



California Institute of Integral Studies

WOMANIST, FEMINIST, AND DECOLONIAL WORLDVIEWS

PARW 7609, 3 units

Spring 2021

Prof. May Elawar (melawar@ciis.edu)

Prof. Alka Arora (aarora@ciis.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class examines a diversity of womanist, feminist, mujerista, indigenous, and decolonial worldviews, theories, and activism in the U.S. and internationally. It reviews contemporary postcolonial and decolonial discourses, along with modern day and historical womanist-feminist controversies. The reading, discussions, and writing assignments will focus on issues related to conflict, race, agency, survival, resistance, difference, sexuality, class, disability, nationality, religion, spirituality, gender, and alliance building. Our topics will be explored through diverse texts, including letters, essays, poetry, stories, dance, prayers, and documentary films. This course is centered on the following questions:

- ◆ How have diverse women theorized and resisted systems of sexism, heterosexism, racism, classism, colonialism, and violence?
- ◆ What are the possibilities of dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity among individuals and communities with vastly different backgrounds and worldviews?
- ◆ How is women's spirituality linked to women's social and political lives?

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

When this course is complete, students will be able to:

1. Understand the multiplicity of perspectives encompassed within the broad categories of “feminism” and “womanism;” situate their own lives and worldviews within this discourse.
2. Analyze the linkages among issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, spirituality, and nationality.
3. Apply some of the common terminology used by feminist, womanist, and decolonial thinkers, such as intersectionality, sex/gender system, postcolonialism, etc.
4. Evaluate the relationship between feminist/womanist thought and the field of women’s spirituality.
5. Engage with complexity, paradox, and difference in global, postcolonial, and transnational thought.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Books

- ◆ Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2017.
- ◆ Burlisson, Dani, Michelle Cruz Gonzales, Silvia Federici, Ariel Gore, Laurie Penny, and Lidia Yuknavitch. *All of Me: Stories of Love, Anger, and the Female Body*. Chicago: PM Press, 2019.
- ◆ Ko, Aph and Syl Ko. *Aphro-Ism*. New York: Lantern Books, a division of Booklight Inc, 2017.
- ◆ Mohanty, Chandra Talpade and Linda Carty. *Feminist Freedom Warriors*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2018.
- ◆ Serano, Julia. *Whipping Girl*. Second edition ed. Berkeley, California: Seal Press, 2016.

Articles

See Canvas for full details.

Digital Media

- ◆ Video Archive: <http://feministfreedomwarriors.org/>
- ◆ Podcast: On Feminism's Fourth Wave: <https://soundcloud.com/publicprograms/alka-arora-on-feminisms-fourth-wave>
- ◆ Other digital media TBD

Assignments

Assignment 1: Reflective Paper, 10%, 5 pages, DUE: Feb 8

What is your relationship to living a feminist/womanist life?

In this paper, please examine your own background to reflect on feminism/womanism in your life. Weave your own voice with the voices of those scholars, leaders, activists, and others who have inspired you. Cite Ahmed and other scholars & activists who have impacted your ideas.

Group Presentation, 20%, Bibliography Due March 1, Presentations March 17

Feminist and womanist thought have emerged from multiple locations and identities. In groups of four, develop a presentation on a stream of feminism, e.g., Black feminists; Xicana feminists; Indigenous feminists, Asian & Arab Feminists; Multi-racial feminists. Examine this group's history, key turning points, significant scholars/activists, and important issues. (Please be sure to examine issues of intersectionality *within* each group (e.g., as related to sexuality, caste, class). Each student should also state their own positionality in relation to the community under discussion. Each group will present their work synchronously via Zoom. Presentations should be 15 minutes long and will be followed by a 10-minute Q&A.

Participation 30%, Ongoing

WHAT CONSTITUTES PARTICIPATION?

Online, peer-based adult learning is predicated on the collective responsibility of all students to contribute to the class. Each of you is vital to the whole community. The only way to demonstrate your full presence is through your regular and substantive presence online. Timely and engaged participation in weekly activities is required. This course is a “learning by doing” experience. Giving and receiving feedback are essential in each group and/or individual assignment.

Note that each week’s activities will begin on Wednesday and conclude the following Tuesday.

Each student is expected to:

- ◆ Participate regularly in class discussion of reading assignments, personal learning experiences, and others’ experiences
- ◆ Read and reflect on assignments
- ◆ Post all assignments on time
- ◆ Be responsible for discussion in small groups and the large group
- ◆ Contribute to the creation of a learning community
- ◆ Contribute to the creation of an on-line resource center for research
- ◆ Collaborate in the emergence of a group ethic of responsibility, dialogue, and analysis

Appropriate Postings

Appropriate posts are substantive and concise. Students are required to develop an initial post of about 300 words responding to the weekly assignment. This initial post must engage the required readings for that week. Additionally, students are expected to engage with colleagues in at least two additional posts (150 – 200 words) throughout the week.

Suggestions for engaging each text:

- 1) Examine your own assumptions and situate them in the literature.
- 2) Glean two or three important insights from each reading to apply to a relevant issue, example or your own research topic.
- 3) Seriously consider different, even opposing, positions to your own. Make an effort to assess the implications of accepting both your own and other’s positions.

Lexicon

Throughout the semester, develop a glossary of terms as you read. This will serve you well as you continue to read and discuss the ideas of this and other classes. During the semester, post two of the terms you encounter in the readings in the Canvas discussion thread titled “Lexicon.” Offer one or two paragraphs on the meaning of each term and how it is relevant to feminist/womanist thought and/or theory.

Final Research Paper 40%, Preliminary Work Due April 20, Final Paper Due May 14

Develop a thesis-driven research paper that presents an original argument focused on one or more of our class themes. Incorporate analysis of course texts and outside readings. Further details, including an assessment rubric, will be posted on Canvas. As an intermediate step toward your final paper, please submit the following by April 20 in order to receive feedback.

-Introductory paragraph with thesis

-Standpoint/Relationship to Topic

-Outline

-Annotated Bibliography

Final paper page length: MA, 12-15. PhD, 15-20.

CIIS Policies

Attendance and late paper policy:

Students are expected to turn in papers by the assigned due date. Extensions will only be given in the case of health or family emergencies. Papers that are turned in late without prior approval by instructors will be marked down. Please note that turning in a paper late will delay the grading process, and you may receive your grade and feedback later than others.

Incomplete Policy:

CIIS has adopted the following Incomplete Policy to be applied across the university: Permission to be given an "I" grade is given only in the following circumstances:

- a. medical reasons documented by a health-care professional.
- b. a family emergency verified with supporting documentation.
- c. decision by the faculty member based on exceptional pedagogical reasons.

For reasons "a" or "b," students are given a maximum of two semesters to finish their coursework. Please note that in many cases, a shorter extension will be granted (e.g. one month or one semester). Also note that reason "c" was developed for serious extenuating circumstances only; in this case, a maximum of one semester is granted for the Incomplete. If you believe that you will need to request an incomplete for this course, please let me know as soon as possible – Incompletes will not be granted on the day or two before the final paper is due.

Course Calendar

Pre-Intensive Reading: Read Introduction and Part 1 of *Living a Feminist Life*

JAN 19-FEB 9 MODULE ONE: Beyond Patriarchy

Schedule Tues & Wed, Jan 19 & 20: 3 hours each (Class 1 & 2)
Jan 21-Jan 26: Course Break
Jan 27-Feb 2: Intensive Follow-up
ZOOM: Wed Feb 3, 3-6pm PST
Feb 3- Feb 9: Online posting

Texts Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*
Podcast: On Feminism's Fourth Wave
Articles: "Must I Be a Womanist?" Roundtable Discussion

Assignments Assignment 1: Reflective Paper. Due Feb 8.

Feb 10-March 2 MODULE TWO: Beyond Silence

Schedule Feb 10-16 (Class 4) Offline Reading and Research Week
Feb 17-23 (Class 5) Online Posting
ZOOM: Wed, Feb 24, 3-6pm PST (Class 6)
Feb 24-Mar 2: Zoom follow-up (Required if missed Zoom; optional otherwise)

Texts Burlisson et al., *All of Me: Stories of Love, Anger, and the Female Body*
Other texts TBD

Assignments Meet with your small group and begin working on your presentation.
Submit bibliography by March 1.

MARCH 3 - 23 MODULE THREE: Beyond Western Eyes

Schedule March 3-9 (Class 7): Small group presentation prep; Reading
March 10-16 (Class 8): Online Posting
ZOOM: Wed, March 17, 3-6pm PST (Presentations)
March 17-19 (Class 9): Zoom follow-up

Texts Mohanty and Carty, *Feminist Freedom Warriors*
Video Archive: <http://feministfreedomwarriors.org/>

Assignments Present and submit small group presentation.

March 20-30: Extended Break (CIIS Spring Break from March 20-28)

MAR31-APR 20 **MODULE FOUR: Beyond Gender Conformity**

Schedule March 31-April 6 (Class 10): Community Check-in online; reading
April 7-April 13 (Class 11): Online posting
April 14-20 (Class 12): Continue online discussions
Guest lecturer TBD

Texts Serano, *Whipping Girl*
Other TBD

Assignments *Submit preliminary work on your final paper by April 20:*
Introductory paragraph with thesis
Standpoint/Relationship to Topic
Outline
Annotated Bibliography

MODULE FIVE: Beyond the Human

Schedule April 21-27 (Class 13) Offline Reading and Research week
ZOOM: Wed, April 28, 3-6 PST
Wed, April 28-May 4 (Class 14): Online posting
May 5-May 10 (Class 15): Concluding remarks

Texts Aph Ko and Syl Ko, *Aphro-Ism*
Other TBD

Assignments Final Paper Due May 14
Submit Course Evaluations