



**Academic Year 2021-2022**  
**Syllabus**  
**Gender Flows**  
**Gender Based Violence and Self-Defence**  
**CFU 6**  
**Prof. Alessandra Chiricosta**

### **Course Description**

According to UN Agencies, Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It has been widely acknowledged that most gender-based violence is inflicted on women and girls, by men. However, to shift from the definition "violence against women" to "gender based violence" reflects the importance of not relying only on a binary, heteronormative understanding of "sex" and "gender", that has been acknowledged by many scholars as a form of violence per se. Existing gender norms often serve to maintain structural gender inequalities that shapes societies, cultures, politics and includes all types of violence against men, women, children, adolescents, gay, transgender people and gender non conforming.

In this Course, gender-based violence is therefore understood as structural violence, that is rooted in a conception of power as hierarchical, as a practice of domination that has to be constantly performed to assure the supremacy and the reality of egemonic identities.

It includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and psychological abuse, threats, coercion, and economic or educational deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life. Feminists political analysis suggests that the division between "the public" and "the private" has to be overcome to unveil the extent to which gender violence act on bodies and on relationships, as a form of foucoulidian "biopower". The personal is political.

Therefore, the Course will adopt an intersectional approach, according to which gendered violence is observed in its connections to unequal power relations based on race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, culture. Following the suggestion of Post-colonial and De-colonial scholars, it is here assumed that, to some extent, the relational model on which gender violence is shaped is at play also in the contest of colonial and neo-colonial relationships, in which other cultures and ethnicities are "feminized".

The final part of the course will analyze collective resistance to violence, as well as the social movement discourses (especially transnational feminists and transfeminists movements originating in the "Global South") surrounding these issues. In these contexts, new theorizations and practices of "self-defence" are displayed to tackle the problem of structural violence from an intersectional angle. Self-defence is intended not merely as a private response to physical assaults, but as a set of practices of self organization and self determination (which includes pedagogies, decision processes, non patriarchal ways of interactions, relations with the environment, and psico-physical trainings) based on non hierarchical principles.

## Teaching Method

The course will be articulated into two Sections: **Lectures** and **Lab**.

### Section 1: Lectures. (4 hours per week)

Each **Lecture** will provide a description of the Topic from an historical angle, 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 Gender and Women's Studies, Feminisms and Queer Theories.

### Section 2: Lab. (2 hours per week)

**Lab** is seen as a space of interaction and debate, in which students are asked to actively participate.

Specific readings and audio video materials will be analysed and proposed as themes of discussion. Attending students are requested to read the articles in advance.

## Schedule of Topics

Topic 1     **Lecture.** Gender, Power and Self Defense. An Introduction to: Feminist Studies, Gender Studies and Queer Studies.

**Lab.** Here I stand... and the Personal is Political

Topic 2     **Lecture:** Contrasting Gender Based Violence in International Institutions. Agencies, Conventions and Legal Instruments

**Lab.** The Beijing 1995 Indigenous Woman Declaration

Topic 3     **Lecture.** The construction of female's body inferiority. Isidore of Seville; Symbolic Violence – Pierre Bourdieu;

**Lab.** Gendered bodies and force

Topic 4     **Lecture.** Epistemic Violence, Colonialism and Postcolonialism– Gayatrik Spivak; Chandra Tapade Mohanty;

**Lab.** Intersectionality

Topic 5     **Lecture.** Gender as Violence – Maria Lugones. Caliban and the witch - Silvia Federici

**Lab.** Case Study: Ni Una Menos, Non Una di Meno

Topic 6     **Lecture..** Rearticulating Self Defence 1

**Lab..**Suffrajutzu, Wen Do and other feminist martial arts in "the west"

Topic 7     **Lecture.** Rearticulating Self Defence 2

**Lab.** Case studies: Gulabi Gang, YPJ Stars, Kung Fu nuns.

## **Textbook and Materials Books**

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

-AAVV *Knowledge and Know-how: the Role of Self-defence in the Prevention of Violence Against Women*. Study requested by Femm Committee - European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C - Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs.

Kang, M. *Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies*, University of Massachusetts - Amherst, 2012

## **Articles:**

Büşra Çınar, A Performative View of Gender Roles: Judith Butler. *International Journal of Media Culture and Literature* Year.1 Number.1 - 2015 (53-60)

Chambers, C "Masculine domination, radicalfeminism and change", *Feminist Theory*, SAGE Publications (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi) 2005, vol. 6(3): 325–346.

Dean, V. "Kurdish Female Fighters:the Western Depiction of YPJ Combatants in Rojava" in *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, 2019, 1:10.12893/gjcpi.2019.1.7

Dorlin, E. *What a Body can do*, <https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/what-a-body-can-do>

Isidore of Seville's *Ethimologies*: Terms "Man" "Woman"

Krais, B. "On Pierre Bourdieu's *Masculine Domination*", *Travail, genre et sociétés* 1999/1 (No 1)

Spivak, G. C. "Can the subaltern speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994

Talpade Mohanty, C. "Under Western Eyes" *Boundary 2*, Vol. 12, No. 3, On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism. (Spring - Autumn, 1984), pp. 333-358.

Talpade Mohanty, C. "Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." *Signs*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Winter 2003), University of Chicago Press, pp. 499-535

Thakkar, Shriya "Art in Everyday Resistance. A Case Study of the Pink Vigilantes of India" in *Junctions: Graduate Journal of the Humanities*, 2017, Vol 3(1): 8-17

## **Conventions:**

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women  
<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/cedaw.pdf>

Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action

[https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing\\_Declaration\\_and\\_Platform\\_for\\_Action.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/pdfs/Beijing_Declaration_and_Platform_for_Action.pdf)

Istanbul Convention.

<https://rm.coe.int/168046031c>

### **Further readings:**

#### On Feminist Philosophy and Gender Studies:

- 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.
- Haraway, Donna. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge, New York.
- Jaggar, Alison M. and Bordo, Susan R., *Gender, Body, Knowledge*, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 1997
- Stone, Alison, *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007

#### On Post-Colonial and De-Colonial Feminist approach:

- 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](http://www2.kobeu.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPD%202015%20readings/IPD%202015_5/under-western-eyes.pdf)
- Shiva, Vandana, *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity*, Natraj Publishers, 2011
- 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](http://abahlali.org/files/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf)
- 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.

### **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;
- understand multiple levels on which violence can shape gender;
- 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 contest of gender, women and queer studies and activism;

**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 written exam and a discussion.

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

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

### **Office hours**

Students can fix an appointment by writing to the email below

### **E-mail**

alessandra.chiricosta@gmail.com

**NOTE:** Since the course is provided for a limited number of students, **Erasmus students** who would like to attend this course and take this exam need to contact the Secretariat of Global Governance by e-mail [global.governance@uniroma2.it](mailto:global.governance@uniroma2.it) for registration.