

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS**  
WSTU 230.10-- CRN 34465  
Thursdays 6:10-8:00 pm  
Fall 2003  
Gelman 502

Professor Barbara Burton  
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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 2:00—3:30 pm

This is a graduate-level seminar intended for serious students. Through written texts and discussions we will explore women's organizing and feminist advocacy as it has occurred in various regions of the world, and as feminist interests and organizations have become globalized into a larger international force. Key questions we will study include: How do feminisms emerge? What specific issues have galvanized women across national and regional borders? What are the politics of generalizing cross-culturally about women's interests and/or feminist demands? What is the relationship between feminism and nationalism? globalized feminism and imperialism? How and when do the interests of first world women and third world women come together? And when do they conflict? How might this be theorized? What is the history of the globalized women's movement and how does it impact local women's movements, international development, and the politics of globalization? What role might feminist agendas play in addressing current global concerns? The course will combine multidisciplinary scholarship, applied research and advocacy, group presentations and an intensive individual research project to provide a comprehensive and critical overview of these issues.

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**BOOKS:**

- Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third World Feminism*, Routledge, 1997
- Jacqui Alexander, Jacqui and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, eds., *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*, Routledge 1997
- Bell, Beverly *Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance*, Cornell University Press, 2001
- Rachel Masika, ed., *Gender, Trafficking and Slavery*, Oxfam Press, 2002
- M. Waller and J. Rycenga, eds., *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War and Resistance*, Garland, 2001
- A required course pack of copied readings available for purchase

**Course objectives, policies and expectations:**

This is a graduate-level seminar intended to offer a productive and challenging forum for discussion of critical and difficult issues. In order to maintain engaged and high-level discussions, it is imperative that all students read the assigned material, prepare for and participate in class discussions and presentations and complete written assignments on time.

All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. See <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

*Religious observances:* If you will miss class because of a religious observance, please let me know in advance to make alternative arrangements.

*Late work and incompletes:* You are expected to complete all work by the assigned due date. Late work will be marked down. We are all working within complex and demanding schedules and it is not fair to give special exceptions unless you are in the midst of very extraordinary circumstances. Please plan and use your time carefully.

**Course Assignments** (see additional detail on each of these after the course schedule below)

*Class participation:* The seminar is small and class attendance is integral to your learning and to the functioning of the course itself. Engagement with each other and with class activities is key. In addition to attending class regularly and engaging thoughtfully in class discussion, you will be asked to evaluate the research presentations of your classmates.

*Short Synthesis paper:* You will be asked to write one short synthesis paper (4-6 pages) in which you will find a way to integrate and synthesize the key ideas, questions and positions taken among authors we read during the first four weeks of class.

*Briefing Teams:* You will be assigned to a small briefing team responsible for preparing a small briefing on the assigned readings and to lead class discussion twice during the semester. You will be evaluated for your demonstrated understanding of the assigned materials and the overall effectiveness of the presentation.

*Final Research Paper and Presentation:* A final research paper of 15-20 pages in length will be due at the end of the semester. A 15- minute oral presentation based upon your paper will be due during the last two weeks of class. You will be required to hand in a research paper proposal no later than October 30.

## **GRADING**

- I will be evaluating your class participation and briefing team presentations on a three-point scale – excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory.
- Your synthesis paper and final research paper and presentation will each be evaluated using traditional letter grades.

Your final course grades will be based upon

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| ◆ Class participation             | 10% |
| ◆ Short synthesis paper           | 20% |
| ◆ Briefing team presentations     | 20% |
| ◆ Research paper and presentation | 50% |

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1 – September 4: Introductions, housekeeping, course overview

2 - September 11 *How and when do feminisms emerge?*

READ: from Coursepack

- Gerda Lerner “Introduction” and “Conclusion” from *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 1993, pp. 3-20, 274-283, notes 284-5, 329-330
- Robin Morgan, “Introduction: Planetary Feminism: The Politics of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” and “Preface to the Feminist Press Edition”, from *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women’s Movement Anthology*, 1996
- Amrita Basu, “Introduction”, from *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women’s Movements in Global Perspective*, edited by Basu, 1995, Westview Press, pp. 1-21
- “I Ain’t The Right Kind of Feminist”, a poem by Cheryl L. West, in *Mohanty, Russo, Lourdes*

### *\*Briefing Group 1*

3 September 18 *What are the politics of generalizing cross-culturally about women’s interests and/or feminist demands?*

READ

- Chapters 1-3, in *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism*, by Uma Narayan pp. 1-118

from coursepack:

- Chapter Three: “Indian Suttie” from Mary Daly’s *GynEcology*, 1978, pp. 113-133
- “An Open Letter to Mary Daly”, Audre Lorde, 1979, in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, Moraga, Anzaldúa, pp. 94-97
- “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in Mohanty, et al, eds., 1991, pp. 51-80

### *\*Briefing Group 2*

4 September 25 *What is the relationship between feminism and nationalism?  
Or between globalized feminism and colonialism? How and why to theorize this?*

### SHORT SYNTHESIS PAPER DUE

READ from coursepack:

- “Subaltern Talk: An Interview with the Editors”, in Landry and MacLean, eds. *The Spivak Reader*, 1996, pp. 287-308
- “La consciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness” in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa, pp. 77-101

from Alexander and Mohanty:

- Geraldine Heng, “A Great Way to Fly” Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism”, pp 30-45

Online: <http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/Bahri/Spivak.html>

- contemporary interview: <http://www.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9707/msg00093.html>
- <http://www.kunstradio.at/FUTURE/DX/EVENTS/geert-spivak.html>

### *\*Briefing Group 3*

**5 October 2** *What is the story told by and about local feminisms and nationalisms in practice?*

READ from Alexander and Mohanty:

- Guerrero, “Civil Rights versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Land Struggles, pp. 101-124
- Vasanth Kannabiran and Kalpana Kannabiran, “Looking at Ourselves: The Women’s Movement in Hyderabad”, pp. 259-279
- Gloria Wekker, “One Finger Does Not Drink Okra Soup: Afro-Surinamese Women and Critical Agency, 330-352

From Waller and Rycenga:

- Siapno, “Gender, Nationalism and ...East Timor”, pp. 275-296
- Chatterjee, “A State of Work...”, pp. 419-436

**\*Briefing Group 4**

**6 October 9** *What does one nation’s history of women’s organizing show in relationship to these larger questions and to local concerns?*

READ

- Beverly Bell, *Walking on Fire: Haitian Women’s Stories of Survival and Resistance*

**\*Briefing Group 5**

**7 October 16** *Histories of a/the global movement*

READ from the coursepack:

- “Transforming Human Rights from a Feminist Perspective” by Charlotte Bunch, pp. 11-17
  - “Women’s Human Rights: The Emergence of a Movement” by Elisabeth Friedman, pp.81-35
  - “Women’s Rights and the United Nations” by Elissavet Stamatopoulou, pp. 36-50
- [all From J Peters and A Wolper, eds. *Women’s Rights/Human Rights*, Routledge 1995]

- “Introduction” “Opening Plenary” and “Regional Perspectives” pp. xxi-30

- “Address by Hilary Clinton”, pp 245-249 in

[all from Eva Friedlander, ed. *Look at the World Through Women’s Eyes: Plenary Speeches from the NGO Forum on Women, Beijing ’95*]

from Waller and Rycenga:

- Mertus 209-212

**\*Briefing Group 6**

**8 October 23** *What are the common issues that have both galvanized and divided women cross-culturally?*

**\* Briefing group 1**

***Violence against women***

READ from Alexander and Mohanty:

- Amina Mama, “Sheroes and Villains: Conceptualizing Colonial and Contemporary Violence...” pp. 46-62
- Anannya Bhattacharjee, “The Public/Private Mirage...” pp. 308-329

- Online: Population Reports: Ending Violence Against Women  
<http://www.jhucpp.org/pr/111edsum.stm>

from Waller and Rycenga:

- Davis, “Public Imprisonment and Private Violence...” 3-16
- Mrsevic, “The Opposite of War is Not Peace”, pp. 41-56
- Peach, “Is Violence Male? The Law, Gender and Violence”, 57-72
- Optional: [http://www.icrw.org/publications\\_violence.htm](http://www.icrw.org/publications_violence.htm)  
Volume 1, 3 and 4
- From Alexander and Mohanty, Alexander, “Erotic Autonomy...” pp. 63-100

**9      October      30    *War, militarism and the State***  
***\*Briefing group 2***

Read from Waller and Rycenga

- Nusair, “Women and Militarization in Israel...”, pp. 113-128
  - Sarraj, “Screaming in Silence”, pp. 17-22
  - Svirsky, “The Impact of Women in Black in Israel”, pp. 235-246
  - Ljubimir, 199-206 “The Passage”, 199-216
  - Kesic, “From Reverence to Rape...” 23-36
  - Mladjenovic and Hughes, “Feminist Resistance to War...”, pp. 247-274
  - Gould, “Ritual as Resistance”, pp. 213-234
  - Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, “Demilitarizing Security”, pp. 159-172
- \*Research Proposals Due\****

**10     November    6    *Sex tourism and trafficking in women and children***  
***\*Briefing Group 3***

- Liz Kelly, “From Rhetoric to Curiosity: Urgent Questions from the UK About Responses to Trafficking in Women”, *Asian Women*: Volume 13, Winter 2001. Pages 21-36.
- From Williams and Masika, ed.
  - Doezema, 20-28
  - Jordan, 28-37
  - Dottridge, 38-42
  - Herzfeld, 50-55
  - Pearson 56-59
  - Tzvetkova 60-68
  - Jana, et al, 69-79
  - Poudel and Smyth 80-86

From Waller and Rycenga:

- Sturdevant, “Who Benefits?”, pp. 141-158

OPTIONAL online:

- From the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)  
<http://www.catwinternational.org/>
- and the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW)  
<http://www.inet.co.th/org/gaatw/>
- Look at the Reports and strategies produced by the US State Department’s Office of Trafficking in Persons – <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>

- Responses by the International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
<http://www.iom.int/iomwebsite/Publication/ServletSearchPublication?event=detail&id=1694>
- The report and response to the State Department by Human Rights Watch  
<http://www.hrw.org/about/projects/traffcamp/intro.html>  
response to state dept: <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/06/powell-ltr.htm>
- You might also be interested (optionally) in the agenda of the International Labor Organization:  
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/publ/field/asia/mekong/index.htm>
- And various and sundry analyses of trafficking and extreme forms of sex tourism (e.g. the ‘Comfort Women’ of Asia)  
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/grhf/Sasia/ejournals/ejournalsframe.html>
- Militarism, Colonialism, and the Trafficking of Women: ‘Comfort Women’ Forced into Sexual Labor for Japanese Soldiers, by Watanabe Kazuko,  
<http://csf.colorado.edu/bcas/sample/comfdoc.htm>  
Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars,  
vol. 26, no. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1994
- Also from the Minnesota Center for Action against Violence and Abuse  
mincava  
<http://action.web.ca/home/catw/attach/CATW%20Comparative%20Study%202002.pdf>

**11 November 13 Reproductive rights, women’s health, female genital mutilation**  
**\*Reproductive Rights – Briefing Group 4**  
**\*FGM – Briefing Group 5**

Read documents/reports online:

from the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy

- Abortion Laws in the Post-Cairo World  
[http://www.crlp.org/pub\\_art\\_icpdab3.html](http://www.crlp.org/pub_art_icpdab3.html)
- Adolescent Reproductive Rights: Laws and Policies to Improve Their Health and Lives  
[http://www.crlp.org/pub\\_art\\_icpdadol2.html](http://www.crlp.org/pub_art_icpdadol2.html)
- ICPD+5: Gains for Women Despite Opposition  
[http://www.crlp.org/pub\\_art\\_icpd5.html](http://www.crlp.org/pub_art_icpd5.html)
- UNGASS on HIV/AIDS: Women’s Empowerment Embraced, Reproductive Rights Slighted December 2001  
[http://www.crlp.org/pub\\_articles.html](http://www.crlp.org/pub_articles.html)

a conference report and discussion between public health practitioners and human rights advocates around strategic links between women’s health and rights (organized by PATH)

- Reproductive Health, Gender and Human Rights: A Dialogue  
<http://www.path.org/resources/rh-gender-rights.htm>

OPTIONAL:

a special online issue on reproductive rights and population issues in South Asia

- re/productions3  
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/grhf/SAsia/ejournals/ejournalsframe.html>
- select a forum of choice to explore the health/race/gender politics at this Harvard School for Public Health site  
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/grhf/>

- for some examples of specific projects in place, see CHANGE (Center for Health and Gender Equity) at this URL  
<http://www.genderhealth.org/publications.php?TOPIC=RSC>

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

- Read: an overview from WHO (World Health Organization):  
<http://www.who.int/dsa/cat98/fgmbook.htm>  
Female Genital Mutilation: An Overview

Several projects in place or recently completed that sought to transform the practice/s in specific communities: (available at CEDPA – Center for Development and Population Activities)

- Breakthrough in Senegal: Ending FGC in Dakar  
[http://www.cedpa.org/publications/PROWID/AFRICA/empowering\\_senegal.pdf](http://www.cedpa.org/publications/PROWID/AFRICA/empowering_senegal.pdf)
- The Positive Deviance Approach in FGM Education in Egypt  
[http://www.cedpa.org/publications/PROWID/AFRICA/Egypt1\\_rib.pdf](http://www.cedpa.org/publications/PROWID/AFRICA/Egypt1_rib.pdf)
- Evaluation of the Women’s Health Program with Focus on the Elimination of FGM in the Gambia  
<http://www.cedpa.org/publications/PROWID/AFRICA/bafrow.pdf>
- Female Genital Cutting: Breaking the Silence, Enabling Change – A Synthesis Paper  
<http://www.cedpa.org/publications/pdf/fgcprowid.pdf>

## **12 November 20 *The role of transnational feminisms in international development and globalization***

### **\*Briefing Group 6**

Read from coursepack:

- Sonia E. Alvarez, “Latin American Feminisms ‘Go Global’: Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium”, in Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar, eds. *Culture of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements*, Westview Press 1998, pp. 293-324
- “Transnational Feminism: Reading Joan Scott in the Brazilian sertao” by Millie Thayer, *Ethnography*, Vol. 2: 2, June 2001, pp. 243-272
- “‘Strategic’ challenges to gender inequality: The South African Gender Commission”, by Gay W. Seidman, *Ethnography*, Vol. 2: 2, June 2001, pp. 219-241

*The post-9/11 American “war on terror”*

- Charles Hirschkind and Saba Mahmood, “Feminism, the Taliban and Politics of Counter-Insurgency”, *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 75:2, Spring 2002

OPTIONAL:

Read in Alexander and Mohanty:

- Honor Ford-Smith, “Ring Ding in a Tight Corner...”, pp. 213-258
- Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies, special issue on Feminist Critiques of Globalization, Fall 1996 (online IJGLS) <http://ijgls.indiana.edu/archive/04/01/>

## **THANKSGIVING**

- 13 December 4 Research Paper Presentations**
- 14 December 9 Possible make-up**

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE on DAY OF COURSE FINAL**

## **RESEARCH PROJECT**

### **15-20 page paper**

The object of this project is for you to develop expertise in either one region or one subject area pertinent to transnational feminist advocacy. Choose an area (a place or a topic) that you would like to explore in depth and that you would like to combine scholarly, professional and political resources to understand. It is important that you find ways to support your writing with reference to arguments and texts used in class and that you ground your writing with research and activism based in the regions you study. Examples you might consider include:

- Examine women's/feminist movement(s) in one region. Consider the history of activism and women's consciousness in that region, the relationship with the state, particular issues that have galvanized women, impact of the movement, relationship of the movement to global movements, lessons that can be learned and shared, possible contribution to larger global issues
- Examine one transnational feminist concern cross-regionally. Consider how different regions, movements and/or institutions have attempted to address a given issue or problem.
- Write a position paper advocating for or against the value and significance of globalizing feminism. Consider theoretical arguments to support your position, the relationship between contemporary feminisms and various feminist histories, the role of the state, the ideal forum for feminisms (practically and politically), and/or the possible impact of your position on particular current concerns (such as economic globalization, international militarism, human rights and democracy, nationalism etc.)

I would like to see a 1-2 page research proposal on **October 30**. Briefly describe your chosen topic, outline how you plan to examine it, and what resources you plan to draw from.

You will have an opportunity to make a 15-minute oral presentation based upon your research to the class at the end of the semester. Your classmates will offer constructive criticism at this time to help you with your final paper.

Presentations due: **December 4 and possibly December 9**

Final Paper due: The day of the course final

*50% of course grade*

## **BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION TEAMS**

The class will be divided into 6 teams of 2 or 3. Each team will be responsible for preparing and leading a briefing and discussion on one class day, of no more than an hour's length.

The briefing team is responsible for reading the assigned material thoroughly, preparing a collaboratively written briefing or overview of it to circulate to the class (no more than 3 pages total), and leading a discussion on key ideas or thoughts that spin from it. It is also possible to supplement this presentation with additional materials or hand-outs, and creative spins, poems or performances on ideas or themes generated.

At minimum, the briefing/presentation needs to respond to the following:

- What are the most significant terms, ideas and arguments to be found in the assigned reading? Find definitions of terms as used by the author, concisely present the main argument or purpose of the article, chapter or book
- How does the author support the argument or idea developed? (With what research or theoretical grounding?)
- What is the significance of this reading for the study of global feminisms? That is, what contribution does it appear to make and/or purport to make to the larger field or subject area?
- What is the relationship between this particular reading and the class discussions and readings so far?

You may want to read reviews, or other articles which describe or summarize the author's work in order to prepare your briefing. If you do so, please be sure and cite these. It is your responsibility and choice as to how you want to organize your division of labor within the team. However, you shall be evaluated by the substance of your participation in terms of how comfortable you seemed to be with the material, how effective the briefing/presentation/discussion was for the class, any new or important insights you offered, and overall comprehension of material.

*20% of your final grade*

**SHORT SYNTHESIS PAPER 4-6 pages**  
**Due September 25**

Write a paper that synthesizes the key ideas and positions outlined in the first four weeks of class. In order to do this, you may decide to identify one or two ways of uniting the material together under one theme or question, and then make the case for how the material shares a common perspective, or how each author differs and why. You may also offer a critical analysis of the material based on additional questions or positions you have taken. The paper will be evaluated according to how well you appear to understand the material, the analysis you offer, and how clearly and effectively you communicate your ideas.

*20% of course grade*