Feminist Activism, NGOization and the Global Gender Equality Regime: Transnational and Regional Perspectives

2 Credit MA Course, Fall 2017/2018
Class time: Friday, 11:00–12:40

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Office hours: Friday, 13:30–15:30, and by appointment

Course description: This course focuses on the making of the global gender equality regime and the ways in which it shapes and is shaped by feminist activism in different world regions that are hierarchically positioned vis-à-vis each other. It covers the period starting with the UN International Women's Year in 1975 until the present day. Specifically, it explores NGOization as a key theme in feminist activism in the era of globalization and neoliberalism. The course is divided in two parts. The first part focuses on the historical formation of the global gender equality agenda as led by UN World Conferences on Women (1975 Mexico, 1980 Copenhagen, 1985 Nairobi and 1995 Beijing), the main developments in gender equality and global governance in the late-twentieth century, and feminists' engagement in gender politics within a state-civil society-transnational governance framework. The second part examines the relationship between feminist activism and the processes of NGOization. It offers perspectives from three world regions, namely Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Central and South America. Examples from these regions will provide students with in-depth understanding of how feminist activists negotiate the terms of gender politics by mediating between their local, national and regional contexts and global frameworks.

Learning outcomes: Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

- Have a basic knowledge of the formal mechanisms of and the discourses around the global gender equality regime (from 1975 until the present day) and be able to situate it in a politico-historical context,
- Have an understanding of feminist theoretical and empirical contributions to the debates on activism and NGOization in the context of globalization and neoliberalism,
- Be equipped to analyze and problematize feminists' participation in global processes and their strategic use of the mechanisms of global governance across different world regions,
- Have an understanding of how transnational processes as well as processes of gender, sexuality, class, nation/ethnicity and culture/religion influence the ways in which feminist activists relate to other (state, non-state and global) actors in the complex field of gender politics,
- Have a more in-depth knowledge of a concrete case and have developed their research and analytical skills by writing a source-based essay.
Course requirements:

**Attendance and participation.** This is a discussion-based class and your attendance and participation are crucial for your learning process as well as your final grade. You are expected to come to every class on time, having carefully read the required readings assigned for the week and able to summarize as well as critically engage with the theoretical insights, key arguments and the evidence presented in the texts. You are encouraged to bring in discussion questions and to reflect on the relevance of the texts to the topic of the course.

The format of the first part of the course will be a short (10-15 minute) introduction by the instructor to the theme of the week, followed by class discussion. From Week 6 onwards you will present the articles assigned for the week and lead the class discussion (see below).

You are allowed to miss one class during the whole course without an excuse. If you will be absent more than once, you need to inform me in advance and write an additional review essay based on the required readings of the missed class.

**Review essay.** Each student should write one review essay, anytime between Week 3 and Week 11. The review essay should be around 3-4 pages (double-spaced) and provide a brief summary of the theoretical insights, key arguments and the evidence presented in the required readings assigned for the specific week. In addition, it should discuss from a critical perspective how the readings relate to each other and how they contribute to the understanding of the theme of the week in particular and to the topic of the course in general. Review essays should be emailed to me AND uploaded to the e-learning site on the day before the related session (the latest by midnight).

**Leading a class discussion.** In the second part of the course each student will take part in presenting the required and suggested readings assigned for a specific week and leading the class discussion. You will do this in pairs or in groups, depending on the number of participants in the course. I will give further instructions on this at the beginning of the term.

**Term paper.** You are expected to write a source-based essay of 10-15 pages (double-spaced) to complete the course. The essay should prove your ability to critically engage with an original source by putting this material into its politico-historical context and relating it to some of the relevant literature provided in the course reader. The source can be print or online material from any country that demonstrates the relationship between feminist activism, processes of NGOization, and the global gender equality regime. You should refer to at least five articles from the course reader and discuss how they inform your analysis of the material you chose. Your use of further literature will be additionally valued. The title of your term paper and a short abstract (100-200 words) are due Week 8, November 10, you can bring them to class or send them via email. Term papers are due December 15 and should be sent via email AND uploaded to the e-learning site. Late submission without excuses will result in 5 percent (for each day) deduction from the final grade.
Assessment:

- Attendance and participation 20%
- Review essay 20%
- Leading a class discussion 20%
- Term paper 40%

Writing guidelines: Written assignments should be sent to me by email AND uploaded to the e-learning site. They should be in Word format, double-spaced and with 12-point font (Times New Roman or Arial). Please choose a specific editorial style (e.g., Chicago or APA) and use it consistently in your spelling, capitalization, punctuation, notes, references, etc. Don't forget to include your name on the actual paper AND in the electronic file name, and always insert page numbers in the document.

You are responsible for providing full reference for all the literature you use in your assignments. Avoid plagiarism by any means and consult me or the Center for Academic Writing in case you are not sure about the rules of citation and proper documentation. You might fail the whole course if your assignments contain plagiarism.

Use of electronic devices: The course material will be available in print copy as well as on the e-learning site. You may use your computers or tablets to access the readings and to take notes, but you should avoid using these devices for purposes that are not related to the class. Mobile phones are not allowed in the classroom. Please put them on silent mode and do not take them out during class.

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Required and Suggested Readings

Week 1. Introduction I: What is the global gender equality regime?

Required:


Suggested:

Week 2. Introduction II: What is NGOization?

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Part I. The making of the global gender equality regime.


**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**Required:**


Suggested:


**Week 5. The 1990s, Beijing Conference (1995) and its aftermath.**

Required:


Suggested:


Part II. NGOization and feminist activism.

Week 6. Central and Eastern Europe I

Required:


Suggested:


Week 7. Central and Eastern Europe II

Required:


Suggested:


Week 8. The Middle East I

Required:


**Suggested:**


**Week 9. The Middle East II**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**Week 10. Central and South America I**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Week 11. Central and South America II

Required:


Suggested:


Week 12. Conclusion: Feminism and neoliberalism today—beyond NGOization?

Required:


Suggested:


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