

## Global Feminisms

### Course Description:

In a viral TED Talk titled “We Should All Be Feminists,” Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stated, “That word feminist is so heavy with baggage, negative baggage. You hate men, you hate bras, you hate African culture, that sort of thing.” Indeed, *feminism* is among the most fraught terms commonly in use both today and throughout its history. Moreover, as Adichie suggests, the contestations surrounding the meanings and values of feminism are only heightened when the term—and the social and cultural movements identified as feminist—cross borders. In this course, we will examine feminist perspectives from around the world in comparative frame. We will consider the ways that feminism has both shaped and been shaped by the cultures it encounters. And while we are unlikely to settle the meaning of *feminism* once and for all, we will come to appreciate the need for a transnational perspective in coming to an understanding of feminism and all of its “baggage.”

### Learning Outcomes:

Upon successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- identify and explain major concepts and debates in transnational feminisms
- use comparison—of cultures, languages, discourses, historical contexts, social positions, theories, genres, etc.—to aid in critical thinking
- research and write a critical analysis paper in comparative studies

### Course Requirements and Grading:

#### 1. *Participation and Preparation* 30%

Regular attendance and active participation in class are vital to success in the course. Participation takes the form of contributing to in-class discussions as well as completing written preparation assignments on Canvas. Students will be asked to summarize the reading or viewing assignment, then respond to a prompt requiring further thinking about the text or video.

#### 2. *Oral Presentation* 10%

Students will prepare a 5-7 minute presentation on an issue or debate relevant to feminism, gender, and/or sexuality, with a focus on how a transnational lens informs views on the chosen issue or debate.

#### 3. *Research and Writing Assignments* 30%

Approximately once per week, students will complete a short writing assignment that either a) applies writing and critical thinking skills learned in class, or b) demonstrates progress toward the final paper. For these assignments, polished writing is less important than evidence of critical engagement with materials and topics related to the course.

#### 4. Critical Analysis Paper 30%

The weekly writing assignments build toward a final paper of 2000-2500 words, which must reference at least five secondary sources. The topic can be anything related to global feminisms, but should employ comparison as a central component of its analysis.

#### Sample Course Materials

- Nancy Hewitt, “Re-Rooting American Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives on 1848”
- “The Story of King Shahriyar and His Vizier’s Daughter, Shahrazad”
- Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*
- Alice Walker, “Nineteen Fifty-five”
- Michelle Rowley, “The Idea of Ancestry: Of Feminist Genealogies and Many Other Things”
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”
- Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek”
- Elizabeth Martinez, “La Chicana”
- The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”
- Audre Lorde, “Poetry is not a luxury” and “Age, Race, Class, and Sex”
- Yi Yangji, “The Diver”
- Vrushali Patil, “From Patriarchy to Intersectionality”
- Amrita Basu, “Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women’s Movements”
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes” and ““Under Western Eyes’ Revisited”
- Emily Jungmin Yoon, various poems
- Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, “Let’s Tell This Story Properly”
- Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*
- Anand Gopal, “The Other Afghan Women”
- Film: *Persepolis*
- Leila Ahmed, “The Veil Debate—Again”
- Emi Koyama, “The Transfeminist Manifesto”
- Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter*
- Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*