

Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology, OISE/UT

WOMEN, WAR, AND LEARNING

AEC 1146

Fall Session 2006

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE

There is no region of the world not engulfed in war and conflict. While it is easy to draw the borders of ‘zones of conflict’ or ‘war zones’, it is rather difficult to discern how these borders divide, save, protect or destroy new communities, identities, nations, and ethnicities. Even more difficult is the tracing of people’s displacement and dispersal as a result of war. For example, in Canada, in the last three decades most of the refugees and immigrants have come from the war zones of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This massive displacement from the three continents and the emergence of new diasporas pose a serious challenge to social institutions including the educational system. For instance, war-zone immigrants and refugees require social services from ESL to workforce integration, to access to higher education, which may bridge their lived experiences in ruptured times and spaces. To understand this complexity, we need theoretical positions, which can explain the conflictual, gendered, and racialized nature of this process, and its interconnectedness to the global structures of capitalism, imperialism and colonialism. This course will, thus, draw on theoretical positions such as Marxism, critical transnational feminism, and critical pedagogies.

The course will cover such general topics as war and violence, women’s participation and role in war and militarism, feminist peace, neo-liberal ideologies of ‘post-war’ reconstruction and ‘democracy,’ the role of women’s NGOs in re-building shattered lives of women in the aftermath of war, women anti-war resistance and activism, and women, violence and learning. More specifically, the course focuses on the impact of war-based violence on women’s learning, and the factors which enhance or impede women’s learning. While there is a vast literature on learning, we are just beginning to inquire about learning under condition of war, displacement and re-rooting. Accounting for the impact of war on women’s learning demands a focus on the role of ‘experience’ in the process of learning. Adult learning theories consider ‘experience’ as the critical element for learning. It has been argued that learning from an experience occurs when it personally affects the learner, either by resulting in an expansion of skills and abilities, sense of self and life perspective, or by precipitating a transformation that involves the whole person, and is also subjectively valued by the learner. This relationship between experience and violence has not yet been theorized in the literature on learning. Although there is no literature that inter-relates women to learning-war-diaspora, we try in this course to take a step beyond the

fragmented theoretical domain, and engage in analysis that draws on theoretical insights of (adult) education, women's studies, and diaspora studies. The approach will, therefore, be interdisciplinary.

There is unequal regional representation. Simply, it is impossible to cover the globe which is burdened with many war related issues. While the covering of war zones is selective, the course takes a theoretically integrated approach by linking the ubiquity of war and displacement with capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy, and the requirements of these interconnected systems to produce and reproduce globally.

Familiarity with critical feminist theories, adult education learning theories, diaspora theories, critique of resettlement and integration processes in Canada, and the political economy of war, capitalism, and imperialism are an asset for those who take the course. Extra reading and help will be provided for students who need it.

APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

In teaching/learning settings, I see my role primarily as an analytical and reflective practitioner, planner and facilitator. We all will be involved in a participatory learning effort; your experience and input are as significant as the accumulated knowledge on the topic. You are, therefore, expected to actively contribute to the learning process. Your learning needs and agenda will be incorporated in the course as well.

CLASS FORMAT

Class sessions will operate as seminars. In collaborative learning we depend on one another to make the experience rich and useful. Therefore, I expect you to attend all class sessions and to actively participate in discussions. In order to enrich your participation, you are expected to devote sufficient time to reading and accomplishing learning activities prior to class session.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Besides class participation, two other learning activities are considered: Monthly journals and a major research project.

Class Participation: The aim is to encourage more collaborative and active involvement in the process of learning. It will give you an opportunity to critically analyse and discuss some of the readings related to a topic of the course. The feedback from the class will, in turn, help you in shaping your ideas and thoughts on this course. Class Participation constitutes 10% of the total grade.

Monthly Journals: It will give you an opportunity to read and record your reflections on the assigned readings and class discussions. This engaged and closed reading of the literature will assist you in formulating your thoughts and articulating your theoretical approaches to the topic

of this course. You are expected to complete **three (3)** journals. There is no length limit. **Due dates: October 3, November 7, and November 28.** Each journal constitutes 15% of the total grade (total for 3 journals is 45%).

Research Paper: This learning activity will indicate your grasp of topics covered in this course, your ability to critique and apply theoretical knowledge. In addition to an adequate knowledge of theory, your paper should demonstrate good writing and research skills. You can be creative and innovative about this project. For example, you can use one of the following short stories books listed below to write a reflective paper where you draw on some of the theoretical debates covered in the weekly reading lists. An alternative is to view films or documentaries relevant to the subject of this course and write a reflective paper. The following books are available in the UT and OISE libraries and Toronto Women's Bookstore:

Urvashi Butalis (2002). *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir*. London: Zed Books.

Lalita Vasantha Kannabiran, Rama Melkote, Uma Maheshwari, Susie Tharu, and Veena Shatrucna (1989). *'We Were Making History...': Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle*. London: Zed Books.

Nuha Al-Radi (2003). *Baghdad Diaries: A Woman's Chronicle of War and Exile*. New York: Vantage Books.

Parin Dossa (2004). *Politics and Poetics of Migration: Narratives of Iranian Women from the Diaspora*. Toronto: Canada Scholar's Press.

Jennifer Langer (ed.) (2002) *Crossing the Border: Voices of Refugee and Exiled Women*. Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications.

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling website provides *Eye Witness* stories of Palestinian women.

There are also many NGOs and women's groups within the Toronto area active on issues related to this course. You may wish to visit them, to collect their resources and learn from their experience. These, among many others, include:

Canadian Tamil Women's Community Services
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torturers
Afghan Women's Association
Immigrant Women Health Centre
Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
Somali Women and Children's Support Network
Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre

The Internet can also be a valuable source of information for analysing, assessing, and critically engaging with official documents of international organizations such as various UN agencies,

Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and many women's groups. The following documents, for example, provide helpful information:

Amnesty International (2005). *Iraq Decades of Suffering: Now Women Deserve Better*. 37 pages.

Amnesty International (2005). *Afghanistan: Addressing the Past to Secure the Future*. 19 pages.

Amnesty International (2005). *Israel and the Occupied Territories: Conflict, Occupation and Patriarchy, Women Carry the Burden*. 36 pages.

The research paper is due no later than **Tuesday, December 12**. The length is maximum 20 pages, double spaced and typed. This learning activity constitutes 45% of the total grade.

Please keep a copy of all your assignments and put your phone number and email address on the covering page. Electronic version of assignments, that is, fax, email messages, or attachments will NOT be accepted.

Learning Evaluation

Class Participation	10%
Monthly Journal	45% (for three journals)
Research Papers	45%

SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS

Reading assignments include book chapters and articles from diverse sources. Other readings may be assigned during the conduct of this course. You are encouraged to bring other readings to the course. The readings are arranged under specific topics; however, all the topics are interconnected and they should be read as such. We may also cover topics other than the ones listed for each week. In planning the seminar readings, I have made arrangements for the use of additional resources including video, film, or documentary presentations or guest speakers.

September 12 & 19 The Condition of War

Selected Topics: How modern wars are linked with capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, militarism, and patriarchy? What analytical tools do we need to understand the nature of this interconnectedness? How to explain the relationship between war, economy, and the expansion of the 'culture of rights' and reconstruction industry? Is identifying 'neo-liberalism' as the ideological foundation for the condition of war adequate?

1. Fanon, Frantz (1999, re-print). "Excerpt from 'Concerning Violence': *The Wretched of the Earth*," in Steger, Manfred and Nancy Lind (eds.). *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York: St. Martin's Press: 157-168.
2. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (2003). "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial

discourses,” in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press: 17-42.

3. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (2003). “‘Under Western eyes’ revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles,” in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press: 221-251.

4. Enloe, Cynthia (2000). “How do they militarize a can of soup?” In Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women’s lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 1-34.

5. Long, Scott (2005). “Anatomy of a backlash: Sexuality and the ‘cultural’ war on human rights,” *Human Rights Watch World Report 2005*. New York: Human Rights Watch: 70-93.

September 26 War as a Capitalist, Colonialist & Imperialist Project

Selected Topics: The condition of war since September 11, 2001; colonial legacy of war, war as an imperialist project.

6. Documentary *Why We Fight* (2005)

7. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (2003). “Demystifying capitalism: Women workers and the politics of solidarity,” in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press: 139-168.

8. Daniel Volman (1998). “The militarization of Africa,” in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (eds.) *What Women Do in Wartime*. London: Zed Books:150-162.

October 3 The War on Women

Selected Topics: What does ‘cultural war’ mean? How the rise of religious fundamentalisms and nationalism is linked to the increase of violence against women? How ‘culture of terror’ and ‘security culture’ is affecting women?

9. Meintjes, Sheila, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (2001). “There is no aftermath for women,” in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds.) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books: 3-18.

10. Petchesky, Rosalind (2002). “Phantom towers: Feminist reflections on the battle between global capitalism and fundamentalist terrorism,” in Betsy Reed (ed.) *Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror*. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press: 357-372.

11. Helms, Elissa (2006) “Gendered transformations of state power: Masculinity, international intervention, and the Bosnian police,” *Nationalities Papers*, 34 (3): 343-361.

21. Abu-Lughod, Lila (2003) "Saving Muslim women or standing with them? On images, ethics, and war in our times," *INSANIYAAT*, 1 (3): 13 pages.
22. Zine, Jasmin (2006) "Between orientalism and fundamentalism: The politics of Muslim women's feminist engagement," *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, 3 (1): 2-24.
23. Hirschkind, Charles and Saba Mahmood (2005) "Feminism, the Taliban, and politics of counter-insurgency," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75 (2): 339-354.
24. Stabile, Carol and Deepa Kumar (2005) "Unveiling imperialism: Media, gender and the war on Afghanistan," *Media, Culture and Society*, 27 (5): 765-782.

October 31 Women's NGOs and the Neo-liberal Ideology of 'Democracy' and 'Reconstruction'

Selected Topics: Reading NGOization in the context of foreign policy. How do women participate in peace negotiation, reconstruction, and rights-based politics? How do NGOs capitalize on women's experience and knowledge as 'native informants' 'experts,' or 'skilled labour' for reconstruction, humanitarian projects, and re-building nation-states?

25. Lowenkron (2006) "The role of NGOs in the development of democracy,' Remarks to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 8.
26. *The Middle East Partnership Initiative Story 2005*
<http://mepsi.state.gov/outreach/index.htm>
27. Alvarez, Sonia (1999) "Advocating feminism: The Latin American feminist NGO 'Boom'," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 1 (2): 181-209.
28. Ewig, Christina (2004) "The strengths and limits of the NGO women's movement model: Shaping Nicaragua's democratic institutions," *Latin American research Review*, 34 (3): 75-102.
29. Hammami, Rema (2000) "Palestinian NGOs since Oslo: From NGO politics to social movements?" *Middle East Report*, No. 214: pp. 16-19 & 27 & 48.
30. Barakat, Sultan and Gareth Wardell (2000) "Exploited by whom? An alternative perspective on humanitarian assistance to Afghan women," *Third World Quarterly*, 23 (5): 909-930.

November 7 Women, War and Peace

31. Rehn, Elisabeth and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2002) *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-*

building. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), 155 pages.

November 14 Women, War, Violence and Learning

Selected Topics: How war and violence affect women's learning? How learning theories explain women's experience of war, displacement, resettlement, and diaspora? How to understand, assess, measure, or evaluate learning?

32. Horsman, Jenny (1999). "Chapter 1: Introduction": 17-34; "Chapter 2: What is 'Normal' in a violent society": 35-56; and "Chapter 4: Beyond 'normal' appearances: 'Hidden' impacts of trauma": 85-125, in Jenny Horsman, *Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence and Education*. Toronto: McGilligan Books.

33. Mojab, Shahrzad and Susan McDonald (2001). "Women, violence and informal learning," NALL Working Paper, No. 41. 20 pages

34. Adalberto Aguirre, Jr. And Brooke Johnson (2005). "Militarizing youth in public education: Observations from a military-style charter school," *Social Justice* 32 (3): 148-162.

35. Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera (2002) "The hidden casualties of war: Palestinian women and the second Intifada," *Indigenous Peoples' Journal of Law, Culture and Resistance*, 1 (1): 67-82.

November 21 Resistance and Survival Learning

Selected Topics: What is the significance of alternative learning models such as 'art-based' or 'in-formal' methods for women? What about learning for emancipation or liberation? How about revolution and national liberation as sites of learning?

36. Enloe, Cynthia (2004). "Being curious about our lack of feminist curiosity," in Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 1-9.

37. Porath, Sigal R. Ben (2003). "Radicalizing democratic education: Unity and dissent in wartime," *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*: 245-253.

38. Farr, Vanessa. (2000). "The pain of violence is a powerful silencer: African women writing about conflict," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* 19(4): 102 -108.

39. Meredith Turshen (1998). "Women's war stories," in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (eds.) *What Women Do in Wartime*. London: Zed Books:1-26.

40. Menon, Ritu and Kamla Bhasin (1998). "Picking up the pieces: Women rehabilitate women," and "learning to survive: Two lives, two destinies," in Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. New Delhi: Kali for Women: 167-225.

November 28

Learning in Diaspora

Selected Topics: How do women re-root themselves in diaspora? Diaspora and ‘hostland’ as new texts and sites of learning? How to theorize the emerging women’s organization from war zones in the diaspora and their transnational feminism?

41. Documentary *Partial Stories of “Displacement”* (2005)

42. Enloe, Cynthia (2004). “Conclusion: Decisions, decisions, decisions,” in Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women’s lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 288-399.

43. Afshar, Haleh (2003). “Women and wars: Some trajectories towards a feminist peace,” *Development in Practice*, 13 (2&3), May: 178-188.

44. Sideris, Tina (2001). “Problems of identify, solidarity and reconciliation,” in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds.) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books: 46-62.

45. Karam, Azza (2001). “Women in war and peace-building: The roads traversed, the challenges ahead,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 3 (1), April: 2-25.

December 5

Reflection, Closure, Party!

Greening Our Classroom

In support of the Department’s Environmental Policy, I encourage you to hand in your assignments on used paper, non-bleached recycled paper, and print double sided. Furthermore, please refrain from bringing disposable cups, etc. into the class.