

GSWS 2405-401/ Engl 2405.401

## Global Feminisms

Fall 2022

MW 10:15-11:44am

Professor Ania Loomba

[loomba@english.upenn.edu](mailto:loomba@english.upenn.edu) / [loomba.ania@gmail.com](mailto:loomba.ania@gmail.com)

Office hours: T 2-3 and by appointment at <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/2158986326>  
and 242 Fisher Bennett Hall as needed.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Feminism has both united women and generated debates between women of different races, locations and sexual orientations, across the world, and also within the US. Feminism means both *understanding* the construction of gender and sexuality in society, and *challenging* oppressive structures that constrain people of all genders. As such, there can be no single feminism that is globally relevant. How should we, located in a prestigious US university, locate our own ideas about gender and sexuality in a global framework?

Each week we will engage with a piece of work—fiction, autobiography, film, historical or activist writing—from a different part of the world. Through them we will explore how histories of colonialism, slavery and race, nation-making and war have led to very different conceptions of the family, sexuality, gender identities the body, labor, and agency around the world.

Satisfies the Cross-Cultural Requirement of the [College's General Education Curriculum](#);  
Fulfills Sectors 1, 2 and 6 of the English major.  
of the Standard Major  
Counts as an [Elective](#) of the Standard Major

### Requirements:

- \*Regular attendance, completion of all required readings and thoughtful class participation.
- \*Leading **two** class discussions (sessions will be chosen in the first weeks)
- \***One** book or film review (3-5 double spaced pages) of your choice by October 24.
- \*250-350 word responses **every other week**. Post on canvas by 5 pm Sunday unless otherwise specified in class.
- \*End of semester paper (12 + pages)

### Grading policy:

Attendance and responses: 40 %  
Leading class discussions: 15%  
Book or film report: 15%  
Final Paper: 30%

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. If you are unwell or there is an emergency, let me know as soon as possible. More than three absences will result in a penalty. Cases of

illness or any other exceptional circumstances need to be individually discussed.

**Required Books:** Please acquire well before time. No last-minute excuses about unavailability will be valid.

Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence* (available on Amazon etc)

Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis I* (available on Amazon etc)

Domitila Barrios de Chúngrara, *Let Me Speak* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1978). (Amazon will direct you to many used copies.)

Revathi, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*. (Available as a Kindle edition/PDF on Canvas.)

All required articles and films are available through Canvas unless indicated otherwise.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Appreciate varied ways of apprehending the work of gender and sexuality in different cultures.
- Reflect on the relationship between feminist perspectives and literature, film, history, and politics.
- Learn to read actively, interpret analytically, think critically, and write/speak persuasively.
- Learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions on complex issues of critical importance.

It is important to me to create a class environment in which everyone feels safe and included. I will do my very best to address everyone with their correct pronouns and names, and to pronounce names correctly. But if I do slip up, I very much hope that someone in the class will correct me.

## ACCESSIBILITY

I am committed to making this class accessible for everyone. Each of us learn differently, so I encourage you to speak with me as soon as possible about your individual learning needs so that I can better accommodate them as we move through the semester.

If you have a medical, physical, psychological, or learning disability that may affect your work in the course, please contact Penn's Office of Student Disabilities Services at (215)-573-9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Stouffer Commons (2702 Spruce Street in Suite 300). All services are confidential. The Critical Writing Program is also available to all students.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work submitted for this course must be the student's own and be written exclusively for this course. Any student who violates basic codes of academic conduct will immediately fail the assignment and be reported to the University Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. If you are unsure about the specifics of what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or other academic violations, please see the Codes of Academic Integrity website provided by Penn: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

**Weekly schedule (subject to adjustments) Full citations of the materials will be added**

**8/31 Introduction. Faultlines and sisterhoods**

\*Combahee River Collective Statement (April 1977).

\*Deirde Keenan, "Race Gender and Other Differences in Feminist Theory"

**9/5 Labor day no class**

**Race, empire and the construction of gender**

9/ 7 \*Jennifer Morgan, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology"

\*Antoinette Burton, "The White Woman's Burden, British Feminists and 'The Indian Woman', 1865–1915"

9/12: \*Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy* (Text on CANVAS)

9/14 \*Sean Redding, "Women and Gender Roles in Africa since 1918: Gender as a Determinant of Status"

\*Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Conceptualizing Gender: Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies"

**Feminism, colonialism and nationalism**

9/ 19 Please browse: \*Katharine Mayo, *Mother India*

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300811h.html>

\*Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question"

\*Mrinalini Sinha, "Refashioning Mother India: Feminism and Nationalism in Late-Colonial India"

9/21 \*Extracts from Edward Said, *Orientalism*

\*Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled"

9/26 \*Kumari Jawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, Chapter 1.

\*Angela Gilliam, "Women's Equality and National Liberation"

9/ 28 \*Watch *Battle of Algiers* Available through Upenn library

\*Daniele Djamila Amrane-Minnie, "Women at War, The Representation of Women in *The Battle of Algiers*"

Recommended: *Feminism Inshallah, A History of Arab Feminism* (Ferial Ben Mahmoud, 2014; streaming through Canvas course reserves) DVD 025 943

**Do Women Have a Nation?**

**10/3 and 10/5**

\*Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence* (available on Amazon etc)

**Culture and history**

**10/10 and 10/ 12** \*Marjane Satrapi *Persepolis I* (available on Amazon etc)

\*Golnar Nabizadeh, "Vision and Precarity on Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*"

\*Kumari Jayawardena, "Women's Struggles and 'Emancipation from above' in Iran"  
Issue 2/3, 347-356.

**10/17** \*Film: *Warrior Marks* (1994; streaming through Course Reserves) DVD 002 127

\*Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. "Warrior Marks: Global Womanism's Neo-Colonial Discourse in a Multicultural Context"

**10/19:** \*Film: Ousmane Sembène, *Moolaadé* (2004; streaming through Canvas course reserves)

\*Zainaba, "Lecture on Clitoridectomy to 'The Midwives of Touil, Mauritania (1987)'"

Recommended:

\*Christine J. Walley, "Searching for 'Voices': Feminism, Anthropology, and the Global Debate over Female Genital Operations"

\*Essays on Sembene and on how to write about film

**Labor, gender and the global economy****10/ 24 and 10/ 26**

\*Domitila Barrios de Chungara, *Let Me Speak*

\*Sarah McCracken, "Women in the Bolivian Mines 1961-1986"

\*John Beverley, "The Margin at the Center: On Testimonio"

**10/31** \*Gita Sen and Caren Grown, *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*

**11/2** \*Watch *Keten van liefde* (Chain of Love) dir. Marije Meerman (streaming through Canvas course reserves)

\*Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, "Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Division of Reproductive Labor"

**11/ 7** \*Lamia Karim, "Demystifying Micro-Credit: The Grameen Bank, NGOs, and Neoliberalism in Bangladesh"

**11/9:** \*Sonia E. Alvarez (1999) *Advocating feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO 'Boom'*

\*Formula and global capital.

**Am I a woman? Issues of gender and sexuality in a global frame**

11/ 14 and 11/16: \*A. Revathi, *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*

\*Aniruddha Dutta, “Between Aid Conditionality and Identity Politics – The MSM-Transgender Divide and Normative Cartographies of Gender vs. Sexuality”

\*Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar, “Dismantling Assumptions: Interrogating ‘Lesbian’ Struggles for Survival in India and South Africa.”

### **Feminism and sex work**

11/21: \**Tales of the Waria* Streaming on UPENN Library

\*Emily Bazelon, “Should Prostitution Be a Crime?”, *New York Times Magazine*, May 5, 2016.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/magazine/should-prostitution-be-a-crime.html>

\*Melissa D. Hargrove, “Sex work” in *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism*

11/23: No class. Friday schedule

11/28: \*Janet Halley et.al, “From the International to the Local in Feminist Legal Responses to Rape, Prostitution/ Sex Work and Sex Trafficking: Four Studies in Contemporary Governance Feminism”

11/30: \* “Harvard to the rescue” in *Kafila* <https://kafila.online/2013/02/16/harvard-to-the-rescue>. “Unintended consequences of feminist action” Prabha Kotiswaran.

### **US and international feminisms:**

12/5 \* Susan Watkins, “Which feminisms?”

12/7 \*The Feminist strike:

<https://viewpointmag.com/2021/03/23/the-political-invention-of-the-feminist-strike/>

### **12/ 12 Concluding discussion**

Ana Clarissa Rojas Durazo, “We Were Never meant to Survive: Fighting Violence Against Women and The Fourth World War”