

*Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto*

**WOMEN, WAR, AND LEARNING
LHA 1146
Winter Session 2021**

Dr. Shahrzad Mojab

When Thursdays
Where Online (Synchronous)
Time 5:30-8:00 (EST)
E-mail shahrzad.mojab@utoronto.ca
Office Hours Thursdays 7:00-8:00 (EST) or by appointment on zoom or phone.

All email correspondence must come from your utormail account. Please include the course code in the subject line.

Acknowledging Our History, Forging Solidarity

The University of Toronto is on Indigenous land, which for thousands of years has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, many of whom continue to fight against colonization, extractive industries, and gendered oppression. To understand global struggle of women for freedom, equality, and justice, we must begin by acknowledging the historical colonial practices that resulted in conquest and expropriation of Indigenous land and understanding the ongoing legacies of patriarchal colonialism, capitalism and imperialism that continue to oppress and exploit women, but most importantly to understand ways women resist, fight back and struggle for revolution.

Information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) from University of Toronto and OISE

As the situation may evolve quickly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the university and the institute may introduce new measures to respond to the situation, it is recommended that you frequently consult these dedicated web pages:

- University of Toronto:
<https://www.utoronto.ca/message-from-the-university-regarding-the-coronavirus>
- School of Graduate Studies:
<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/covid19>
- OISE Office of the Registrar and Student Services:
<https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/orss/COVID-19.html>

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVE

Most regions of the world are engulfed in war and conflict. While it is easy to draw the borders of the ‘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 people’s displacement, dispossession, 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 the three continents 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 language training to workforce integration, to access to higher education, which may bridge their lived experiences in ruptured times and spaces. To understand this complexity, we need theoretical positions, which can explain the conflictual, gendered, classed, 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 and feminism, anti-racist transnational feminism, and critical pedagogies to address how, where, what women learn under the condition of war, occupation, colonization, and violence.

War has an expansive definition in this course. It is not limited to nation/state to nation/state militarized conflicts. The historical and structural forms of poverty, settler colonialism, fascism, patriarchy, ‘war-on-terror’ and ‘war-on-women’ constitute forms of war and violence which will be addressed in the course. Under the current pandemic, COVID-19 could be considered a new “portal” for global violence against women.

The course will cover such general topics as war and violence, women’s participation and role in war and militarism, feminism and peace, neo-liberal ideologies of ‘post-war’ reconstruction and ‘democracy,’ the role of women’s NGOs in re-building shattered lives of women in the aftermath of war, but also perpetuating the ‘imperialist/colonialist feminist’ relations. We will also discuss the women anti-war resistance and activism, and women, violence and learning. More 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 conditions 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 adequately theorized in the literature on learning. Although there is some 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, Marxism, women's studies, and diaspora studies. The approach will, therefore, be interdisciplinary.

There is unequal regional representation in the course readings. Simply, it is impossible to cover the globe which is burdened with many war and violence 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, racism, 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.

COURSE POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Respecting Our Learning Community. 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. This course, like all courses, has its own politics. We will discuss and we will disagree. It is of the utmost importance that we disagree respectfully and engage in productive, generative conversation. The expectation of this course is that students conduct themselves in a collegial and respectful manner in class, out of class, and within on-line formats. 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, engage deeply with theoretical debates, and accomplishing learning activities prior to class sessions.

Politics of Teaching/Learning. Like other courses, this course has its own politics. The instructor and the course content share the politics of the University of Toronto in (a) opposing discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, marital status, and family status, and (b) commitment to human rights, the rights of freedom of speech, academic freedom and freedom of research. The U of T "Statement of Institutional Purpose" affirms that "these rights (freedom of speech, academic freedom and freedom of research) are meaningless unless they entail the right to raise deeply disturbing questions and provocative challenges to the cherished beliefs of society and the university itself." Class participants are, thus, encouraged to exercise these rights, and raise challenging questions; however, the political positions of class participants will not be a basis for evaluating their academic performance.

Structure and Flexibility. The course is both structured and flexible. You see its structured character in the selection of topics, their division into sections, the order introduced into the diverse readings/topics, and a balance between theoretical and empirical content. The pace of change in the position of women and the politics of the region are astonishing, and this demands flexibility in order to cover the latest developments; we should be able, for instance, to screen latest documentaries and accommodate guest speakers.

Respectful Learning Environment. There is an expectation that this class will be a positive space for all. Participation means respectful discussion that is free of racism, sexism, classism, ableism, and/or any other form of bigotry.

For information about student supports see:

Anti-Racism and Cultural Diversity Office: <https://antiracism.utoronto.ca>

Equity and Diversity Office: <http://sgdo.utoronto.ca/about-the-office/equity-diversity-u-of-t/>

Mental Health Supports: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/mental-health-care/>

UofT Positive Space: <http://positivespace.utoronto.ca/>

First Nations House: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/fnh>

Academic Integrity & Student Conduct. It is expected that all students will adhere to university policies on academic integrity and student conduct in the classroom. All assignments will be written in a standardized and accepted stylistic form (APA). For more information on how not to cheat in this class, please see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Academic Support for Students

a. OSSC

OISE Student Success Centre (OSSC) offers a range of services, including one on one writing, math and French language support. For more see:

https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/orss/OISE_Student_Success_Centre.html#overview

b. OISE Library

The OISE Library provides research support on a range of topics from finding articles, to developing search strategies, to managing citations and generating bibliographies. Students are welcome to:

- Request an one-on-one consultation with an OISE librarian (available by phone or online): <https://oise.library.utoronto.ca/research/book-consultation>
- Use the Ask Chat service to connect quickly online: <https://library.utoronto.ca/ask-librarian>
- Email or call your OISE Librarian directly. Our contact information is listed in our staff directory: <https://oise.library.utoronto.ca/aboutus-staff-directory>

LEARNING ACTIVITIES & ASSAIGNMENTS

The primary objective of the learning activities is to enhance your skills in theoretical analysis and engaged/critical reading and writing of texts. In assessing your learning, I will focus attention on the following factors:

1. An active level of participation.
2. Evidence of your ability to integrate new knowledge and to effectively communicate your understanding in writing.
3. Evidence of your ability to critically analyse and engage with alternative perspectives.
4. Quality, clarity and focus in writing.

Participation & Preparation (10%)

Attendance is extremely important for full engagement in this course. Your presence and active engagement are expected. I strongly encourage students to discuss with me any circumstances that may affect their participation in class. It is expected that all students will come to class having completed the assigned readings. Class time will be discussion heavy and students should be prepared to discuss readings. Participation points will be allocated based on active engagement with course content and peers.

Reading Reflections (20%)

Each student will prepare 'reading reflections' on **two** weekly readings in order to facilitate discussion of the readings in class. You are encouraged to be creative in your plans for discussion of the readings. You are expected to summarize the readings and provide points for discussion related to course themes.

In reviewing each reading, think about the following questions:

- What is the author's main argument?
- How does the author support her/his argument?
- How does the author define key concepts?
- What are the political, personal, and intellectual implications of the author's arguments?
- What is your critique of the author's argument, assumptions, evidence?
- What questions do this reading raise for you?
- What did you learn from this reading?

A theme-based paper (20%)

Each student will be assigned a theme based on the course readings. You will be expected to write an analytical review paper based on the theme. Reviews should be no more than **1000 words** and should analyze the text for its discussion of course themes. Reviews are due on

Due Date: February 25

Final Paper (50%)

Each student will complete a major course paper (**maximum 4000 words**) on the subject of their choosing related to course themes. Final papers are due by **April 8 or April 15**.

SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS

January 14 & 21

The Condition of War

Selected Topics: How modern wars are linked to 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. Frantz Fanon (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. Frantz Fanon (1965). “Algeria Unveiled,” *A Dying Colonialism* [translated from French by Haakon Chevalier with an Introduction by Adolfo Gilly]. New York: Cover Press: 35-67.
3. Himani Bannerji (2020). “Colonialism/Capitalism/Resistance,” in Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Ziadah (eds.) *Revolutionary Feminisms*. London, Verso: 95-118.
4. Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2020). “Abolition Feminism,” in Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Ziadah (eds.) *Revolutionary Feminisms*. London, Verso: 161-178.
5. Angela Davis (2020). “Abolition Feminism,” in Brenna Bhandar and Rafeef Ziadah (eds.) *Revolutionary Feminisms*. London, Verso: 203-216.

January 28

War as a Capitalist, Colonialist & Imperialist Project

Selected Topics: The condition of war since September 11, 2001; colonial legacy of war, war as an imperialist project; war and capitalism; and the military-industrial complex; war, violence, and the ideology of capitalism/imperialism.

6. Angela Davis (2008). “A vocabulary for feminist praxis: on war and radical critique,” in Robin L. Riley, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Minnie Bruce Pratt (eds.). *Feminism and War: Confronting U.S. Imperialism*. London: Zed Books: 19-26.
7. Daniel Volman (1998). “The militarization of Africa,” in Meredith Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (eds.). *What Women Do in Wartime*. London: Zed Books: 150-162.

8. Shahrzad Mojab (2015). "Gender and violence," in Immanuel Ness and Saer Maty Ba (eds.). *Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*. New York: Palgrave: 1236-1247.

February 4 & 11

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 the 'culture of terror' and 'security culture' is affecting women? Understanding and thinking through the missing and murdered Aboriginal women; why so much violence?

9. Laleh Khalili (2011). "Gendered practices of counterinsurgency," *Review of International Studies*, 37: 1471-1491.
10. Sheila Meintjes, 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-War Transformation*. London: Zed Books: 3-18.
11. Patricia Hynes (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.
12. Tina Sideris (2003). "War, gender and culture: Mozambican women refugees," *Social Science and Medicine*, 56 (4): 713-724.
13. Rangira Bea Gallimore (2008). "Militarism, ethnicity, and sexual violence in the Rwandan genocide," *Feminist Africa*, issue 10 on Militarism, Conflict and Women's Activism: 9-29.
14. Mari Toivanen and Bahar Baser (2016). "Gender in the representations of an armed conflict," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, 9: 294-314.

February 18

Missing and Murdered of Aboriginal Women

14. TRC [reports](#)
15. Readings on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

February 25

Harm of War to Women

Theme-based Paper is due

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, survivors, activists, and artists.

16. Helen Scanlon (2008). “Militaryization, gender and transitional justice in Africa,” *Feminist Africa*, issue 10 on Militarism, Conflict and Women’s Activism: 31-48.
17. Hagar Kotef (2010). “Objects of security: Gendered violence and securitized humanitarianism in occupied Gaza,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 30 (2): 179-191.
18. Alison Crosby and M. Brinton Lykes (2011). “Mayan women survivors speak: The gendered relations of truth telling in postwar Guatemala,” *The International Journal of Transnational Justice*, Vol. 5: 456-476.
19. Julie Mertus (2004). “Shouting from the bottom of the well: The impact of international trials for wartime rape on women’s agency,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6 (1): 110-128.

March 4 Feminisms & Colonialism, Orientalism, Imperialism, and Fascism

Selected Topics: What are the theoretical roots of ‘colonial feminism’ and ‘imperialist feminism’? 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?

20. Liz Fekete (2012). “Anti-fascism or anti-extremism?” *Race & Class*, Vol. 55(4): 29–39.
21. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar (2005). “Challenging imperial feminism,” *Feminist Review*, No. 80: 44-63.
22. Shahrzad Mojab (2020). “Fascism and anti-fascism in adult education: Politics and pedagogy,” in Susan Brigham, Robert McGray and Kaela Jubas (eds.). *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Canada: Advancing Critical Legacy*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.: 347-357.

March 11 Women’s NGOs and the Neo-liberal Ideology of ‘Democracy’ and ‘Reconstruction’

Selected Topics: Reading NGOization in the context of foreign policy. 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’ ‘experts,’ or ‘skilled labour’ for reconstruction, humanitarian projects, and re-building nation-states? Feminist transnational activism and rights-based activism.

23. Rema Hammami (2000). "Palestinian NGOs since Oslo: From NGO politics to social movements?" *Middle East Report*, No. 214: pp. 16-19 & 27 & 48.
24. Shahrzad Mojab (2009). "'Post-war Reconstruction', imperialism and Kurdish women's NGOs," in Nadjie Al-Ali and Nicola Pratt (eds.). *Women and War in the Middle East*. London: Zed Books: 99-128.
25. Mariz Tadros (2010). "Between the elusive and the illusionary: Donor's empowerment agendas in the Middle East in perspective." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 30(2): 224-237.
26. Valentine M. Moghadam (2015). "Transnational activism," in Laura Shepherd (ed.). *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*. New York: Routledge, pp. 331-345.

**MARCH 18: MARCH BREAK
NO CLASS**

March 25 & April 1

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? 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? 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?

27. Shahrzad Mojab (2010). *Women, War, Violence and Learning*. New York: Routledge.
28. Catherine Hall (2008). "Making colonial subjects: Education in the age of empire," *History of Education*, 37(6): 773-787.
29. Himani Bannerji (2020). "Patriarchy in the era of neoliberalism: The case of India," in Himani Bannerji, *The Ideological Condition: Selected Essays on History, Race and Gender*. London: Brill and Historical Materialism 212: 542-567.

30. Shahrzad Mojab and Sara Carpenter (2020). "Marxist feminist pedagogies of fascism and anti-fascism." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, special issue of Adult Learning in the Age of Trump and Brexit, no. 165, Spring, pp. 129-141.

April 8 **Back to Gender, Violence, Colonization, and Imperialism:
Reflection and Moving forward**