Spring 1-15-2004

WST 2309-003: Non-Western Cultures: Gender and Society

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Women Studies: 2309: Non-Western Cultures: Gender and Society
Spring 2004

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Office hrs: TR 1:00-2:00 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description:

In this course, we will consider the major social concerns and gender issues raised in twentieth century non-western literary works by men and women writers from Asian (India, Pakistan, China) and Middle-Eastern countries. Through their writings, we will explore issues of gender in relation to culture (which also will entail a discussion on class and race) in the above mentioned non-western countries. We will then go on to studying the impact of these issues on the treatment and position of men and women in these countries. By analyzing selected literary writings of non-western writers, we will trace the ways in which they complicate, critique, and subvert their cultural ideologies. Some of the questions that we will pursue are the following: How do issues of 'gender' and 'identity' manifest in these texts? How do non-western women define the term 'feminist emancipation'? Are their definitions homogeneous? What are the ideals/values and roles posited for non-western women and men by their respective societies and to what extent do they accept or negate these established norms? What is the rationale behind their acceptance and negation?

Course Requirements:

One class presentation on a single topic or work: 15%
One mid-term exam: 30%
One final paper, 5-7 pages: 40%
Active Preparation and Class Participation: 15%

Texts Required:

Nawaal Al-Saadawi. Woman at Point Zero
Stephen Alter and Wimal Dissanayake (eds.) The Penguin Book of Modern Indian Short Stories
Ambai. A Purple Sea
Eileen Chung. "The Golden Cangue"
N.J. Dawood (Trans.) The Koran
Anita Desai. Where Shall We Go This Summer
Altaf Fatima. The One Who Did Not Ask
Kalidasa. The Loom of Time
Rabindranath Tagore. Binodini
Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism
Susie Tharu and K. Lalita (eds.). Women Writing in India, volume II
Zhang Jie. "Love Must Not Be Forgotten"

Course Policies:

Discussion (participation) is an important component of this course. Your presence in class is important for everyone, but especially for you. More than three unexcused absences will bring your final grade down by 1%. Three late appearances equal one unexcused absence.
Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. For each day that the paper is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an 'A' essay due on Friday will be a 'F' by next Thursday. ALWAYS MAKE COPIES AND BACK UP YOUR WORK!

**Plagiarism Policy:**

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- "The appropriation or imitation of the language, of ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) -- has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

**Information for Students with Disabilities:**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accomodations, please contact the Co-ordinator of the office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Tentative Syllabus.**

**Week 1**

1/13- Introduction to the Course
1/15- Anita Desai's "A Devoted Son" from *The Penguin Book of Modern Indian Short Stories*

**Week 2**

1/20- Ambai's "A Kitchen in the Corner of the House" from *A Purple Sea*
1/22- Chhaya Datar's "In Search of Myself" from *Women Writing in India*, vol II

**Week 3**

1/27- continued, Rabindranath Tagore's *Binodini*
1/29- continued

**Week 4**

2/3- continued, Anita Desai's *Where shall We go this Summer*
2/5- continued

**Week 5**

2/10- Kalidasa's *Abhijnanasakuntalam* from *The Loom of Time*
2/12- continued, Vaidehi’s "An Afternoon with Shakuntala" from *Women Writing in India* Vol II

**Week 6**

2/17- continued, Zhang Jie's "Love Must Not Be Forgotten"
2/19- Eileen Chung's "The Golden Cangue"

**Week 7**

2/24- continued, Review for the mid-term exam
2/26- Mid-term Exam
Week 8

3/2- The Koran, Nawaal Al Saadawy's Woman at Point Zero.
3/4- continued

Week 9

3/9- continued, Altaf Fatima's The One who did not Ask
3/11- continued

Week 10

3/23- continued
3/25- continued

Week 11

3/30- Cheryl Johnson-Odim's "Common Themes, Different Contexts: Third World Women and Feminism" from Chandra Talpade Mohanty's Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism
4/1- Conferences for Final Paper and Class Presentations

Week 12

4/6- conferences
4/8- continued

Week 13

4/13- Class-Presentations
4/15- continued

Week 14

4/20- Class-Presentations
4/22- continued

Week 15

4/27- Class-Presentations
4/29- Final Paper due, Review