

**Global Feminisms Conference, Sept. 15, 2006:
Changing the World, Changing the Academy**

**USING GF PROJECT IN CLASSROOMS:
INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES (COLE)**

Introduction:

This session was framed around three key question/objectives. The session included both faculty, graduate students and undergraduates (including two who had never taken intro WS.)

- What are the advantages and disadvantages to the main ways of teaching Introduction to WS (global as a topic covered among many others such as women and work versus global perspectives infused throughout the course)?
- How would we make a module/unit for a course using these materials?
- What would a reading list for such a course include?

What are the advantages and disadvantages to the main ways of teaching Introduction to WS (global as a topic covered among many others such as women and work versus global perspectives infused throughout the course)?

- Items that came up in this discussion included the difference between “transnational” (as is in the title of Grewal/Kaplan’s Introduction to Women’s Studies textbook) and “global feminisms,” on which this project focuses.
- How can we ensure that if only one interview clip from China, India or Poland is used, that does not become representative of all Chinese, Indian or Polish feminists? A module could contain clips from one site that show a range of opinions about an issue or it could contain multiple clips on the same theme from different sites
- One professor noted that use of these materials might be different at her University where student’s primary language is not English. Global in that context might actually mean discussing Western thought in a particular week but not centering it. Their course uses the Beijing Action Platform as a starting point to compare how far women have come on the particular points.

How would we make a module/unit for a course using these materials?

- After reading five transcript portions that addressed the question of defining feminism, we discussed that various themes we found: myths about feminism, marginalization of feminism, personal is political but feminisms is larger than any one woman but about future generations.
- Due to the provocative issues discussed in even these few portions, we agreed that it could help spark conversation or at least get students started on thinking about complexity within a particular debate.
- An exercise viewing or reading different interviews could also give more depth to their understanding of other locations. Students may recognize that US is a diverse multicultural location, but assume that other countries do not have such diversity of thought.
- An advantage to bringing in some of these clips is also to show students, who often already have ideas about what feminism is, would be that they could see that it is not

- just a US idea—that women around the world find it useful “so maybe it isn’t so crazy.”
- We also discussed the idea of reusing the same clip(s) at different points in the term to see how students can apply what they have read since the previous viewing to look at the clip differently.
 - Using the Beijing Platform in comparison with other documents such as NOW Mission statement could lead to discussion about how the document was created including the lack of explicit reference to sexuality. The history behind those tensions also allows for discussion of sexuality in university settings where the topic may not be as easy to include as in the US(or Intro WS). Also, setting up a course in the US around the platform and only sometimes bring in US-based documents would be an interesting turn in a way to teach the course.
 - A DVD module would include
 - Clips around a certain theme
 - Transcripts from the clips
 - Bibliography
 - Suggested activities using those specific clips (writing exercises, group work)

Other possible ways to think of the materials:

- Partnering with textbook authors to incorporate the interviews
- Creating a new textbook
- Pedagogy page on GFP website with specific exercises

Initial reading list (compiled from Elizabeth Cole and workshop members’ suggestions)

Baden, S. and Goetz, Anne Marie, 1997, ‘Who Needs [Sex] When You Can Have [Gender]? Conflicting Discourses on Gender at Beijing’, in *Feminist Review*, Issue 56, June 1997

Friedman, Estelle B. (2002). *No Turning Back! The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. New York: Ballantine Books. The book has a couple pages in the introduction about the debate around the word “feminism”. Book site: <http://noturningback.stanford.edu/resources.html> Helps students see the debate is not just today.

Frye, M. (2004). “Oppression.” In L. Richardson, V. Taylor, & N. Whittier (Eds.) *Feminist frontiers*, 6th ed (pp. 6-8). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Hooks, b. (2000). “Feminist Politics – where we stand” In *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*(pp. 1-6). Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. “Sisterhood, Coalition and the Politics of Experience.” In *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Thompson, B. (2004) Multiracial feminism: recasting the chronology of second wave feminism. In G. Kirk & M. Okazawa-Rey (Eds.) *Women's lives: Multicultural perspectives*, 3rd ed (pp. 545-556). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Zheng, Wang. 1999. *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories*. University of California Press. Portion on different Chinese terms for "feminist."