

SYLLABUS
FEMINIST THOUGHT FROM THE MAJORITY WORLD
INSTRUCTOR: Lilian Abou-Tabickh

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This second-year course centers on feminist thought and epistemologies that originate in the majority world or what is referred to as the global South as a correction to a longstanding marginalization. Focus on its historical context and current conditions requires feminist scholarship to engage with imperialism, colonialism, heteropatriarchy, nationalism and the state, capitalism and economic exploitation, land, the family, community and the Earth. Therefore, the course introduces Southern feminist scholarship not as case studies analyzed through Northern or minority-world conceptual frameworks but as abstract thought. In particular, the course begins with identifying and explaining the fundamental problem in the global knowledge economy in feminist research and teaching that continue to privilege Northern feminist theory. Following some scholarly views on the term “Global South”, the second part presents feminist scholarship that resist those imposed concepts and theories and offers original research agendas and conceptual frameworks. The class consists of lectures and discussions, active learning techniques, small table groupings, and individual presentations.

LEARNING GOALS:

This course will provide

- a critical view of Eurocentric feminist theories and the current arguments by Southern feminists on the global economy of knowledge and its impact on feminist thought and praxis
- an understanding of the different arguments that pertain to re-centering the practices and discourses that originate in the global South
- an overview of the challenges to universalized categories and an engagement with conceptual frameworks developed by marginalized scholars for the study of gender

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the course, students have

- acquired an understanding of current debates in feminist thought regarding the ways coloniality and imperialism structure knowledge, the one-way flow of theories and frameworks from the global North and their dominance in research and teaching globally
- also acquired an understanding of the limitations of universalized categories and of globalized theories that are based on specific historical experience
- acquired clarity regarding the relation between colonization, imperialism and racialized gender oppression
- engaged with decolonial feminism as a theoretical framework that enables understanding of the relations of oppression and the resources for liberation

- acquired knowledge of different analytical transformative tools that disrupt dominant logic in knowledge production, facilitate dialogues and move to democratic epistemology and world-centered solidarity-based approach to knowledge
- improved their ability to reflect on their beliefs, attitudes, and actions, and the ability to apply what they have learned in new situations
- enhanced their interpersonal skills and ability to work productively with others
- sharpened their ability to think analytically and critically and demonstrate creative and independent thinking

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT:

- **Class participation (25%):** The course requires active engagement with the texts and that you come prepared to class and ready to engage with the discussion and other activities.
- Students suggest essays they would like to discuss in class – Submissions due WEEK 5
- **Weekly responses (25%):** Submit ten responses to the week's readings. The responses should be one-page single-spaced that includes: the topic and summary of the author's argument including the reasons and evidence. You may also show connections between the readings of the same week and/or, to previous weeks. Then, state what you learned from them, and end with a question that arises out of the readings. Everyone is expected to read those responses before coming to class. Grading is on a scale from 1 to 10.
- **Response presentation (15%):** Students are required to present one of their responses in class and relate to their fellow students' responses. Length of the presentation and discussion is 15 minutes. Sign-up on WEEK 1.
- **Research paper proposal (5%):** Hand in half-a-page single-spaced outline of your plan for the final paper. Use assigned readings for the paper. Due WEEK 11.
- **Final paper (30%):** In pairs or groups of 3, write 7-8 pages, double-spaced, on a theme raised in the course. You may use external sources in addition to the assigned readings for the paper. Incorporate artistic elements that support your argument, such as original photos, videos, a local event, experience, or intervention ideas. Topic suggestions and group formation WEEK 3.

WEEK 1:

Introduction to the course content and overview of the syllabus

Connell, Raewyn. "Rethinking Gender from the South." *Feminist studies* 40, no. 3 (2014): 518-539

Munir Fasheh – Occupation of Knowledge

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0MVsjhTdSQ&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

WEEK 2:

Kanagasabai, Nithila. "Forever Fields: Studying Knowledge Practices in the Global North: a View from the Global South." *Gender and development* 31, no. 2-3 (2023): 399-416

Byrne, Deirdre C. & Imma, Z'étoile. "Why 'Southern Feminisms'?" *Agenda* 33, no. 3 (2019): 1-7

Assignment due: Weekly response 1
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEKS 3 & 4:

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London & New York: Zed Books; Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999.

- Chapter 1: Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory, pp. 19-41

Amin, Samir. *Eurocentrism*, translated by Russell Moore and James Memberz. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009.

- Chapter 3: *The Culture of Capitalism*, pp. 151-156, 165-188, 189-193

Assignment due: Weekly response 2
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 5:

Medina, Jose. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistance Imaginations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

- Chapter 1: Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, and Epistemic Friction, pp. 27-55

Assignment due: Weekly response 3
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 6:

You may choose one reading:

Lugones, Maria. "Methodological Notes Toward a Decolonial Feminism." In *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, edited by Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Eduardo Mendieta, 68– 86. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

Mansour, Asmaa. "Decolonizing Islamic Feminism: Zaynab Al-Ghazali's Spiritual Activism in Return of The Pharaoh." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 38, no., 1 (2022): 149–166.

Assignment due: Weekly response 4
Students suggest essays they would like to discuss in class on WEEK 8

WEEK 7:

Min, Dongchao. "Awakening Again: Travelling Feminism in China in the 1980s." *Women's Studies International Forum* 28, no. 4 (2005): 274–288.

Connell, Raewyn. "Meeting at the Edge of Fear: Theory on a World Scale." *Feminist Theory* 16, no. 1 (2015): 49–66.

Assignments due: Weekly response 5
Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 8:

Sheppard, Eric & Nagar, Richa. "From East-West to North-South." *Antipode* 36 no. 4 (2004): 557–563

Abdo, Nahla. "Imperialism, the State, and Ngos: Middle Eastern Contexts and Contestations." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 30, no. 2 (2010): 238–249.

Assignment due: Weekly response 6
Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 9:

Content suggested by students

WEEK 10:

You may choose one reading:

Arvin, Maile, Tuck, Eve, & Morrill, Angie. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (2013): 8–34.

Suzack, Cheryl and Huhndorf, Shari M. "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues." In *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, edited by Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanne Perreault and Jean Barman, 1-17. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010.

Assignment due: Weekly response 7
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 11:

Tlostanova, Madina, Thapar-Björkert, Suruchi, & Koobak, Redi. "Border Thinking and Disidentification: Postcolonial and Postsocialist Feminist Dialogues." *Feminist Theory* 17, no. 2 (2016): 211–228.

Gouws, Amanda. "Theorizing Feminism from the South: Knowledge Production through South Africa's Feminist Journal AGENDA." *Journal of international women's studies* 23, no. 2 (2022): 57-71

Assignment due: Weekly response 8
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 12:

Lorraine Bethel's. "What Chou Mean We, White Girl?" In *Conditions: Five, the Black Women's Issue*, co-edited by Lorraine Bethel and Barbara Smith, 86-92. Baltimore, Mariland: Alternate Press Index, 1979.

Jordan, June. "Where Is the Love?" In *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa, 174-76. San Francisco: Aunt Lute, [1980] 1990.

Lugones, Maria. "On the Logic of Pluralist Feminism." In *Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*, 167-192. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

Assignment due: Weekly response 9
 Response presentation and class discussion
 Final paper proposal

WEEK 13:

Banerjee, Pallavi and Connell, Raewyn. "Gender Theory as Southern Theory." In *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, edited by Barbara Risman, Carissa M. Froyum, and William J. Scarborough, 57-68. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018.

Agarwal, Bina. *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*. Cambridge England New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

- Ch. 1: Land Rights for Women: Making the Case, pp. 1-50 (**Optional**)

Assignment: Weekly response 10
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 14:

You may choose one reading:

Álvarez Villareal, Lina. “Rooted-South Feminisms: Disobedient Epistemologies and Transformative Politics.” *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 2023: 1-22.

Giraldo, Isis. 2016. “Coloniality at Work: Decolonial Critique and the Postfeminist Regime.” *Feminist Theory* 17, no. 2 (2016): 157–173.

Assignment: Weekly response 10
 Response presentation and class discussion

WEEK 15:

Alcoff, Linda Martín. “Decolonizing Feminist Theory: Latina Contributions to the Debate.” In *Theories of the Flesh: Latinx and Latin American Feminisms, Transformation, and Resistance*, edited by Andrea J. Pitts, Mariana Ortega, and José Medina, 11-28. Oxford: Oxford university Press, 2020.

Sivan, Eyal, director: Jaffa - The Orange's Clockwork

<https://www.eyalsivan.info/index.php?p=fichefilm&id=10#&panel1-4>

Assignment due: Weekly response 12
 Response presentation and class discussion

Concluding remarks