

**WSS 308 (9538): GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN**  
*www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/wss308*

Spring 2014  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
1:15-2:35 pm  
BA 212

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This interdisciplinary course will explore women’s lives, representations, and political movements from different world regions. We will examine the impact of Western colonization throughout the world, and women’s feminist reclamations of culture and identities as resistance to colonial legacies. We will further examine contemporary issues, including sexual politics, reproductive health, global economies, wars and crises, and environmental sustainability. We will also develop a “decolonized” feminist worldview while engaging in creative projects to understand the intersecting effects of gender, race, class, nationality, and sexuality on women’s lives.

**GENERAL EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES REQUIREMENT**

This course fulfills the international perspectives general education requirement, which provides students with 1) an understanding of the impact of nations, regions, and cultures upon other nations, regions, and cultures; 2) an understanding of the reciprocal interactions between individuals and global systems; 3) an ability to see cultural groups from their own points of view; and 4) an ability to use the analytic tools of a specific discipline to engage in comparative analyses of cultures, nations, and regions.

**COURSE LEARNING GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

During the course of the semester, students will learn to: 1) place women at the center of global and cross-cultural analyses; 2) deepen such analyses as they examine the intersections of gender, race, class, nationality, and sexuality, and 3) creatively engage research, teaching, and learning.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Required Readings (available at Mary Jane Books, corner of Western Avenue and Quail Street)

Enloe, Cynthia. *Seriously! Investigating Crashes and Crises as if Women Mattered*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

A Course Packet (abbreviated as “CP” in the course schedule) is also available for purchase at Mary Jane Books. Additional readings are available on BLACKBOARD.

### Activities & Assignments

**Class Participation:** You are expected to come to class regularly and to contribute to discussions. You will also be expected to bring reading materials to class the day that we discuss them. Class sessions will be structured around lectures, discussions, and occasional class exercises. At times, you will be given short assignments to prepare ahead of lectures and discussions as they pertain to reading materials. Failure to attend class on a regular basis will result in point deductions from your final grade. You are allowed *three unexcused absences*, but once you miss more than three classes, you will receive a 5-point deduction for each additional absence. Exceptions will be made only for emergencies and illnesses, with proper documentation provided.

**Notes in the Margins:** These are responses to readings and films/videos studied in this course. Based on the “notes in the margins” that you have taken while completing your readings or while watching a film/video in class, you will be expected to produce a 250-word reflection each week, not of the reading or film/video itself but of your initial responses to the reading/film/video and how they may have changed or deepened upon further reflection. You are expected to post these weekly reflections on BLACKBOARD **by the end of the week, Friday 11:59 PM EST**. *You need to complete at least 10 such assignments this semester.*

**Midterm Exam:** This exam will cover materials at midpoint and include short-answer questions, true/false questions, and a short essay question. It is scheduled in class for **Thursday, March 13**.

**Final Project:** In lieu of a Final Exam, you will instead be required to complete a Final Project, a collaborative and creative project encouraging women to “think globally.” In a special showcase towards the end of the semester – **Tuesday, May 6** – we will be featuring an event at Campus Center Assembly Hall, in which we will open our class to the public and present “global perspectives on women” through certain creative outlets: a *Food-around-the-World Bazaar*; a *Women’s Memorial Art Installation*; and a *Global Awareness Fashion Show*. (Maximum: 15 members per team)

Team 1 – Food-around-the-World Bazaar & Cookbook (1:30pm-1:35pm): Team members working on this portion of the Final Project will come together and work on preparing and providing different dishes, snacks, and beverages from different parts of the world. They will also work on putting together a “global awareness” cookbook (also scanned as a PDF file), one which features recipes and ingredients and, specifically, what the local and global politics are in providing these ingredients for a global population, as well as the role of women in these political situations. In Assembly Hall, a table will be provided, and it will be up to the team to determine how to decorate and present the food. Be sure to document this food display through video and photographs, which should be made available online. For the Showcase, we will begin with a 5-minute overview of the food bazaar, followed by a similar 5-minute overview of the featured art installation – see below – which will then lead to the audience helping themselves to food and viewing the installation before launching into the Fashion Show: also see below.

Team 2 – Women’s Memorial Art Installation & Exhibition Catalog (1:35pm-1:40pm): Team members working on this portion of the Final Project will come together and put together an art installation project around an international “women’s memorial” project. Of which global issue impacting women should

your team raise awareness? There are many topics – violence against women, war and crises, political prisoners, human trafficking, poverty, hunger and famine, environmental devastation, the global economy, etc. – which need our remembrance. How will you highlight this issue and what artistic metaphors and symbols could you incorporate to do this? At Assembly Hall, you will be given a table for this installation, but you could also use the entire room if you have a bigger project in mind. *Think big! Think globally!* Moreover, be sure to document this art installation through video and photographs and an exhibition catalog (scanned as a PDF file), which should all be made available online.

Team 3 – Global Awareness Fashion Show & Program Brochure (2:00pm-2:30pm): Team members working on this portion of the Final Project will come together and put on a provocative fashion show, all designed around raising global awareness of issues impacting women: anything from fashion + sweatshops to the politics of dress + women’s bodies to the problem of cultural appropriation to the racial politics of beauty. You can feature the usual – M.C., runway models, deejay, music, and fashions (from clothes to jewelry to wigs, etc.) – but put a twist on the runway show (e.g. parody or political theater) by adding more details on “where our fashions come from” and what women’s roles are in this business. This portion of the Showcase should have a 30-minute running time. Be sure to document this Fashion Show through video and/or photographs, and a program brochure (scanned as a PDF file), to later be featured online.

In preparation for this project, you will need to sign up for a Final Project team on BLACKBOARD by **Thursday, March 27**, and work with team members in class (**April 3; April 29; May 1**) as well as outside of class. A Project Proposal is due in class on **Thursday, April 3**. A 200-word Project Statement with a Google Map of the different locations featured in your project, including an Annotated Bibliography of 8-10 sources and a Flier promoting the event, is due on **Tuesday, April 22**. The print copy and PDF file of the written portion of the project (e.g. Cookbook, Exhibition Catalog, and Program Brochure) are due on **Thursday, May 1**. The Showcase is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 6**, in the Campus Center Assembly Hall. Online materials (5- or 10-minute video and photos taken during the Showcase and digitized for online viewing) are due on a flash drive in class or via a link on BLACKBOARD by **Thursday, May 8, 11:59 PM**.

### HOW GRADES ARE DETERMINED

ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS	DUE DATES
Class Participation	20	Each session
Notes in the Margins	20	Weekly
Midterm Exam	30	March 13
Final Project	30	Sign-Up on Blackboard (Mar.27) Project Proposal (Apr. 3) Google Map & Project Statement (Apr. 22) Written Portion of Project (May 1) Project Showcase (May 6) Online Materials (May 8)

### GRADING SCALE

A = 100-93 points | A- = 92-90 points | B+ = 89-87 points | B = 86-83 points | B- = 82-80 points  
C+ = 79-77 points | C = 76-73 points | C- = 72-70 points | D = 69-65 points | E = Below 65 points

## **EXPECTATIONS**

Rather than a “safe space,” this course will strive to create a “brave space” in the classroom. Because of this, sensitivity and respect for all are a must if we are to approach the contents of this course in a brave manner.

Part of creating a brave and respectful classroom involves accommodating the different learning and emotional needs and concerns of all students present – including a commitment to avoiding discrimination based on disability/different abilities, racial and ethnic identities, sexual orientations, and gender-based identities. Please speak with me privately if you need to make specific arrangements to accommodate different learning styles.

Creating such a classroom also involves maintaining respectful communication and interactions. As such, you are expected to turn off cell and smart phones (or keep on vibrator alert in cases of "emergency" calls) before class begins. Texting and Internet surfing on personal laptops and other electronic devices are considered disrespectful use of class time and will result in reduced points from your class participation grade if they become regular occurrences.

## **POLICIES**

Attendance: As stated earlier, you are allowed three unexcused absences. You will receive a 5-point deduction from your final grade for any additional absence over the accepted three – except in cases of emergencies and illnesses, with proper documentation provided.

Lateness: Late assignments will result in a 5-point reduction for each day late. After two days late, you will receive a “0” for that assignment.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism and cheating are university offenses and will result in failing grades and disciplinary action. To avoid plagiarism, understand what it means: Plagiarism results when someone uses the ideas or writings of another and presents these ideas or writings as her/hir/his own. When citing sources, it is best to present ideas using your own original words. When quoting directly from sources, it is best to use direct quotes only if the phrasing is apt and powerfully stated; be sure to include proper citation. If the quote is not revelatory or eloquent but simply provides some useful information, then it is best to explain the information completely in your own words while providing proper citation.

Copyright: To avoid copyright infringement, you will need to familiarize yourself with copyright policies on “fair use” of others’ creative works. Copyright “fair use” allows you to reproduce copyrighted work if your use of such work is “transformative” of the original or contains a small portion of it. Visit: <http://fairuse.stanford.edu>.

Extra Credit: There may be opportunities to earn extra credit towards your final grade this semester. Such opportunities may include attending special events relating to issues explored in this course (in which case, you will need to provide proof of your attendance at such events, as well as a thoughtful write-up about the event posted on BLACKBOARD). You may earn two bonus points for each event that you attend/write about on BLACKBOARD (but no more than two such events will be counted for extra credit). You may also earn extra credit by attending and putting into practice for your Final Project skills acquired through a Free Tutorial of interactive media tools, offered at the Interactive Media Center – located in the basement of the main library (visit their library website for the spring semester schedule). You may earn extra credit for attending up to two such tutorials (two bonus points per tutorial).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### INTRODUCTION: IS SISTERHOOD GLOBAL?

- Jan. 23 Course overview and introduction.
- Jan. 28 BLACKBOARD: “The Danger of a Single Story.”  
Course Packet (CP): “Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women’s Movements.”
- Jan. 30 BLACKBOARD: “The Sexual Geopolitics of Popular Culture and Transnational Black Feminism.”

### PART ONE: SEXUAL (GEO)POLITICS

- Feb. 4 CP: “Stolen from Our Bodies: First Nations Two-Spirits/Queers and the Journey to a Sovereign Erotic”; “La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness.”
- Feb. 6 SCREEN: *Shinjuku Boys*.
- Feb. 11 BLACKBOARD: Roundtable – “Femen’s Unfeminist Tactics?”; “The Naked Bodies of Alia”; “Femen vs. Muslimah Pride”; “Bodies that Matter”; “Parallel Histories.”
- Feb. 13 SCREEN: *Girl Model*.
- Feb. 18 BLACKBOARD: “Blonde Beauties and Black Booties: Racial Hierarchies in Brazil.”  
CP: “White But Not Quite: Tones and Overtones of Whiteness in Brazil.”  
SCREEN: *Ebony Goddess*.
- Feb. 20 holiday – no class.
- Feb. 25 SCREEN: *Carmen Miranda: Bananas is My Business*.
- Feb. 27 CP: “Carmen Miranda on My Mind: International Politics of the Banana.”
- Mar. 4 CP: “Life on the Global Assembly Line”; “Ana’s Choice.”
- Mar. 6 SCREEN: *La Operacion*.
- Mar. 11 CP: “Who Should and Who Should Not Inhabit the World.”  
SCREEN: *Our Rhineland*.
- Mar. 13 Midterm Exam.

*Spring Break*

### PART TWO: RECLAIMING OUR BODIES, OUR NATIONS, OUR PLANET

- Mar. 25 SCREEN: *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days*.
- Mar. 27 Film continued.  
CP: “Reproductive Health in Romania: Reversing the Ceausescu Legacy.”  
Due: Sign Up for Final Project on Blackboard.

- Apr. 1 CP: “Baghdad Underground.”  
BLACKBOARD: “Afghan Feminists Fighting from under the Burqa.”  
SCREEN: *Rise: Revolutionary Women Reenvisioning Afghanistan*.
- Apr. 3 Project Workshop.  
Due (during class time): Project Proposal.
- Apr. 8 *Seriously!:* chapters 1-5.
- Apr. 10 *Seriously!:* chapters 6-7.
- Apr. 15 holiday – no class.
- Apr. 17 *Seriously!:* chapters 8-9.
- Apr. 22 SCREEN: *Taking Root: The Vision of Wangari Maathai*.  
Due: Google Map and Project Statement.
- Apr. 24 BLACKBOARD: “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest.”

**CONCLUSION & CELEBRATION: MAKING FEMINIST SENSE OF OUR WORLD**

- Apr. 29 Project Preparation.
- May 1 Project Preparation continued.  
Due: Written Portion of Project.
- May 6 Class Showcase in CC Assembly Hall: Fashion Show, Food, and Art Fest.
- May 8 Course review.  
Due: Materials for Online Site.