

**Carleton University
Late Summer 2015
Department of English**

**ENGL 4115C/ WGST 4812A/ AFRI 4050A: Subaltern Feminisms: Power, (Im)Mobility
and Belonging**

**Mondays/Wednesdays 6:00 pm- 9:00 pm
Location: 204 TB (*Please confirm location on Carleton Central*)**

**Instructor: Aliesha Hosein
Email: alieshahosein@cmail.carleton.ca
Office: 506 TB
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 4:45pm – 5:45 pm or by appointment**

**Preliminary Outline: Subject to Change*

This course looks at the intricacies involved in the different approach of feminists and subaltern theorists to the gender issues within and outside a post –colonial framework. Young enumerates key issues of ‘postcolonial feminist’ endeavour:

Postcolonial feminism has never operated as a separate entity from postcolonialism; rather it has directly inspired the forms and the force of postcolonial politics. Where its feminist focus is foregrounded, it comprises non-western feminisms which negotiate the political demands of nationalism, socialist feminism, liberalism, and ecofeminism, alongside the social challenge of everyday patriarchy, typically supported by its institutional and legal discrimination: of domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, honour killings, dowry deaths, female foeticide, child abuse. Feminism in a postcolonial frame begins with the situation of the ordinary woman in a particular place, while also thinking her situation through in relation to broader issues to give her the more powerful basis of collectivity. It will highlight the degree to which women are still working against a colonial legacy that was itself powerfully patriarchal - institutional, economic, political, and ideological (Young, 2003, 116).

In this course we will focus on the broad category of postcolonial feminisms and transnational feminisms which can include but are not limited to: African Feminisms, South Asian Feminism, Islamic Feminisms, Chicana Feminism, Caribbean Feminism and Womanism.

There are several similarities between postcolonialism and feminism. Both concepts are essentially concerned with the theories of marginalization and the construction of a “subaltern” colonialism and/or male-dominated gender differentiation. Terminology is a central concern of both postcolonial and feminist theories because both these philosophies have analyzed issues of “the silent voice” and “marginalization,” as a result of the way the female or the colonized subject has been driven to articulate selfhood in the terms of the oppressor. Additionally, both

philosophies question the notion of universalization by rejecting the binary structures (patriarchy and colonialism) and suggesting alternative areas of focus. However, post-colonial feminist theory has departed from mainstream postcolonial theory by highlighting the importance of gender to understand concepts of colonialism and nationalism. This theory states that oppressions relating to the colonial experience— particularly racial, class, and ethnic oppressions—have particularly marginalized women in postcolonial societies.

In addition, postcolonial feminist scholars contest the Eurocentric gaze that privileges Western notions of liberation and progress and portrays women in developing countries as victims of restrictive cultures and religions. Scholars like Chilla Bulbeck (1997) argue that Western feminist philosophy posit white feminists as more advanced and liberated, with the underlying assumption that women all over the world want to be more like Western women or that their ideal is to gain the same rights as men. In these characterizations, little attention is paid to history and difference; Western feminism becomes the norm against which all other women are judged.

Seminar Guidelines- because as you know summer is short, intense and sweet.

Attendance: Attendance at each seminar is mandatory. If there is a medical reason or any other urgent situation, a written note should be submitted.

Seminar Participation: Seminars generally succeed or fail because of the quality of group participation. This means that you must keep on top of the required readings—reading thoroughly, carefully and in a timely manner.

Seminar Structure: We will begin each session with a short introductory lecture that will be followed by a presentation/s. The seminar will then open up for general discussion, questions and responses. In order to prepare for this aspect of the seminar, you should formulate a question and a point for discussion for each reading. One useful way to do this is to focus on a specific part of a reading. You might consider asking:

- What is the salient argument that the reading/s are making?
- Is the argument consistent? If not, are there productive or useful gaps and contradictions for discussion?
- In the case of a fictional text, what are the key issues that might emerge as the framing ones for the text?
- Do the readings provide an important intervention in our thinking about feminism as a trans-national project? How can we evaluate the intervention?
- What assumptions are the readings making in terms of audience/subject matter/discipline, etc.?
- Is there scope for making useful comparisons with other texts that we are reading?

These pointers do not have to be followed in any particular order. They are mainly provided to assist you in formulating a response.

Class Presentation: Each seminar participant will be required to sign up for at least one class presentation on the week's readings. Details of presentation will be discussed once the module starts.

Evaluation:

1. Each class you will submit 250-300 words of critical analysis for that day -10 in all - 30%

2. One final 25-30 page paper- 30% -Due Wednesday 12th August, 2015. At the start of the last class.
3. One seminar presentation -30%
4. One critical question per week before the presentation to the presenter by e-mail – 10%.

Conduct: We will strive to create a convivial class atmosphere in which you will be at ease to express your opinions and participate fully in the learning process. Any disruptive conduct will, however, not be tolerated. You are required to avoid habitual lateness, reading newspapers during class, listening to music with earbuds/ headphones on, working hurriedly on an assignment due for submission in your next class, sleeping during class, leaving the classroom before the end of the class period, chatting with others on issues not related to the ongoing class discussion, or any other behaviour that interferes with the learning process and distracts everybody else.

As for use of computers, laptops, I-phones, I-pads and other electronic gadgetry. If you are using your computer for schoolwork - fine. But, if your other activities are distracting, annoying or disrespectful and violates another person's right to enjoy, be comfortable in, or feel secure in the classroom environment, then, we as a class may have to discuss this further. Please read <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/> for a better understanding of your rights and responsibilities.

Assignments: Students do all assigned tests and examinations according to the instructor's specifications. Except in cases where necessary permission is granted or a student is able to present evidence of illness or any form of incapacitation, any student who fails to submit assignments on schedule will lose a determined percentage (10% per day) of his/her final grade point.

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request

Each Week will consist of two 3hr seminar type classes. The onus is on you to find these readings. I will try to get them easily accessible through library.

Week 1 The Stakes

Monday 6th July, 2015:

Patricia Hill Collins. "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought"

Barbara Smith. "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism"

Hazel Carby. "'Women's Era: Rethinking Black Feminist Theory and 'White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood'"

Wednesday 8th July, 2015.

Walker, Alice. "Womanist"

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles."

Zinn, Maxine Baca and Bonnie Thornton Dill. "Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism"

Week 2 African Feminisms-Defining and Investigating African Feminisms.

Monday 13th July, 2015

Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, "Stiwanism: Feminism in an African Context."

Judith Van Allen, "Sitting on a Man": Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women."

Peter Delius and Clive Glaser. "The Myths of Polygamy: A History of Extra-Marital and MultiPartnership Sex in South Africa."

Wednesday 15th,July,2015

Amina Mama, "Sheroes and Villains: Conceptualizing Colonial and Contemporary Violence against Women in Africa.

Obioma Naemeka "Nego-Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way"

Catherine Obianuju Acholonu. "[Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative.](#)"

McFadden, Patricia. . "Sex, Sexuality, and the Problems of AIDS in Africa."

Week 3 South Asian Feminisms

Monday 20th July, 2015

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western eyes: feminist scholarship and colonial discourses."

Nivedita Menon, "Sexuality, caste, governmentality: Contests over 'gender' in India."

Tanita Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism.*

(Selected readings)

Wednesday 22nd July, 2015

Sandya Hewamanne,

"City of whores": Nationalism, development, and global garment workers in Sri Lanka."

Elisabeth Croll, "A Weaker Destiny: Daughter Discrimination,"

Anne E. McLaren, "Marriage by Abduction in Twentieth-Century China,"

Week 4 Chicana Feminisms

Monday 27th July, 2015

Beatriz M. Pesquera and Denise A. Segura "There is No Going Back: Chicanas and Feminism"

Anna Nieto Gómez "Chicanas in the Labor Force"

Denise A. Segura, "Chicana and Mexican Immigrant Women at Work: The Impact of Class, Race, and Gender on Occupational Mobility,"

Wednesday 29th July, 2015

Chela Sandoval, "Feminism and Racism: A Report on the 1981 National Women's Studies Association Conference,"

Patricia Zavella, "Talkin' Sex: Chicanas and Mexicanas Theorize about Silences and Sexual Pleasures,"

Aída Hurtado, "The Politics of Sexuality in the Gender Subordination of Chicanas,"

Week 5 Caribbean Feminisms (we miss the Monday- Class Civic holiday)

Wednesday 5th August,2015

Janet Momsen. "The Double Paradox" in *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Thought.*

Patricia Mohammed. 44-55

Angela Gourdine. *The Difference Place Makes.* 80-102

Michelle Rowley. "Reconceptualizing Voice: The Role of Matrifocality in Shaping Theories and Caribbean Voice." in *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Thought.* Patricia Mohammed. 22-43.

Patricia Hill Collins, "The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood." In *Black Feminist Thought*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 123-148. (optional)

Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Women's Love Relationships." In *Black Feminist Thought*. New York: Routledge, 2000. 149-172. (optional)

Week 6 **Militarism**

Monday 10th August, 2015

From the: *The Women & War Reader*, eds. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin. New York University Press, 1998.

-Turpin, "Many Faces: Women Confront War," 3-18

-York, "The Truth about Women and Peace," 19-25

- Scheper-Hughes, "Maternal Thinking and the Politics of War," 227-33

Wednesday 12th August, 2015

- D'Amico, "Feminist Perspectives on Women Warriors," 119-25

- Feinman, "Women Warriors/Women Peacemakers: ...," 132-9

AND not from the reader

Sjoberg & Gentry, "Dying for Sex and Love in the Middle East."

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by July 26^h.

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

Requests for Academic Accommodations

For Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations are required to contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre to complete the necessary letters of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss their needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first class or ITV test. This is to ensure sufficient time is available to make the necessary accommodation arrangements.

For Religious Obligations:

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event.

Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

For Pregnancy:

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

For more information, consult <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>.

Assistance for Students:

- **Student Academic Success Centre (SASC):** www.carleton.ca/sasc

- **Writing Tutorial Services:** www.carleton.ca/wts

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): www.carleton.ca/sasc/pass_home/index.html

Registration policy: during the drop/add period at the beginning of the semester; the PJIWGS encourages students to visit this and other courses in order to make informed judgments about which courses to take. After the last day for course changes, however, only students registered in the course may remain; no student may late-add (or restore a dropped registration) after the deadlines without petitioning the, instructor, the PJIWGS and the Registrar's office.

Communication: we shall use several lines of communication to ensure a vibrant rapport throughout the course. They include: (1) email to the instructor – please allow a window of 24 hours for me to reply. Students are welcome to send me emails regarding any issue they like to discuss about the course. Sometimes this facility may be used to submit assignments with my permission; (2) students can see me at my office or make an appointment that is mutually convenient.

Diversity

This class is built on the assumption that diverse perspectives are fundamental to learning. It is only when we are challenged by knowledge and viewpoints different from our own that we can learn and grow. We'll be dealing with topics that can sometimes look different depending on where you stand—topics that can become somewhat controversial as well. This is just the sort of situation where we benefit most from experience and perspectives different from our own. The course is structured to make the most of our differences by giving you many opportunities to interact with all of your classmates. But for this to work we must all be willing to listen to each other respectfully. A few basic guidelines can make a big difference here:

- Treat each other with respect.
- Question the quality of the argument, not personal beliefs.
- Speak from experience.
- Avoid generalizing about groups of people.
- Share air time.
- Listen respectfully to different perspectives.
- Don't blame or scapegoat.
- Focus on learning, not on winning argument