

WMNS 401 GLOBAL FEMINISMS

Spring 2011, Blended Online Course

Wednesday, 3:30-6:10pm, CHM 195

Professor Anna Mansson McGinty

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: Bolton 478 (Geography)

Office hours: MW 11:00-12:00 or by appointment, in Bolton 478

Email: mansson@uwm.edu (available daily until 6pm)

Phone: 414-229-2650

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE

This course explores different expressions of feminist understanding and women's activism and movements around the world. Rather than offering a brief overview of several countries, the class focuses on some particular contexts in order to obtain a more in-depth view of how women's lives, actions, and feminist understandings relate to specific cultural, political, and social conditions.

We begin with the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. We will study the salient document "Platform for Action" formulated during the conference and its significance for thinking about women's rights as human rights as well as the serious tensions between various positions on women's rights. The course moves then on to the debate on universalism and cultural relativism. Are human rights universal or do we have to take culture and difference into consideration? Thereafter, the class gets to the more theoretical part of the semester. We will examine different feminist perspectives and theoretical texts regarding "Western" and "Third World"/Postcolonial Feminisms and how they relate to each other. This exploration brings about crucial questions such as: What is global about feminism? Can we talk about feminism and "sisterhood" in global terms? In which ways do "Third World" feminists critic "Western" feminist discourse? Does feminism mean different things for different women? After this theoretically oriented discussion we will look on a few specific countries and regions -- Sub-Saharan Africa (Zimbabwe), Latin America (El Salvador), and a few Muslim countries. We will learn about women's everyday life and struggle not only through academic texts, but also through novels, testimonials, personal accounts, and documentaries. Throughout the class the issue of women's lives as well as their activism and "feminism" are investigated in relation to broader social and political interlocking systems such as imperialism, colonialism, and globalization.

The main objective of the course is to expose the students to a broad range of feminist thought and action. It urges the students to examine their own position and have an open mind to the different ways women across the world relate to gender relations and the social and cultural conditions within which they live.

BLENDDED ONLINE CLASS

This is a blended online class. In this particular case it means that about half of the class follows traditional format of F2F class time, while the other half is conducted online. Therefore, the class meets only once every other week from 3:30-6:10 pm. The week when we don't meet you will engage in course readings and post assignments and responses on the D2L website of the course.

For some of you, this may be your first online class. Don't be nervous! This is the first time I teach parts of my class online. We are in this together! The course outline is planned in a fashion to facilitate the learning process for you. If you do have any concerns or questions regarding assignments or other things, please don't hesitate to contact me (email, office hours, or office phone).

If you have technological problems with your login (e.g., you forgot your password, or if you just can't get on) or if you run into any other typical Desire2Learn difficulties, help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may do one of the following:

- Send an email to **help@uwm.edu**
- Pick up a phone and call 414.229.4040 if you are in Metro Milwaukee (or just 4040 on a UWM campus phone)
- Go to Bolton 225 (this lab is not open all day or on weekends – check for specific hours)
- Go to EMS E173A (this is a 24/7 lab)
- If you are calling from off campus but within Wisconsin or within the USA, call 1.877.381.3459.

Navigating D2L

Where to find what

Since this is a blended online class I expect you to visit D2L regularly. D2L is pretty straightforward. Under **Course Home** you can find my announcements for the class and other news. Please, make sure to check this regularly!

Under **Content** you can find the syllabus and other important information pertaining to the class, such as policies and guidelines. Here you can also find the eight online modules assignments.

It is in the **Dropbox** and/or **Discussions** that you will post your assignment and responses (see the instructions for each assignment). Make sure to post them in the right Category of assignment (for example, "Module 1 assignment").

In **Grades** you can find the grade you have received for completed assignments.

COURSE GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance and participation (16%)

As an upper-division course each student's attendance and participation in discussion are salient. Needless to say, since the course only meets seven times during the semester I expect you to attend all of the classes. More than one absence will result in a lowered grade. That is, if you miss more than one class, your attendance grade will be downgraded by one point/missed class (for example from A to A-, from A- to B+, from B+ to B etc.).

Online assignments and activities: 35% (5% each)

There are seven online class assignments and activities (Module assignments 1-7). Each of these constitutes 5 % of your online activity grade.

Research project: total 45% (abstract 5%, first version 15% last version 20%, oral presentation 5%)

You should start to think about the topic of your individual research project early on in the semester. The purpose of this project is for you to research and gain in-depth knowledge on a specific subject related to global feminisms that interests you in particular. You can choose to focus on a particular feminist issue with global consequences, a feminist activist, a women's rights activist, an organization, or a women's movement. It is important that you are able to relate your paper to the readings of the class and to find sources outside class materials. Contact me early on in the semester if you need some guidance or have any questions.

To make sure you work on your research paper throughout the semester, you have to submit a draft (your work in progress) once before the final version. This will allow you to get comments and feedback from me throughout the research process. By **February 23**, I want a written abstract describing your project (5% of your grade). In the abstract you have to state a clear purpose, a few research questions that you are interested in exploring, and how your topic ties to the class broadly. You should also include a couple of sources that would benefit your project. By **March 30**, you have to submit your work in progress, at least 4 pages long (not including the bibliography). This draft submission constitutes 15% of your grade. In our last f2f meeting, **May 11**, you will give an oral presentation of your project, which constitutes 5% of your grade. **The final paper, which should be at least 8 pages, is due May 16 and is worth 20% of your grade.**

Again, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have problems choosing a topic, need reading suggestions, or have any other problems related to the paper! It is important that you get an early start. Submit your paper versions on time!!! You know the deadlines ahead of time, so plan your research accordingly. Late abstract and paper versions will be penalized and downgraded by one point/day (for example from A to A-, from A- to B+, from B+ to B etc.).

Intro and exit assignments: 4% (1% each)

During the semester I will hand out four “exit assignments.” These questionnaires ask for information such as what you have learned and what is still unclear to you. These should only take a few minutes to fill out.

GRADES AND ASSESSMENT

Your online assignments and responses as well as research paper will be graded on:

- the complexity, strength, originality, and clarity of your ideas;
- how well you substantiate your claims with carefully selected evidence;
- the skills and interest with which you approach the issues you address;
- the general competence of your writing

A/A- Your work demonstrates very thoughtful, sustained engagement with the ideas articulated in the articles, previous readings, and the issues under discussion. Your response is insightful, strong, convincing, well-argued, and your writing is free of technical errors (i.e., free of syntax, punctuation, and grammatical errors).

B/B- Your work demonstrates that you are relatively engaged with the readings and that you are tempting to think about and respond critically (i.e. thoughtfully and analytically) to what you have read. Your work is relatively coherent and your writing is relatively free of technical errors (i.e., relatively free of syntax, punctuation, and grammatical errors).

C/C- Your work is adequate, but not exceptional in any way. Your work may be relatively coherent but lacks a critical (i.e., thoughtful and analytical) component. Your writing contains several technical errors.

D/D- You submitted work, but it’s too short to develop ideas, or way off the point, or technically so sloppy as to interfere with my ability to understand what you have to say.

F You failed to submit the required work.

Grade distribution

A (100-95%)	B- (80-83%)	D+ (67-69%)
A- (90-94%)	C+ (77-79%)	D (64-66%)
B+ (87-89%)	C (74-76%)	D- (60-63%)
B (84-86%)	C- (70-73%)	F (<60%)

POLICIES AND POSTING ASSIGNMENTS ONLINE

A major portion of your grade will be determined by the extent you participate in the online activities and the quality of your participation (40% of final grade). The weeks when we don't meet face-to-face, your assignments and activities online are the only way for you to demonstrate to me that you are keeping up with the assigned readings and that you comprehend what you're reading! In other words, your posted assignments and responses online are salient!

The class meets only once every other week. The weeks in-between our f2f lecture times you should post an assignment that reflects that you have read and reflected upon the readings. These online module assignments are posted weeks ahead of time, and since you have no other class obligations for this class other than posting your assignment at the latest on Friday by midnight during these "online weeks" there are NO excuses for late work. **That is, I won't accept any late online assignments.** So if you fail to post your assignment by midnight on the due date you will receive an F for that assignment. The ONLY exception is emergency situation for which I need an official note such as a doctor's note.

How to post assignments and responses to D2L:

Most of the eight online module assignments should be posted in the **Dropbox**. Click on **Dropbox** and on the appropriate module category for the assignment. Click on **Add a File** and attach your file, a word document, from your computer (please use a word document!) and then click **Upload**.

A couple of assignments ask you to post your responses to the Discussion forum. Click on **Discussions** and then the appropriate Forum and Discussion and post your response. Here you can either attach your word file or "copy and paste" your text into the message board. For December 1, when you are supposed to post your second draft of your paper, please attach it as a word file in the discussion forum.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Misconduct

Make sure you properly cite all sources used in a written assignment. **Plagiarism** is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be prosecuted in accordance with university policies and procedures as set out in UWS Chapter 14 and UWM Faculty Document #1686. The standard penalty for plagiarism in this course will be a failing grade in the course and a written report to be placed in your file.

Disability Information

If you will need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, you should also contact the Student Accessibility Center at 229-6287.

Accommodation for Religious Observances

Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance.

For further information on university policies, refer to

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>

READINGS

Textbooks (available at People's Books Cooperative with two exceptions):

Dangarembga, Tsitsi. 1989. *Nervous Conditions*. New York: Seal Press.

(Price: Co-op: 12.60, Used: 10.50 ****Note**** This title has been put permanently out of stock by the publisher/supplier and will only be available through the store's used book supplier (and only as long as they have stock)).

Narayan, Uma. 1997. *Dislocating Cultures. Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism*. New York & London: Routledge Press. (Price: Co-op: 35.10)

Tula, Maria Teresa. 1994. *Hear My Testimony: Maria Teresa Tula, Human Rights Activist of El Salvador* (edited and translated by Lynn Stephen). Boston: South End Press. **BUY ONLINE!!**

Warnock Fernea, Elizabeth. 1998. *In Search of Islamic Feminism. One Woman's Global Journey*. (Price: Co-op: 14.36, Used: 11.96)

Articles (to be found on e-reserve)*:

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. "Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others." *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), 783-790.

Ahmadu, Fuambai. 2007. "Ain't I a Woman Too?": Challenging Myths of Sexual Dysfunction in Circumcised Women. Pp. 278-310 In Ylva Hernlund and Bettina Shell-Duncan (eds.) *Transcultural Bodies: Female Genital Cutting in Global Context*.

Alvarez, Sonia. 1998. "Latin American Feminisms go Global: Trends of the 1990s and Challenges for the New Millennium." In *Cultures of Politics, Politics of Cultures*, Sonia Alvarez, 293-324. Boulder: Westview Press.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1990. "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness" In *Making Face, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Badran, Margot. 2000. "Competing Agenda. Feminist, Islam, and the state in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Egypt" In Bonnie Smith, ed. *Global Feminisms Since 1945*. London & New York: Routledge.

Bayes, Jane H. & Tohidi, Nayereh eds. 2001. *Globalization, Gender, and Religion. The Politics of Women's*

Rights in Catholic and Muslim Contexts. New York: Palgrave. (Chapter 1/Introduction and Chapter 2)

Brems, Eva. 1997. "Enemies or Allies? Feminism and Cultural Relativism as Dissident Voices in Human Rights Discourse." *Human Rights Quarterly* 19.1: 136-164.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2002. *Black Feminist Thought. Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge. (Chapter 1 and 2)

Combahee River Collective. 1982. A Black Feminist Statement. In Hall, Scott, and Smith eds., *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave. Black Women's Studies*. Feminist Press.

Falah, Ghazi-Walid. 2005. "The Visual Representation of Muslim/Arab Women in Daily Newspapers in the United States" In *Geographies of Muslim Women: Gender, Religion, and Space*. The Guilford Press: New York.

Kaplan, Temma. 2001. "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Women as Agents of Social Change" In Marjorie, ed. *Women, Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Mansson McGinty, Anna. 2007. Formation of alternative femininities through Islam: Feminist approaches among Muslim converts in Sweden. *Women's Studies International Forum* Vol. 30/6 pp 474-485.

Menchu Tum, Rigoberta. 1984. *I, Rigoberta Menchú. An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. (Edited and introduced by Elisabeth Burgos-Debray.) New York and London: Verso. (Introduction, Ch. I, Chapter XXIII, XXIV, XXVII, XXX, XXXIV)

Merry, Sally E. 2003. Human Rights Law and the Demonization of Culture (And Anthropology Along the Way), *Polar: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1, pp. 55-77.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In *Feminism Without Borders*, Chandra Mohanty, pp. 17-42. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mohanty, Chandra. 2003. "Sisterhood, Coalition, and the Politics of Experience." In *Feminism Without Borders*, Chandra Mohanty, pp. 106-23. Durham: Duke University Press.

Moranga, Cherrie L. and Gloria E. Anzaldúa. 1983. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*. New York: Women of Color Press. (Chapters: "Speaking in Tongues" pp. 183-193, "La Prieta" pp. 220-233).

Oyewùmí, Oyèrónké. 2003. Introduction: Feminism, Sisterhood, and *Other* Foreign Relations. In *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. Africa World Press.

Rupp, Leila J. 1996. "Challenging Imperialism in International Women's Organizations, 1888-1945." *NWSA* 8:1.

Sugnet, Charles. 1997. "Nervous Conditions. Dangarembga's feminist reinvention of Fanon." In *Obioma*

Nnaemeka, ed. *The Politics of (M)othering: Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*. London: Routledge.

Wilson, Ara. 1996. "Lesbian Visibility and Sexual Rights at Beijing," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 22(1):214-218.

COURSE OUTLINE

<p>WEEK 1, LECTURE</p> <p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL FEMINISM</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: January 26</u></p> <p>READINGS: Leila Rupp, Temma Kaplan</p> <p>Documentary: <i>Beyond Beijing</i></p>
<p>WEEK 2</p> <p>ONLINE</p> <p>UN FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN GENDER AND RELIGION</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: Jane Bayes and Nayereh Tohidi, Ara Wilson</p> <p>Read also online the UN Platform for Action formulated at the UN Conference in Beijing, http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#concern</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT ONE: See Module One, Due Wednesday, February 2</p>
<p>WEEK 3, LECTURE</p> <p>FEMINISM AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: February 9</u></p> <p>READINGS: Eva Brems,* Sally Engle Merry* VIDEO: parts of <i>Warrior Marks</i></p> <p><i>In class we will discuss last week's assignment and the UN Platform for Action in the context of cultural relativism. How are universal human rights and "culture" problematized by the readings for today?</i></p>
<p>WEEK 4</p> <p>ONLINE</p> <p>UNIVERSALISM VS. CULTURAL RELATIVISM</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: Fuambai Ahmadu* and UNICEF article</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT TWO: See Module Two, Due Wednesday, February 16</p>
<p>WEEK 5, LECTURE</p> <p>"THIRLD WORLD"/ POSTCOLONIAL FEMINISMS</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: February 23</u></p> <p><u>IMPORTANT! Submit a typed abstract of your research project in class!</u></p> <p>READINGS: Chandra T. Mohanty, Uma Narayan (Chapter 1 and 2)</p> <p>Documentary: <i>Prostitutes of God</i></p>

<p>WEEK 6</p> <p>ONLINE “WOMEN OF COLOR”</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: Gloria Anzaldúa* (excerpts from <i>Making Face, Making Soul: Hacienda Caras and This Bridge Called My Back</i>), Patricia Hill Collins,* The Combahee River Collective*</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT THREE: Module Three, Due on Wednesday, March 2</p>
<p>WEEK 7, LECTURE</p> <p>AFRICAN WOMEN, COLONIALISM, AND FEMINISM</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: March 9</u></p> <p>READINGS: Oyèrónké Oyewùmí,* <i>Nervous Conditions</i>, Ch. 1-4</p>
<p>WEEK 8</p> <p>ONLINE “NERVOUS CONDITIONS” COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: <i>Nervous Conditions</i>, Ch. 5-10, Charles Sugnet*</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Module Four, Due Wednesday, March 16</p>
<p>WEEK 9</p>	<p><u>SPRING BREAK</u></p>
<p>WEEK 10, LECTURE</p> <p>EL SALVADOR, SOUTH AMERICA</p> <p>WOMEN’S STRUGGLE AGAINST AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: March 30</u></p> <p><u>SUBMIT A FIRST VERSION OF YOUR RESEARCH PAPER (AT LEAST 4 PAGES) IN CLASS</u></p> <p>READINGS: <i>Hear My Testimony</i>, Ch. 1-6</p> <p>Documentary: <i>Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza De Mayo</i></p>
<p>WEEK 11</p> <p>ONLINE “HEAR MY TESTIMONY” THE POWER OF TESTIMONIALS</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: <i>Hear My Testimony</i>, Ch. 7-13, Parts of <i>I, Rigoberta Menchù. An Indian Woman in Guatemala</i>*</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Module Five, Due Wednesday, April 6</p>

<p>WEEK 11, LECTURE</p> <p>MUSLIM WOMEN AND FEMINISM</p>	<p><u>LECTURE: April 13</u></p> <p>READINGS: Lila Abu-Lughod*, <i>In Search of Islamic Feminism</i>, Chapter 5, Egypt</p> <p>Documentary: <i>A Veiled Revolution</i></p>
<p>WEEK 12</p> <p>ONLINE MUSLIM WOMEN'S ACTIVISM</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: <i>In Search of Islamic Feminism</i>, Chapter 2, 3, 7, and 9</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT SIX: Module Six, Due Wednesday, April 20</p>
<p>WEEK 13, LECTURE</p> <p>MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE WEST IDENTITIES AND REPRESENTATIONS</p>	<p><u>Lecture: April 27</u></p> <p>READINGS: Falah*, Mansson McGinty*</p>
<p>WEEK 14</p> <p>ONLINE WORK ON YOUR RESEARCH PAPER!</p>	<p><u>ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS</u></p> <p>READINGS: Narayan, Chapter 3. This week I want you to devote your time working on your research paper.</p> <p>ASSIGNMENT SEVEN: Module Seven, Due May 2 and 4, respectively.</p> <p><u>IMPORTANT!! Post a second draft of your paper in the discussion forum by Monday, May 2, and give feedback to a classmate's paper by Wednesday, May 4, at midnight.</u></p>
<p>WEEK 15, LECTURE</p> <p>ORAL RESEARCH PRESENTATION</p>	<p>LECTURE: May 11</p> <p>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PAPER</p>
<p>Your research paper is due on <u>Monday, May 16, at 4 pm</u>. Please put your paper in my mailbox at the Center for Women's Studies, Bolton 735.</p>	