></td>
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<td><em><strong>Final Paper Due</strong></em></td>
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ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY SELECTIONS


POSSIBLE RESEARCH THEMES

Feminist Development Theory: Economy, Community, Sustainability


Formal and Informal Politics, Community Activism, Globalization, and Dilemmas of Transnational Feminist Practices


Gendered Violence: Women as [(Im)]Migrants and Refugees, National Security and War


Feminist Ethical Dilemmas in Fieldwork, Situating the Activism Project


Constructing a Vision of Possibilities


The Transcultural Power of Writing the Personal and the Political


Educational Capital: Pedagogy and Praxis


