

WS 439: Feminist Theory (Gender, Nation, and Empire)
Spring 2017

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30 – 1:00;
Thursday 2:45 – 3:15; or by appointment

Course Objectives:

Many forms of feminisms existed through participating in certain dominant discourses so that the issue, then, is not a search for a transparent or transcendent feminism but a need to examine the conditions of possibility of these feminisms... Rather than debate feminism's collusions or resistances, I argue that nationalism, imperialism, and colonial discourses shaped the contexts in which feminist subjects became possible. — Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel*

In this course, we will examine complex and problematic linkages among gender, race, nation, and empire. Currently, feminist post-colonial and global studies – a vibrant and expanding field of scholarship – is pressing for new interpretations and formulations of women, generating a body of work that casts critical light on women, feminism, modernity, militarism, racism, and imperialism. As scholars in the field point out, women's lives in the US need to be re-examined within the contexts of racism, nationalism, and imperialism which have significantly mediated the relations between white women and women of color, West and East, Self and Other, etc. We take these scholars' concerns seriously, and explore how racism, nationalism, and imperialism have provided the contexts from which Western and especially American women's and feminist discourses and practices have emerged. The class will provide students with opportunities to recast the questions of gender, power, and globalism and reconsider their involvement in social and international justice issues from critical transnational perspectives.

The course is designed for WS majors, certificate students, or those who have taken several upper-level women's studies courses and who are interested in deepening their understandings of gender studies.

Textbooks:

Please purchase the reading packet at MaPS, Castle Memorial Annex, College of Education, UHM.

For the location of MaPS, please see below:

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/crdg/curriculum-materials/maps/contact-us/>

Requirements:

Required Readings: You are expected to read all the assigned materials before you come to class.

Class Participation: Class attendance and participation in discussions is critical. I will take attendance every week, and it will be part of your final grade. While I lecture on background and related materials, it is expected that you raise questions, share your observations, and develop critical thinking. Missing 3 – 4 class periods will subtract 5 points from your class participation grade. Missing 5 – 7 class periods will result in forfeiting the entire 10 points of your class participation grade. If you miss 8 or more sessions,

you will fail this course. If you arrive late (by 15 minutes or more) or leave early (any time before a session is over), you forfeit class attendance for that day. If you miss a session for valid reasons (medical, familial, and others), please submit a written documentation in person within a week following your absence. Phone calls and email communications are not accepted for this purpose. For additional information regarding class room conduct, please see below. [10 points]

Exams: You will have two in-class exams during the semester. Each exam consists of true or false questions, multiple choice questions, and several essay questions. If you fail to take either or both of the exams, you will not pass this course. [50 points x 2 = 100 points]

Research Paper & Class Presentation: You are required to form a group and pursue a small-scale research project on issues related to this course. You will present your research findings in class (20 minutes) and write a 5 - 7 page report. Possible topics include:

- * nationalism, militarism, and imperialism in our everyday practice at home, in community, at school;
- * cultural constructions of American vs. “other” women in mass media, feminist discourses, academic writings (including textbooks and documentary films);
- * auto/biographies of women leaders, adventurers, explorers, etc., and their participation in the politics of race, nation, and empire;
- * feminists’ participation in and resistance against racism, nationalism, militarism, and imperialism;
- * minority or colonized women’s resistance against racism, nationalism, militarism, and imperialism;
- * post 9-11 nationalism and international military conflicts and gender politics within.

Your report should include the following information: (a) the overall question/theme of your group research; (b) the findings of your own research as well as others members’; (c) the relation between your group research and the course content; (d) any new analytical/theoretical insights derived from the research project. Your report is due on the day of your presentation. No late submission is accepted. If you fail to take part in group presentation or submit your report in time, you will not pass this course. [30 points]

Extra Credit Options: You can attend up to three public lectures or events on campus that are relevant to this course, and write a brief summary and commentary (no more than three pages; typed and double spaced; proof read; edited). Each summary/commentary will be due within a week of the event. You need to provide (a) the information concerning the title, date, location, and speaker(s) of the event, (b) a brief summary of the event, (c) and your reactions. You also need to discuss how the event relates to this course. If your summary/commentary is of a satisfactory nature, you will receive two points.

Classroom Conduct Policies:

In WS439, we strive to create a learning space in which we collectively engage with each other to pursue critical thinking and productive discussions. Toward that end, please keep in mind the following requirements:

a) Please approach the instructor and other members of the class with courtesy and respect. Your effort toward creating a learning environment that is professional, respectful, and productive is not only appreciated but considered essential. Please engage in the types of behaviors and interactions befitting a space of higher learning.

b) Please refrain from consuming food in class. It is distracting to the instructor and other students. Please also refrain from the kinds of activities that have no relation to learning.

c) Please refrain from any use of cellular phone or other electronic communication device in class. If you fail to comply with this requirement, you must leave and forfeit class attendance for that day.

d) You may use your computer to take notes, yet please limit your use to that purpose alone. If you fail to comply with this requirement, you must leave and forfeit class attendance for that day.

e) Please be punctual. If you arrive late (by 15 minutes or more) or leave early (any time before a session is over), you forfeit class attendance for that day. If you have valid reason(s) to arrive late or leave early, please communicate the reason(s) to the instructor in a timely, reasonable manner.

f) Please keep up with your reading and other assignments listed in the syllabus. Your active participation in class depends on your critical engagement with reading and other materials in advance. Please remember that your timely completion of assignments constitutes a key to your success in this class.

Final Grade:

Class participation	10 points
Exam 1	50 points
Exam 2	50 points
Research Presentation	10 points
Research Paper	20 points

Total	140 points

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1

January 10: Introduction

January 12: Introduction

Part 1: Categories of Analysis, Sites of Inquiry

Week 2

January 17: Gender and Feminism in the Global Context

- Cynthia Enloe “Carmen Miranda on My Mind: International Politics of the Banana” in *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, University of California Press, 2000.
- Assignment 1: Based on your reading of Enloe’s piece, identify one item that highlights the importance of women or gender in the international relations. What power dynamics does the item reveal about women/gender in international relations? Bring the item to the class. Be ready to present your observation and analysis

January 19: Gender and Feminism in the Global Context (cont'd)

- Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?: Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104/3, 2002.
- Film: "Under One Sky: Arab Women in North America Talk about the Hijab"

Week 3

January 24: Gender and Feminism in the Global Context (cont'd)

- Chandra Mohanty "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, eds., by Mohanty et al., Indiana University Press, 1991.
- Assignment 2: Please go to the website of the Arab American National Museum and read the sections titled "What is Orientalism?" Make sure that you watch the videos available in each section. <http://arabstereotypes.org/why-stereotypes/what-orientalism>
- Film: Excerpts from "Killing Us Softly 4"

January 26: Library Session

- Please come to Hamilton Library (Room 306) for a session on library use and resources. Please be there on time.

Week 4

January 31: The Myth of Civilization

- Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in US Women's History*, ed. by Ellen Dubois and Vicki Ruitz, Routledge, 1990.
- Assignment 2: Please review the film, "Pocahontas," on reserve at the Sinclair Library and respond to the questions listed in your handout.

February 2: The Myth of Civilization (cont'd)

- Jane Simonsen, "Object Lessons: Domesticity and Display in Native American Assimilation," *American Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 2002.
- Film: Excerpts from "Our Spirits Don't Speak English: Indian Boarding School"

Week 5

February 7: Race, Gender & Civilization 1

- Patricia Hill Collins “The Past is Ever Present: Recognizing the New Racism” in *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*, Routledge, 2005.
- William Black, “How Watermelons Became a Racist Trope,” *The Atlantic*, December 8, 2014.
- Film: “Ethnic Notions”

February 9: Race, Gender & Civilization 1 (cont’d)

- Angela Davis “Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist” in *Women, Race, Class*, Vintage Books, 1983.

Week 6

February 14: Race, Gender & Civilization 2

- Anne McClintock, “Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising,” in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Routledge, 1995.

February 16: Race, Gender & Civilization 2 (cont’d)

- Ann Fausto-Sterling, “Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of Hottentot Women in Europe, 1815 – 1817,” in *Deviant Bodies*, eds. by J. Terry and U. Urla, Indiana U. Press, 1996.
- Film: “The Life and Times of Sara Baartman”

Week 7

February 21: Race, Gender & Civilization 3

- Robert Rydell, “Introduction” and “The Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893” in *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876 – 1916*, The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

February 23: Race, Gender & Civilization 3 (cont’d)

- Reader: Abigail Markwyn, “Encountering ‘Woman’ on the Fairgrounds of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition,” in *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World’s Fairs*, eds. by T.J. Bousseau and Abigail Markwyn, Illinois University Press, 2010.
- Stacy Kamehiro, “Hawaii at the World’s Fairs, 1867 – 1913.” *World History Connected*, 8.3, 2011.
- Shannon Wanecki, “Global Village: Hawaii Meets World at the 1915 World’s Fair in San Francisco,” *Hana Hou!*, Vol. 19, No. 5, 2016.

Week 8

February 28: Catch up and Review

March 2: Exam 1

Part 2: Rethinking Feminism, Nation, and Empire

Week 9

March 7: Empire and “Women’s Emancipation”1

- Reader: Jane Haggis, “Gendering Colonialism or Colonising Gender?: Recent Women’s Studies Approach to White Women and the History of British Colonialism,” *Women’s Studies International Forum*. Vol. 13. 1990.

March 9: Empire and “Women’s Emancipation”1(cont’d)

- Reader: T.J. Boisseau, “‘They Called Me Bebe Bwana’: A Critical Cultural Study of an Imperial Feminist,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 21, 1995.

Week 10

March 14: Empire and “Women’s Emancipation” 2

- Reader: Kristin Hoganson, “‘As Badly Off as the Filipinos’: U.S. Women’s Suffragists and the Imperial Issue at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer), 2001.
- Film: “Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs, and Empire, 1898 - 1904”

March 16: Empire and “Women’s Emancipation” 2 (cont’d)

- Reader: Leila Rupp, “Challenging Imperialism in International Women’s Organizations, 1888 - 1945,” *National Women’s Studies Association Journal*, Vol. 8, 1996.

Week 11

March 21: Women and the Cold War

- Reader: Elaine Tyler May, “Explosive Issues: Sex, Women, and the Bomb” in *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Basic Books, 2008.
- Film: “Atomic Café”

March 23: Women and the Cold War (cont’d)

- Reader: Robert Jacobs, “The Atomic Kids: American Children vs the Bomb” in *The Dragon’s Tail: Americans Face the Atomic Age*, University of Massachusetts Press, 2010.

Week 12

March 28: Spring Break – No Class

March 30: Spring Break – No Class

Week 13

April 4: Women and the Cold War (cont'd)

- Reader: Robert Haddow, “Introduction,” and “Men's Gadgets, Women's Fashions, and the American Way of Life,” in *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s*, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

April 6: Women and the Cold War (cont'd)

- Laura McEnaney, “Raising Women’s Bomb Consciousness” in *Civil Defense Begins at Home: Militarization Meets Everyday Life in the Fifties*, Princeton University Press, 2000.

Week 14

April 11: Women and Feminism in the Post-Cold War World (cont'd)

- Reader: Purnima Bose, “A Cosmetic Cover for Occupation,” *Solidarity*, September – October 2009.
- Film: “The Beauty Academy of Kabul”

April 13: Women and Feminism in the Post-Cold War World (cont'd)

- Reader: Sonali Kolhatkar, “‘Saving’ Afghan Women.”
- Reader: “About RAWA.”
- Film: Excerpts from “Beyond the Frame: Alternative Perspectives on the War on Terrorism”

Week 15

April 18: Group Presentations

April 20: Group Presentations

Week 16:

April 25: Group Presentation

April 27: Group Presentations

Week 17

May 23: Summary and Review for Exam 2

Final Exam: TBA