

# APPROACHING WOMEN'S STUDIES

Semester 1, 20 credits

*Please note that this outline is indicative as of Summer 2023 and is subject to change.*

## Convenor:

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## Who should take this module?

This module is core for MA Women's Studies, MA Women's Studies (Hums) and MA Women, Violence and Conflict, and an option module for MA Women's and Gender Studies (GEMMA). Research students new to CWS might think about taking this module (research students should discuss with their supervisors whether they should 'audit' the module as part of their research training).

## Description and Aims:

This module provides an introduction to key issues and concerns within Women's and Intersectional Feminist Studies. It starts by exploring theoretical and conceptual approaches to the field, paying particular attention to the unstable category of 'woman' and the concept of 'gender', and interpreting these through an intersectional lens within the social and historical contexts of race, sexuality, disability and neurodivergence, religion, culture, class, and caste amongst others. The module then moves on to consider various topics that have been and still are of particular concern to feminists, including colonialism, nationalism, masculinities, intersectionality, care, and the anthropocene.

Interdisciplinary in approach, the module enables individual students from many different disciplinary backgrounds to work with their peers to develop a broad range of knowledge suitable for interdisciplinary feminist research. We also want you to think outside the 'Western' (Western European/North American) and strictly Anglophone context in which we are based here in the UK; we do this by developing an awareness of the epistemological, historical, political, and colonial basis of the theories entrenched in Euro-, white-, and Anglo-centric contexts and we work together to forge and imagine pathways beyond them.

## Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this module, students will be able to:

- Interrogate and explain key issues and concerns within Women's and Intersectional Feminist Studies, including the problematics associated within the category 'woman', the concept 'gender', and colonial and racial hegemonies
- Critically engage with and account for the differences amongst gendered bodies, with an astute awareness of intersecting identity categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, dis/ability, age, and others.
- Apply different methods to gendered research, with an appreciation for the importance of interdisciplinarity in Women's and Intersectional Feminist Studies.
- Develop feminist research with an appreciation for the importance of cross-cultural work in Women's and Intersectional Feminist Studies, with a sensitivity to questions of difference and diversity.

## Indicative Programme

- Week 1: Introduction to Women's Studies
- Week 2: Theorising Sex and Gender
- Week 3: Dis/ability and Fat studies
- Week 4: Religion
- Week 5: Assessment Workshop
- Week 6: Colonialism
- Week 7: Race
- Week 8: Intersectionality, Dalit Feminism, and Caste-Class Relations
- Week 9: Care, Reproduction, and Labour
- Week 10: The Anthropocene
- Week 11: Assessment Preparation

## Assessment:

The module is assessed by means of one essay of 3,500-4,000 words. You will write a partial draft as a 'procedural essay' (compulsory but not assessed) partway through this module, and will receive detailed feedback. (GEMMA students will not do the procedural essay.)

## Indicative Reading:

- Abu-Lughod, Lila. (2015). *Do Muslim women need saving?* (Vol. 15): SAGE Publications Sage UK: London.
- Alsop, Rachel, Fitzsimons, Annetee, and Kathleen Lennon (2002) *Theorizing Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bhattacharya, Tithi. (2017). *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentering oppression*. London, UK: Pluto Press.
- Christ, Carol P., and Judith Plaskow, eds. *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992.
- Deeb, Lara. (2008). *An enchanted modern: Gender and public piety in Shi'i Lebanon*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- De La Bellacasa, Maria Puig. (2012). 'Nothing comes without its world': thinking with care. *The Sociological Review*, 60(2), 197-216.
- Ebron, Paulla, & Tsing, Anna. (2017). Feminism and the Anthropocene: assessing the field through recent books. *Feminist Studies*, 43(3), 658-683.
- Hedva, Johanna. "Sick Woman Theory." *Mask Magazine: The Not Again Issue*, 2015.  
<http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory>.
- Han, Clara. (2012). *Life in debt: Times of care and violence in neoliberal Chile*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Haraway, Donna J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Hill Collins, Patricia, and Sirma Bilge (2016) *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- hooks, bell (2015) *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. New York: Routledge.
- Hoppe, Katharina. (2020). Responding as composing: towards a post-anthropocentric, feminist ethics for the Anthropocene. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, 21(2), 125-142.

- Kafer, Alison. *Feminist, Queer, Crip*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013.
- Mahmood, Saba (2005). *Politics of piety. The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- McCann, Carole R., and Seung-Kyung Kim, eds. (2010) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Routledge.
- Richardson, Diane, McLaughlin, Janice, and Mark E. Casey, eds. (2006) *Intersections between Feminist and Queer Theory*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Robinson, Victoria, and Diane Richardson, eds. (2015) *Introducing Gender and Women's Studies*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saha, Subro. (2020). Caste, Materiality, and Embodiment. *CASTE/A Global Journal on Social Exclusion*, 1(1), 200-216.
- Stoler, Ann Laura. (1995). *Race and the education of desire: Foucault's history of sexuality and the colonial order of things*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.
- Stryker, Susan, and Aren Z. Aizura, eds. (2013) *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Swarr, Amanda Lock, and Richa Nagar, eds. *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2010.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton University Press.
- Viswanath, Rupa. (2014). *The Pariah problem: caste, religion, and the social in modern India*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Zinn, Maxime Baca, et al, eds. (2005) *Gender through the Prism of Difference*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.