



Academic Year 2018-2019

Syllabus

Gender Flows

CFU 6

Prof. Alessandra Chiricosta

Course Description

This course will provide students with an overview of the field of Gender and Women's Studies, Feminisms and Women's Movements, with a specific focus on the global, intercultural and transnational dimension of Women's and Feminist debates and activism. The course will adopt an intersectional perspective which illustrates how relationships between systems of oppression surrounding race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and citizenship are interconnected and historically bound. As an introductory course, it is designed to offer a range of interdisciplinary tools and methods for understanding and analysing issues at stake.

As Baksh and Harcourt pointed out, Transnational Feminists and Women's Movements (TFWM) can be defined as the fluid coalescence of organizations, networks, coalitions, campaigns, analysis, advocacy and actions that politicize women's rights and gender equality issues beyond the nation-state, particularly from the 1990s, when deepening globalization and new communications and information technologies (ICTs) enabled feminists to connect readily with and interrogate their localities and cross-border relations.

Rather than presenting TFWM as static "objects" of enquiry, the Course will show which kind of dynamics they originated from and bring into play. The metaphor of "Weaving" is therefore used to highlight the specific way (i.e. focusing on relations and interconnections) in which TFWM conceptualize and act in the social and political space.

After a brief introduction to the principal concepts and terms used in Gender Studies the course will be articulated into two Sections: **Framework** and **Weaving**.

Section 1: Framework.

The Framework is the contest of interaction of two threads, i.e. *warp* and *woof*. Accordingly, this course will follow two lines. The first (*warp*) will outline the historical development of Feminisms and Women's movements as political, philosophical and social phenomena that have been taking place in diverse areas of the globe assuming different shapes and aspects. The second (*woof*) will introduce key concepts and methodologies used in Gender and Woman's Studies, highlighting the extent to which they have been elaborated not as abstract categories but as the result of situated dynamics of power in specific socio-political contexts. *Warp* and *Woof* constantly intertwines: the development of new analytical tools and perspectives create the possibility of innovative discourses and socio political movements which will originate new paradigms.

Section 2: Weaving.

Weaving is an action, a process, rather than a "thing". The same conclusion can be drawn when observing Transnational Feminist Movements (TFM). Transnational feminist movements operate on many levels: the intergovernmental policy level; networking within and across national, regional and international borders in support of specific grassroots struggles to achieve feminist goals; and intersectional networking and movement building with other global movements that are organizing for human rights and political and economic transformation.

The Second Section of the Course will focus on how some global issues (I.e. knowledge, theory and praxis; body politics, health and wellbeing; human rights and human security; economic and social justice; citizenship and state- building; militarism and religious fundamentalisms; feminist political ecology; and digital-age transformations) are presented and discussed in the contemporary transnational feminist debate and platforms for action.

Teaching Method

Each Lesson of the first Sections will provide a description of the Topic from an historical angle (*warp*), outlining the theoretical framework in which the Topic has been conceived and discussed. Then it will move to provide a critical analysis on how specific meanings, concepts and categories related to the Topic at stake have been developed and used in the contest of Feminisms, Gender and Women's Studies (*woof*).

While *warp* part of the lesson is intended as a Lecture, *woof part* is seen as a space of interaction and debate, in which students are asked to actively participate.

In the Second Section specific readings from the book *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements* (ed. by Rawwida Baksh and Wendy Harcourt) will be analysed and proposed as themes of discussion. Attending students are requested to read the articles in advance.

Schedule of Topics

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| Topic 1 | Preparing the tools: introducing Gender, Womanism, Feminisms and other <i>strange</i> terms |
| Topic 2 | Framework: The Origins and First Wave Feminism in the US and Europe. Womanism in the World. Contesting the ethnocentric assumption of the “white female” superiority. |
| Topic 3 | Framework: Second Wave: From Equality to Liberation. The multifaceted aspects of women's movements |
| Topic 4 | Framework: The Third – and Forth - Wave. Postcolonialism, Intersectionality Cyberfeminism, Glocality |
| Topic 5 | Weaving: Knowledge, Theories and praxis |
| Topic 6 | Weaving: Body politics, Health and wellbeing |
| Topic 7 | Weaving: Human Rights and Human Security |
| Topic 8 | Weaving: Citizenship and State Building |
| Topic 9 | Weaving: Militarism and Religious Fundamentalism |
| Topic 10 | Weaving: Feminist Political Ecology |
| Topic 11 | Weaving: Digital Age Transformations and Future Trajectories |
| Topic 12 | Conclusions and final discussion |

Textbook and Materials

1) Rawwida Baksh and Wendy Harcourt (ed. by) *The Oxford Handbook of Transnational Feminist Movements*, Oxford University Press 2015

2) McLaren, M. (ed.by) *Decolonizing Feminism. Transnational Feminism and Globalization*, Rowman & Littlefield, London-New York, 2017 (Preface; Introduction)

2) Pilcher, J. and Whelehan, I. *Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Dehli, Singapore, Washington D.C., Melbourne, 2015 (only Terms discussed in classroom)

3) Spivak, G.C. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg's *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, 1988.

On line version is available at http://abahlali.org/files/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf

4) Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, *boundary 2*, Vol. 12, No. 3, On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism, 1984. pp. 333-358.

On line version is available at http://www2.kobeu.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPD%202015%20readings/IPD%202015_5/under-western-eyes.pdf

Further readings:

On Feminist and Women Philosophy:

Stone, Alison, *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007

Jaggar, Alison M. and Bordo, Susan R., *Gender, Body, Knowledge*, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 1997

Butler, Judith, *Undoing Gender*, New York/London: Routledge, 2004.

Braidotti, Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, Second Edition, Columbia University Press, New York, 2011.

On Post-Colonial and De-Colonial Feminist approach:

Trinh Thi Minh Ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Duke University Press Books, 2003.

Shiva, Vandana, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity*, Natraj Publishers, 2011

On Transnational Women's Movements:

Basu, Amrita, (ed.by) *Women's Movements in the Global Era. The Power of Local Feminisms*, (2003)..

Roces, Mina and Edwards, Luise (ed by) *Transnational Women's Movements in Asia*, Routledge, London-New York, 2010

Readings on other issues related to the Course, according to specific requirement, can be asked to the teacher.

Assessment

By the end of the course, students will:

- demonstrate an introductory understanding of the field of gender and women's studies, and utilize a range of interdisciplinary tools and methods.
- construct and enhance a critical understanding of intersectionality, including an awareness of gender and its complex intersections with other social, cultural, and biological categories, including but not limited to sex, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexuality, ability, and age.
- cultivate a language framework for thoughtfully articulating the critical vocabulary in the field of gender and women's studies.
- show an understanding of post-colonial and de-colonial theories and practices in the context of transnational women's movements.

Methods of evaluation for attending students: attendance 30%, active participation to the in-class discussions 30%, final exam 40%.

Methods of final exams for attending students There will be a final oral exam.

Attending students must be present at least to 80% of classes.

Non attending students will be evaluated only on the final examination.

Office hours

Monday afternoon, at the end of the lesson.

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NOTE: Erasmus or non-Global Governance students who would like to attend one or more courses and take one or more exams need to contact the Secretariat of Global Governance by e-mail global.governance@uniroma2.it for registration and inform the Professor of the course. They are required to sign a code of conduct like all Global Governance students, accepting all values and rules. Please read it carefully before enrolling.

Notice that attendance is required from the very first lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student.