WS 314-4: Race, Class and Gender Relations: Positioning Intersections

Dr. Marian Gracias

The course is an examination of feminist and anti-racist perspectives pertaining to the historical development, social construction, and interlocking relationship of race, culture, gender and class. During the course, students will engage with creative, academic, theoretical and critical work dealing with these nuanced relations of power that intimately structure not only women’s everyday lived experiences but also the institutional and social spaces that gendered and racialized women inhabit. Main topics include:

- the representations, actions, and responses to the discourse, systems, and experience of colonialisation, neo-colonisation, and globalization
- the rhetoric and practice of diversity, immigration, and national identity
- multiracial identifications
- the racializing and gendering of poverty
- the exposing and challenging of classism as well as poor bashing
- debates within feminism about the location of racialized women and aboriginal women
- the strengths and pitfalls of transnational feminism
- the process and effects of expressing and organizing dissent, activism, coalition building

Coursework and readings include inter-disciplinary material involving feminist, anti-racist and cultural studies writings and theory, literature, film and visual studies. Course material emerges primarily from Canada and the US, but also includes some global contexts. By becoming aware of, acknowledging, analyzing, applying, extending, and hypothesizing strategies to respond to interconnected racist, classist, and sexist systems of oppression, it is hoped that students can carry on such (un)learning, alliance building, and practice both in academic contexts and in other areas of their lives and communities.

Required Texts
Enakshi Dua and Angela Robertson, eds. Scratching the Surface: Canadian Anti-Racist Feminist Thought (Women’s Press, 1999)
Larissa Lai, Salt Fish Girl (Thomas Allen, 2002).
Michelle Cliff, Abeng (Plume, Penguin 1995).
Jin-Me Yoon: Touring Home Away (Presentation House Gallery, 2003)
Custom Courseware Package Readings

Assignments and Course Evaluation
Attendance, Class Participation, and Reading Preparation 10%
Journals 10%
Mid-term Exam (in-class) 25%
Proposal and Annotated Working Bibliography 5%
Class Presentation 15%
Term Paper (10-12 pages) 35%

The Department of Women’s Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the Department.