Course Description:

“Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the “third-world woman” caught between tradition and modernization” (Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” pg 306).

Despite great advancements in the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, the struggle for women’s rights and equality continues, often within problematic discourses centered in the West. For example, on October 9th Malala Yousafzai, a young Pakistani girl from the Swat Valley who was outspoken about education and rights for girls, was shot in the head by the Taliban. Malala was a blogger for the BBC in 2009, and, gaining popularity, she was featured in a New York Times documentary in 2010. In 2011 she won the National Youth Peace Prize in Pakistan (now renamed the National Malala Peace Prize) and was nominated for the Dutch International Children’s Peace Prize. On October 29th a picture of Malala’s face, a veil covering her hair and her hands covering her mouth, was on the cover of Newsweek. A darling of western media, the tragic story of Malala raises many questions for feminists today including, on what and whose terms are Malala’s rights being determined and, related, how does the western media play a role in the violence to which she was subject? More broadly, how does violence play out in gendered ways? Specifically, this course takes as foundational that gender and identity are constructed and will thus consider the intersections of the categories gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality (and more) and the ways in which power and privilege operate across those categories. We will consider questions such as what constitutes action, what constitutes resistance and even what constitutes social justice? How does a western concept of feminism change when viewed within the context of imperialism and global power structures? What do(es) globalized feminism(s) look like? How might we reimagine spaces of resistance in feminism based on a global or individual context (think about Malala here)? How are we implicated in the texts we read? How is gender and the body implicated in issues of nationhood? How are issues of human rights complicated through a gendered lens?

Course Objectives:

- Questioning of one’s position within gendered, economic, political and racial structures of power in a globalized context.
- Understanding of social problems, movements, and change related to gender in specific non-western cultural, historical, political contexts.
- Development of critical and analytical reading, writing and speaking skills.
- Analysis of the relationship between gendered subjectivity, resistance and social/political/global contexts.

Texts may include:

- Sidhwa, Bapsi. Cracking India.
- Devi, Mahasweta, Imaginary Maps
- Satrapi, Marjane. Complete Persepolis.
• Dangarembga, Tsitsi *Nervous Conditions*
• Magona, Sindiwe “Women at Work”
• Law-Yone, Wendy *The Road to Wanting or Irrawaddy Tango*
• Abani, Chris *Becoming Abigail*
• Abouzeid, Leila, *Year of the Elephant*
• Optional Films including *Syrian Bride*
• Articles/book chapters: Please print all PDFs assigned.

**Expectations and Evaluation:**

This course has a seminar format and requires extensive student participation weighted at 10% of the overall grade. A discussion-based class presents you with an opportunity to be heard through both oral and written contributions; it also means that you must come prepared to discuss each of the readings assigned in depth on the day they are due. You will be graded on the quality and quantity of participation in class discussions. The success of this seminar depends on everyone’s participation, and absences hurt the entire class. Attendance, therefore, is mandatory and if you miss more than one class for any reason it can hurt your final grade. That said, I do understand that life happens and I am willing to work with you if you contact me as early as possible. However, if you miss more than 3 classes (three weeks of class) you cannot pass this class since it is not possible to make up missed classes with extra work.

Because this is a discussion based class, in order to draw on and value everyone’s unique personal experience and background, each student is required to help lead discussion once throughout the semester worth 20% of your overall grade. The purpose of having each of you help lead discussion is to give you more say in how the class is run and what we discuss as well as to develop critical speaking skills and interrogate the text more fully. In planning your discussion, think about what you want everyone to learn. What can we learn together that will expand or deepen what we learned from reading the material individually? Once you have defined these goals for yourself, structure your questions to meet your goals. You may wish to plan an activity or do group work in conjunction with a set of questions. On the day of your discussion, please hand in 1-2 pg. description of your class plan that includes goals, overall strategy, and specific questions or other plans you have for the class. Feel free to be in touch with me about the questions and goals. You will be graded on the critical thinking you have done about the text, the questions you ask and the way you lead the discussion. Supplementary materials are not required but encouraged (power point, prezzies, other media handouts, etc—please let me know at least 4 days in advance if you need photocopies).

You are required to do 3 short responses assigned throughout the semester each worth 10% for 30% total. These are to be approximately 2 pages typed and are intended as a space for you to explore critical issues in each section. I will assign these the week before they are due. Think of short responses as a space for you to begin to think and to write critically about the texts. I am not looking for “proof” that you’ve done the reading (although addressing the end of a text is generally necessary); rather I want to see how deeply you can think about certain aspects of the material. The short responses serve as preliminary work for the final paper. Please note that short responses are required and graded. They are due at the beginning of the class for which they are assigned, and I will not accept late responses since discussion could inform someone’s response.
in unfair ways. If you will be absent when a response is due please arrange to turn it in prior to the class.

A large percentage of your grade (40%) will be a final paper intended to be a critical argument that engages with the theory and literature that we considered throughout the semester. This final paper or project asks you to synthesize course material, reflect on your own positions vis-à-vis the material, and make and defend a critical argument. This paper will be about 8-10 pages and is intended to build from the ideas you explored in your short responses. More information will be given.

Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification, and facilitating academic dishonesty. If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated” (from UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy). To ensure that you understand the university's policy on academic integrity, review the guidelines and list of violations at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>. I expect you to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy. **Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment at the very least and most likely will result in failure of the class.**

Finally, it is sometimes necessary to change the syllabus (in particular the assignments) slightly as the semester progresses. You are responsible for any changes discussed in class. If you miss class, please be sure to check with me or your classmates about upcoming assignments.

**Tentative Calendar:**

**Part I: (En)Gendering Alternatives**

Week 1: Introduction to course, theoretical concepts of post-structuralism and feminist studies

Week 2: No Class-MLK Jr. Day

Week 3: Audre Lorde “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” and “Lift and Separate”
   Judith Butler-*Bodies that Matter* excerpt
   Adrienne Rich “Notes Towards a Politics of Location”
   Kaplan “The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Practice”

Week 4: Chela Sandoval “US Third World Feminism”
   Chandra Mohanty “Under Western Eyes”
   Uma Narayan “Contesting Cultures”
   **Short Response Due**

**Part II: (En)Gendering Nation**
Week 5: Abouzeid, Leila, *Year of the Elephant*

Week 6: *Imaginary Maps* select short stories  
Anne McClintock “The Lay of the Land”  
Veena Das “Language and Body”

Week 7 *Cracking India*  
Menon and Bhasin “Recovery, Rupture, Resistance”  
**Short Response Due**

Week 8 **Spring Break**

**Part III: (En)Gendering Transnationality**

Week 9: Law-Yone, Wendy *The Road to Wanting* or *Irrawaddy Tango*

Week 10: Abani, Chris *Becoming Abigail*  
And TBA on trafficking

Week 11: *Persepolis I*  
Scott McCloud “Understanding Comics”  
Whitlock “Autographics: The Seeing "I" of the Comics”

Week 12  
**Persepolis II**  
“Mahmood’s "Agency, Gender, and Embodiment”  
**Short Response Due**

**Part IV: (En)Gendering Futures**

Week 13: Dangarembga, Tsitsi *Nervous Conditions*

Week 14: Sindiwe Magona “Women at Work”  
Workshop papers

Week 15 Wendy Brown “Feminism Unbound”;  
**Final Papers due**