

**Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology, OISE/UT**

**WOMEN, WAR, AND LEARNING**

**AEC 1146**

**Spring Session 2005**

**Dr. Shahrzad Mojab**

<b>When</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays	<b>My Office</b>	7-116
<b>Where</b>	8-220	<b>Telephone</b>	923-6641, ext. 2242
<b>Time</b>	5:30-8:30	<b>E-mail</b>	smojab@oise.utoronto.ca

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE**

There is no region of the world not engulfed in war and conflict. While it is easy to draw the borders of ‘zones of conflict’ or ‘war zones’, it is rather difficult to discern how these borders divide, save, protect or destroy new communities, identities, nations, and ethnicities. Even more difficult is the tracing of peoples displacement and dispersal as a result of war. For example, in Canada, in the last three decades most of the refugees and immigrants have come from the war zones of Asia, Africa and Latin America. This massive displacement from various parts of the world and the emergence of new diasporas pose a serious challenge to social institutions including the educational system. For instance, war-zone immigrants and refugees require social services from ESL to workforce integration, or access to higher education, which can bridge their lived experiences in ruptured times and spaces. To understand this complexity, we need theoretical positions, which can explain the conflictual, gendered, and racialized nature of this process, and its interconnectedness to the global structures of capitalism, imperialism and colonialism. This course will, thus, draw on theoretical positions such as Marxism, critical transnational feminism, and critical pedagogies.

This course is not, however, about war and destruction, war and economy, war and violence, or war and peace. Neither is it about women’s participation and role in war and militarism, feminist peace and peace education, or analysing war atrocities committed against women such rape. Specifically, the course focuses on the impact of war-based violence on women’s learning, and the factors which enhance or impede women’s learning. While there is a vast literature on learning, we are just beginning to inquire about learning under condition of war, displacement and re-rooting. Accounting for the impact of war on women’s learning demands a focus on the role of ‘experience’ in the process of learning. Adult learning theories consider ‘experience’ as the critical element for learning. It has been argued that learning from an experience occurs when it personally affects the learner, either by resulting in an expansion of skills and abilities, sense of self and life perspective, or by precipitating a transformation that involves the whole person, and is also subjectively valued by the learner. This relationship between experience and violence has not yet been theorized in the literature on learning. Although there is no literature that inter-relates women to learning-war-diaspora, we try in this course to take a step beyond the fragmented theoretical domain, and engage in analysis that

draws on theoretical insights of (adult) education, women's studies, and diaspora studies. The approach will, therefore, be interdisciplinary.

There is unequal regional representation. Simply, it is impossible to cover the globe which is burdened with many war related issues. While the covering of war zones is selective, the course takes a theoretically integrated approach by linking the ubiquity of war and displacement with capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy, and the requirements of these interconnected systems to produce and reproduce globally.

Familiarity with critical feminist theories, adult education learning theories, diaspora theories, critique of resettlement and integration processes in Canada, and the political economy of war, capitalism, and imperialism are an asset for those who take the course. Extra reading and help will be provided for students who need it.

## **APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING**

In teaching/learning settings, I see my role primarily as an analytical and reflective practitioner, planner and facilitator. We all will be involved in a participatory learning effort; your experience and input are as significant as the accumulated knowledge on the topic. You are, therefore, expected to actively contribute to the learning process. Your learning needs and agenda will be incorporated in the course as well.

## **CLASS FORMAT**

Class sessions will operate as seminars. In collaborative learning we depend on one another to make the experience rich and useful. Therefore, I expect you to attend all class sessions and to actively participate in discussions. In order to enrich your participation, you are expected to devote sufficient time to reading and accomplishing learning activities prior to class session.

## **LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Due to the intensive nature of the course and to leave enough time to complete the learning assignments, the deadline for submitting the final paper is extended for additional two weeks. Besides class participation, two other learning activities are considered: Weekly journals and a major research project.

Class Participation: It will give you a chance to share your main findings and arguments with the class. This learning activity aims at encouraging more collaborative and active student involvement in the process of learning. It will give you an opportunity to critically analyse and discuss some of the readings related to a topic of the course. The feedback from the class will, in turn, help you in shaping your ideas and thoughts on this course. Class Participation constitutes 20% of the total grade.

Weekly Journal: It will give you an opportunity to read and record your reflections on the

assigned readings and class discussions. This engaged and closed reading of the literature will assist you in formulating your thoughts and articulating your theoretical approaches to the topic of this course. You are expected to complete five journals. There is no length limit.

**Due dates: May 10, 17, 24, 31, and June 7.** The Journals constitute 30% of the total grade.

Research Paper: This learning activity will indicate your grasp of topics covered in this course, your ability to critique and apply theoretical knowledge. In addition to an adequate knowledge of theory, your paper should demonstrate good writing and research skills. You can be creative and innovative about this project. For example, you can use one of the following short stories books listed below to write a reflective paper where you draw on some of the theoretical debates covered in the weekly reading list. An alternative is to view films or documentaries relevant to the subject of this course and write a reflective paper. I have the following books, which I can share and are also available in libraries and Toronto Women's Bookstore:

Urvashi Butalis (2002). *Speaking Peace: Women's Voices from Kashmir*. London: Zed Books.

Lalita Vasantha Kannabiran, Rama Melkote, Uma Maheshwari, Susie Tharu, and Veena Shatrucna (1989). *'We Were Making History...': Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle*. London: Zed Books.

Nuha Al-Radi (2003). *Baghdad Diaries: A Woman's Chronicle of War and Exile*. New York: Vantage Books.

Parin Dossa (2004). *Politics and Poetics of Migration: Narratives of Iranian Women from the Diaspora*. Toronto: Canada Scholar's Press.

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling website provides *Eye Witness* stories of Palestinian women.

There are also many NGOs and women's groups within the Toronto area active on issues related to this course. You may wish to visit them, to collect their resources and learn from their experience. These, among many others, include:

Canadian Tamil Women's Community Services  
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torturers  
Afghan Women's Association  
Immigrant Women Health Centre  
Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre  
Somali Women and Children's Support Network  
Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre

The Internet can also be a valuable source of information for analysing, assessing, and critically engaging with official documents of international organizations such as various UN agencies, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and many women's groups.

The research paper is due no later than **Thursday, June 30<sup>th</sup>**. The length is maximum 20 pages, double spaced and typed. This learning activity constitutes 50% of the total grade.

***Please keep a copy of all your assignments and put your phone number on the covering page. Electronic version of assignments, that is, fax, email messages, or attachments will NOT be accepted.***

## **SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS**

Reading assignments include book chapters and articles from diverse sources. Other readings may be assigned during the conduct of this course. You are encouraged to bring other readings to the course. The readings are arranged under specific topics; however, all the topics are interconnected and they should be read as such. We may also cover topics other than the ones listed for each week. In planning the seminar readings, I have made arrangements for the use of additional resources including video, film, or documentary presentations or guest speakers.

### **May 3 & 5**

#### **The Condition of War**

*Selected Topics:* How modern wars are linked with capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, militarism, and patriarchy? What analytical tools do we need to understand the nature of this interconnectedness? How to explain the relationship between war, economy, and the expansion of the ‘culture of rights’ and reconstruction industry? Is identifying ‘neo-liberalism’ as the ideological foundation for the condition of war adequate?

1. Fanon, Frantz (1999, re-print). “Excerpt from ‘Concerning Violence’: *The Wretched of the Earth*,” in Steger, Manfred and Nancy Lind (eds.). *Violence and its Alternatives: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. New York: St. Martin’s Press: 157-168.
2. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (2003). “Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses,” in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press: 17-42
3. Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (2003). “‘Under Western eyes’ revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles,” in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press: 221-251.
4. Giles, Wenona and Jennifer Hyndman (2004). “Gender and conflict in a global context,” in Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (eds.) *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 3-23.
5. Enloe, Cynthia (2000). “How do they militarize a can of soup?” In Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers:*

*The international politics of militarizing women's lives.* Berkeley: University of California Press: 1-34.

6. Long, Scott (2005). "Anatomy of a backlash: Sexuality and the 'cultural' war on human rights," *Human Rights Watch World Report 2005*. New York: Human Rights Watch: 70-93.

7. Le Billon, Philippe (2000). *The Political Economy of War: What Relief Agencies Need to Know*. London: Humanitarian Practice Network: 39 pages.

## **May 10 & 12**

## **The War on Women**

*Selected Topics:* What does 'cultural war' mean? How the rise of religious fundamentalisms and nationalism is linked to the increase of violence against women? How 'culture of terror' and 'security culture' is affecting women? What has been feminist responses to fundamentalism, terrorism, militarism and the US global 'women's emancipation' agenda? How fundamentalisms and terrorism are linked to orientalism, colonialism, and capitalism?

8. Galazza, Amy (2002). "Why gender matters in understanding September 11: Women, militarism, and violence," in Betsy Reed (ed.) *Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press: 379-391.

9. Meintjes, Sheila, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (2001). "There is no aftermath for women," in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds.) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books: 3-18.

10. Petchesky, Rosalind (2002). "Phantom towers: Feminist reflections on the battle between global capitalism and fundamentalist terrorism," in Betsy Reed (ed.) *Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press: 357-372.

11. Eisenstein, Zillah (2004). "Feminism and Afghan women: Before and after September 11," in Zillah Eisenstein, *Against Empire: Feminism, Racism, and the West*. London: Zed Books: 148-180.

12. Daniel Volman (1998). "The militarization of Africa," in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (eds.) *What Women Do in Wartime*. London: Zed Books: 150-162.

13. Sideris, Tina (2003). "War, gender and culture: Mozambican women refugees," *Social Science and Medicine*, 56: 713-724.

14. Tax, Meredith (2002). "World culture war," in Betsy Reed (ed.) *Nothing Sacred: Women Respond to Religious Fundamentalism and Terror*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press: 23-29.

15. Amnesty International, the International Action Network on Small Arms and Oxfam

International (2005). *The Impact of Guns on Women's Lives*. 39 pages.

**May 17 & 19**

### **Harm of War to Women**

*Selected Topics:* Women as displaced, refugees, or immigrants; women as political prisoners, detainees, or sex workers; poor women, widows, depressed, addicts, or slaves. Women as 'freedom fighters,' resisters, story tellers, witness, survivors, activists, and artists.

16. Hynes, Patricia (2004). "On the battlefield of women's bodies: An overview of the harm of war to women," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27: 431-445.

17. Pillay, Anu (2001) "Violence against women in the aftermath," in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds.) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books: 35-45.

18. Marvić-Petrović and Ivana Stevanović (1995). "Life in refugee: Changes in socioeconomic and familial status," in Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović (ed.) *Women, Violence and War: Wartime Victimization of Refugees in the Balkans*. Budapest: Central European University Press: 151-169.

19. Enloe, Cynthia (2004) "Updating the gendered empires: Where are the women in occupied Afghanistan and Iraq?" in Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 268-305.

20. Amnesty International (2005). *Iraq Decades of Suffering: Now Women Deserve Better*. 37 pages.

21. Amnesty International (2005). *Afghanistan: Addressing the Past to Secure the Future*. 19 pages.

22. Amnesty International (2005). *Israel and the Occupied Territories: Conflict, Occupation and Patriarchy, Women Carry the Burden*. 36 pages.

**May 24 & 26**

### **Women, War, Violence and Learning**

*Selected Topics:* How war and violence affect women's learning? How learning theories explain women's experience of war, displacement, resettlement, and diaspora? How to understand, assess, measure, or evaluate learning?

23. Horsman, Jenny (1999). "Chapter 1: Introduction": 17-34; "Chapter 2: What is 'Normal' in a violent society": 35-56; and "Chapter 4: Beyond 'normal' appearances: 'Hidden' impacts of trauma": 85-125, in Jenny Horsman, *Too Scared to Learn: Women, Violence and Education*. Toronto: McGilligan Books.

24. Mojab, Shahrzad and Susan McDonald (2001). "Women, violence and informal learning," NALL Working Paper, No. 41. 20 pages

25. Bop, Godou (2001). "Women in conflicts, their gains and their losses," in Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredith Turshen (eds.) *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*. London: Zed Books: 19-34.

## **May 31 & June 2**

## **Resistance and Survival Learning**

*Selected Topics:* What is the significance of alternative learning models such as 'art-based' or 'in-formal' methods for women? What about learning for emancipation or liberation? How about revolution and national liberation as sites of learning?

26. Enloe, Cynthia (2004). "Being curious about our lack of feminist curiosity," in Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press: 1-9.

27. Porath, Sigal R. Ben (2003). "Radicalizing democratic education: Unity and dissent in wartime," *Philosophy of Education Yearbook*: 245-253.

28. Farr, Vanessa. (2000). "The pain of violence is a powerful silencer: African women writing about conflict," *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme* 19(4): 102 -108.

29. Meredith Turshen (1998). "Women's war stories," in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (eds.) *What Women Do in Wartime*. London: Zed Books:1-26.

30. Lykes, Brinton (1999). "Telling stories – rethreading lives, community education, women's development and social change among Maya Ixil," *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 2(3): 207-227.

31. Menon, Ritu and Kamla Bhasin (1998). "Picking up the pieces: Women rehabilitate women," and "learning to survive: Two lives, two destinies," in Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*. New Delhi: Kali for Women: 167-225.

## **June 7 & 9**

## **Learning in Diaspora**

*Selected Topics:* How do women participate in peace negotiation, reconstruction, and rights-based politics? How do NGOs capitalize on women's experience and knowledge as 'native informants' for reconstruction, humanitarian projects, and re-building nation-states? How do women re-root themselves in diaspora? Diaspora and 'hostland' as new texts and sites of learning? How to theorize the emerging women's organization from war zones in the diaspora and their transnational feminism?

32. Enloe, Cynthia (2004). "Conclusion: Decisions, decisions, decisions," in Cynthia Enloe,

