

SPRING ... Portland State University...2010
Women, Activism, and Social Change

WOMEN'S STUDIES-WS 307, CRN 64804

Tuesday-Thursday, 7:30pm-9:20pm

Clay Building 104
Classmates to contact if
I miss class:

My Book Projects #1 #2

Marlene Howell, Instructor

Contact me through BB email
Office hours:
Abu Rasheed Restaurant, 1921 SW 6th
Tuesday, Thursday 2:30—3:30pm
or by appt.

Teaching Assistants:
Contact them through BB email

Welcome!

Women, Activism, and Social Change are as much a part of the fabric of today's world as anytime in herstory. This paradigm continues to create new options for facilitating justice, shifting and redefining power, and also serves as a dialectic, giving rise to new and critically important questions.

Can social change happen without a true dismantling of patriarchy and the systems of oppression that keep it in place? Was it enough to send a check to the Red Cross, when the few local people hired to rebuild New Orleans were not paid the prevailing wage by those who were awarded no bid contracts? Are huge anti-war marches really a social change action? What is the difference between peace work and anti-war work? Do tree huggers make a difference in forest protection? Do community radio and independent media impact our understanding of public affairs in a way that the corporate media does not? What is the role of government, and what do we want it to be? Is activism essential to the process of change? Can men be feminists? How do we define "social change"? Is it a process, product, or both? Where do we locate ourselves, and why do our locations often shift over the course of our lives? What impact does privilege have on the the inner workings and progress of activist groups? How do activists define success? Why is gender a key aspect of activism?

You will NOT have the answers to these questions and many more by the end of the term. But, if you claim your education, you will be well educated in knowing how to assess, and act upon, the issues of justice that such questions address.

Course Objectives

- *to learn more about global women's activism*
- *to increase herstorical knowledge base of activism*
- *to critically discern the impact of privilege in creating and sustaining activism*
- *to be practice activism*
- *to listen critically and carefully*
- *to take risks as we gain confidence in sharing our views and speaking our truths*
- *to learn from and with each other*
- *to build academic skills of writing, analysis, research, classroom involvement*
- *to be active in your own process of learning*
- *to have some **FUN** together!*

How it Works

This course has a variety of assignment choices. The requirements for everyone are to participate in the classroom experiential activities, two small book groups—including a written analysis of each book, written with a partner, and attend the final. The remaining assignments are your choice, depending on your interests and the grade you hope to earn. Grading for required and optional assignments is based on academic quality, including level of analysis, use of assigned readings as citations in written work, grammatically correct writing, synthesizing of major ideas presented by authors, appropriate and active classroom participation, class preparedness, academic growth and achievement.

Choose assignments which indicate an understanding of your learning style, time allocation, academic curiosity, and community interests. If you have special learning needs,

please let me know! During the first week, I will review each assignment option so that the whole assignment system makes sense to everyone!

Extra credit and/or late submission of any assignments are not accepted. Submit all assignments on **Blackboard**. *No hard copies!* It is your responsibility to know how to use Blackboard. Contact User Support Services in Smith 18, 503 725-4357; help@pdx.edu; <http://www.uss.pdx.edu>, for assistance.

Non-involvement in a required assignment results in earning at least one and a half letter grades lower than the overall number of points indicates, unless a personal emergency (verified upon request) happens. This class uses the university policy regarding cheating and academic integrity as a basis for any issues of plagiarism or other forms of dishonesty that may arise.

Classroom Etiquette

Each class period will begin with a moment of silence to honor all the people who have lost their lives in the current, on-going wars throughout the world, and also to honor those who have lost their lives due to the violence of oppression-especially domestic violence. Please respect this time, especially if you arrive late. Be polite to each other in the classroom. When you come into the classroom, talk quietly or read, and when it is time to start class, please be attentive! If you use a lap top to take notes, please do not let it interrupt your involvement in discussions, or use it for web searching, email postings, etc.

RINGERS ON ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES SUCH AS CELL PHONES MUST BE INAUDIBLE DURING CLASS. IF YOU MUST TAKE A CALL, TEXT, TWEET or SURF the WEB, HAVE THE COURTESY TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM FIRST. BRING DRINKS/FOOD TO CLASS CAREFULLY! Nothing disrupts a class like a drink that is kicked and spilled. Of course, if a drink spills, please help one another to promptly and completely clean it up!

Texts

Here are the texts you'll need for the course. All are available at IN OTHER WORDS bookstore, 8 NE Killingsworth (corner of NE Killingsworth and Williams), 503 232, 6003. IN OTHER WORDS will be selling the texts at the Women's Resource Center, in Montgomery Hall, during the first week of classes.

Required

**For a Girl Becoming*

Authors: Joy Harjo, Mercedes McDonald
Publisher: University of Arizona Press, Oct 2009
ISBN-13: 9780816527977
ISBN: 0816527970

**She Would Not Be Moved: How We Tell the Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*

Author: Herbert Kohl
Publisher: New Press (January 1, 2007)
ISBN-10: 1595581278
ISBN-13: 978-1595581273

Students choose TWO of the following:

**Bleeding Afghanistan: Washington, Warlords, and the Propaganda of Silence*

Authors: Sonali Kolhatkar, James Ingalls

Publisher: Seven Stories

ISBN-10: 1583227318

ISBN-13: 978-1583227312

**A Woman Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice*

Author: Malalai Joya

Publisher: Scribner; 1 edition (October 20, 2009)

ISBN-10: 143910946X

ISBN-13: 978-1439109465

**Dreaming of Baghdad (Women Writing the Middle East)*

Author: Haifa Zangana; Ferial J. Ghazoul

Publisher: The Feminist Press at CUNY (September 1, 2009)

ISBN-10: 1558616055

ISBN-13: 978-1558616059

**Iran Awakening: One Woman's Journey to Reclaim Her Life and Country (Paperback)*

Authors: Shirin Ebadi, Azadeh Moaveni

Publisher: Random House Trade Paperbacks (April 10, 2007)

ISBN-10: 0812975286

ISBN-13: 978-0812975284

**Witness in Palestine: A Jewish American Woman in the Occupied Territories*

Author: Anna Baltzer

Publisher: Paradigm Publishers; illustrated edition (August 30, 2007)

ISBN-10: 1594513074

ISBN-13: 978-1594513077

**The Challenge for Africa*

Author: Wangari Maathai

Publisher: Pantheon; First Edition edition (April 7, 2009)

ISBN-10: 0307377407

ISBN-13: 978-0307377401

**Women's Activism and Feminist Agency in Mozambique and Nicaragua (Paperback)*

Author: Jennifer Leigh Disney

Publisher: Temple University Press (December 28, 2009)

ISBN-10: 1592138292

ISBN-13: 978-1592138296

**A Crazy Occupation*

Jamie Taraby

Publisher: Allen & Unwin (June 28, 2006)

ISBN-10: 174114650X

ISBN-13: 978-1741146509

Assignments

Take a look at how the three students listed on this grid earned their target grade. Then, create a grid of your own as an outline for what you are assigning yourself. It may be helpful to include dates of when you'll complete certain assignments. Note that in this example, the points listed are totals for the term, and that these students did not always earn full points for their work. Full explanation of each assignment type follows.

REQUIRED-All of these	Maya	Beau	Shalala	Me
2 Book Reports-Written with a different partner for each book 300pts possible for each report 600 total pts possible	500	400	600	
Oral presentation of assigned article (200 pts possible) or oral/real time analysis/critique of the presentation (400 pts possible) 200-400pts possible	200	400	200	
At least 700 total pts must come from required assignments	700	800	800	
OPTIONAL				
Attendance/Participation-up to 25 self graded points available each day of class starting April 6; attending Final worth 100; 300 pts lost by not attending it- (except for excuses verified by medical or first responders; 25 extra pts possible April 6,20, May 4, 18 for experiential activity participants 550 total pts possible	400	300	500	
Attending <u>four</u> out of class activities—no partial credit accepted-- and submitting a written analysis of the 4 events 500 total pts possible	500	500		
Eight journals, reflecting on your social location as the basis for examining your weekly experiences during <u>both</u> days of class. Submit as many or as few as you'd like— 800 total points possible	500			

Mother's Day Rewrite or Children's Book re: Girls Coming of Age Using discussions in class re: Kohl and Harjo, work with a partner and create a children's chap book on one of the above topics. Present your creation in class on May 6 (Kohl), or May 20 (Harjo). Make a slide show to go with your book. 500 pts possible for each	Maya	Beau 500	Shalala	
TOTAL OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS	1400	1300	1300	

Explanation of Required Assignments

Small Group Book Discussions

On alternating Thursdays, students meet in student led small groups, formed according to one of the books they've chosen to read from the list at the end of this syllabus. In these small groups, ideas about the books are openly shared, always focusing on agency, power, privilege, and whether the main characters/analyses in your book do, or do not, meet your criteria for what constitutes solid feminist activism and why. From these

discussions, students prepare to work with a partner in the group, and write a substantive analysis—not a report--, based on three questions each pair creates as a framework for its critical assessment. The full assignment criteria are available in the BB assignment area. At midterm, begin a new small group, with the second book you chose, and repeat this exercise. The first paper is due on May 1. The second is due June 5.

Oral Presentations of Academic Articles

As part of participation credit, on alternating Tuesdays, 2 groups of 4 students each will present an oral report/analysis about one of two assigned articles from a feminist scholarly publication. After each group makes their presentation, a third group of four students will make an assessment of both presentations, openly, in real time, during the class period. All 3 groups will have 30 minutes maximum for their presentations.

In presenting the two articles, each group prepares three key questions 1) what is the main point made by the author(s) and why is it relevant

to feminist activism; 2) how are the main points substantiated and why do you accept or not accept this line of reasoning; 3) what do you as a scholar and an activist feel is the value of this article for students like yourself?

In assessing both presentations, the third group will have to have read both articles and be ready to describe the strengths, weakness, omissions, and high points of each presentation. Those who write journals about these presentations should refer to all three of the groups' analysis, and use citations from all of the articles presented.

Explanation of Optional Assignments

Tuesday Experiential Activities

On alternating Tuesdays, we will take most of the class period to do an experiential exercise designed to help us learn more about the dynamics of the personal being political, and the political being personal. Participation in these exercises is voluntary; no one loses credit for not participating. Those who do participate earn extra credit. Each exercise will be fully explained before it starts. Everyone must individually assess what level of participation is appropriate for their overall learning goals and personal experiences. On Thursdays of the weeks when we do these activities, we'll spend the first hour debriefing the activities.

Participation Credit

Fully explained in the assignment grid/table, active participation is another way to earn credit toward your grade. Even better, you assign the grade to yourself! See grid/table for details.

Attending activists', artists', authors', organizations' presentations

Learn what activists in your community are doing, thinking, and why. Attend four types of events—an author presenting a book about their activism, a rally or march (not TBTN, as we're attending it as a class), an art as social commentary/activism project, and a presentation by an activist(s) not discussing a book. Submit one written analysis of all of the events, at the end of the term, highlighting what you learned about yourself vis a vis the issue and mode of activism

being used, why you chose those events, your overall impression of the presentation and the work that the activists are doing, and how the themes in the presentation connect to at least two ideas in the books you're reading in your book project. Book readings (such as those at the public library, In Other Words, Annie Blooms, the Women's Resource Ctr, or Powell's are acceptable as events. Religious or social based programs do not count for this option.

Journal Reflection: Where Am I With This Content

Eight times in the term, a journal critique of self, in relation to the material that's been discussed in class through assigned readings and experiential activities, may be submitted. In the journal, address three ideas from class that really gave you pause for thought, and explain why. Often our personal experiences inform not only what we allow ourselves to learn, but how we learn, and integrate, new or returning ideas/analysis into our

activism. Delve into the ideas and their practical application within all of their complexity. Don't settle for easy answers here. Offer some analysis showing understanding of what you're learning. Include some citations from the assigned readings. No minimum or maximum page length. Just a judicious use of words to cogently speak your piece/peace with wisdom and acumen.

Writing the story of Mother's Day, or a girls' coming of age story, as a children's book, using the framework of analysis found in Kohl or Harjo.

If we were to tell children the true story of Mother's Day, or girls coming of age, what would we say, and why? What would we leave out as unimportant, too advanced/complex, or simply too hard to explain? When presenting historical/cultural/social reality instead of historical revision or fabricated myth, what is most important to share? How do we document in words, pictures, tone, emphasis, facts, the truth as we know it,

challenging colonizing paradigms? Working with another student, create such a text, and share it with the class by reading it aloud. Make a companion slide show to help contextualize the presentation—what were the decisions to be made and how were they made? Is the creation of accurate texts, activism? Does it help shift power? Why or why not? To whose benefit?

Minimal Points needed for each grade level

2100 A 1900 B 1700 C 1500 D

A plus or minus may be added to a grade, according to overall academic achievement.

Schedule of Assigned Readings and other Assignments

<p>March 30 Introduction to the class, each other Lecture: What is successful activism? What's your sign? <i>A Girl Becoming</i>—Joy Harjo</p>	<p>April 1 Review of Syllabus Choosing Optional texts Discuss Experiential Activities Sign up for presentation of scholarly activities <i>A Girl Becoming</i> in class assignment</p>
<p>April 6 Experiential Activity: Brown Eyes/Blue Eyes</p>	<p>April 8 Debrief Experiential Activity Book Groups Meet Kohl; Harjo Journal #1</p>
<p>April 13 2 Student Scholarly Articles' Group Presentations Student Evaluation of Presentation Last word: Marlene</p>	<p>April 15 Guest Speaker: Carol Gabrielli Journal #2</p>
<p>April 20 Experiential Activity: Will You Be My Friend</p>	<p>April 22 Debrief Experiential Activity Book Groups Meet Kohl; Harjo Journal #3</p>
<p>April 27 2 Student Scholarly Articles' Group Presentations Student Evaluation of Presentations Last word: Marlene</p>	<p>April 29 Take Back the Night—Attend as a class Note: First Book Report/Analysis due May 1 Journal #4</p>
<p>May 4 Experiential Activity: Where's my Chair?</p>	<p>May 6 Debrief Experiential Activity Kohn Presentations Journal #5</p>
<p>May 11 2 Student Scholarly Articles' Group Presentations Student Evaluation of Presentations Last word: Marlene</p>	<p>May 13 Journal #6 Guest Speaker: Jon Schwiebert</p>
<p>May 18 Experiential Activity: Do You Agree/Disagree? Always?</p>	<p>May 20 Harjo Presentations Journal #7</p>
<p>May 25 2 Student Scholarly Articles' Group Presentations Student Evaluation of Presentations Last word: Marlene</p>	<p>May 27 Journal #8 Guest Speaker: Elaine Ordahl</p>
<p>June 1 Wrap Up, Special Activity maybe</p>	<p>June 3 Wrap Up, evaluations Note: Second Book Report/Analysis due June 5</p>
<p>June 8 Final Class Meeting</p>	