

## ***Postcolonial Feminist Theory***

Rhetoric 10:264; Women's Studies 131:264; POROI 160:280

2:30-5:20 Wednesdays in E250 AJB

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### ***Course Description***

This course focuses on the central issues that confront and constitute “feminism” within contexts of neocolonialism. In an increasingly interconnected global economy, in which flows of capital, media, and people crisscross the globe in uneven flows, new kinds of questions face academics and activists who seek to theorize and intervene in gendered relations of power. What socio-political forces must be taken into account to adequately theorize gender within such a context? How might we rethink the subject of feminism within such a frame? How does globalization reconfigure gender relations? What does “feminism” look like in a postcolonial context?

Postcolonial theory strives to intervene in such globalizing processes by attending to neocolonial relations of power in the production of culture, politics, and resistive forms. Under such an approach “feminism” must be (re)configured in ways that theorize gender across a variety of axes of power (class, nation, race, sexuality) and across a variety of contexts (citizenship, diaspora, and im/migration; location and representation; the cultural production of space; alliance formation; travel, home, and belonging). In this course gender is theorized through various lenses of postcoloniality: the intersection between the global and the local; the relationship between colonial histories and contemporary relations of rule and resistance; the differentiated modes of global mobility and access; the cultural production of the West and East, North and South; the feminization of labor within the global context; nation and transnationalism.

### ***Course Requirements***

#### **Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend every class prepared for discussion. Weekly response papers enable students to do so. For each semester hour credit in the course, you should expect to spend two hours per week preparing for class sessions. For this course, then, you will spend six hours outside of class per week and three hours in class.

#### **Assignments:**

Weekly 1-2 page response papers, double-spaced, typed, and edited (30%)

Lead Discussion (20%)

Term paper: 20 pages (50%)

#### **Disabilities:**

I would like to hear from anyone who has a disability which may require seating modifications or testing accommodations or accommodations of other class requirements,

so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Please contact me during my office hours.

### **Student Rights, Responsibilities, Resources:**

All students in the College have specific rights and responsibilities. You have the right to adjudication of any complaints you have about classroom activities or instructor actions. Information is available in the College's Student Academic Handbook ([http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/)). You also have the right to expect a classroom environment that enables you to learn, including modifications if you have a disability.

Your responsibilities to this class-and to your education as a whole-include attendance and participation. [*Here an instructor could put specific information on his/her or the department's attendance policy.*] You are also expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of assignments and in test-taking situations (the College's policy on plagiarism and cheating is on-line in the College's Student Academic Handbook, at [http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/)). You have a responsibility to the rest of the class-and to the instructor-to help create a classroom environment where all may learn. At the most basic level, this means that you will respect the other members of the class and the instructor, and treat them with the courtesy you hope to receive in turn.

Printed materials for Summer and the Printed "Academic Policies and Other Useful Information for Students 2005-06" were prepared in March of 2005. These printed documents--and the PDF version linked through ISIS may have errors or out-of-date information. The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences attempts to keep this on-line version of the Student Academic Handbook as current and correct as possible. If you have questions about the information in this handbook, please contact the [CLAS Academic Programs & Services office](#). If you find an error in this document, or have suggestions for improving this handbook, please contact [JoAnn Castagna](#).

### ***REQUIRED TEXTS***

- This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (Eds.). 1981. New York: Kitchen Table Press.
- this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*. Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating (Eds.). 2002. New York: Routledge.
- The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. New York: Routledge.
- Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*. Inderpal Grewal. 2005. Durham: Duke.
- Undoing Gender*. Judith Butler. 2004. New York: Routledge.
- Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and The Sacred*. M. Jacqui Alexander. 2005. Durham: Duke.
- Living Spirit, Living Practice: Poetics, Politics, Epistemology*. Ruth Frankenberg. 2004. Durham: Duke.
- Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Visweswaran, Kamala. 1994. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

*After Life: An Ethnographic Novel*. Hecht, Tobias. 2006. Durham: Duke.  
*Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Mohanty,  
Chandra. 2003. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.  
Books are at *Prairie Lights*; "Reader" available at Zypher's

**Course Schedule (tentative)**

WEEK 1 Central Concepts  
Introduction to the course

WEEK 2  
Defining the "Post"Colonial  
Stuart Hall, "What was the 'post-colonial'? Thinking at the limit"  
Anne McClintock, "The Angels of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-colonialism'"  
Gyan Prakash, "Who Is Afraid of Postcoloniality?"  
Peter Hulme, "Including America"  
Chandra Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggle"  
Caren Kaplan, "The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Critical Practice"  
Reader  
**Response #1 Due**

WEEK 3  
Location and the Politics of Speaking  
Ruth Frankenberg and Lata Mani, "Crosscurrents; Crosstalk: Race, 'Postcoloniality' and the Politics of Location"  
Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others"  
Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"  
Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"  
Jayati Lal, "Situating Locations: The Politics of Self, Identity, and 'Other' in Living and Writing the Text"  
Dawn Rae Davis, "(Love Is) The Ability of Not Knowing: Feminist Experience of the Impossible in Ethical Singularity"  
Reader  
**Response #2 Due**

WEEK 4 **US Third World Feminism**  
Bridges and the Formation of "Radical Women of Color"  
*This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*  
**Response #3 Due**

WEEK 5  
*This bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation*  
**Response #4 Due**

WEEK6 **Diaspora, Subjectivity, Citizenship**  
*Undoing Gender*

**Response #5 Due**

WEEK 7

*The Post-Colonial Critic*

**Response #6 Due**

WEEK 8

*Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms*

**Response #7 Due**

WEEK 9

*Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*

**Response #8 Due**

WEEK 10

**Crossings, Poetics, Narrative**

*Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and The Sacred*

**Response #7 Due**

WEEK 11

*Living Spirit, Living Practice: Poetics, Politics, Epistemology*

**Response #9 Due**

WEEK 12

*Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*

**Response #10 Due**

WEEK 13

*After Life*

**Response #11 Due**

WEEK 14

Synthesis

WEEK 15

Synthesis

WEEK 16

Student presentations: **Final Papers Due**