988:396 (05) – Special Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies: Global Women’s Filmmaking

M 12:00 – 3:00 and W 1:40 – 3:00 / RC – 3

Cross-listed with 01:195:377 (05) and 01:175:377 (01)

Professor Susan Martin-Márquez

In its “Women and Media Fact Sheet,” Rutgers’ Institute for Women’s Leadership shows that male characters comprise nearly 75% of speaking roles in major Hollywood films, and that “women are dramatically underrepresented behind the scenes in the U.S. film industry,” directing, for example, only 5% of the 250 highest grossing films in 2011. Some of the most celebrated international filmmakers, however, are women, and their works typically feature a much larger percentage of female protagonists. In this course we will study a wide variety of films from around the globe, directed by women and produced from the 1960s to the present. We will examine the local contexts out of which these films have emerged, exploring the ways in which women work to negotiate diverse cultures and film industries in order to realize their creative vision. We will also seek to place their films in critical dialogue with several currents in "Western" film theory which focus, for example, on questions of authorship and authority or the cinematographic construction of difference. Films from countries such as Argentina, Britain, China, (the former) Czechoslovakia, France, India, Iran, Martinique and Tunisia will be treated.

No prior work in film studies required; the semester will begin with a “crash course” in film analysis.

988:396 (07) – Special Topics in Women’s and Gender Studies: Feminist Advocacy for Women’s Rights through the United*

W 2:15 – 5:15 / CWGL Conference Room

Professor R. Balakrishnan

The course aims to use the engagement with feminist advocacy praxis as a means for developing critical perspectives on feminist advocacy theory. Throughout the seminar, students, acting as a learning community, will have an opportunity to meet and discuss advocacy strategies with US and international activists. During the CSW, students will be expected to spend four days in New York City attending official government sessions and participating in workshops led by nongovernmental organizations from around the world. The course will also offer opportunities to meet with Rutgers University faculty and local and global activists engaged in a wide variety of advocacy efforts from direct advocacy to using advanced communications technologies. Central to the life of the course will be the opportunities for students to reflect together on their experiences and develop their own critical analyses of the state of feminist activism and their own activist goals. These analyses will be shared through class discussions, analytical papers and
an online discussion forum to engage the broader Rutgers community, as well as during a public event at Rutgers which they will plan and organize.

*Special permission by application only*

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988:396 (90) – Topics in Women's and Gender Studies: Social Media and Social Movements

*Online Course*

Instructor: Nafisa Tanjeem

Are social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube changing the world of social movements? How does social media frame social justice issues at the intersection of race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, and ethnicity? Does social media substitute, complement, or distract conventional organizing? How does online activism transform into offline protest, and vice versa? Which strategies do social media activists adopt to keep their campaigns alive?

“Social Media and Social Movements” addresses these exciting questions drawing on interdisciplinary scholarships of social movement studies, critical race theories, geography and cultural studies, media studies, and transnational feminist framework. It examines how social media continues to redefine what constitutes activism, community, collective identity, and public space. It explores the role of social media in inspiring movements, decentralized networks, civic engagement, and transnational collaboration between activists. Using a wide array of examples such as Barack Obama’s 2008 electoral campaign, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and the Arab uprising, the course inquires whether social media challenges power hierarchies and shifts the balance of power toward more bottom-up efforts.