

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS PROJECT PODCAST SERIES:
CONTEXTUALIZING FEMINIST VOICES:
TEACHING WITH THE GLOBAL FEMINISMS PROJECT**

**Topic: Courses on Reproductive Justice
and Coalition Building**

**Host: Marisol Fila
Speaker: Patrick Grzanka**

**University of Michigan
Institute for Research on Women and Gender
1136 Lane Hall Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1290
Tel: (734) 764-9537**

**E-mail: um.gfp@umich.edu
Website: <http://www.umich.edu/~glblfem>**

© Regents of the University of Michigan, 2022

Music credit: Banjo Arba Minch Garden by Cooper Moore. Creative Commons.

https://freemusicarchive.org/music/Cooper-Moore/A_Retrospective_1990-2010/h_Banjo_Arba_Minch_Garden

Intro: Welcome to Contextualizing Feminist Voices: Teaching with the Global Feminisms Project. This series is focused on teaching, pedagogy, and uses of the archive in the context of the classroom. Designed with a special emphasis on educators, in each episode you will learn from instructors who have used the project's interviews in their courses, and about activities and resources for incorporating the archive into your class.

Marisol Fila: Today Dr. Patrick Grzanka, Professor of Psychology and Chair of the Interdisciplinary Program in Women, Gender, and Sexuality at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, joins us on the podcast. Dr Grzanka's interdisciplinary work explores the complex ways that social institutions such as health care, science, law, and education (re)produce harm at the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. The second edition of his edited book *Intersectionality: Foundations and Frontiers* was published by Routledge in 2019, and his next book traces the "born this way" wars—fierce debates about the origins of sexual orientation—in science, law, and the lives of sexual and gender minorities. He is active in various social movement organizations in Tennessee and currently serves as chair of the Board of Directors of Tennessee Advocates for Planned Parenthood.

MF: Thank you so much for making the time to meet with us, and provide your insights and your comments and your feedback on your classes. Our first question is, if you can briefly describe the course that you use the archives in.

Patrick Grzanka: Sure. So I talk about the Global Feminism Project probably in all of my courses. Even in graduate level research design, I'll find some way to drop some insight from the archive into class. But specifically the course that I probably lean on GFP the most is my Introduction to Women, Gender and Sexuality course. That's a two hundred level course at the University of Tennessee that serves as the introduction to the major, and I use a book that includes essays written by important feminist, queer, and trans study scholars to orient students to the field broadly. And the other text is actually my edited book "*Intersectionality: Foundations and Frontiers*," and I find that content from the Global Feminisms Project does a really nice job humanizing and illuminating these ideas for my students. And it's one of the most important things that I can do for young feminist scholars is to show them that the ideas, the kind of world changing ideas that they're encountering in our classes, were produced by actual people who have life histories, and who sometimes are a lot like them. And I think that that as an intervention can be really powerful. And that comes directly from my students who say, "It's amazing to actually see who these people are."

MF: Excellent. Thank you so much. And how do you use the material in the archives?

PG: Well, as I said before, I have mentioned interviews in the archive to students, really, since I probably first encountered the Global Feminisms Project which would have been probably late graduate school. So and for me, I've kind of had the archive on my radar for quite some time. But I thought specifically I'd tell you about the place of one of the interviews in my course, because I think it plays a really key role. So in my book "Intersectionality," which attempts to introduce kind of advanced undergraduate students, early graduate, early career graduate students, or really anyone seeking to understand more about intersectionality. It introduces the concept through both kind of what we might call canonical texts, and then more contemporary applications of intersectionality theory. And so one set of readings that I think is powerful and important for my students explores the concept of reproductive justice. So the framework, the human rights framework, that was developed by Black women in the US in the 1990s, and then expanded upon through a multi racial coalition of activists, women of color in particular, but also male allies who were critiquing liberal feminist reproductive rights frameworks for the single axis approach, as we might say, sort of in the business. The single access approach that they took, a gender-first or gender-only approach to reproductive rights activism, which in turn ignored or effaced the concerns of women of color, both in the US and worldwide, when it comes to the question of reproductive oppression. So in WGS 200, because reproductive justice has been a focus of my own work for quite some time, and because of the contemporary issues of reproductive injustice that we face in the United States in particular, but of course, worldwide as well, I tend to focus a bit on RJ [Reproductive Justice] in the course. And what's so great about the Global Feminisms Project is that there's this fabulous interview with Zakiya Luna interviewing Loretta Ross and Zakiya's work on the reproductive justice movement and coalition building has been really influential to mine. She conducted this work as part of her dissertation project, her first book on reproductive justice, and she also did a bit of work with Professor Elizabeth Cole, Liz Cole, also at the University of Michigan, where GFP is housed. And I use their work on this feminist concept of coalitions all the time. The interview with Loretta Ross is so particularly important because Loretta Ross is one of the founders and leaders of the reproductive justice movement and I have a reading in my book by Loretta Ross, a more contemporary article that explores what she calls Americanized fascism, and how reproductive injustice is a key part of that movement, and I also have a reading from Zakiya Luna about coalitions, and how reproductive justice groups negotiate sameness and difference across experience. And so in my class, all of this is to say that what I do with the interview is show clips in class, but also refer students to the transcript. And refer students to the archive, so that they see the connections between this kind of multi generational group of feminist scholar activists. And the interview I love for many reasons because you can google the history of the

reproductive justice movement and get pretty authoritative accounts very quickly if you go, for example, to Sister Songs' website. But the interview provides a sort of human side to the story that I think is really special. The way that Ross and Luna interact with each other exposes how you know the movement which has changed the world in so many ways wasn't an accident by any means. This is, you know, years of coordinated and thoughtful activism went into creating this transformative paradigm and catalyzing shifts in the way that we talk about, for example, contraception access and abortion rights in the United States and worldwide. But the interview reveals that there were very real people trying their best to make really consequential decisions and to negotiate conflicts in the movement which are inevitable. And I think that for students to see that, it doesn't just humanize something that can seem really abstract, but I think it makes tangible what it means when we say, "we work together in coalitions for intersectional social justice." I think that students can be, well not just students, I think sometimes we all can be intimidated by the enormity of movements that have changed the world. I'm thinking also about BLM [Black Lives Matter], for example, and it can seem like activism that's genuinely consequential. It's just totally out of reach, it's like there's no way. How could we possibly come up with an idea that big and ideal, that important, that it inspires so many others? And Loretta Ross and Zakiya Luna's interview is just a beautiful example of how two people in the movement can share their experiences from deeply different perspectives, and we can learn so much about movement building from the real stories. I mean, the theories are important, you know the framework is important. That's what I said I test my students on. That's what I want them to write about and be able to cite and reference. But the stories behind those ideas are equally powerful.

MF: Absolutely. You couldn't have said that better, and that's actually how I became interested in the archive, and also part of the project. So I think that you already touched on all of this idea with this last answer that you get to the way that you use to the course, and I mean the way that you use the archive in your course. But what do you think is most effective about the way you use the Global Feminisms materials?

PG: Well, I actually listened to another podcast, and I heard Liz Cole talking with you all about how she uses the archive, and I felt that she said it so well. I'm like embarrassed to give my own answer, because I was just prepping to say exactly what she said, but less eloquently.

I think that the archive is a profoundly valuable source of real people's experiences doing the work that we talk about in the WGS classroom or in feminist classrooms across the disciplines.

So when I say to students that one of the reasons why Liz Cole's scholarship is so important to me and other feminist psychologists is because she suggests that we might think about coalitions instead of identities as the cornerstone of intersectionality. And then we go into

the archive, and we can see people enacting coalitions rather than just describing them. I think that that's one of the many things that makes the archive so powerful. We talk about the unity of theory and practice all the time in social justice focused classrooms, that is spaces that really seek to use knowledge for positive social transformation. The Global Feminisms Project is an archive of translating profoundly important theoretical concepts into social action, and it's done so through personal life histories and narratives. That are just deeply compelling.

And again, I think it's impossible to overstate the importance of showing students the real people behind the big ideas because that's the politics of empowerment right there. I mean helping students see that, like you two could come up with something and energize people around the problem that actually results in a real world changing transformation. I mean, that's what I want all my students to feel.

MF: Definitely, and it goes back to what you were saying before that many times when we think about these big movements that really made a change in history, we feel that that's unreachable, or the leaders from that movement are like superheroes, that you see the power of the collective. And, as you are saying, the power of also coalition-building. Yeah, definitely. And one last question: Do you have any advice for others about pitfalls to avoid in using Global Feminisms materials or any difficulties to watch out for?

PG: No, not at all. What I would say is experiment, wander around the archive. Have fun. I think that's the stuff that's been the most informative to me in my work. What one of the things that I say to the students, you know, when I give them links to the interviews is, you know, poke around, check out the rest of it. I'm sure that most of them don't, they're busy, and they're trying to accomplish tasks, and you know. They're doing their homework, so to speak. I think of it as fun, but they think of it as work and a grade, but some of them probably do poke around, and some of them get exposed to other ideas from other countries outside the United States, or from activists that they've never heard of before, and that's again that sort of like that.

It's the stuff that happens in real lives that might not be written on a syllabus. But that is just as important. So no pitfalls to avoid. I would just encourage anyone who's thinking about incorporating the archive into their teaching to be open and creative, and to know that your students will probably find ways to draw inspiration from the archive that you can't capture necessarily in that assignment. So let them, you know, kind of run free with it.

MF: Thank you. Thank you so much, Dr. And thanks for sharing all of your teaching experience with the archive, with us and with the rest of the listeners of course, of the podcast.

PG: You are so welcome. You have me excited to be back in the WGS classroom again, and to think of new ways to use GFP in my work.

MF: Thank you again to Dr. Patrick Grzanka for sharing his time and experience with us today on the podcast. We know his insights will be valuable to instructors teaching courses on Women and Gender Studies with a focus on reproductive justice, coalition and movement building and multigenerational connections. As Dr. Grzanka emphasizes, using the interviews from the archive is an invaluable resource to humanize theory and to bring awareness to feminist activists, scholars and thinkers' histories and life experiences.

Outro: Thank you for listening to this episode of Contextualizing Feminist Voices: Teaching with the Global Feminisms Project, a podcast created by the Global Feminisms Project. The entire team hopes it will help you understand and incorporate the materials on the website into your class. If you liked this episode, check out the other podcasts in the series, as well as materials about countries, teaching resources, and interviews on the website.