

GSWS 200: Transnational Feminisms. Fall 2019.**3 credits****M W 10:00 AM-11:15AM Location:****No prerequisites****Instructor: Prof Fawzia Afzal-Khan****Course Description:**

How has feminism – as a social movement – responded to globalization’s challenges? What are transnational feminist networks? Does the very concept of “global sisterhood” need to be critiqued? Where do “local” feminist movements (cultural, national, regional) fit within the frameworks of an increasingly global economy? What role have the United Nations or international non-governmental organizations played in challenging discriminatory laws and attitudes worldwide? What are some transnational feminist responses from around the world to conflict, war, religious fundamentalisms? To gender violence such as genital mutilation, acid attacks, sex trafficking, sweatshop labor, migration and other similar social issues? How should “western” feminisms approach gender, sexuality, class in “non-western” contexts? What might, reciprocally, be learned? Are LGBTQ rights linked to transnational feminist goals? What roles do hegemonic or hyper-masculinities and neoliberal capitalism play in maintaining inequalities and injustices against women (and underprivileged men)? Students will hone these and similar questions through multidisciplinary readings, film, and case studies for political debate.

Through class discussions and student-led “provocations” sparked by the assigned readings and films in the course, students will develop an understanding of the socioeconomic and political conditions that (re) produce inequality worldwide, and debate the role of transnational feminist movements in overcoming and uncovering systemic structures that perpetuate these inequalities.

Please Note:

- This syllabus is subject to change.
- If you have any disabilities I need to be made aware of, please do so right away.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense; MSU expects its students to adhere to the highest possible standards of scholarship and academic conduct. Students should be aware that engaging in behaviors that violate the standards of academic integrity will be subject to review and may face the imposition of penalties including failure and expulsion.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Explain the central concept and meaning of transnational feminist networks
- Critically examine in comparative ways the transition from a politics of hegemonic “global sisterhood” imposed by western nations, to a more egalitarian model of transnational networking in the global south.
- Critically evaluate and comment intelligently on successes and imitations of global organs of development such as the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations, on promoting women’s and human rights agendas worldwide, especially with reference to the global south.
- Develop an understanding and critical vocabulary for thinking and speaking about issues of gender and sexuality in varied cultural, national, and religious contexts impacted by colonial and neocolonial histories, and how these discourses are deployed in an era of neoliberal capitalism and neoimperial wars to achieve various ends. Students will learn to evaluate to what extent and in what ways transnational feminist theory and practice might serve as a cross-cultural endeavor for achieving justice in today’s world.

Methodologies:

This will be a discussion-based class, where assigned weekly readings and films will be analyzed and discussed collectively in class sessions. I will offer some initial comments and opening questions and then students are expected to respond to these and add their own questions and responses. Students will be put into pairs or small groups, which will be expected to lead class discussions for each unit, and provide Internet leads to enhance discussion and generate additional probing questions as appropriate.

Student learning is expected to take place via class participation, group provocations, journaling, and a final paper (**see endnote #1**)

Texts:

Note: Articles marked by an asterisk below are either available on our course site or you can find them in the library or on the net. The rest of our readings are selections from books also listed below that have been scanned and added to Canvas.

You are required to purchase ONLY ONE textbook, which is a novel:

Ozeki, Ruth. 1998. *My Year of Meats*. Viking Press. (ordered at bookstore)

The books from which you’ll be reading selected chapters are as follows:

Basu, Amrita, Ed. 2017. *Women’s Movements in the Global Era: the Power of Local Feminisms*. Boulder: Westview Press. (ordered for you at bookstore)

Hawkesworth, Mary. 2012. *Political Worlds of Women*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
(ordered for you at bookstore)

Chowdhury, Elora and Liz Philipose. 2016. Eds. *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism and Transnational Solidarity*. University of Illinois Press

Chowdhury, Elora. 2011. *Transnationalism Reversed: Women Organizing Against Gendered Violence in Bangladesh*. SUNY Press.

Riley, Robin Lee, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Minnie Bruce Pratt .2008. *Feminism and War: Confronting US Imperialism*. Zed Books

Ratti, Rakesh. 1993. *Lotus of Another Color*. Abe Books

Lee, Janet and Susan Shaw. 2010. *Women Worldwide: Transnational Feminist Perspectives on Women*. Mcgraw-Hill.

Robin Morgan. 1984. *Sisterhood Is Global*. Doubleday.

Angela Rose Miles, ed. 2013. *Women in a Globalizing World: Equality, Development, Peace and Diversity*. Inanna Publications. (ordered at bookstore)

Articles:

(articles marked with asterisk are indicated as readings I plan for us to discuss in class)

*Amar Wahab. "Homosexuality/Homophobia is un/African"?: Un/Mapping Transnational Discourses in the Context of Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill/Act. *Journal of Homosexuality*, October 2015

*Cyra Akila Choudhury . "Governance Feminism's Imperial Misadventure: Progress, International Law, and the Security of Afghan Women." In *Contesting Feminisms: Gender and Islam in Asia*. Ed. Huma Ahmed Ghosh, SUNY Press: 2015, pp. 227-250. (possible substitute for Zillah Eisenstein's article)

*Elora Chowdhury. "Locating Global Feminisms Elsewhere: Braiding US Women of Color and Transnational Feminisms." *Cultural Dynamics* 21.1 (2009): 51 -78.

*Radhika Coomaraswamy. "Are Women's Rights Universal?: Re-Engaging the Local." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, Volume 3, Number 1, 2002, pp. 1-18

*Fawzia Afzal-Khan. "The Heart of Darkness in Zero Dark Thirty." *Counterpunch.org* (2012).
<https://www.counterpunch.org/2012/12/14/the-heart-of-darkness-in-zero-dark-thirty>

_____ "The Politics of Pity and the Individual Heroine Syndrome- Mukhtaran Mai and Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan." *Performing Islam*, vol 4, issue no. 2 (2015), pp. 151-73 (possible reference article for final paper).

*Dina Siddiqui, "Do Bangladeshi Garment Workers Need Saving? Sisterhood in the Post-sweatshop era" *Feminist Review* No. 91, (2009), pp. 154-174

*Isabelle Gunning. "Female Genital Surgeries and Multicultural feminism: the ties that bind, the differences that distance." *Third World Legal Studies*, 1994–1995: 17–47.

*Joseph Massad, "ReOrienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World" *Public Culture*. Vol 14:2, 2002, pp. 361-85.

Films:

Babel (Mexico and USA) dir Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006

Zero Dark Thirty (USA) dir Kathryn Bigelow, 2012

Saving Face (Pakistan) dir. Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, 2012

Warrior Marks (Pratibha Parmar and Alice Walker, UK/USA), 1994

Orientalism (Sut Jhally; USA), 1998

Pray the Devil Back to Hell (dir. Gini Reticker Liberia), 2008

Jihad For Love (India, UK), 2007

Afghan Women: A History of Struggle dir. Kathleen Foster (USA; 2007)

Additional secondary materials to look up if interested:

<http://www.rawa.org/index.php>

On the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan

<http://www.shirkatgah.org/>

On Pakistan's leading Feminist Resource Center

<http://www.wluml.org/node/5408>

Women Living Under Muslim Laws

Assignments:

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED UNLESS APPROVED THROUGH PRIOR ARRANGEMENT.

Please also note our syllabus order/readings etc are subject to change at any time. YOU are expected to keep track of any changes that occur.

- **25% =Group Provocations** throughout the semester. These consist of members assigned to a group (or pairs)—to come prepared to the classes they are expected to lead discussions for (as indicated on syllabus), with discussion questions meant to provoke responses from their peers based on the assigned readings. Everyone in class is expected to participate and contribute equally to their groups. **Each one of you is expected to hand in** a 1 paragraph description of what ideas you came up with for your group’s activities, questions you contributed for the assigned readings, and list any internet articles or blogs or videos you came across and used in class that you felt deepened your understanding of the issues at hand.
- **30%= a portfolio of your weekly responses PLUS a short midterm.** I will collect these (in a nice, neat binder, properly labeled) **THRICE** during the semester (dates are indicated below). Your group provocation notes can be part of these. **BRING THE BINDER TO CLASS AND HAND IN TO ME SEP 26th, OCT 26th and DEC 12th. EACH WEEKLY ENTRY SHOULD BE DATED, AND SHOULD REFERENCE THE READINGS/FILMS FOR EACH WEEK AND RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS ON THESE IN ONE ENTRY PER WEEK WHICH SHOULD BE BETWEEN 1-2 pages double spaced. You should write out quotes that jump out at you from each reading, scenes or quotes from films, comment on these, ask your questions, connect the readings and films to each other, to what’s happening in the world, etc.** Think about what particularly sparked your interest in a reading or film and why, and how the term “transnational feminism” started to take shape/become clearer in your mind. **TOTAL MIN # of double-spaced pages expected by term end: 14-16**
- **30%=Final paper, 6-8 pp., double-spaced.** Your portfolio, if well and regularly kept, will help you write this paper. Works Cited page is additional, follow MLA format.¹
- **15%= Active class participation:** You must participate in class by speaking up/asking a question or offering a comment related to the assigned text, at least ONCE every session, and respond to ONE other classmate’s observation/comment/question in each class as well. This means EACH of you must offer TWO interventions during each class session.

TOTAL NUMBER OF WRITTEN PAGES SUBMITTED FOR THE TERM MUST NUMBER BETWEEN 22 and 25.

Class Rules:

- NO electronic devices in class to be visible—unless I ask you to use them to look up something, or unless you are using your laptop for a powerpoint during your provocation. Otherwise—take notes on a notepad using pen or pencil.
- No more than 3 unexcused absences are allowed during the term.
- Being continually late, popping in and out or nodding off in class will be grounds for admonishment and a poor final grade. Kindly visit the restroom prior to coming to class, shut off your mobile phones, and get a good night's rest!

SCHEDULE (Individual sessions are subject to change)

Week 1 Session 1 Wed Sep 4: Meet and Greet; Groups assigned. Powerpoint Lecture by Fawzia on Main Schools of Feminist Theory as Backdrop for understanding Transnational Feminisms

UNIT 1: Global vs Transnational Feminisms: Main debates, Policy Instruments: Group #1 starts leading discussions Week 2, session 2, till end of unit

Week 2 Session 1 Sep 9: Watch “Orientalism” in Class; discuss the “other” as backdrop to our concerns.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QYrAqrpshw> and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZiyXEF1Aas>

Week 2 Session 2 Sep 11: “Sisterhood is Global”—Introduction from *Sisterhood Is Global* by Robin Morgan. Available online.

<https://www.feminist.com/resources/artspeech/inter/sisterhood.htm>

Group #1 leads Discussion with prompt: “*Patriarchy is the same everywhere and the cause that unites women*” as backdrop to our concerns this term; the usefulness/ drawbacks of this analytic frame.

Directions for Group 1 for Sep 16 and the next two weeks (weeks 3 and 4): Prepare power points explaining and outlining pros and cons of the UN conferences on women’s rights, on the one hand, and the WSF (World Social Forum) on the other hand, as spaces for transnational feminist organizing, using the readings and links assigned for the rest of Unit 1 below; focus on raising questions that the class can consider moving into the readings assigned for this unit)

Week 3 session 1 Sep 16 : The UN as a global or transnational feminist instrument? Reading: PP 7-12 of *Women's Movements in the Global Era* ("Transnational Influences) ed. Amrita Basu (on the U.N Decade for Women; pros and cons)

Week 3 Session 2 Sep 18: Reading: "International and Transnational Political Activism" pp 249-278 in *Political Worlds of Women* by Mary Hawkesworth.

Week 4 Session 1 Sep 23: Group 1 Leads Discussion w powerpoint : Reading: "Activism and Advocacy in Comparative Perspective" pp 165-177 " in *Political Worlds of Women*. and "Building Solidarity through the World Social Forum" which can be accessed here:http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=520:building-global-solidarity-through-feminist-dialogues&catid=116&Itemid=452

Week 4 Session 2 Sep 25: No Class

Week 5 Session 1 Sep 30:

Sep 26: Based on Reading: No Class -- you will answer some short questions in writing in class; plus connect the article it to readings discussed thus far. You will upload these answers at the end of class onto course site. This will comprise your midterm evaluation, along with portfolio.

HAND IN PORTFOLIOS (1ST TIME) to TA

UNIT 2: Beyond the White Savior Complex. Group 2 Leads Discussion for this unit

Week 5 session 1 Oct 1: Reading, R. Coomaraswamy, "Are Women's Rights Universal?"

Watch Warrior Marks by Pratibha Parmar and Alice Walker on your own before next class

Week 5 session 2 Oct 3: Discuss film in context of Reading: "Female Genital Surgeries and Multicultural Feminism" by Isabelle Gunning as well as last week's reading "Are Women's Rights Universal?"—**Group 2: have a PP ready with questions about the film that refers to both readings**

Week 6 Session 1 Oct 8: In-Class viewing <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHw4HEzsysc> on Bangladesh Sweatshops. Q for Group 2 to focus on/develop: *is this reporting an eg of Transnational feminist analysis? If yes, how, if not, why not?*

Week 6 Session 2 Oct 10: Reading: Dina Siddiqui, "Do Bangladeshi Garment Workers Need Saving?" Q: *How does reading Dina's analyses alter the way you now view (or ask different questions) of TV reporting/films on Bangladesh garment industry disasters?* Look at student blog entry: <https://umdgenderandglobalization.wordpress.com/page/8/>

Week 7 Session 1 Oct 15: Doc film by Sharmeen Obaid, *Saving Face* paired with Ch I on Acid Violence and TFO (Transnational Feminist Organizations) in Elora Chowdhury's *Transnationalism Reversed*.

Week 7 Session 2 Oct 17: Reading: "Bridging the Divide in Feminism" by Yuanfang Dai in *Dissident Friendships: Feminism, Imperialism and Transnational Solidarity*.

Group 2 should be prepared to make concluding remarks with questions for further exploration.

WEEK 8 IS FALL BREAK

UNIT 3: Transnational Feminist Solidarity vs. Transnational Violence: Group 3 Leads discussion for this unit

Week 9 Session 1 Oct 29: Reading: "The Other Side of Globalization: Legal regulation of Cross-Border Movements" by R. Kapur (from *Women in a Globalizing World*.)

Week 9 Session 2 Oct 31: Come to class having watched *Babel* on your own time: we will discuss the film in light of week 8's articles. Provocation should focus on: expanding understanding of transnational feminisms as going beyond "women's issues" to link with violent nature of patriarchal capitalist world economic system; Trump's current policies on immigration etc. **Group 3 should have a powerpoint presentation that raises questions linking up the issues and articles and film (Babel) for class discussion**

HAND IN PORTFOLIOS-2nd Time

Week 10 Session 1 Nov 5: Start watching film *Zero Dark Thirty* in class; watch the remainder on your own before next class meeting

Week 10 Session 2 Nov 7: Reading: Fawzia's essay in *Counterpunch.org* <https://www.counterpunch.org/2012/12/14/the-heart-of-darkness-in-zero-dark-thirty>; From *Feminism and War*: "Decolonizing the Grammar of International Law" AND "Re Militarizing the Globe" by Zillah Eisenstein—Group #3 should combine points from these three essays to provoke discussion tying them to the film, *Zero Dark Thirty*

Week 11 Session 1 Nov 12: COME TO CLASS HAVING WATCHED THE DOCUMENTARY AFGHAN WOMEN: A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE (ON RESERVE)

Reading: From *Contesting Feminisms: Gender and Islam in Asia*, "Governance Feminism's Imperial Misadventure: Progress, International Law, and the Security of Afghan Women" by

Cyra Akila Choudhury (Group 3 discuss/show clips of RAWA and from the doc Afghan Women to enhance discussion)

Week 11 Session 2 Nov 14: Reading: *From Women's Movements in the Global Era*, "Pakistan's Women's Movement: Protests, Programming, and Revitalization" by Farida Shaheed. *I will try to get her on skype for part of this class to answer questions.*

Unit 4: Transnational Theory and Activism around Ecology and LGBTQ issues: Group 4 Leads till end term

Week 12 Session 1 Nov 19: Reading: From *Women in a Globalizing World*—"Alternatives and Resistance." pp. 511-539 And pp. 218-224, Helen Forsey, "GMO's: Globalizing Male Omnipotence"

Week 12 Session 2 Nov 21: *My Year of Meats* (1st half of novel) **Group 4: Start connecting up semester's readings with the novel**

Week 13 Session 1 Nov 26: *My Year of Meats*. (2nd half of novel); combine with clips from the doc: *Super Size Me* available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sgcc_ZZnAgM

Week 13 Session 2 Nov 28: In class search and collection of material by and on four transnational feminist speakers coming to us on Dec 5th; students agree on what to read in prep for their visit: EMAIL TO fAWZIA

Week 14 Session 1 Dec 3: Readings: Sharmeen Islam, "Toward a Global Network of Asian Lesbians" (pp 41-46 from *Lotus of Another Color*) and Joseph Massad, "ReOrienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World"

Week 14 Session 2 Dec 5: Panel session with transnational feminists here in class; Meet and Engage with: Nighat Said Khan, Uma Chakravorty, Bishnupriya Paul and Tiina Rosenberg.

EACH GROUP NOMINATES/SELECTS ONE PERSON TO REPRESENT THEIR GROUP TO INTERACT WITH AND ASK QUESTIONS OF OUR SPEAKERS

Week 15 Session 1 Dec 10: "Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill and Transnational Discourses" (n Resources on class site)

Week 15 Session 2 Dec 12: Concluding comments on orientalism and transnationalism with group 4 also bringing up questions on Pervez Sharma's film *Jihad for Love* and the BBC channel 4 doc, *How Gay Is Pakistan?* (available on netflix)--*which everyone is expected to have watched on their own prior to class*. Link to discussions of Islam, Massad and Wahab from previous sessions.

Final papers MUST be uploaded by Dec 14th morning 10 am and portfolios handed in during my office hour on the 12th. NO LATE PAPERS OR EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

TOPIC FOR FINAL PAPER:

What is a transnational feminist analytic frame? How has your understanding of the world deepened, what different types of questions have you begun to ask regarding women's rights and their connection to issues of global peace and war, "us" and "them", LGBTQ rights in a transnational frame, food justice etc, as a result of your increasing transnational awareness throughout this term/class? Answer this question by referring to as many different texts we've read/discussed as possible, and use your entries in your portfolios to draw connections between them. You MUST reference the novel **My Year of Meats** as a text that exemplifies transnational feminisms in some way that you've understood from our discussions.

6-8 pages total, double spaced. Works Cited Page is additional

Use the MLA format for in-text citations and Works Cited page. Here is a link:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>