

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS PROJECT PODCAST SERIES:
CONTEXTUALIZING FEMINIST VOICES:
THE LESSON PLANS**

Topic: Reproductive Rights/Reproductive Justice

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Andrea Huang: Hi Eimeel, thank you for speaking with me today! Can you please provide a brief overview of the lesson plan and its learning goals?

Eimeel Castillo: Sure! Thanks for inviting me to talk about this. So, this lesson plan is geared towards teaching students to go beyond the pro-choice/pro-life debate and think broadly about how what seems to be a very personal, intimate decision is in fact mediated by greater social forces. In that sense, it is inspired by the feminist motto of “the personal is political”. It introduces them to the concept of reproductive justice that originated from the U.S. Black Feminist thinking. From then, it was key to me that students were exposed and understand multiple feminist perspectives on reproduction that shaped the way in which these activists have conceived reproductive rights as linked to social justice struggles such as demands for better housing and childcare. Of course, one of the goals is that students discuss how women make decisions over their bodies and reproduction from a more holistic point of view.

AH: What are some of the proposed activities that instructors can find in the lesson plan?

EC: This lesson plan contains three activities and one final assignment. During the first exploratory activity, students do some freewriting. They narrate a personal story around making decisions on their own bodies and their health. This is because feminists have argued that our bodies are important sites of knowledge production and I wanted students to explore that potential through short personal narratives while growing up. During the second activity, students are introduced to multiple contexts and perspectives on reproduction and, very important, they get familiar with the concept of reproductive justice from the voice of prominent activist Loretta Ross. I think she brilliantly explains the concept and in a clear way for students to then use the concept in the following activity. The third activity consists of group work in which students analyze and debate legislation regarding abortion around the world using complementary resources such as timelines and maps (all of them are, of course, in the instructor’s package). Here the website is such a rich source because activists’ interviews allow students to appreciate geographical patterns or changes across time. The last exercise is the final assignment. Here, students test their understanding of the concept of reproductive justice and take the fictional role of a media analyst to evaluate a current reproductive rights campaign through the critical lens of a human rights approach to women’s health.

AH: Now, why would you say that this lesson plan is a helpful resource for instructors? Why did you create this lesson plan? And are there any adaptations that instructors can make of this lesson plan?

EC: I think, and this has been mentioned before, the lesson plans are extremely flexible to make modifications. During the design, I was aware of the ways they can be adapted to different courses and levels. For example, the first activity can easily be incorporated into an intro to women's health course or the second activity can definitely help students in courses about social justice debates. Also, within each lesson plan there are always suggestions on ideas on how to make it more survey-like or tailored to specific needs of the classroom. One thing that I wanted to say to instructors is that when they arrive at the topic of abortion, the activities were conceived as scaffolding, tiny steps to help set the ground for a productive discussion that goes beyond the controversy. I really hope that instructors find these previous necessary conversations useful to enter that discussion that can be difficult to have in classrooms.

AH: Thanks, Eimeel. Is there anything else that you would like to share about this lesson?

EC: Yes, I would like to add that similarly to the lesson plan on transnational feminisms, this lesson plan builds from the one developed around intersectionality. Not only because the concepts of reproductive justice and intersectionality come from Black feminist theory but also because they are closely linked to historical struggles to overcome oppression, and together they contribute to observing these structural forces as central to understanding individual experiences. So it could be paired with that lesson plan in a constructive way.