

**HISTORY 781/COMPARATIVE STUDIES ~~781~~ 781****WOMEN AND COLONIALISM IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE****INSTRUCTOR: CLAIRE ROBERTSON**

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**Goals and Substance**

This seminar explores the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, religion, and sexuality in the context of colonialism, with a particular focus on women and gender. European and American colonialism was arguably the strongest political and cultural force of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with strong earlier influences and present manifestations in addition. It has/had many socioeconomic implications for both colonized and colonizer peoples, including women. Here we will adopt a cross-cultural approach, exploring colonialism wherever it occurred/occurs, from the Americas to Soviet Central Asia and many points between, and in many different forms, from formal political control to spheres of influence, mercantile to white settler colonialism. We will move chronologically from early forms of colonialism to later ones, and deal with various forms of colonialism crucial to the establishment of European dominance from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries. We will pay particular attention to the voices of colonized women and to their representations in colonialism, as well as to identity issues.

**Student Learning Objectives**

Students will first familiarize themselves with diverse theoretical perspectives regarding colonialism before proceeding to look at various past and present colonial situations. Students are expected to be able to apply both theory and models of colonialism to the case studies, especially to understanding the historical progression of colonialism. Students will also learn how gender relates to colonialism, and how women's experiences differ from men's and why. Looking at both colonized and colonizer women allows for the application and critique of different models and theories. Weekly written assignments call for both theoretical and applied thinking, as well as attention to writing as an art. The showing of certain films allows for analysis and critique of visual representations of colonialism, while student facilitation of a discussion requires students to look at the readings in a different way to be able to lead a thorough discussion in a productive manner.

**Reading**

The most important aspects of participation in this seminar are doing the reading of approximately 60 to 120 pages per week and then analyzing it in class discussions and written assignments.

**Required books are:**Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (essay)Shirin Rai, *Gender and the Political Economy of Development*Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds. *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class*

Reader: available from instructor

**Written Assignments:****Questions**

Once a week during eight weeks of the term (first week required, last week not possible) students need to select one article or chapter for which you will answer a set of questions in no more than 2 pages total typewritten (12 pt. type, 1 inch margins, double-spaced) as follows:

1. What is the central thesis of the author(s), that is, what is s/he trying to prove? What theoretical framework is being used? Do you see any unconscious bias here?
2. Are there significant differences in the impact of colonialism in this case on women and men (this applies to both colonized and colonizers)? What are they, if so?
3. How are the gender differences discussed in 2. connected to the form of colonialism being described here? The form of colonialism is related strongly to when it occurred--pre-or post-industrialization and the presence or absence of white settlers.

If you want, your answers may be in outline form (you have about a maximum of one paragraph to answer each question). If you have problems with a question for a reading--it is not answered or seems irrelevant--write n.a. You may also respond with more questions if that seems appropriate. Occasionally you will see NQ on the syllabus, which means no questions may be done on that reading. There is no term paper.

**Short Exercises**

On the syllabus there are asterisks next to a series of short exercises you are expected to complete as we go along. They are due on the date where they are listed. **All essays will be graded according to the SCOR sheet attached to this syllabus.**

**Class Participation and Facilitating**

Students are expected to participate in a lively and informed manner in class discussions, and to, in partnership with one other student, facilitate the class discussion on one occasion. This means that you are expected to be especially on top of the readings for that day, and to plan with your partner an approach to discussing the materials. This should include formulating a set of questions and anything else you think would be helpful. Your grade for this exercise forms a third of the class participation grade. Sessions marked **IF** will be facilitated by the instructor.

**Colonial Film Representations**

An important aspect of this class is attention to images of colonized and colonizer peoples, including films. Once every two weeks this class will view a film with direct relevance to colonial experiences and/or colonizer representations. You will do an analysis of these colonial representations/experiences for two of these films to be handed in no later than the next class session (this will replace your reading questions for that week). In that analysis please answer questions 2 and 3 as for the readings and replace 1 with the following: what assumptions about colonialism and gender are evident in the film? If you want you may also add other observations you want to make and use three pages instead of two. We will show the films at a mutually agreed time if they do not fit into the class schedule. The film schedule is as follows:

Week 2: *The Couple in the Cage*

Week 4 *The Battle of Algiers*

Week 6 *Passage to India*

Week 8 *Warrior Marks*

**Your grade will be based on the questions (35%), the short exercises (35%), and class participation/facilitating (30%).**

**\*\*All students must be officially enrolled in the course by the end of the second full week of the quarter. No requests to add the course will be approved by the department chair after that time. Enrolling officially and on time is solely the responsibility of each student.**

### **Class Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>
Jan. 6	Introduction and Organization	
Jan. 8	<b>Theory</b> Defining colonialism: Theories regarding colonialism/imperialism <b>IF</b>	Reader: Wolfe (everyone), choice of Said/Smith Ch.3 (see end of reader), or Rai, Ch.2
Jan. 13	Theory as if women mattered <b>IF</b>	Reader: Etienne and Leacock, Intro.; choice of: Said&Spivak/Mallon or Rai, ch. 3
*Hand in your own definition of colonialism (maximum one paragraph), then state which of the readings you found most helpful in developing it and why (max. 1 page).		
Film: <i>The Couple in the Cage</i>		
Jan. 15	<b>Experiences of the Colonized: Comparative and Historical Perspectives</b> Growing up under colonialism <b>IF</b>	Kincaid, <i>A Small Place</i> , entire NQ
Jan. 20	Latin America	Reader: Burkett, Behar
Jan. 22	Africa I	Reader: Van Allen, Mullings
Jan. 27	Africa II	Reader: Gengenbach, Tashjian and Allman
*Hand in two pages comparing and contrasting colonized women's experiences in two different countries/cultures. What explains the differences?		
<b>OR</b>		
*Apply the theory you find most useful from our Jan. 8, 13 deliberations to one of the examples we looked at from Jan. 15 to 27.		
Jan. 29	<b>Gender and White Settler Colonialism</b> White settler colonialism-definitions, stages	S&Y: Ch. 1; reader: Janiewski
Feb. 3	North America	S&Y: Ch. 5; reader: Perdue or Sparks
*Hand in two pages analyzing the U.S. as a white settler colony.		

- Islam, Algeria and Sexuality**
- Feb. 5 Colonial postcards-gendered perspectives Reader: 4 chs. (your choice) of Alloula, Mathur
- Film: *Battle of Algiers*
- Feb. 10 Algeria, Soviet Central Asia Reader: Fanon, Peace Corps; S&Y: Ch. 10  
**IF**
- Feb. 12 Sexuality Reader: Stoier, Hunt, Robertson
- Film: *Warrior Marks*
- \*Hand in two pages in which you analyze colonial voyeurism and its causes (don't forget Said).
- Colonized and Colonizer Women's Relations, Sexual Fears**
- Feb. 17 The White Woman's Burden I Reader: Burton, Jayawardena, *White Woman's Other Burden*, pp. 1-13, 21-51
- Feb. 19 The White Woman's Burden II Reader: Jayawardena, pp. 91-103, 221-28, Ch. 17 or 18, 261-68, Woollacott
- Film: *Passage to India*
- Feb. 24 The servant 'problem' Reader: Burkett, Knapman, Enloe
- \*Hand in a page analyzing why 'female solidarity' failed to cross race/class/ethnicity barriers under colonialism.
- Contemporary Colonialisms**
- Feb. 26 Women, the last colony? Reader: Nash, Bennholdt-Thomsen
- \*Hand in 1 paragraph each embodying gendered definitions of neo-colonialism and post-colonialism, with a brief footnoted discussion of how you derived the definitions.
- Mar. 2 India Reader: Mies, *Lacemakers of Narsapur*, pp. 72-146
- Mar. 4 Israel/Palestine/Iraq S&Y: Ch. 11; Iraq--class choice
- \*Hand in two pages comparing the 'options' available to colonized women under colonialism and neo-colonialism and the possible outcomes of each action they might take in terms of how it would affect their situation for better or for worse. Do it in table form. One column should include a list of examples of each option referring to the course readings.
- Mar. 9 Overthrowing the system? Zimbabwe Reader: Nhongo-Simbanegavi, Schmidt
- Mar. 11 Neo/postcolonial feminism? Culture wars from Africa to Afghanistan Reader: Mohanty, Howard, and IF James/Robertson or Seierstad NQ
- \*Hand in two pages describing what you think are the most pressing contemporary problems involving women and colonialism.

Mar. 16 Whose voices? Listening.  
Decolonizing methodology

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Reader: Russo, Trinh Minh-ha., IF  
and Rai, chs. 5-6 (pp. 159-216), or  
Smith, Ch. 8 NQ

**\*Hand in four or five pages analyzing the question, if Western feminism is a manifestation of neo/colonialism, can a transnational feminist post-colonial movement exist? Should it? What relationship should Western women have with women in developing countries? Try to develop your own perspective on this issue taking into consideration the assigned readings (cite them) for this date and other course materials..**