Introduction

Literary critic Grace Hong asserts that “women of color feminism” offers an oppositional politics that shifts our ways of knowing and encountering the world. This course explores feminist thought of women of color to investigate the contours of what a “women of color feminism” might be in terms of its political and ethical concerns, and to outline what that feminism offers both theoretically and in terms of political praxis. In particular, we will be examining the analytical framework of intersectionality (the ways that power, identity, and agency occur along interlocking vectors of race, gender, sexuality, class, and more).

The first half of the course establishes the feminist foundation upon which we build our analytical lens and method. The second half of the course will examine examples of women of color feminist organizing and includes an experiential component: collaborative group projects applying women of color feminist ideas to community work and organizing.

Texts

Most readings will draw from the following books:
* This Bridge Called My Back
* This Bridge Called Home
* Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism
* Sister Outsider
* Women of Color and Feminism
* The Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology
* Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice
* That’s Revolting!: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation
* The Radical Doula Guide

Other readings will be provided on ELMS.
Learning Outcomes

* Students will be able to articulate women of color feminist theories and analytical frameworks.
* Students will develop an intersectional analysis that highlights the significance of the categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and more, and the ways these intersect, particularly in students own personal experiences and experiences of communities students are part of.
* Students will understand models of women of color solidarity and collaboration.
* Students will hone research, analytical, presentation, and collaboration skills.

Requirements

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Attendance, participation, readings
Attendance is mandatory for every class. Absences may be excused for illness and other extenuating circumstances IF you inform me BEFORE the class you are missing. Please treat class like a work-place: You are allowed sick days to be used at your discretion but you must handle them responsibly by informing your supervisor (me) and by catching up on your work. If you need to miss class, please contact a peer to see what you missed.
Active participation is expected of every student. Active participation consists of completing the readings before class and contributing to class discussion in thoughtful ways that engage the readings, materials presented in class, and your classmates contributions. You MUST speak in class regularly to receive a passing grade for participation. Coming to office hours can also count towards participation.

Homework assignments
There will be several small assignments throughout the semester. Most will require online participation in discussions.

Presentation
Students are responsible for 1 group presentation (20 minutes) during the semester on a particular contemporary woman of color feminist thinker.
Midterm
In-class short-answer essay. Students will create possible exam questions, and we will discuss in class the session before the midterm. I will revise/edit/tweak and create the midterm based on these questions.

Final Project
Using a women of color feminist lens, students will work in groups to identify an issue affecting them as students at UMD. Using women of color feminist theory and models for organizing, groups will design and implement some kind of political program that addresses their issues. Students will be given class-time to work in groups, and will be given guidance over the development of this project.

Final Reflection Paper
A 5-page (around 1500 words) reflection paper that will discuss what you have learned in the course, how the course has affected you, and why the topics/issues of the class are important. This will be a personal reflection that must substantively engage course materials from throughout the semester (at least 5 texts). Grading will be based on sophistication and depth of analysis. Due at your scheduled Final Exam time.

Extra Credit
You can earn extra credit throughout the semester by writing 2-page reflection/response papers on outside materials/events related to the course. These can boost your participation grade and help bump borderline grades. When choosing something to write on, run your ideas by me first.

Course Schedule
The first 7 weeks will cover women of color feminist theories and frameworks. After the midterm, students will examine examples of contemporary women of color perspectives and organizing around particular issues, as students develop their final projects.

Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: Women of Color Feminism and Women of Color Studies
  ● Grace Hong
  ● Grace Chang
Week 3: Theory in the Flesh and Intersectionality
  ● Cherrie Moraga
  ● Audre Lorde
  ● Combahee River Collective
  ● Patricia Hill Collins
  ● bell hooks
  ● Haunani-Kay Trask
  ● Chandra Mohanty
Week 4 & 5: Feminisms of the 21st Century
- *This Bridge Called Home*, selections
- *Colonize This!,* selections
- *The Color of Violence*, selections
- *Feminism Without Borders*, selections
- *Politics of Piety*, selections

Week 6: Reproductive Justice & Queer of Color Critiques
- Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice
- *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice*, selections
- *The Radical Doula Guide*
- Black Girl Dangerous, essays
- *That’s Revolting!: Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation*, selections

Week 7: Midterm

Week 8: Spring Break

Week 9: Critical Reflections on Organizing and Community

Week 10: Case Study: INCITE!

Week 11: Case Study: Black Lives Matter

Week 12: Case Study: Brown Boi Project

Week 13: Case Study: Andrea Smith controversy

Week 14: Final projects

Week 15: Final projects