

Transnational Feminism

(Sample Syllabus: Introductory/Intermediate)

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Office:

Office Hours:

Content Warning

Some of the topics and materials discussed in this course might be difficult for students from a variety of backgrounds. (These topics include but are not limited to: depiction and discussion of non-consensual sex and violence toward women; body image and appearance; body mutilation.) Detailed content warning will be given prior to relevant units/readings. If you have any concerns about any elements of the course, or if there is any way that we can together make things easier to bear, please contact me by email, by Zoom, or in person.

Textbook

There is no required textbook for this course; all readings will be made available on Sakai.

1. Course Description

In this course, we will explore how members of different cultural and national communities have theorized about feminism and organized feminist movements. Our readings will be predominantly written by women of color and drawn from interdisciplinary resources (e.g., sociology, economics, literature, media studies, cultural studies, women's and gender studies, and of course, philosophy).

Disclaimer. Despite its title, this course is not designed as a survey for “transnational feminism” as a theoretical framework/political movement. It does not track the historical development of transnational feminism, nor does it give equal attention to central topics in this movement. Instead, we will focus on looking at different experiences of women around the world, especially their experiences of being subject to oppressive systems and resisting those systems in the distinct sociopolitical, cultural, and historical contexts in which they are placed, as well as answering why it is important to shed light on these differences. We will also pay careful attention to understanding and not overgeneralizing the category of ‘women.’ In that regard, an alternative title for this course may be “women of color feminisms across the globe,” including Black, Latina, Asian, and postcolonial/decolonial feminisms.

2. Learning Objectives

This course has four learning objectives:

- You will examine key concepts, topics, and issues in global and transnational feminist scholarship; as a result, you will develop a critical awareness and a deeper understanding of

the distinct experiences of women around the world and their contribution to feminist and other social justice movements.

- You will learn the importance of interdisciplinary scholarship, and especially, the role of ‘theory’ in helping us understand our lives and enabling us to enhance them.
- You will practice key philosophical skills, including: identifying and critically evaluating different perspectives on a complicated issue, forming your own views based on such evaluation, and clearly communicating your views in writing and in speech with interlocutors who may have different or opposing opinions while engaging in respectful dialogue.
- You will reflect on how the topics that we have discussed in class relate to issues outside of the classroom (e.g., in your lives) and form your own reasoned views on those issues.

3. Commitment to Respect and Diversity

Together as a class, we are committed to creating a safe learning environment for everyone involved, irrespective of their ability, age, economic status, ethnicity, first language, gender expression and identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexuality. Personal offenses or discriminatory remarks toward others on any of these bases will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

During the semester, we will have *anonymous climate surveys* to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and respected during class discussions and lectures. If you have any concerns about the learning environment at any time during the semester, please do not hesitate to let me know.

4. Course Assignments and Assessment

The requirements for this course are as follows.

Due Date	Assignment	Percentage
Daily	Attendance & Participation	10%
Daily	Weekly Reading Responses	20%
TBD	Group Discussion Facilitation	10%
2/24 (Fri)	Paper I Outline (1 page)	5%
3/10 (Fri)	Paper I (3-4 pages)	10%
4/14 (Fri)	Paper II Outline (2 pages)	5%
5/1 (Mon)	Paper II (5-6 pages)	20%
5/8 (Mon)	Final Exam	20%

Attendance & Participation (10%)

You will meet this requirement in part by attending class regularly. But you will also need to regularly participate in discussions and in-class activities to get full points. There will be *alternative* ways of earning participation points; we will discuss a specific guideline for these assignments in class.

In the mid-semester, I will release an *estimate* of your participation grade—this does not count toward your overall grade and only serves to give you a sense of how you have been doing so far. If what you see is not the grade you expected or wanted, come talk to me and we will discuss the ways to boost your grade!

Weekly Reading Responses (20%)

Once a week, you will write a short reading response (1 double-spaced page \approx 250 words) to the assigned reading on that week. In your response, you will (1) summarize one of the main ideas, claims, or arguments in the reading, and (2) present a question or a comment about that idea, claim, or argument. You can choose whether to respond to Tuesday's reading or Thursday's. Your response is due at **11:59pm** the night before the class meeting.

There will be 13 weeks on which we will have new readings. I will drop your lowest 3 and count the remaining 10 toward your grade (so, each reading response will be worth 2% of your overall grade.)

How to submit: Include your response as an attachment and send it via Sakai message, with the subject line RR Last Name Date (e.g. RR Jang 1/10).

Make-up opportunity. You can make up for *one* missed reading response by writing a reflection paper on a film, a novel, or an article. The list of these materials will be updated during the semester.

Group Discussion Facilitation (10%)

Once a semester, you and your groupmates will lead discussion on the assigned reading. Your group will be in charge of: (i) coming up with a list of big group and small group discussion questions on that reading, (ii) facilitating big group discussion, and (iii) submitting a report of how it went. I will post a detailed guideline on Sakai. We will decide on the schedule on the first week.

Paper I and Paper II (15% and 25% *total* respectively)

For both paper assignments, you will first submit an outline for your paper (1 double-spaced page for Paper I; 2 double-spaced pages for Paper II). The outline itself is worth 5% of your overall grade. You will then submit a paper based on the feedback that you received on your outline. The Paper I (3-4 double-spaced pages) will be worth 10% of your overall grade; the Paper II (5-6 double-spaced pages) will be worth 20% of your overall grade. I will release a specific guideline for these assignments closer to the due dates.

In addition to submitting outlines, you are strongly encouraged to book *individual meetings* with me to discuss your paper ideas! I will not read your paper drafts (to preserve anonymity and fairness), but I can help you brainstorm, strengthen your argument, come up with an objection, and so on.

Final Exam (20%)

The exam will require you to answer *short answer questions* from Unit 1 through 6. All questions will come from the Exam Study Guide posted on Sakai. We will have a Unit Review Session after each unit and the Exam Review Session on the last day of classes. I will post a detailed guideline on how to prepare for and take this exam closer to the exam date.

5. Grading and Other Class Policies

Each assignment will be marked out of the number of percentage points that it contributes to your overall grade. This will give you a total score of 100, which I'll convert to your final letter grade:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
94	90	87	84	80	77	74	70	67	60	0-59

For paper assignments, I'll also give you a corresponding letter grade. We'll look at grading criteria closer to the due dates.

Anonymous Grading

I will grade the papers and the final exam *anonymously*. This means that you shouldn't put any identifying information on them, other than your PID number. Make sure to include your PID number *both* in the body of your paper *and* in the file name.

Late Policy

Each paper is due at **11:59pm** sharp on the dates indicated below.

Late days. You are given "three late days" that you can freely use on any of the paper assignments (not applicable to reading reactions. You can use all three days on a single assignment, or spread them out on several assignments. (For instance, you may turn in your Paper I three days late, or turn in your Paper I an hour late and your Paper II Outline two days late without getting a late penalty. Turning in an assignment an hour late will use up a whole late day.)

You don't have to tell me in advance, and I won't ask any questions! If you submit the paper late, I will simply deduct the day(s) from the remaining late days you have. *Once you have used up the late days, late papers will be docked a full letter grade (10%) for each calendar day (or part of a day) that they are late.* So, use the late days wisely!

Extension. You may earn an additional extension beyond the three late days given, if you make a reasonable request for an extension *at least 72 hours in advance* of the paper due date.

Page Limit Policy

Your paper assignments are subject to strict page limits. To standardize length, all submissions should be: 12pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. If you have nonstandard formatting, I will convert it to standard formatting to check for length.

I will dock a third of a letter grade for each third of a page you are over or under the required page range (excluding the reference list or bibliography).

Plagiarism and the Honor Code

You are expected to abide by UNC's Honor Code, and refrain from any kind of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. At UNC, plagiarism is defined as "deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise." This includes *unintentionally* stealing another person's work or failing to give credit to someone else's idea *by accident*.

Just as you are bound by the Honor Code not to plagiarize, I am bound by it to report suspected cases of academic dishonesty of any kind to the Honor Court. If you are ever in any doubt as to whether something constitutes plagiarism, check with me first!

6. Resources

Accommodations

If you need special accommodations for class assignments, please register with the Accessibility Resources & Service Office (<https://ars.unc.edu/>). Once I receive an official request from the ARS Office, I'd be happy to make the arrangements!

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS (<https://caps.unc.edu/>) is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, both for short-term and long-term needs.

Writing Center

To ensure the anonymous grading, I will not read the paper drafts. But you can always set up an appointment with one of the coaches at the UNC Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/>) to improve your paper at any stages of writing—from brainstorming to polishing a full draft.

Title IX Resources

Any students impacted by acts of discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and related retaliation are encouraged to report the incident and seek resources on campus or in the community.

Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Rebecca Gibson: rmgibson@unc.edu), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (reportandresponse@unc.edu), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential: caps@unc.edu), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (confidential: gvsc@unc.edu) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at <https://safe.unc.edu/>.

7. Reading Schedule (Subject to change)

1/10 Tue – Course Overview

Unit 1. Feminist Theory

1/12 Thu – Charlotte Bunch, “Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education” (1979) AND bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice” (1994)

1/17 Tue – bell hooks, “Feminism: Movement to End Sexist Oppression” in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984; reprint in 2014)

1/19 Thu – Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tool Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” and “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1984)

1/24 Tue – Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1976)

1/26 Thu – *Paper Writing Workshop*

Unit 2. Transnational Feminism

1/31 Tue – Kimberlé Crenshaw, excerpts from “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color” (1991)

2/2 Thu – Uma Narayan, excerpts from “Contesting Cultures: Westernization, Respect for Cultures, and Third-World Feminists” in *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminisms* (1997)

2/7 Tue – Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse” (1984)

2/9 Thu – Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Cartographies of Knowledge and Power: Transnational Feminism as Radical Praxis” (2010)

Unit 3. Epistemology

2/14 Tue – Miranda Fricker, Chapter 1 and 2 in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (2007)

2/16 Thu – Miranda Fricker, Chapter 8 in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (2007)

2/21 Tue – Patricia Hill Collins, “Black Feminist Epistemology” in *Black Feminist Thought* (1990)

- Recommended: Kristie Dotson, “Inheriting Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Epistemology* (2015)

2/23 Thu – Theresa Martínez, “Toward A Chicana Feminist Epistemological Standpoint: Theory at the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender” (1996)

2/24 Fri – **Paper I Outline due!**

Unit 4. Identity

2/28 Tue – Katharine Mitchell, “Transnational Subjects: Constituting the Cultural Citizen in the Era of Pacific Rim Capital” in *Ungrounded Empires : The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism* (1996)

3/2 Thu – Afsaneh Najmabadi, “Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?” (2006)

- Recommended: Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí, Chapter 4 in *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (1997)
- Recommended: Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, “Youruba’s Don’t Do Gender: a critical review of Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí’s *The Invention of Women*”

3/7 Tue – Gloria Anzaldúa, excerpts from *Borderlands: La Frontera* (1987)

- Recommended: Helen Vera, “Chicana Identity Construction: Pushing the Boundaries” (2005)

3/9 Thu – Ángela Ixkic Bastian Duarte, “From the Margins of Latin American Feminism: Indigenous and Lesbian Feminisms” (2012)

- Recommended: Sarah Hoagland, “Why Lesbian Ethics?” (1992)

3/10 Fri – **Paper I due!**

3/14 Tue and 3/16 Thu – *Spring break* (no class)

Unit 5. Women’s Bodies and Labor

3/21 Tue – Gabrielle Oliveira, “Ideals and Practices of Transnational Motherhood and Care” in *Motherhood across borders immigrants and their children in Mexico and New York* (2018)

3/23 Thu – Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, “Maid in L.A.” in *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence, with a New Preface* (2007)

3/28 Tue – Pei-Chia Lan, “Migrant women’s bodies as boundary markers: Reproductive crisis and sexual control in the ethnic frontiers of Taiwan.” (2008)

3/30 Thu – Megan Rivers-Moore, “Affective sex: Beauty, race and nation in the sex industry” (2013)

4/4 Tue – Alexander Edmonds and So Yeon Leem, “The racial politics of plastic surgery” (2021)

4/6 Thu – Vanessa Pérez-Rosario, “On Beauty and Protest” (2018)

Unit 6. Transnational Feminist Movements

4/11 Tue – Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” (2002)

4/13 Thu – Ratna Kapur, “Hecklers to Power? The Waning of Liberal Rights and Challenges to Feminism in India” (2012)

4/14 Fri – **Paper II Outline due!**

4/18 Tue – *Paper Writing Workshop 2*

4/20 Thu – Tomomi Yamaguchi, “Gender Free” Feminism in Japan: A Story of Mainstreaming and Backlash” (2014)

4/25 Tue – Amina Mama, “‘We will not be pacified’: From freedom fighters to feminists” (2020)

4/27 Thu – *Final Exam Review Session*

5/1 (Mon) – **Paper II due!**

5/8 Mon – **Final Exam!**