

FINAL Syllabus, 4 September 2023

Fall 2023

FRSEMR 64U: Stories of Gender and Justice

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Time: Tuesdays, 12:45-2:45pm

Place: CGIS Knafel K109 (1737 Cambridge Street, first floor)

Professor Thornber's Office Hours: Thursdays 12-1pm. Please contact me (Professor Thornber, thornber@fas.harvard.edu) to make an appointment to meet during this time, as well as to meet outside of office hours, including meeting in person. I'm glad to accommodate students who have class, employment, or other responsibilities during my office hours.

I'm most easily reached over email (thornber@fas.harvard.edu). Ordinarily, I respond to email within 24 hours, Monday through Friday, and frequently much sooner.

Course Description

With gender inequities and biases pervasive within and across cultures worldwide, and the global pandemics of gender-based violence and structural violence further intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic, how have individuals, groups, communities, and nations globally fought for (and against) gender justice? How have struggles against gender injustice intersected and conflicted with struggles against racial, ethnic, environmental, health, LGBTQIA+ and other forms of injustice?

Gender justice, as is true of justice more broadly, is often discussed in the abstract, or as a matter of law, political history, protest movements, enfranchisement, and similar phenomena. Yet at its core, justice involves individuals and their experiences - both their suffering and their triumphs - experiences most directly accessed through stories. In this seminar we'll explore a range of stories and different forms of storytelling on gender justice, from novels to memoirs/personal histories, histories, and creative nonfiction. Some narratives with which we will engage are Meredith Talusan's *Fairest: A Memoir*, Ito Shiori's *Black Box: The Memoir that Sparked Japan's #MeToo Movement*, Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals*, Cynthia Enloe's *The Big Push: Exposing and Challenging the Persistence of Patriarchy*, and Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua's *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Students will also be encouraged to write their own stories on gender and justice.

Prerequisites

The only prerequisite for this course is a desire to read a range of provocative works from around the world that tackle some of the most significant injustices facing our societies. Cultural, historical, and social context will be explained in class and in supplementary readings. No non-

English language expertise required, although students who can read a text in the original language are encouraged to do so.

Academic Integrity, Generative AI, and Honor Policy

You are expected to follow standard citation practice and properly cite all books, articles, websites, lectures, and other sources that you use in your work, including AI. You must also acknowledge any feedback you have received on drafts, whether from friends, family members, tutors, or other sources. Please be in touch with Professor Thornber with any questions about citation practices.

[This paragraph from the Harvard OUE website re **Generative AI**] *Certain assignments in this course will permit or even encourage the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools such as ChatGPT. The default is that **such use is disallowed unless otherwise stated**. Any such use must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted; you bear the final responsibility. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. We draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Harvard could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.*

This course supports the Harvard Honor Code: *Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.*

Accessibility

From the Disability Access Office (DAO):

Harvard University values inclusive excellence and providing equal educational opportunities for all students. Our goal is to remove barriers for disabled students related to inaccessible elements of instruction or design in this course. If reasonable accommodations are necessary to provide access, please contact the [Disability Access Office \(DAO\)](#). Accommodations do not alter fundamental requirements of the course and are not retroactive. Students should request accommodations as early as possible, since they may take time to implement. Students should notify DAO at any time during the semester if adjustments to their communicated accommodation plan are needed.

Expectations about preparation

You must come to every class meeting having carefully read the readings for that meeting. Course materials are available as noted below. Most primary sources are available online via the Harvard libraries or digitally via Kindle. Many are also available in paper copy from online bookstores, often quite cheaply (delivery times might vary, so please plan ahead), and some are at the COOP.

Electronics

Given what a distraction they tend to become, laptops, tablets, phones, and other electronic devices are not permitted in class, with 2 exceptions: 1) Students may use a laptop to show PPT slides for their presentation; 2) Students may use an electronic device to access course readings when the class is looking together at a particular passage. Out of respect for your classmates, and to facilitate your own learning, please do not use electronic devices for any other purpose.

Content and Climate

The readings and discussions for this class will often focus on difficult topics that are both political and personal and might trigger strong feelings, including discomfort, anxiety, sadness, and anger. Everyone is responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Please always be respectful, even when you strongly disagree with a classmate, and please be mindful of how experiences, stories, and identities can shape perspectives and position participants in the classroom.

Everyone is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings maturely and respectfully. If you're struggling with the course materials for a given class, please be in touch with Professor Thornber. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss, but please be in touch with Professor Thornber, who can help with alternative arrangements if needed. (This advice adapted from Julie Beaulieu, "Content Warning and Class Climate.")

Grading

This Freshman Seminar is graded SAT/USAT. Attendance is required to pass the course. If you must miss a class, you are required to contact Professor Thornber in advance. Only religious and medical/family emergency absences are excused. You must complete and pass all course requirements to pass the course. More than 2 unexcused absences put you at risk of failing the course.

Class attendance and participation – 25%

Course Blog – 15% (Every Monday, before 6pm, you're expected to post a 250-word minimum paragraph on the week's reading, on the course website, under Discussions. Please share what most struck you about one or more of the class readings for that week, what you found provocative, insightful, especially interesting, surprising, puzzling, and/or disturbing if not offensive, and why. Please avoid generalities and plot summaries, and please cite a specific passage or two, with the page number(s)/location in versions without page numbers)

Reading Checks – 15% (We'll begin our time together with a brief reading check, which will build on the blog postings, readings, and/or class discussions)

Presentation – 15% (Once during the semester you'll give a 15-minute presentation and lead class discussion for an additional 15 minutes. See class PPT from week 1 for details)

Short Paper – 10% (900 words on one of the course readings, building from class discussion)

Final Project – 20% (This can be a paper [9 pp.] or a creative project such as creative writing, or a podcast, website, musical composition, dance performance, etc. related to the themes of the course)

Course Schedule

Week 1 – September 5 – Introductions

Introduction to the course; introduction to key ideas, questions, and terms. Pandemics of violence. Struggles for justice.

By 5pm Thursday, September 7, please:

- 1) **Sign up for presentations** – please email Professor Thornber, thornber@fas.harvard.edu, your top 3 choices for the date you'd like to present. Presentations are expected to be on the readings for that date.
- 2) **Post to the course Canvas site**, under Discussions, a brief paragraph with your name, pronouns, email, year, anticipated/possible concentration(s), any related courses you've taken at Harvard or elsewhere, what you're hoping to get out of our course, and anything else you'd like Professor Thornber and your classmates to know.

Week 2 – September 12 – No Class (Professor Thornber working for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft [German Research Foundation])

Week 3 – September 19 – Some Foundational Readings **Class begins at 1:15pm today**

Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Preface to the Fourth Edition; on course website)

Anita Hill, *Believing: Our Thirty-Year Journey to End Gender Violence* (Preface, Introduction, Chapter 1; on course website)

Rafia Zakaria, *Against White Feminism: Notes on Disruption* (Introduction, Chapter 1; on course website)

Week 4 – September 26 – Some Additional Foundational Readings, LGBTQIA+ Justice

Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals* (available online via Hollis)

Krista Benson, "What's in a Pronoun?: The Ungovernability and Misgendering of Trans Native Kids in Juvenile Justice," *Journal of Homosexuality* 67:12 (2020) (pp. 1691-1712; available online via Hollis)

Week 5 – October 3 – Art Museum Visit

Margaret Middleton, "Queer Possibility" (prereading; on course website)

Short Paper due at 9am, Friday October 6

Week 6 – October 10 – Intersections among Gender, Sexuality, Mental Health

Tanisha Neely, "Falling Between the Cracks of Queer and Black," in Stephanie Schroeder and Teresa Theophano, *Headcase: LGBTQ Writers & Artists on Mental Health and Wellness* (pp. 3-11; on course website, on reserve)

Arlene Istar Lev, "Queer Affirmative Therapy," in Stephanie Schroeder and Teresa Theophano, *Headcase: LGBTQ Writers & Artists on Mental Health and Wellness* (pp. 12-23; on course website, on reserve)

Calvin Rey Moen, "Surviving Science, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Being Mad and Queer," in Stephanie Schroeder and Teresa Theophano, *Headcase: LGBTQ Writers & Artists on Mental Health and Wellness* (pp. 128-138; on course website, on reserve)

Thomas Mondragon, "Liberating the Big Pink Elephant in the Therapy Room," in Stephanie Schroeder and Teresa Theophano, *Headcase: LGBTQ Writers & Artists on Mental Health and Wellness* (pp. 219-230; on course website, on reserve)

Week 7 – October 17 – Intersections among Gender, Sexuality, Race, Ethnicity

Class begins at 1:15pm today

Meredith Talusan, *Fairest: A Memoir* (purchase on your own, digital copies available, online access via Hollis, on reserve)

Week 8 – October 24 – Intersections with Motherhood and Mental Health

Cho Nam-joo, *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* (at COOP, digital versions available, on reserve)

Week 9 – October 31 – Non-Partner Sexual Violence 1 (Memoir and #MeToo)

Itō Shiori, *Black Box: The Memoir that Sparked Japan's #MeToo Movement* (at COOP, digital versions available, online access via Hollis, on reserve)

Week 10 – November 7 – Non-Partner Sexual Violence 2 (Memoir and History)

C. Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women* (Prologue and Epilogue; on course website)

Kim Soom, *One Left* (at COOP, online version available via Hollis, on reserve)

Week 11 – November 14 – Family Violence (Memoir and Migration)

Class begins at 1:15pm today

Sarbjit Kaur Athwal, *Shamed: The Honour Killing that Shocked Britain by the Sister Who Fought for Justice* (at COOP, digital versions available)

[Final Project Proposals due November 15, 9am on Canvas, Assignments (200-250 words)]

Week 12 – November 21 – NO CLASS [Thanksgiving week/please use this time to work on your final projects]

Week 13 – November 28 – Intimate Partner Violence (Autofictional Fiction)

Meena Kandasamy, *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (purchase on your own, digital versions available, online version available via Hollis, on reserve)

Week 14 – December 5 - Final Project Discussions and End-of-Semester Reflections

December 2023, Date TBD/ 5pm Eastern – Capstone Projects Due