Feminist activism has long been a global phenomenon. How do we understand feminist practices in various locations as well as the relationships between feminisms in the east and west, and the local and global? When racial relations, sexuality, and abortion right are important issues for feminists in the US, what are the major issues concerning feminists in other countries? Without assuming a universal course of development of women’s activism, this course adopts a comparative approach to the investigation of particular historical processes of women’s movements in three countries, the United States, India, and China. Focusing on the feminist activism in the three countries, this course attempts to ground our understanding of globalization in local history, and to present in a concrete way that feminisms have histories and meanings that extend far beyond the North American continent. By comparison, we also hope to illuminate the cultural parameters of each location that have shaped various feminist practices.

Personal narratives (in both textual and visual forms) of feminist activists from the three locations constitute the main body of texts for this course. Other readings and documentaries will provide historical backgrounds to these personal narratives. Students will be encouraged to actively participate in analyzing and comparing the textual and visual material in the process of learning diverse feminist issues crossing national boarders and from the personal to the political. This course presumes a willingness to engage in hard thinking, questioning, and respectful listening to the voices (spoken and written) of others.

**Required Books:**


**E-Reserves:**


Ping-Chun Hsiung et al. Chinese Women Organizing, Berg, 2001


Interview transcripts on C-Tools:

US: Taylor and Kramer, Kathy Cohen, and Holly Hughes, Andy Smith
India: Neera Desai, Vina Mazumda, and Flavia Agnes
China: Wang Cuiyu, Li Huiying, Ai Xiaoming, Ge Youli
Poland: Barbara Labuda, Anna Gruszczynska, Malgorzata Tarasiewicz

Grading:

1. Class participation: 30%

Your in-class participation will be an essential element of this course. We learn not only from our own individualized readings of the course materials, but also by hearing different ideas, reactions, critiques, and questions about them. I encourage you to speak up if you have questions about a particular reading. You are expected to complete the reading by each Thursday and be prepared for class discussion. Regular attendance and active participation in discussion are required.

In addition to regular participation in class, students will take turns to lead discussion by preparing discussion questions for the assigned reading.

2. Written exercises: 30%

One-page journal each week (20% total): In the journal you should state the argument of the reading, evaluate the kind of evidence used, and consider whether or not it advances your thinking about feminism. Or you may discuss the effectiveness of a personal narrative and assess the strength or weakness of an interview. This exercise aims at improving your ability of critical reading. You should email me your journals by Tuesday evenings.

One five-page essay (10%): Drawing on the insights from the books and interviews assigned for the first part of the term, you may discuss (1) the key cultural, political, and social factors that were specific to the US at a particular historical moment that have helped shape the US feminist agendas and practices; (2) in what ways these local practices are connected to global processes. The essay is due on Feb. 14.

3. Term paper: 40%

This is a research paper about a feminist organization selected by you. You should make the decision on which organization you want to study by the fourth week and submit an outline of your research paper by February 20. Your research methods may include interviewing and/or archival research. In the final paper, you are required to present a brief introduction of the history and structure of the organization, a discussion of its goals and activities, and an in-depth analysis of its strengths and limits in light of what we have learned from various feminist activities in different locations in this course. The goal of the term paper is to enable you to relate your textual learning to on-going feminist practices in a specific location for a better understanding of cultural and political dynamics and parameters in which feminists have taken action. The paper should not exceed 15 pages. It is due on April 20.
## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 5</td>
<td><strong>Introduction &amp; Film:</strong> Beyond Beijing—The International Women's Movement</td>
<td>Estelle Freedman, <em>No Turning Back</em>, Preface, and pp. 1-72</td>
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<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td><strong>The Global Stage and the Politics of Location</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Film:</strong> My feminism</td>
<td>Freedman, pp. 95-119, Adrienne Rich, “Notes Towards a Politics of Location” (E-reserve)&lt;br&gt;Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Feminist Encounters” (E-reserve)&lt;br&gt;Lata Marni, “Multiple Mediations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Transnational Reception” (E-reserve)</td>
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<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td><strong>Social Movements and Feminist Insurgence</strong></td>
<td>Boggs, Chapters 5-9&lt;br&gt;Rosen, Part Two&lt;br&gt;<strong>Video in class:</strong> Grace Lee Boggs</td>
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<td>Feb. 2</td>
<td><strong>Sexuality and Intersectionality</strong></td>
<td>Rosen, Part Three&lt;br&gt;Freeman, Chapter 11&lt;br&gt;Interview Transcript: Cathy Cohen&lt;br&gt;<strong>Video in class:</strong> Holly Hughes</td>
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<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td><strong>Feminism and Global Capitalism</strong></td>
<td>Rosen, Part Four&lt;br&gt;Freeman, Part Three&lt;br&gt;Interview Transcripts: Andy Smith, Taylor and Kramer&lt;br&gt;<strong>Video in class:</strong> Taylor and Kramer</td>
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<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td><strong>Colonial History and Feminism in India</strong></td>
<td>Lata Mani, “Contentious Traditions” (E-reserve)&lt;br&gt;Barbara Ramusack, “Women and Gender in South and Southeast Asia” (E-reserve)&lt;br&gt;Vina Mazumdar and Indu Agnihotri, “The Women’s Movement in India: Emergence of a New Perspective,”</td>
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Feb. 23  Multiple Voices and Diverse Organizing Strategies
   Raka Ray, Chapters 3-5
   Interview Transcript: Neera Desai
   Video in class: Vina Mazumda

March 2   Recess

March 9   Constraints and Possibilities
   Raka Ray, Chapters 6-9
   Interview Transcript: Flavia Agnes
   Film: Unlimited Girls

March 16  Nationalism and Feminism in China
   Film: From Confucius to Mao

March 23  Feminism and the Socialist State
   Wang Zheng, Chapter 5 & 8
   Tina Mai Chen, “Female Icons…” (E-reserve)
   Interview Transcript: Wang Cuiyu
   Film: From Mao to Fall Equality

March 30  Chinese NGOs and Transnational Feminism
   Hsiung et al. Chinese Women Organizing, Introduction, chapters 3 & 8 (E-reserve)
   Mallika Dutt, “Some Reflections,” (E-reserve)
   Wang Zheng, “Research on Women in Contemporary China,”(E-reserve)
   Interview Transcript: Ge Youli, Gao Xiaoxian.

April 6   Feminist Activism in the Post UN Conference on Women
   Interview Transcripts: Ai Xiaoming, Li Huiying, Zhang Lixi, Wang Xingjuan.
   Film: Vagina Monologues: Stories Behind the Scene

April 13  Cultural Parameters and Feminist Futures
   Pun Ngai, “Opening a Minor Genre of Resistance” (E-reserve)
   Wang, “Gender, Employment and…” (E-reserve)
   “Feminist Futures: Transnational Perspectives”(E-reserve)
   Film: The Global Assembly Line

April 20  Term paper due in my mailbox by 4:00 pm.