

WS 505 Feminist Analysis in Global Perspective

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TR 5:30-

7:20

354 CC

Spring 2006

Introduction

This course has two main objectives. The first is to introduce students to some of the problems, experiences, and agency of women in countries often referred to as the "Third World." These countries are located primarily in the southern hemisphere.

The second, even more important, objective is to improve our capacity for critical thinking when doing cross cultural analysis. Students will apply feminist conceptual tools to assess a) the representation of women and issues by women themselves and by others, and b) students' own interpretations of and reactions to readings, films and class discussion. That is, students will be asked to turn the analytical lens on themselves and their own cultures to identify factors that influence their interpretations and reactions to writings/films by/about Third World women.

This will be a partnered course. That is, the instructor and students will share responsibility for the day-to-day dynamics of the course, including class discussion. Because of this, attendance is critical as is coming prepared to discuss the day's assignments.

We will use three narratives in book form and an electronic coursepack of readings. There will be occasional handouts and I will e-mail news items and questions to help prepare for class discussions.

Texts (2-3 copies of books also are on reserve at the Main Library)

Shaarawi, Huda. *Harem Years: Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist*. The Feminist Press, 1987. (Trans. and background discussion by Margot Badran)

Barnes, Virginia Lee and Janice Boddy. *Aman: The Story of a Somali Girl*. Vintage Books, 1994.

Tula, Maria Teresa. *Hear My Testimony: Maria Teresa Tula, Human Rights Activist of El Salvador*. South End Press, 1994 (Trans. and background discussion by Lynn Stephen)

The *Electronic Coursepack* can be found under my name through a link to "e-reserves" for Prof/Courses that can be found on the OSU Library's OSCAR page. Not all items are listed in the exact order in which they are to be read. Items on e-reserve are designated on the syllabus by an @

Some readings are marked on the syllabus as "required" and some as "optional." Everyone is responsible for doing ALL required readings.

Course Requirements/Expectations

3 two-part Essays - 45%

Class participation (discussion, workshops, attendance) - 25%

Homework assignments - 15%

Final essay - 15%

Essay Assignments

Additional instructions for essays are provided at the end of this syllabus.

Essays will be graded on clarity, thoughtfulness, insight, accurate use of readings, application of conceptual tools in the analysis, and how well the essay fulfills the expectations for the assignment. *Analysis, use of course concepts, and critical thinking are a must.* Frequent grammar and spelling errors may lower the grade.

Individual papers/essays will be assessed both in comparison to an expected *standard* and to the overall quality of all papers/exams in the class. In the interest of fairness when comparing papers, I may take into account factors such as experience (beginning undergrad, advanced undergrad). *My expectations increase over the three assignments since I assume that your skills improve.*

All written assignments must be typed or word processed in a reasonable sized font such as Times Roman 11 or 12 with *no more* than 1 inch margins all around the page (page numbers may be outside the margin). Paragraphs should be indented and there should be no blank lines between paragraphs. The text can be single spaced, space and a half, or double spaced. The title and your name should be single spaced and start 1 inch from the top of the first page.

There should be a descriptive title and every paper should begin with a short paragraph or some opening sentences that state the objective or focus of the paper. This statement and the descriptive title will provide both you and me with a "road map" that can make it easier to follow the flow and logic of the paper and your arguments. Be sure to explain what you mean throughout rather than leave interpretations up to the reader. Make connections between your ideas throughout.

Word limits (lengths) are given with essay instructions. Because font sizes and variable line spacing affect number of pages required, suggested lengths for essays are based on number of words, not number of pages. Use your word processing software to do a word count. Print the word count at the end of the paper. Excessively short or excessively long papers are strongly discouraged. Please work within the suggested word limits. These instructions help assure fairness in evaluations by promoting comparable lengths; suggested lengths provide adequate space for a thoughtful and reasoned essay.

Grades will be discounted for late assignments unless you get my permission for an extension prior to the due date.

Warning: each student is responsible for keeping a copy of her/his paper in her/his possession. In the unlikely event that a paper is lost or damaged, this is the necessary proof it was completed on time.

Papers may be handed in on the due date during class OR you may e-mail your paper to me by the due date. When I receive it, I will send an e-mail saying "Got it." *If you do not get this e-mail message back from me, then I did not get the paper. You should contact me immediately.*

You do not need to provide full references for course readings. Simply refer to the author and an abbreviated title in the text ("Aman book, p. XX"). Page numbers are important so that I can go back and check what you are referring to in your essay. If you find it necessary to include full references, these should be single spaced on a separate, added page and should not be included in the word count.

All papers should draw from course materials primarily. There is no need to do library research or to look for outside readings. If material in another course is useful to your analysis, then limit the space given to it and emphasize course materials.

Participation

You start out with an A. It is up to you to keep it!!

Homework

There are 2 required homework assignments. Homework assignments help you prepare for class discussion. They will be graded U, S-, S, and S+. They will be very short. Homework assignments will not be accepted after the due date.

Class discussions

I will provide different means for participating in class. These include your voluntary participation in discussion, calling on you, breaking down into workshops or group discussions, acting as reporter or notekeeper for a discussion, sending news items to share with class members, etc.

Norms and Policies

- All assignments must be handed in on the due date unless there is a verifiable emergency (written proof is required and I will contact the writer to verify) or an extension has been approved before the due date. Students need to talk to me as soon as they realize there may be a problem; in case of illness or accidents, have someone else notify me immediately. Missed classes and late papers cannot be made up. Any unexcused late paper will be subject to a grade reduction of 4% for each week day or weekend day that it is late without prior permission.
- Any suspected plagiarism will result in loss of grade for the assignment and the student will be turned in to the appropriate university officials.
- Vacations and family gatherings will not be considered a legitimate reason for missing class or a due date. Work schedules should be arranged to avoid conflict with class participation. If you know of conflicts or potential problems, please talk to me as soon as possible. I will try to work with you to resolve the problem.
- Students with special needs should let me know as soon as possible. I will work with you and the staff at OSU Disability Services at 150 Pomerene Hall.

Networking

- Check your e-mail frequently. I will send out information about on- and off-campus events that are relevant to the course and the extra-credit assignment, send out answers to frequently asked questions, provide advice and feedback on assignments, send out notices of any emergencies or unforeseen events, share news items related to class, etc
- Feel free to send me e-mail announcements to circulate to the class or with questions that you may have. And feel free to contact me about anything you need to discuss. You can contact me by e-mail, by phone, or come to see me during office hours or by appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: all required readings should be read *prior to Tuesday of the week for which they are assigned unless otherwise indicated*. I suggest you start reading books early, especially Shaarawi and Tula.

Week 1: March 28-30 INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST ANALYSIS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

We will discuss the organization and objectives of the course and will begin to define and work with some of the basic concepts we will use in the course

Tuesday: course business and handing out of materials

Handouts: [these introduce one of our basic concepts and will be revisited throughout the course; so keep them handy]

Excerpts from

Chilla Bulbeck on the concept of world traveling and seeing ourselves through the eyes of others. From *Re-Orienting Western Feminisms: Women's Diversity in a Postcolonial World*. Cambridge University Press, 1998: 84-5, 211-216.

Christine Sylvester on world traveling "African and Western Feminisms: World-traveling the Tendencies and Possibilities." *SIGNS* 20, 1995:944-49

Thursday:

FILM "Third World Women"

Required Readings for Thursday:

Have looked over Bulbeck and Sylvester.

©Ong, Aihwa. "Colonialism and modernity: Feminist re-presentations of women in non-Western societies." Pp. 372-381 in *Theorizing Feminism: Parallel Trends in the Humanities and Social Sciences*, edited by A. Herrmann & A. Stewart. Boulder: Westview, 1994. 8 pp.

©Moser, Caroline. "Gender planning in the Third World: Meeting practical and strategic gender needs." Pp. 158-171 in Tina Wallace & Candida March, eds. *Changing Perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development*. Oxfam America, 1991. 13 pp. (Will help you prepare for the film discussion; focus on development approaches)

Week 2: Apr 4-6 MORE ON REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN'S LIVES AND NEEDS

Homework Assignment for Thursday: 1-2 page, single-spaced comment on representation of women in Van Allen OR Stone/James. Additional instructions at end of syllabus.

Required Readings for Tuesday: [again, basic concepts we will use throughout the course]

Review Bulbeck and Sylvester handouts.

©Kandiyoti, Deniz. "Bargaining with patriarchy." Pp. 86-92 in *The Women, Gender & Development Reader*, edited by N. Visvanathan, L. Duggan, L. Nisonoff & N. Wieggersma. London: Zed Books, 1997. 6 pp.

We also will work with handouts on world traveling.

©Stewart, Abigail J. "Toward a feminist strategy for studying women's lives." Pp. 11-35 in *Women Creating Lives: Identity, Resilience and Resistance*, edited by C. Franz & A. Stewart. Westview, 1994.

Required Readings for Thursday: [read both, write on one for homework assignment]

©Van Allen, Judith. "'Aba riots' or Igbo 'women's war'? Ideology, stratification, and the invisibility of women." *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change*, edited by Nancy Hafkin & Edna Bay. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1976. 14 pp.

©Stone, Linda and Caroline James. "Dowry, bride-burning, and female power in India." *Women's Studies International Forum* 18, 2, 1995: 125-135. 9 pp.

Week 3: Apr 11-13 WOMEN & AGENCY IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

FILM Tuesday "Small Happiness" (1 hr length)

Required Readings for Tuesday:

We will continue to work with concepts from earlier weeks. Review Kandiyoti on the patriarchal bargain, Moser's practical/strategic needs, Stewart's strategy for studying women's lives.

©Wolf, Margery. "Chinese Women: Old Skills in a New Context." Pp. 157-172 in *Women, Culture and Society*, edited by M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere. Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1974. 16 pp.

Thursday :

We will continue our discussion of the film and of Chinese women's agency, interests, and oppression; the patriarchal bargain; social change in China; and representation. We will continue discussing key concepts and how to evaluate studies of women in Third World countries.

Required Readings for Thursday:

Judd, Ellen. "Men are more able." *Pacific Affairs* 63,1, 1990: 40-61.

Week 4: Apr 18-20 HAREM YEARS: A MEMOIR

ESSAY 1 DUE Thursday

Read entire book (including Margot Badran's chapters) to discuss this week: *Harem Years*

Week 5: Apr 25-27 RETHINKING NOTIONS OF OPPRESSION AND AGENCY: THE STRUGGLE OVER VEILING & ISLAM

Required Readings for Tuesday:

©Abu Odeh, Lama. "Post-colonial Feminism and the Veil: Thinking the Difference." *Feminist Review* 43, Spring 1993: 26-37. 11 pp.

©Hoodfar, Homa. "Return to the veil: Personal strategy and public participation in Egypt." Pp. 320-325 in *The Women, Gender & Development Reader*, edited by N. Visvanathan, L. Duggan, L. Nisonoff & N. Wiegersma. London: Zed Books, 1997. 5 pp.

©Del Collins, Marla. "To veil or not to veil?" *Women and Language* XXVI, 1, 2003:61-72. 11 pp. [Give this one a quick read and we will critique it in class]

Readings for Thursday:

Review course concepts and Ong article

©Osman, Ghada. "Back to basics: The discourse of Muslim feminism in contemporary Egypt." *Women and Language* XXVI, 1, 2003: 73-78. 5 pp.

©Sedghi, Hamideh. "Third World feminist perspectives on world politics." Pp. 89-105 in *Women, Gender and World Politics: Perspectives, Policies and Prospects*, edited by Peter Beckman & Francine D'Amico. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1994. 15 pp.

Week 6: May 2-4 AMAN'S STORY

FILM "Fire Eyes" Thursday

ESSAY 2 DUE Thursday

Read book (including anthropologists' comments) to discuss this week

Week 7: May 9-11 EMPOWERMENT and the POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD

FILM Tuesday "Community"

FILM Thursday "Maria's Story"

Required Readings Tuesday:

©Ray, Raka. "On engendering a better life." Pp. 107-111 in K. Bhavnani, et al, eds. *Feminist Futures*. Zed, 2003. 5 pp.

©Rowlands, Jo. "Empowerment examined." Pp. 86-92 in D. Eade, ed. *Development and Social Diversity*. Oxfam, 1996. 6 pp.

Required Readings Thursday:

©Navarrete, Maria Ofelia. "Maria's Stories." Pp. 22-30 in *Feminist Futures*, ed. by K. Bhavnani, et al. Zed, 2003. 8 pp.

©Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "Lifeboat ethics: Mother love and child death in Northeast Brazil." Excerpt reprinted from *Natural History* 98, 10, 1989. 5 pp.

Week 8: May 16-18 MARIA TERESA TULA: A TESTIMONIAL

ESSAY 3 DUE Thursday

FILM Thursday "Arpilleras"

Read entire book (including Stephen's chapters) to discuss this week

Optional: ©Lynda Marin. "Speaking out together: Testimonials of Latin American women." *Latin American Perspectives* 18, 1991:51-68. 17 pp. [a good analysis of testimonial literature as a political tool and of differences between women's and men's testimonials]

Week 9: May 23-25 ANALYZING LESBIAN LIVES

Homework assignment for Thursday: Jot down notes on what you find out about lesbian organizing on the internet. Be ready to discuss what you found in class. And be ready to discuss how easy or difficult it was to find information on lesbians and lesbian organizing in a country [in the global South] of your choice.

FILM Thursday "DYKE TV"

Required Readings for Tuesday:

©Dorf, Julie and Gloria Careaga Perez. "Discrimination and the tolerance of difference: International lesbian human rights." Pp. 324-33 in J. Peters & A. Wolper, eds. *Women's Rights Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives*. Routledge, 1995. 9 pp.

©King, Katie. "There are no lesbians here: Lesbianisms, feminisms, and global gay formations." Pp. 33-45 in A. Cruz-Malave & M. Manalansan, eds. *Queer Globalizations*. NYU Press, 2002. 12 pp.

©Adam, Barry. "Globalization and the mobilization of gay and lesbian communities." Pp. 166-79 in P. Hamel, et al., eds. *Globalization and Social Movements*. Palgrave, 2001. 13 pp.

Readings for Thursday:

Use the internet to find out about lesbians' struggle for human rights, problems faced in specific countries, laws and persecution, and advances made (i.e., in South Africa in recent years).

Some sources of internet information:

International Lesbian and Gay Association (this website has a wealth of information on regional issues, organizing, networks, conferences, reports, etc.) <http://www.ilga.org/>

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (this is a great website and you can find a complete copy of Rachel Rosenbloom and Charlotte Bunch's book *Unspoken Rules: Sexual Orientation and Women's Human Rights*. You can click on it chapter by chapter to read about women's experiences in different countries. Choose a couple of countries to read about for class discussions. You also will find reports by The International Tribunal on Human Rights Violations Against Sexual Minorities and many other interesting reports on lesbian activism, legal reform initiatives, human rights watches, etc.) <http://www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc/section.php?id=56> Then go to "Publications and resources" and click on "reports." Click on Unspoken Rules (then specific countries) and any other report that interests you.

World March of Women--Information document on the rights of lesbians Information on the campaign for "lesbian rights are women's rights are human rights" and discussions of challenges. http://www.marchmondiale.org/en/di_lesbi/di_02.html

Week 10: May 30-June 1 POSSIBILITIES FOR TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SOLIDARITY

FINAL ESSAY DUE *next Monday, June 5. E-mail it to me by 5:30 or have it in my mailbox at the Women's Studies office by 4:30 pm.*

Required Readings:

©Narayan, Uma. "Essence of culture and a sense of history: A feminist critique of cultural essentialism." *Hypatia* 13, 2, Spring 1998: 86-106. 20 pp.

©Ferguson, Ann. "Resisting the veil of privilege: Building bridge identities as an ethico-politics of global feminism." Pp. 189-207 in U. Narayan & S. Harding, eds. *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial and Feminist World*. Indiana Univ. Press, 2000. 17 pp. Discussion will focus on pages 190-92 and 198-203 ONLY.

Thursday:

Come ready to discuss how to understand women and forge transnational alliances without being essentialist, orientalist, imperialist, etc. We also can discuss the editors/co-authors/translators of the three books!

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Note: See detailed instructions on style and criteria for grading essays at beginning of syllabus.

Homework Assignment Week 2

Using one of the required readings for Week 2 (Van Allen or Stone and James) and taking into account both Kandiyoti and Stewart articles, write 1-2 pages, single spaced (no more than 500 words) on some aspect of the representation of women in the article or on evidence presented for women's agency under patriarchy. You are free to decide what to write and how to approach it. Use this assignment to prepare yourself to participate in our class discussion. You may find one of the following questions useful to think about: What kinds of trade-offs do women seem to have in this society? That is, what do they get in exchange for what they give up? All women or some women? OR Assuming women always have some agency (room to maneuver) in all cultures, what do you see as the most important aspects of women's agency here and the most important limits to women's agency? OR do you identify strengths or problems in the representation of women in the article?

Homework Assignment Week 9

Prepare 1-2 pages (no more than 500 words) on what you find out about lesbian organizing on the internet. Be ready to discuss what you found in class. Can you tie this info to any of the articles?

TWO PART ESSAY 1 - Huda's Story

Follow stylistic instructions in the syllabus. This Two-Part Essay should be around 1200 words (but no more than 1300) divided about 2/3 to 3/4 on Part 1 and about 1/4 to 1/3 on Part 2 of the assignment. Base your essay on Huda's memoirs and the commentary and background given by the editor. Give word count at end.

It will be helpful to my reading of your essay if, when you refer to a specific incident or quote, you put the page number in parentheses. Example (p. 12).

Part 1: Huda as a "lens" to herself and her society

Use some of the concepts we have been discussing in class to help you in reading Huda's story. Some may be more appropriate than others. Be selective.

In reading Huda's story, try to answer some the following questions. You probably won't have space to address each and every one of them in the essay and you may not even want to, but asking yourself about them should be helpful and can give you ideas about how to focus the essay. This part of the essay should focus on Huda and her experiences as a means for understanding her and the context within which her feminism emerged. These questions will prepare you well for the class discussion.

For whom was Huda writing? How do you think this affected what she wrote? What seems to be missing from Huda's story? That is, what information would you think was important to her life and experiences but you did not find included in this edition of her writings? What was her gender role (expected behavior and personality traits)? How accepting did she seem of expectations? What did she object to? Did she make efforts to control her life and choices? If so, did her efforts constitute a rejection and attempt to overthrow constraints or did she strategize within constraints? What role do gender vs. other characteristics of Huda's place in society (race, class, other) seem to play in who she is, how she behaves and the values she holds?

Part 2: Your cross cultural analysis and reactions (lens to yourself). This should be a clearly identified separate section of your essay.

Consider the following questions when writing about your analysis and reactions. Do not try to cover all of them. Choose the question(s) that can help you formulate ideas for turning the lens on yourself (to analyze your values/beliefs/reactions).

In reading about Huda, reflect on yourself, your understanding of her, the intellectual and emotional responses you have to her story and to her as a person. Assess your own subjectivity and any problems you might have had in attempting to "suspend your subjectivity."

Can you relate to Huda? What about your subjectivity helps you or is an obstacle to your ability to relate? Do you like Huda? Why or why not? What do you like the most, the least? Why do you think you respond to Huda as you do?

Why was Huda called a "feminist" and how do her behavior and her values fit your understanding of the concept of feminist?

Huda has very strong values and opinions and is not afraid to express them. What do you think she would approve or disapprove of in your life or values? Why?

What seems to be contradictory about her values and her lifestyle? Does the time in which she lived help you accept some of those contradictions or not? How do the time and place in which you live affect your responses?

TWO PART ESSAY 2 - Aman's Story

Follow stylistic instructions in the syllabus. This Two-Part Essay should be around 1200 (but no more than 1300) words divided about 2/3 on Part 1 and about 1/3 on Part 2 of the assignment. Base your essay almost entirely on Aman's story though you can use the comments made by the authors about her. Give word count at end.

It will be helpful when you refer to a specific incident or quote if you put the page number in parentheses. Example (p. 12).

Part 1: Aman as a "lens" to herself and her society

Use the concepts we have been discussing in class to help you in reading Aman's story. Some may be more appropriate than others. Remember the following principles of feminist analysis as you read and write: focus on gender & patriarchy to understand women's experiences; focus on family and other social institutions as sites of patriarchy; focus on the intersection of gender, race, class, age and other differences; focus on women's agency, listen to their voices.

Some of the following questions/issues may help you in reading and writing about the book. Do not try to cover all of them.

Aman is telling her story for an audience--us. What does she want us to think and feel about her and about Somali culture and social organization? What seem to be Aman's values, prejudices, dreams? What does Aman's description of her life tell us about society's expectations for women of her class and ethnic group? What did she accept or reject? How does Aman seem to view traditions and rules? What do you learn about colonialism and the way Somalis felt about it? Do there seem to be mechanisms built in to the culture or something about social change or colonialism that you think might have allowed women some measure of freedom or room to maneuver or rebel--or the opposite, that led to greater control over them? How was Aman able to rebel and get away with it? How typical do you think she was? Who seemed to have a strong impact on the kind of girl and woman Aman became? What events seemed to have an important impact on her development as a woman? Why did she hide her identity in the book?

You won't have space to address each and every one of these questions in the essay and you may not even want to, but asking yourself about them should be helpful and can give you ideas about how to focus the essay. They also will help you to participate in the class discussion.

Part 2: Your cross cultural analysis and reactions (lens on yourself; focus on your own subjectivity and attempts to "suspend" it; you might also want to focus on why you sympathize/empathize with or judge Aman; you also could look at your culture through her eyes).

Consider the following questions when writing about your analysis and reactions. You may not be able or even want to cover all in this part of the essay, but they will help you formulate ideas for your writing. Do you like Aman? Why or why not (what is it about you and about her)? How do you think Aman wants you to feel about her and her culture (what passages lead you to conclude this)? What do you think about comments she makes about people who are not Somalis? Are there things about your values, lifestyle, or American cultural practices that Aman would disapprove of? Do her experience and viewpoints lead you to look differently at any of your cultural practices? What did you learn about yourself and your perspective through your analysis of Aman's story?

TWO PART ESSAY 3 - Maria Teresa Tula's Story

Follow stylistic instruction in the syllabus. This two-part essay should be around 1200 (but no more than 1300) words divided about 2/3 on Part 1 and about 1/3 on Part 2 of the assignment. Give word count at end.

It will be helpful when you refer to a specific incident or quote if you put the page number in parentheses. Example (p. 12). You may bring in related readings or films when they help you analyze or shed light on Maria Teresa's experience and values.

Part 1: Maria Teresa as a "lens" to herself, her society and her movement

Use concepts we have been discussing in class to help you in reading Maria Teresa's story. Some may be more appropriate than others. You select the concepts that you find useful for your analysis. Remember the principles of feminist analysis as you read and write.

You will find some of the following questions useful for preparing to write your essay and to prepare you for class discussion. Maria Teresa is telling her story for an audience—us—and she used a genre called testimony or testimonial.

What does she want us to think and feel about her? About her women's group? About their cause? What do Maria Teresa's experiences tell us about the conditions in which she lives? Do you find any commonalities or shared experiences with other women's groups we have studied? Would Maria Teresa consider herself to be an extraordinary woman or an ordinary woman in extraordinary circumstances? What kind of life did she want to live versus the kind of life that she had to live? What were her goals and those of the women with whom she organized? Do you think she felt a contradiction in the personal side and the political side of her identity as mother and her exercise of social motherhood? How do issues of class, gender relations, and power come into play in the unfolding of her life?

You may not want to address each of these questions, but asking yourself about them should be helpful and can give you ideas about how to focus the essay. They also will help you to participate in the class discussion.

Part 2: Your subjectivity and reactions

This is another opportunity to focus on your own subjectivity and the conceptual skills you have acquired through this course.

Do you understand the decisions Maria Teresa made for herself and her children, the way in which she constructed her identity as mother? What conceptual tools helped you to understand Maria and the Co-Madres? Were you able to understand how motherhood is expressed by women in the Co-

Madres? Do you feel able to judge the choices that she made? How did you respond to Maria Teresa's attempts to influence you as a resident or citizen of the United States? What kind of response did her story provoke in you? Do you feel any sense of solidarity with her and what does this mean to you?

Final Essay

Write a final essay of approximately 900-1000 words [shorter!]

You have 2 options for this paper:

Option 1. Evaluate the "authors/editors/translators" or "autobiographers" of the three books we have read. Which author do you think did the best job of using a feminist approach to studying women's lives or which do you think imposed too much of herself on her discussion of the woman who was her subject? Explain the basis of your assessment by referring to discussions and concepts or readings that we have been working with all quarter. Support your arguments with examples from the book(s).

Option 2. Write your final essay on possibilities for global/transnational feminist alliances (and maybe your involvement in them!). You can focus on a particular issue if you want (ie., lesbian rights, sex trafficking, genital cutting, etc.). How might you approach or advise someone else to approach forging an alliance with a woman or women's group from the global South? What kind of interaction would be needed? Remember why Western feminists are so often criticized about their interactions and their theories! What can we do to be less "imperialist" or "less essentialist"? Is cultural relativism an adequate strategy? What about practices that some cultures condone? How can a Western feminist become involved? Draw on course readings and discussions and your responses to them!

COURSE CONCEPTS

In this course, we will be developing our skills in applying concepts useful to cross cultural analysis-- including turning our analysis on ourselves. Among the key concepts we MAY work with this quarter are the following:

feminist analysis, feminisms
orientalism, re-orienting
lens, filter
standpoint, location
situated, contextualized subjects
practical and strategic gender interests
traveling feminism
world traveling
representation
voice
oppression
social structure, agency
local, global, transnational
patriarchal bargain
identities, identity construction
bridge identity politics
WID/GAD approaches
universalism, modernism

postmodern, postcolonial, poststructuralist
solidarity, alliances
empowerment, power
cultural essentialism
cultural relativism

OVERVIEW OF THE QUARTER

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
1	Introduction to Feminist Analysis in Global Perspective	Continued Film
2	Representation	Continued Homework
3	Women & Agency in Cultural Context Film	Continued
4	Harem Years this week	Essay due
5	Rethinking Notions of Oppression and Agency: Veiling & Islam	
6	Aman's Story this week	Film Essay due
7	Empowerment Film	Politics of Motherhood Film
8	Maria Teresa Tula's Story this week	Film Essay due
9	Analyzing Lesbian Lives	Continued Film Homework
10	Transnational Feminist Solidarity	Continued

Final essay due next Monday