

Transnational Feminisms 2014
WGSS 695A-1
Dr. Laura Briggs
Bartlett 314
Thursdays 2:30-5:00
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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

Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. 1994. "Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity," in *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Boundary 2* (1984): 12/13 (3/1): 333-358

Arnaldo Cruz Malavé and Martin Manalansan, "Introduction" to *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: NYU Press, 2002).

Laura Briggs, J.T. Way, and Gladys McCormick, "Transnationalism: A Category of Analysis," *American Quarterly* 60:3 (September 2008): 625-648.
Option one: 2pp reading response paper

Contemporary Queer Feminisms

Week 3. February 5

Chandan Reddy, *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the U.S. State* (Duke University Press, 2011).

Option one: 2pp reading response paper

Week 4. February 12

Eithne Luibhéid, *Pregnant on Arrival: Making the Illegal Immigrant* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013)

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

Sonia E. Alvarez, 'Latin American Feminisms 'Go Global': Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium', in Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelyn Dagnino and Arturo Escobar (eds.) *Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1998).

Millie Thayer, "Transnational Feminism: Reading Joan Scott in the Brazilian Sertão." *Ethnography* 2:2 (2001): 243-271.

Amrita Basu. "Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women's Movements." *Meridians* (2000): 68-84.

Lynn Morgan and Elizabeth F. S. Roberts, "Reproductive Governance in Latin America," *Anthropology and Medicine* 19:2 (2012)

Week 7. March 5 Mexico, Drugs, and the Question of the Narco-State

Monárrez Fragoso, Julia Estela. 2010. "Death in a Transnational Metropolitan Network." In: *Cities and citizenship at the U.S.-Mexico border: the Paso del Norte metropolitan region*. Edited by: Staudt, Kathleen A., César M. Fuentes Flores, and Julia Estela Monárrez Fragoso. 2010. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 23-42.

Camacho, Alicia Schmidt. 2006. "Migrant melancholia: Emergent discourses of Mexican migrant traffic in transnational space". *South Atlantic Quarterly* 105 (4): 831-861.

Kampfner, Cristina Jose. (2013). "Las Mujeres Olvidadas: Women in Mexican Prisons," In: Global lockdown: race, gender, and the prison-industrial complex, edited by Julia Sudbury. 127-136.

Diaz-Cotto, Juanita. (2013). "Latinas and the War on Drugs in the United States, Latin America and Europe," In: Global lockdown: race, gender, and the prison-industrial complex, edited by Julia Sudbury. 137-154.

Option one: 5-7pp paper due

The Cultural Politics of Neoliberalism

Week 8. March 12

Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy*. Beacon Press, 2012.

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

Cheryl Johnson Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism," in Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Indiana UP, 1991).

Achola Pala Okeyo, "Reflection on Development Myths," *Africa Report* (March/April 1981): 7-10.

Nawaal el Saadawi, Fatima Mernissi, and Mallica Vajarathon, "A Critical Look at the Wellesley Conference," *Quest* 4:2 (Winter 1978): 101-107.

Maylei Blackwell. 2014. "Translenguas: Mapping the Possibilities and Challenges of Transnational Women's Organizing across Geographies of Difference." Sonia E. Alvarez, Claudia de Lima Costa, Verónica Feliu, Rebecca J. Hester, Norma Klahn, Millie Thayer and Cruz Caridad Bueno, eds. *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press).

Suchland, Jennifer. 2011. "Is postsocialism transnational?" *Signs* 36(4), Summer:837-62.

Herr, R. S. 2014. Reclaiming Third World Feminism: Or why transnational feminism needs third world feminism. *Meridians* 12(1): 1-30.

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

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104:3 (September 2002): 783-90.

Mahmood, Saba. "The Subject of Freedom," from *The Politics of Piety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005): 1-39.

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

Laura Briggs, *Somebody's Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption* (Duke, 2012).

Final Papers due: May 5