

Spring 2024
PHIL 694/WMST 550
"Latin American Decolonial Feminist Theories"

COURSE INFORMATION

Prof. Claudia Cabello Hutt, PhD.

Office: Johnson Center 240K

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Time and place: Tuesdays 4:30-7:10, Exploratory Hall L111

Office hours: Monday 12:00-1:00, Tuesday 11:00-12:00 (in-office or Zoom), and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an in-depth study of decolonial theories emerging from the Global South, specifically Latin America. We will examine the history and turns of postcolonial and decolonial ideas and their implications for developing critical methodologies, epistemological justice projects, and research/praxis in gender and sexuality studies.

We will study foundational concepts such as 'coloniality of power,' the 'matrix of colonial power' (Quijano), and 'coloniality of gender' (Lugones). We will reflect on the processes and consequences of the imposition of Western epistemologies, specifically in relation to gender and sexual identities and histories. In this way, we will learn about decolonial philosophies and how to be self-reflexive about our engagement with knowledge and critical about our positions in the world.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ❖ Think critically, communicate effectively, and further develop the capacity to produce rigorous conceptual analysis.
- ❖ Develop knowledge of the history and core ideas/debates of decolonial thought.
- ❖ A critical perspective on concepts of coloniality, decoloniality and its intersection with western modernity.
- ❖ Apply intersectional frameworks in both scholarship and activist frameworks in feminist and LGBTQ communities.
- ❖ Identify thinkers of the Global South who have shaped decolonial theory.
- ❖ Demonstrate an understanding of historical and cultural events that shaped Latin America's 'decolonial turn'.

- ❖ Explain the nature and impact of colonialism and white supremacy on colonized peoples across Latin America as well as racialized people around the world.
- ❖ Apply the theoretical frameworks of the course in multiple disciplinary texts, research projects, and public arenas.
- ❖ Produce a final graduate-level research paper. A paper that shows originality, rigorous research, and academic analysis and writing. This is a paper that can be presented at a conference or further revised for publication.

Course materials

-Required Texts. From the GMU bookstore or online booksellers_

Required books (paper or digital):

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Any edition. I recommend the Richard Philcox translation (Grove Press).

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera : The New Mestiza*. *Any edition
I recommend [the fourth edition, 25th anniversary](#). San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.

Books you might want to buy if you can (I will still post the PDFs of the required chapters):

Mignolo, Walter D. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity : Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Duke UP <https://www.dukeupress.edu/the-darker-side-of-western-modernity>
*You can get a 40% discount until February 20 using MLA24

Walsh, Catherine E. *Rising up, Living On: Re-Existences, Sowings, and Decolonial Cracks*. 1st ed., Duke University Press, 2023. <https://www.dukeupress.edu/rising-up-living-on>

-All the other materials will be available on Blackboard or through links to open sources.

Technical Help

If you have difficulty with accessing Blackboard, please contact the ITU Support Center at 703.993.8870 or support@gmu.edu

If you have trouble with using the features in Blackboard, email courses@gmu.edu

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: This is an advanced seminar class, and weekly attendance and engagement in class discussion is expected. After the final 'add' date, you get one absence without penalty, no questions asked. After that, any absence from class without a good reason that is

documented and communicated to me in writing will result in a 10% reduction to your participation grade. If you are absent 4 meetings or more, you will automatically fail this course.

As this is an in-person class, the norm will be for us to meet in the classroom, unless Mason's guidance for Spring classes changes or when I am abroad at a conference. If you cannot attend a class in person on health grounds or due to an unexpected emergency, please email me, and we will work together to identify the best way for you to make up the material you miss.

Please note: **Masks continue to be very welcome in this class.** Please feel free to mask if this makes sense for your individual circumstances or if you are more comfortable doing so.

Evaluation and grading:

15%	Active participation and attendance
10%	Abstract and annotated bibliography for final paper
20%	Blackboard questions and response papers (3)
40%	Final paper
15%	Discussion facilitation

Response papers: The written response paper needs to be 2-3 pages with no bibliography (double space, one-inch margins, 12-point max.). The response paper should identify some of the author's arguments, critically analyze them, and offer possible connections to other texts read in this course or other ideas if relevant. Two due dates for response papers are fixed, the third is your choice.

Discussion questions on Blackboard: Each student needs to post on Blackboard discussion board two or three questions related to the assigned readings by 1:00pm on the day of each class. The discussion questions may include a direct quote from the texts. I will select questions to generate discussion and analysis in class.

Discussion facilitation: The professor will introduce the discussion during the first few weeks of classes. Starting from the third week, the discussion will be introduced by students through a mini-class (20-30 mins).

Grad students are expected to practice teaching and facilitating skills. You will present information and, at the same time, engage your classmates by asking for thoughts about a quote or idea, and by incorporating discussion questions into the presentation.

You should schedule a meeting with the professor one full week before your presentation to receive the objectives and recommendations of sources.

Final paper: For the final paper, you need to hand in an abstract that includes the topic, research question or hypothesis, a paragraph explaining your ideas, and an annotated bibliography. The final paper needs to directly engage one or more of the thinkers studied in this course. You will receive more specific guidelines later in the semester.

You will receive comments and specific feedback; once your abstract has been approved by your professor, you will be ready to proceed. You cannot change your topic without approval from the professor. The paper needs to follow the MLA or APA guidelines and have an extension of 10-12 pages without a bibliography (that should go on a separate page). The evaluation rubric is available on Blackboard.

- ❖ This paper needs to show originality, rigorous research, and an academic level of analysis and writing. This is a paper that can be presented at a conference or further revised for publication.

The deadline to turn in your final paper is **Monday, May 6 at noon.** Via Blackboard. For every day that your paper is late 10% will be deducted.

Life Happens

- **If you need to miss classes** due to individual circumstances, please let me know and we can make arrangements for you to make up the material. Taking part in in-depth discussions of the texts and meaningful group work will be a key part of taking the class, and this will be challenging if you are not present in person. We can always find make-up options and workarounds – but they will not substitute for being present in person.
- **If you miss an assignment** or believe that you will miss an assignment due to extenuating circumstances (including for example, illness, self-quarantine, care for family members who are ill, etc.), please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work together make appropriate adjustments and chart a way forward. Extensions can be given, though these should be arranged in advance wherever possible.
- If you cannot attend a class or may need flexibility regarding an assignment deadline due to **religious observance**, please let me know in advance so that we can plan for this together, including opportunities to make up work or material missed and/or adapting the assignment schedule as appropriate.

There are two non-negotiable constraints on the flexibility I can offer:

1. Instructors are not permitted to accept any additional work after final grades have been entered, so it is important to communicate with me about any problems or delays, especially towards the end of the semester.
2. A grade of 'incomplete' can be awarded to provide the opportunity to complete

missing work as long as (a) this is requested and agreed in writing (email is fine for this) before final grades are entered, and (b) 60% of the coursework has been completed and you are on track to pass the course.

Email and other forms of communication:

You can reach me by email, by coming to office hours or by scheduling an appointment. Meeting in person is the best way to communicate any concerns or questions about readings, research ideas, etc. I will do my best to respond to your email within 24 hours. Friday is my writing day, and I usually do not respond to emails until Monday. But please, if your email is urgent, please add 'time-sensitive' in the title so that I know you need an answer soon. I do not respond to emails on weekends.

Office of Disability Services

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474.

All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Diversity/Religious Holidays

If there are any issues related to religious holidays, please inform the instructor during the first week of class. See also <http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=104>

Academic Integrity

See the last page of the syllabus for the University's policy on academic integrity. If you are unsure about a citation, ASK! Plagiarism is much more than submitting a paper you found online. If you do not include a works cited or fail to follow MLA or APA correctly in your papers, you will not receive a passing grade for the assignment, and I am obligated as an instructor to report your case to the Honor Committee. Please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process or visit <https://oai.gmu.edu/>, the Office of Academic Integrity's website.

What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form.

Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions.

AI-Generated texts (Chat GPT and others)

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student, and sources should be clearly quoted and cited.

AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Artificially generated content, which includes, but is not limited to, the use of artificial intelligence tools or other tools that generate artificial content in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or other assessments, is not permitted in this course.

Statement on Inclusion and Safe Learning

It is my intent that this learning community be a space for learning and growth, both in and out of class, where students from all diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and learning needs are well-served. A community where the diversity that students bring is viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. I intend to present materials and activities that respect gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

Important note: Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear each other.

It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions; please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, you may:

Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.

Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are at least one other student in the class had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of the context and impact of course material and class discussions.

(Adapted from Prof. Lynn Hernandez, Brown University)

Names and Pronouns

Our names are closely attached to who we are and our sense of self, as well as how we are seen by others. Appropriate pronoun use is a basic requirement for inclusivity and mutual respect. In the first class, I will invite everyone to share their name and gender pronouns and to let us know how best to address them. If you make a mistake about someone's name or pronoun, acknowledge your mistake, apologize (briefly), correct and move on: we all make mistakes, what matters is that we strive to relate to each other with care and respect.

Mason allows students and employees to use a chosen or preferred first name and indicates their pronouns where possible (i.e.: class rosters, Blackboard, and PatriotWeb). See here for additional information: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/updating-chosen-name-pronouns/>

My pronouns are '**she/her/ella**' and I go by "Professor Claudia" in my role as an instructor (in class and class-related emails).

Anti-Racism Statement

As a member of the George Mason University community, I will work to create an educational environment that is committed to anti-racism and inclusive excellence. An anti-racist approach to higher education acknowledges the ways that individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural manifestations of racism against Black individuals, indigenous people, and other people of color contribute to inequality and injustice in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our communities. Anti-racist work strives to provide our community members with resources to interrupt cycles of racism so as to cultivate a more equitable, inclusive, and just environment for all of our students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends, regardless of racial background. I believe that the work of anti-racism starts with each individual; together, students and faculty in this course will build knowledge and take actions rooted in principles of equity, inclusion, and justice that we will carry with us throughout our lives.

Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students.

Confidential student resources are available on campus at the Student Support and

Advocacy Center (<http://ssac.gmu.edu/>), Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://caps.gmu.edu/>), and Student Health Services (<http://shs.gmu.edu/>).

As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employees,” **I am required** to report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Resources

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES CENTER; JC 240K (703) 993-2986; <http://wmst.gmu.edu/center/>

The Women and Gender Studies Center sponsors programs and events that are relevant to this course. It has a library of material that may be checked out. We support several student organizations and provide internship opportunities. We also offer free printing to all of our enrolled students and minors. Hours: Mondays-Thursdays 9-6 and Fridays from 9-2.

LGBTQ+ Resources: <https://lgbtq.gmu.edu/>

Student Engagement for Racial Justice: <https://ccee.gmu.edu/serj/>

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu/>

Office of Disability Services (ODS): 703-993-2472 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>

Student Support and Advocacy Center: <http://ssac.gmu.edu>

University Libraries: <http://library.gmu.edu/>

Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

For a full list of student support resources, please see the Stearn’s Center:
<https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowning-mason-students/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

Writing Center

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#). See (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/tutoring/email--tutoring>)

Counseling and Psychological Services

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of

professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>].

CALENDAR

Please find the calendar on a separate page on Blackboard. Also, follow the readings and homework in folders created for each class.