



## HISTORY 2797F (550)

Selected Topics in International or Comparative History

### Women vs. Empire: Decolonization, Feminisms, & Womanhoods

Intersession, May 11-29, 2026

Online

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#### 1. Course Information

<b>Course number &amp; section</b>	History 2797F (550)
<b>Course name/theme</b>	Women vs. Empire: Decolonization, Feminisms, & Womanhoods
<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Sara Khorshid
<b>Zoom office hours</b>	By appointment ( <i>Email instructor to book an appointment!</i> )
<b>Class location</b>	Online (synchronous) via Zoom
<b>Zoom link</b>	<a href="https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/94812539637">https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/94812539637</a>
<b>Scheduled class times</b>	Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays May 11-29, 2026 10:30 am - 12:30 pm

#### 2. Course Description

This course focuses on global feminist and women's histories in the 20th century, especially within the context of the mid-century wave of decolonization and the Cold War. We will draw on national case studies from different parts of the world, as well as on transnational solidarity networks, to explore the impacts of colonialism, decolonization, the Cold War, and anti-imperialist networks on feminist movements and on perceptions of idealized and deviant womanhoods. We will also explore transnational alliances and conflicts between women activists in an era that was marked by sharp polarizations and strong solidarities across borders.

Thematically and chronologically organized, this course includes select (but not exhaustive) case studies that reflect the following themes and developments:

- women's roles in anti-colonial resistance and decolonization
- broader women's and feminist anti-imperialist activism and discourses
- perceptions of idealized (and deviant) womanhoods in imperialist, anti-imperialist, postcolonial, and decolonial contexts—in the US/Western Bloc, Eastern Bloc, Non-Aligned Movement nations, and beyond

#### **Key concepts and keywords**

Women; feminism; women's movements; transnational, international, and global networks; Cold War, decolonization; postcolonial, postcoloniality, and modernity/authenticity; Third Worldism; anti-imperialism; Western Bloc and Eastern Bloc; Non-Aligned Movement; West and Western world; non-Western world, Global South

### 3. Course Learning Outcomes

- Exploring the role of women in anti-colonial contexts
- Familiarity with women's activism and feminism(s) in the context of the mid-20th-century wave of decolonization and the Cold War
- Ability to see and analyze the gendered aspects of political and international history, and the implications of such gendered aspects
- Familiarity with feminist and women's transnational interactions, solidarity, and rifts in the Cold War context
- Reflecting on and evaluating one's own positionality in relation to feminism and women's issues at a global level based on an informed understanding of the historical contexts and the afterlives of colonialism and anti-colonial resistance, postcoloniality, the mid-20th-century wave of decolonization, and the Cold War
- Connecting the history discussed in this course to relevant present-day discussions and developments

### 4. Statement on Acceptable Use of Generative AI

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own. Use of AI content generators (such as ChatGPT) to complete assignments without attribution or permission from the instructor is a scholastic offence. AI content detectors may be used as a tool to assess the originality of student work

Unless explicitly requested by the course instructor for specific tasks, all work submitted in this course must be your own.

You may not make use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT to write your assignment for you.

### 5. Textbooks and Course Materials

- No textbook is required for this course.
- We will use secondary/scholarly and primary sources, including movies and memoirs.
- All readings and materials are either available via the university library website or on Brightspace.
- All movies that are not in English have English subtitles.

### 6. Assessments/Grade Breakdown

#### Summary

Assessment	Weight	Due Date
1 Attendance & participation	15%	Every meeting
2 Response on <i>Djamilah</i> movie & Zohra Drif's memoir	25%	Tue., May 19, 2026
3 AI timelines & personal critique/reflection	20%	Mon., May 25, 2026
4 Imagined conversation between 2 feminists	20%	Thu., May 28, 2026
5 Reflection on what you have learned from this course	20%	Mon., Jun.1, 2026
<b>1 bonus point for every class you attend with your camera on from start to finish Maximum 5 pts</b>		

#### Requirements to Pass This Course:

1. Attending at least 5 classes out of all 11 (online via Zoom)
2. Completing and submitting all written components of the assignments

## Details

Detailed instructions regarding each of the assessments will be made available on Brightspace under Assessments.

### 7. Meeting-by-Meeting Class Schedule

Meeting	Theme	Readings/Movies <i>Do them before class!</i>
<b>Meeting 1</b> Mon., May 11, 2026	Introductions + This Course	No readings
<b>Meeting 2</b> Tue., May 12, 2026	Anticolonial Men, Women, & Feminism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ellen L. Fleischmann, "<a href="#">The Other 'Awakening': The Emergence of Women's Movements in the Modern Middle East, 1900-1940.</a>"</li> <li>Partha Chatterjee, "<a href="#">Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India.</a>"</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 3</b> Wed., May 13, 2026	Women as Freedom Fighters I	<b>Watch <a href="#">Djamilah</a></b> (1958 Egyptian-produced movie on an Algerian freedom fighter during the War of Independence) <i>English subtitles appear on this YouTube link. If they don't appear to you, check your YouTube settings or email me</i>
<b>Meeting 4</b> Thu., May 14, 2026	Women as Freedom Fighters II	Excerpts of your choice from Zohra Drif, <a href="#">Inside the Battle of Algiers: Memoir of a Woman Freedom Fighter</a>  <b>Optional read:</b> Chapter 2 and skim through excerpts of your choice from Marnia Lazreg, <a href="#">The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question</a>
<b>Meeting 5</b> Tue., May 19, 2026 <b><i>Due Date!</i></b>	Postcolonial Womanhood and State Feminism	Read <b>ONE</b> of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laura Bier, "<a href="#">Introduction</a>," <i>Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasserist Egypt</i></li> <li>May Hawas and Philiip Muehlenbeck, "<a href="#">Mobilizing Women? State Feminisms in Communist Czechoslovakia and Socialist Egypt.</a>"</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 6</b> Wed., May 20, 2026	Anti-Imperialist Solidarity & Third Worldism	<p><b>A.</b> Read <b>ONE</b> of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laura Bier, "<a href="#">Our Sisters in Struggle: State Feminism and Third World Imaginaries.</a>"</li> <li>Francisca De Haan, "<a href="#">Continuing Cold War Paradigms in Western Historiography of Transnational Women's Organizations: The Case of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF).</a>"</li> <li>Katherine M. Marino, "<a href="#">East-South Feminism in the Long Global Sixties: Felicia Santizo and the Women's International Democratic Federation in Panama.</a>"</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Watch <a href="#">I Am Cuba (Soy Cuba)</a></b>, a 1964 Soviet-Cuban movie that captures popular sentiments against Western/American-led imperialism in the Global South during the Cold War</p>
<b>Meeting 7</b> Thu., May 21, 2026	Soviet Womanhood	Watch <a href="#">Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears</a> , a beloved 1980 Russian movie produced by the Soviet government <i>Activate English subtitles</i> 148 minutes divided into two shorter videos
<b>Meeting 8</b>	Maoist Feminism	Read <b>ONE</b> of the following:

Mon., May 25, 2026 <b>Due Date!</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tina Mai Chen, "<a href="#">Female Icons, Feminist Iconography? Socialist Rhetoric and Women's Agency in 1950s China.</a>"</li> <li>2. The <a href="#">introduction</a> of Wang Zheng, <i>Finding Women in the State: A Socialist Feminist Revolution in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1964.</i></li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 9</b> Tue., May 26, 2026	American Womanhood and Feminism during the Cold War	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Instagram post</a> on the 1959 "Kitchen Debate" between US Vice President Nixon and Soviet/Russian (USSR) Premier Nikita Khrushchev</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Transcript of the Kitchen Debate</a></li> <li>3. The introduction and Chapter 1 from Elaine Tyler May, <i>Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era.</i></li> <li>4. Jacqueline Castledine, "<a href="#">In a Solid Bond of Unity': Anticolonial Feminism in the Cold War Era.</a>"</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 10</b> Wed., May 27, 2026	The 1970s & 1980s The United Nations Decade for Women	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Jocelyn Oloctt, "<a href="#">We Are Our Sister's Keeper': US Feminists at the 1975 International Women's Year Conference.</a>"</li> <li>2. Angela Davis, "<a href="#">Women in Egypt: A Personal View.</a>"</li> </ol>
<b>Meeting 11</b> Thu., May 28, 2027 <b>Due Date!</b>	From Past to Present; From Freedom Fighters to Feminists	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Amina Mama, "<a href="#">We Will Not be Pacified': From Freedom Fighters to Feminists.</a>"</li> <li>2. Sherene Razack, "<a href="#">Global White Supremacy in a Time of Genocide.</a>"</li> </ol>

#### 8. FASS Appendix (on Brightspace)

Includes the required statements as per Senate Policy:

- Prerequisite checking – the student's responsibility
- Statement on Use of Electronic Devices
- Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")
- Statement on Academic Offences
- Support Services