

**WOMENSST 292G: “Crazy Ladies!?!” Feminism(s) and the Diaspora
Situating U.S. Women of Color”
Spring 2012**



Allia A. Matta

Rani Varghese

Tuesday 4:00-6:30 p.m., Bartlett 119

Mailbox: Bartlett 208 Office hours: Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30pm/by appointment (RV)

Tuesdays from 6:30-7:30pm/by appointment (AAM)

“...that definition of me, and millions like us, formulated by others to serve out their fantasies, a definition we have to combat at unconscionable cost to the self and even use, at times, in order to survive; the cause of so much shame and rage as well as oddly enough, a source of pride...” (“Reena” Paule Marshall)

Course Description

This course examines the interplay of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other aspects of social identity in women's lives and communities. Emphasizing intersectionality, transnational feminist frameworks, and psychological theories as critical lenses, we will examine the historical and cultural narratives of women of color. This course further complicates how history, positionality, and culture work to create diverse narratives of women of color in the U.S.

Throughout this course, we will also integrate and employ:

- **Integrative Analysis:** It is crucial that we understand “women” and “gender” as multiple and diverse, embedded in the complex network of interlocking variables of race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality.
- **Feminism(s):** There is no unitary “feminism” but rather “feminisms.” Feminisms must be understood as multiple, shifting, and contesting movements—from the historical and contemporary perspectives.
- **Knowledge Construction:** Exploring feminist interventions in the politics of knowledge—as indicated in theoretical and literary texts.
- **Feminist Theory:** Emphasizing a notion of feminist theorizing that includes *description* and *analysis* as well as thinking that imposes *vision* and *change*.
- **Activisms:** Exploring women’s resistance to oppression and inequities.

Course Texts

Texts are available at Food for Thought Books, 106 North Pleasant Street, Amherst, MA 01002

- 1) *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Sandra Cisneros, Vintage Contemporary/Random House, 1992.
- 2) *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison, Vintage International/Random House, 2007.
- 3) *Woman Warrior: Memoirs of Girlhood Among Ghosts*, Maxine Hong Kingston, Vintage International Edition 1989.
- 4) *In and Out of Our Minds: The Mental Health of African Americans*, edited by Diane Brown and Verna Keith, Columbia University Press, 2003.
- 5) *Women of Color and Feminism*, Maythee Rojas, Seal Press, 2009.
- 6) Supplemental Readings—Spark

Course Requirements

Attendance & Class Participation

Attendance in this class is **required** and will be recorded at each class session. Each student is expected to attend all classes and actively participate in class discussions and exercises. Class participation is an essential part of our course learning. Your attendance is critical because our class format is enriched through our participation. Students who are absent cannot learn from or teach their classmates.

Excused absences include events of sickness, a family emergency, religious observances and athletic commitments. **Students must provide appropriate documentation and write a 2 page typed reflection paper on the week's readings in order to excuse the absence. More than one unexcused absences will result in your grade being marked down.** Please notify the instructors if you are unable to attend class for any reason.

If you miss a class, you are urged to contact one of the instructors or a classmate to gather the material covered in class and/or handouts. It is the student's responsibility to obtain any handouts/assignments from the instructor and/or classmates if you are absent.

Course Reading

The readings are an essential component of this course. You are expected to read and reflect upon the assigned readings before coming to class. You may find it helpful to take notes from the readings in preparation for classroom discussions. We are committed in maintaining a positive and engaging learning community where “we all” function as interactive participants.

Assignments

Each student is expected to complete all of the course assignments. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day when they are due. Please hand in hard copies of all assignments unless otherwise specified. Assignments should be typed using 12-point type and double-spaced, with one inch margins. All written work should reflect your ability to write according to the appropriate academic standard and must be carefully edited for spelling and grammatical errors. Assignments should include a running head that includes a page number, your name, and the

assignment number. Faculty will be happy to assist you if you are having difficulty with running heads or other formatting issues. Please staple your work and turn in only the typed pages of the assignment (i.e., without folders, cover sheets, and/or card stock covers).

Academic Honesty

This class follows the University's policy regarding academic honesty. As cited in the policy, "Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty." http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

E-mail and Classroom Etiquette

E-mailing an instructor is not the same as texting a friend. We expect you to write professional e-mails to us. This includes stating the course in the subject line, addressing the e-mail to us, signing your full name, and being polite even if you are upset.

Assessment and Evaluation

We care most about your commitment to your learning and engagement with the issues that will be presented, discussed, and wrestled with in this course. At the same time, this is a graded course so we must find some way to measure learning. Student grades are not be based on your beliefs. Agreeing with the perspectives presented in class is not a requirement though you may find that your beliefs contribute to how you access the material. Please note that you will be graded on your ability to critically analyze, discuss, and make meaning of the texts and diverse theoretical perspectives, complete the required assignments, and fully participate in classroom activities.

Important: The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disability Services (PDS); you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify us within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make the appropriate arrangements.

GRADING 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
 F = below 63

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POINTS</u>	<u>DATE DUE</u>
Attendance & Participation	15	N/A
Discussant Presentation	15	As assigned
Critical Reflection Papers (3)	45	See syllabus
Final Paper	25	See syllabus
Total Points Possible:	100	

Course Calendar

Texts Key: *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Sandra Cisneros; *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison; *Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston; *In and Out of Our Minds: The Mental Health of African Americans* (IOM), edited by Diane Brown and Verna Keith; *Women of Color and Feminism* (WCF), Maythee Rojas; Supplemental Readings (Spark)

WEEK	Date	Topic	Readings (to complete by this date)	Assignments Due (this date)
1	1/24	Locating Yourself— Social Location/Positionality Multi-level Analysis	1. Rojas, “Prologue” & “Defining Identities” (WCF) 2. Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, “Identities and Social Locations: Who am I? Who are my people?” <i>Women’s Lives</i> (Spark) 3. Chung, “Finding my eye-identity.” <i>Readings for Diversity and Social Justice</i> . (Spark) 4. Hajratwala, “Colonization.” <i>Our Feet Walk the Sky</i> (FWTHS). (Spark).	
2	1/31	Finding Theory: a) Histories of Feminism(s) b) Feminism(s) and the Diaspora	1. Hurdis, “Heartbroken: Women of Color Feminism and the Third World.” <i>Colonize This</i> . (Spark). 2. Aguilar, “Survival.” <i>This Bridge We Call Home</i> . (Spark). 3. DiAngelo, “My Class Didn’t Trump My Race: Using Oppression to Face Privilege.” <i>Multicultural Perspectives</i> . 8 (1). ***** 3. Hewitt, “Introduction” <i>No Permanent Waves</i> (NPW) (Spark) 4. Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism” (NPW) (Spark) 5. Chavez, “We Have a Long Beautiful History Chicana Feminist Trajectories & Legacies” (NPW) (Spark) 6. Mohanty, “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism.” <i>Feminism with Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity</i> . (Spark)	
3	2/7		1. Taylor, “Black Feminisms and Human Agency” (NPW) (Spark)	Critical Paper #1

		<p>Why Intersectionality? The relevance of an intersectional analysis.</p>	<p>2. Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change." <i>Feminist Studies</i>, 31(1). ***** 3. Combahée River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (Spark) 4. Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine..." (Spark) 5. Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House". <i>Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches</i>. (Spark). 6. Keating, "From Intersections to Interconnections - Lessons for transformation from This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color." <i>The Intersectional Approach</i>. (Spark) 7. Jordan, J. (2002). "Report from the Bahamas." <i>Some of Us Did not Die</i>. (Spark).</p>	<p>Discussant Presentations: (3)</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>2/14</p>	<p>Embodying Representation and Location: a) Historical Representations based on culture and normalcy?</p>	<p>1. Barkley Brown, "'What Has Happened Here: The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics.'" (Spark). 2. Aanerud, R. (2002). "Thinking again: This bridge called my back and the challenge go whiteness." <i>This Bridge Called Home</i>. (Spark). ***** 3. Rojas, "Embodied Representations." (WCF) 4. Rushin, "The Bridge Poem." <i>This Bridge Called My Back</i>. 5. Wing et al. "Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life" <i>American Psychologist</i>. 62 (4) (Spark). 6 Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers & Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics." Black Queer Studies: The Anthology.</p>	<p>Discussant Presentations: (3)</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>2/21</p>	<p>b) Locating the Body as raced, gendered, classed, functional and dysfunctional.</p>	<p>1. Wendel, "The social construction of disability." <i>The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability</i>. (Spark). 2. Dreyfus & Rabinow, "Practice and discourse in</p>	<p>Discussant Presentations (3):</p>

		<p>Foucault's early writing." <i>Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics</i>.</p> <p>3. Metz, "The Gendered Psychodynamics of Pharmaceutical Advertising, 1964-97." <i>Prozac on the Couch</i>. (Spark)</p> <p>4. Metz, "The Protest Psychosis." <i>How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease</i>. (Spark)</p>	
6	2/28	<p>Guest Lecturer: Perdomo</p> <p>1. Brown, "Introduction" In and Out of Our Minds (IOM) Brown & Keith, "The Epidemiology of Mental Disorders..." (IOM)</p> <p>3. Brown et al, "(Dis) Respected and (Dis)regarded: Experiences of Racism..." (IOM)</p> <p>4. Brown et al, "Multiple social roles and multiple stressors for Black Women" (IOM)</p> <p>1. Asher, "Beyond cool and hip: Engaging the question of research and writing as academic Self-woman of color Other." <i>Qualitative Studies In Education</i>. VOL. 14 (1), 1-12. (Spark)</p> <p>2. Collins, "Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black Feminist Thought." <i>Social Problems</i>, 33 (6). 14-22. (Spark)</p>	
7	3/6	<p>War on Our Bodies</p> <p>a) Issues of Violence</p> <p>b) Reproductive Justice</p> <p>1. Abraham, "Immigrant Status and Marital Violence." <i>Speaking the Unspeakable: Marital Violence Among South Asian Immigrants in the United States</i>. (Spark).</p> <p>2. Barbee, "Violence and Mental Health" (IOM)</p> <p>3. Bhattacharjee, "'A Slippery Path: Organizing Resistance to Violence Against Women.'" <i>Dragon Ladies (Spark)</i></p> <p>4. Ross, "The Color of Choice: White Supremacy and Reproductive Justice." <i>The Color of Violence: Incite Anthology</i>. (Spark)</p> <p>5. Nowrojee & Silliman. "Asian Women's Health: Organizing a Movement." <i>Dragon Ladies (Spark)</i></p> <p>6. Breed. "Eugenics victim, son fighting together for justice" http://www.gazettenet.com/2011/08/16/eugenics-victim-son-fighting-together-for-justice (Spark)</p>	<p>Discussant Presentations (3):</p>

	3/9		DUE ON SPARK	Critical Reflection Paper #2
8	3/13	Transnational Diaspora Crazyness a) Crazy Black Women: Representative Voices and Texts b) Singing and Painting the Blues	1. "Creative Expressions" (WCF) 2. Collins, "Economies of the Flesh: Representing the Black Female Body in Art" (Spark) 3. <i>The Bluest Eye</i> pp. "Forward" pp. 1-109	Discussant Presentations (3):
9	3/20	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!		
10	3/27		1. <i>The Bluest Eye</i> pp. 110-End 2. Keith & Thompson, "Color Matters: The Importance of Skin Tone for African American Women's . . ." (OM) 3. Farrington, "Faith Ringgold's Slave Rape Series" (Spark)	Discussant Presentations (3):
11	4/3	Loca Chicana Women: Voices, Politics, and Art	1. Anzaldúa, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue Overcoming the Tradition of Silence." & "Cultural Tyranny." <i>Borderlands/La Fronteras</i> . 2. Cota-Cardenas "The Faith of Activists: Barrios, Cities, and the Chicana Feminist Response." <i>Chicana Leadership (Spark)</i> 3. Cisneros, <i>Women Hollering Creek</i> pp. 1-113 4. Menderz-Negrete "Awareness, Consciousness, and Resistance." <i>Chicana Leadership (Spark)</i>	Discussant Presentations (3):
12	4/10		1. <i>Women Hollering Creek</i> pp. 114-End 2. Sanchez 'The Dramatization of a Shifting Poetic Consciousness: Bernice Zamora's <i>Restless Serpents</i> ' (Spark) 3. Sanchez, "Setting the Context: Gender, Ethnicity, and Silence in Contemporary Chicana Poetry." <i>Contemporary Chicana Poetry (Spark)</i> 4. Rojas, "Social Struggles." (WCF) 1. Shah "Slaying the Dragon Lady Toward an Asian American Feminism." <i>Dragon Ladies (Spark)</i> 2. Peques, Strategies from the field: Organizing the Asian American feminist movement." <i>Dragon Ladies (Spark)</i>	Discussant Presentations (3):
13	4/17	NO CLASS – MONDAY SCHEDULE	1. Eng & Han. "A dialogue on racial melancholia." <i>Asian Spark</i>	Critical Reflection #3 4/20/12 via Spark

14	4/24	Dragon Ladies? Asian Women: Rage, Resistance, and Redefinition Guest Lecturer: Yoon	<i>American Studies Now, (Spark).</i> 2. Anonymous, "For My Sister: Smashing the Walls of Pretense and Shame." <i>This Bridge Called Home</i> . 3. Santos, "Gathering the Dust: The Bases Issue in the Philippines." "Olongapo: The Bar System." Let the Good Times Role: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia. 4. Hong-Kingston, <i>Women Warrior, pp 1-111</i> .	
15	5/1		1. Geok-jin Lim, "Memory and the New-Born: The Maternal Imagination in Diaspora." <i>This Bridge We Call Home. (Spark).</i> 2. Tumang "Filipino secrets and American dreams". <i>Homelands: Women's Journeys Across Race, Place and Time. (Spark).</i> 2. Hong-Kingston, <i>Women Warrior</i> , pp 111-end. 3. Fishkin & Hong Kingston, "Interview with Maxine Hong Kingston" <i>American Literary History. (Spark)</i>	Discussant Presentations (4):
	5/8	EXAM WEEK		Final Paper Due 5/8/12