

# Introduction to Global Gender & Women's Studies

## **Course Description and Objectives**

Introducing a historical overview of the diversity of global feminist movements, this course examines changing gender roles across the globe. The interdisciplinary readings, lectures, class and online discussions, as well as movie analyses, will broaden students' understanding of gender issues and enable students to recognize the intersection of sexism with class, race, and ethnicity in the construction of women's identities in societies around the world. Central focus of our study will be the gendered impact of globalization processes: We will address the diverse economic, political and socio-cultural framework shaping experiences of women and gendered minorities in the US, and compare them with societies in the Global South and Global North. Against the background of transnational feminist activism, students learn to critically analyze the obstacles to, and opportunities for establishing women's rights as human rights.

## **Global Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelatedness of local and global contexts in the shaping of gender issues.

Students will be able to assemble a multi-perspective analysis of a given gender issue against local, global, international, and intercultural background.

Students will be able to demonstrate acceptance of shared responsibility for solving local, global, international and intercultural experiences of gender inequality.

## **Required Texts:**

Inderpal Grewal & Caren Kaplan. 2006. *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World* (New York: McGraw Hill)

Estelle Freedman. 2003. *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (Ballantine Books)

### **Additional Material for Media Analysis:**

Students will watch selected media for in-class reflection and discussion; results of media analysis will be part of Midterm and Final Exams.

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Media for analysis:</b>
<i>Politics of the Body</i>	CHINA: <i>Human Trafficking - Detective Shi and the stolen brides</i> (2009)
<i>Women &amp; Health</i>	INDIA: <i>A Powerful Noise</i> (2008)
<i>Women &amp; Media</i>	SAUDI ARABIA: <i>Dishing Democracy: Arab women as newsmakers</i> (2009)
<i>Women &amp; Violence</i>	GLOBAL: <i>Women, War &amp; Peace</i> (2010)
<i>Women &amp; Work</i>	BANGLADESH: <i>The Hidden Face of Globalization</i> (2011)

### **Co-curricular Component:**

This course will also have co-curricular components. In particular, we will have a series of guest speakers from different departments at FIU as well as local community organizations, activists or artists that deal with the issues discussed in class. Topics for lectures include:

#### **Topic I: Women's sweatshop work**

- Speaker I: Representative of USAS (United Students Against Sweatshop Work); Information on local FIU chapter and class involvement.
- Speaker II: Student organizer for AltaGracia, a unionized garment factory in the Dominican Republic; Student support required for lobbying universities nationwide to order University apparel from fair-labor factories.
- Speaker III: FIU Labor Studies department

#### **Topic II: Women and Gender Inequalities**

- Speaker: Kenyan artist and writer; Creative work as a window onto identity and resistance.

#### **Topic III: Women and Violence**

- Speaker I: FIU Women's Advocacy Center; Introduction of student volunteering and community work opportunities.
- Speaker II: Survivor
- Speaker III: Lawyer; Issues of domestic violence and the US legal framework

These lectures will be organized on a contingency basis and will depend on the availability of the speakers. Presentations will be videotaped for future use.

## Active Learning and Grading:

The grading requirements for this course generally contain an active learning component. In particular, all the assignments below ask students to critically engage with the course material, apply it and extend it as necessary. Exclusive of in-class exams, all assignments contribute to classroom discussion and debate.

### 1) Attendance & Participation (15%)

*Discussion Leader Assignment:* Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class, and be prepared for class discussion. Students will be in charge of leading discussion of the course material for at least two class sessions during the semester, assigned by the instructor. Students will briefly introduce the thesis of the assigned article before starting a sustained class discussion by raising specific questions for open debate.

Unexcused absences and lack of participation will count against your final grade. Students who miss more than 4 classes unexcused will have their course grade automatically reduced one level, e.g. from A- to B+. Students who fail to attend at least 60% of class sessions will automatically receive an F grade.

### 2) Three Reflective Journals (25%)

Within three course sections (Women & Health; Work; Violence) students will analyze a gender issue pertinent to each section, and discuss the impact of globalizing tendencies on women and gendered minorities in a country of their choice

#### *Group Work*

Students will form study groups (4-5 participants) to research human rights abuses of women in global sweatshops. In preparation of a live Skype conference with women workers in a garment factory in the Dominican Republic, student groups compile a questionnaire, reflecting on how the introduction of fair labor conditions as well as the payment of a living wage contributed to the wellbeing of workers and their community. The result of the Group Work, as well as the students' takeaway from the Skype conference form part of one Reflective Journal (constitutes 50% of the Journal's grade)

### 3) Midterm Exam (15%)

### 4) Final Exam (15%)

### 5) Final Class Paper (30%)

*Written Assignment* (80% of Final Class Paper grade):

5-6 pages multi-perspective analysis of the local and global framework shaping a specific gender issue in a specific location, chosen by the student. Evaluation of impact on women's public and private lives in terms of health, work, family, politics, and violence.














*Oral Assignment* (20% of Final Class Paper grade):

"Elevator Pitch" - Presentation of students' topics in class; Students introduce the gender issue in question; outline the regional and societal framework exacerbating/leveraging the research focus; evaluate possible solutions they encountered; lead class discussion on their individual topic.

# Syllabus

## PART I: SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction to key concepts related to gender, race, class, and sexuality against a global framework, foregrounding the impact of colonization and globalization on women's health issues. Students will be encouraged to critically engage with these issues as Discussion Leaders, through class discussions as well as one Reflective Journal. These encourage students to develop and apply critical thinking skills on gender against global framework.

<b>Week 1</b>	<p><b>Introduction &amp; Key Concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Kwame A. Appiah, "The Case for Contamination"</li> </ul> <p><b>The Historical Emergence of Feminisms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>No Turning Back</i>, Chapter ONE</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<p><b>Sex Differences &amp; Changing Ideas of Gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 1</li> <li> <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Gender &amp; Power"</li> </ul> <p><b>The Rise of Western Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 2</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<p><b>The Making of Race, Sex and Empire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 3</li> <li> <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Race and the Politics of Identity"</li> </ul> <p><b>Women and Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 4</li> <li> <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Medicine, Markets, and the Female Body"</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<p><b>Reproductive Rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 5</li> <li> <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Reproduction: the politics of choice"</li> </ul> <p><b>Health Policy in the Global South</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 6</li> <li> MEDIA ANALYSIS: 'A Powerful Noise' (2008)</li> </ul>

**PART II: GENDERED IDENTITIES IN NATIONS/STATES**

*Focusing on citizenship, identity politics as well as feminist organizing across borders. A Media analysis as well as a Midterm Exam will enable students to connect women's issues in the United States to women's issues across the world.*

<b>Week 5</b>	<p><b>Women and Citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 7</li><li>📖 <i>No Turning Back</i>, "The global state &amp; the politics of location"</li></ul> <p><b>Women, Gender, and the State</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 8</li><li>📖 <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Women and politics"</li></ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<p><b>Feminism and Identity Politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 9</li></ul> <p><b>Gender and Nations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 10</li><li>📺 MEDIA ANALYSIS: <i>Women, War &amp; Peace</i> (2011)</li></ul>
<b>Week 7</b>	<p><b>MIDTERM EXAM</b></p> <p><b>Transnational Feminist Networks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 11</li></ul>
<p><b>PART III: REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN CULTURE &amp; MEDIA</b></p> <p><i>The production and reception of creative work, as well as issues of literacy and consumer culture impinge profoundly on the image of women and gendered minorities in cultures across the globe. Class discussions, media analyses, as well as one Reflective Journal prompt students to apply critical analysis.</i></p>	
<b>Week 8</b>	<p><b>Women in Art</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 12</li></ul> <p><b>Media Production and Reception</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 13</li><li>📺 MEDIA ANALYSIS: <i>Dishing Democracy: Arab women as newsmakers</i> (2009)</li></ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<p><b>Gender and Literacy: Print &amp; Media Cultures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 14</li></ul> <p><b>Women's Representation in Colonial Contexts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 15</li><li>📖 <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Sexualities, identities and self-determination"</li></ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	

	<p><b>Gender and Advertising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 16</li> <li>📺 MEDIA ANALYSIS: 'Killing Us Softly 4'</li> </ul> <p><b>Commodifying the Body</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 17</li> </ul>
<b>Week 11</b>	
	<p><b>Women and Violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Gender and violence"</li> </ul> <p><b>Dis/Empowerment of women in Cyberculture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 18</li> </ul>
<p><i>PART IV: GENDERING GLOBALIZATION AND DISPLACEMENT</i></p> <p><i>In Part IV we will explore how economic and military globalization result in gender marginalization in terms of global travel, work, and displacement, with a focus on the gendered exploitation of labor in global factories.</i></p> <p><i>Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelatedness of local and global contexts in the shaping of gender issues through class discussions, dialog with guest speakers, as well as one Reflective Journal. In addition, students will be able to demonstrate acceptance of shared responsibility for solving local, global, international and intercultural experiences of gender inequality within the context of Group Work in preparation for a live Skype conference with factory workers in the Dominican Republic.</i></p>	
<b>Week 12</b>	
	<p><b>Travel and Tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 19</li> </ul> <p><b>Women as Refugees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 20</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	
	<p><b>Diasporas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 21</li> </ul> <p><b>Women, Work, and Immigration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📺 MEDIA ANALYSIS: <i>Detective Shi - Human Trafficking China</i> (2011)</li> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 22</li> <li>📖 <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Women's domestic labor"</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	
	<p><b>Gender Politics of Economic Globalization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📺 MEDIA ANALYSIS: <i>The Hidden Face of Globalization</i> (2011)</li> <li>📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i>, Chapter 23</li> <li>📖 <i>No Turning Back</i>, "Industrialization, wage labor, and the economic gender gap"</li> </ul> <p><b>GROUP WORK</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's Sweatshop Work</li> <li>Live Skype Conference with women workers in the Dominican Republic</li> </ul>

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**PART V: TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON FEMINIST FUTURES**

The concluding readings in Part V assert the global power dynamics that generate positions of vulnerability and exploitation as much as positions of agency and authority for women and gendered minorities across the world, which students will be able to reflect on in their final exam. The Final Class Paper will enable students to assemble a multi-perspective analysis of a given gender issue against local, global, international, and intercultural background.

<b>Week 15</b>	
	<b>Resisting Globalization</b> 📖 <i>Gender in a Transnational World</i> , Chapter 24 📖 <i>No Turning Back</i> , “Workers and mothers: feminist social policies” <b>Conclusion: Transnational Perspectives of Feminist Futures</b> 📖 <i>No Turning Back</i> , “New words & images: Women’s creativity as feminist practice”
<b>Week 16</b>	
	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>

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