**Feminist Perspectives on**

**Inequalities, (Im)Mobilities, and Transnationalisms in a North American Context**

**Fall 2016 Political Science Honours Seminar**

**York University**

**POLS 4980, Wednesdays 2:30pm-5:30pm; Vari Hall 3017**

**Syllabus**

**Professor:** Dr. Anne Sisson Runyan, Fulbright Visiting Research Chair in North American Integration, Department of Political Science, York University and Professor of Political Science and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, University of Cincinnati

**York Office Location and Hours:** Ross S661, Wednesdays 12noon-1:30pm and by appointment (virtual or in person)

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## Course Description

This Political Science honours seminar, also open to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality and Environmental Studies students, starts from the idea that “North America” as a region is socially constructed; currently, it is constructed particularly in relation to the post-North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and post-9/11 climate in which we live. Such a climate (re)produces national, political, economic, cultural, social, environmental, and mental borders that limit our thinking about rights, citizenships, social and physical mobility, ecological sustainability, national and social identities, and local and transnational social movements. Such borders prevent the development of more inclusive societies and more equal, just, and ecologically sustainable relations within and across the region. Through the lenses of feminist comparative, regional, and environmental politics studies, this course focuses on nation, gender, race, class, and sexuality inequities and struggles for social and environmental justice across the North American region where the Global North and South meet and where a world power lies at the center.

Aspects of this course grew out of a tri-federally funded North American Mobility student and faculty exchange program on Women’s Human Rights, Citizenships, and Identities, which involved six universities in Mexico, the US, and Canada, including the University of Cincinnati and York University. Aspects of it additionally arose from a collaborative international online learning (COIL) project led by myself and a Political Science and Gender Studies colleague at the Universidad de las Americas Puebla in Mexico in which we joined our courses on this topic to enable students in the US and Mexico to collaborate transnationally through a range of online activities. In this course, we will also explore the barriers to and potentialities of building transnational political solidarities for a more just and eco-friendly “North America,” challenging not only the borders “out there” but also those between each other and within ourselves. But we will particularly do so in this course through a focus on a case of burying Canada’s nuclear waste not far from Toronto on the shores of Lake Huron, which has prompted local and transnational protest led particularly by women and indigenous peoples, groups that have traditionally been at the forefront of resisting the nuclear fuel chain from uranium mining to nuclear production and waste in North America. We will also consider this case in the context of top-down North American integration efforts, the threats they pose (particularly to the Great Lakes), and resistances to them.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

Recognize all sorts of borders in the North American region

Recognize the complexities of “crossing borders” for marginalized people and for social movements

Challenge borders as barriers to social, economic, and political mobility for women and other marginalized peoples in the North American region

Identify competing notions of “North America”

Identify the structural inequalities intensified by NAFTA, other regional agreements/policies, and neoliberal globalization more generally

List examples of feminists organizing against NAFTA and its effects in all three countries

Understand the limitations of and on citizenship rights in the North American region

Evaluate abuses of women’s rights in the North American region

Analyze readings and films for their ability to raise awareness about the interconnectedness of struggles against gender inequalities and immobilities in the North American region

Critique the nuclear landscape in North America

Understand the gendered, racialized, and undemocratic nature of nuclear waste regulatory regimes in North America

Analyze the crisis of nuclear waste through the lenses of gender and indigeneity in North America

Engage in group research and writing on a case study

Construct new ways of thinking about and acting for gender, racial, indigenous, and environmental justice in the Great Lakes Region and in a North American context

**Required Texts**

Runyan, Anne Sisson, Amy Lind, Patricia McDermott, Marianne H. Marchand. 2013. *Feminist (Im)Mobilities in Fortress(ing) North America: Rights, Citizenships, and Identities in Transnational Perspective*. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate.

Bayes, Jane, Patricia Begne, Laura Gonzales, Loise Harder, Mary Hawkesworth, and Laura MacDonald. 2006. *Women, Democracy, and Globalization in North America: A Comparative Study*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

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Additional readings listed in course outline and posted in Moodle.

**Course Policies**

In this course, all informed points of view will be listened to and respectfully considered. In addition to being respectful of each other in class discussions and within groups, students are also expected to keep up with and critically engage with the readings, films, and other course materials through in-class discussion assignments; electronically submit written work on time; and avoid plagiarism of any kind by appropriately documenting sources of quotations, ideas, and arguments.

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. While up to 2 classes missed will not result in a non-attendance penalty (although graded in-class discussion contributions missed will result in no points for those activities missed), 3 missed will result in a full grade deduction from the final grade and 4 or more classes missed will result in failure of the course without medical or other emergency documentation and making alternative arrangements for course requirements with me in such cases. Please let me know in advance if you are having problems with attendance, assignments, or course materials so I can help you in any way I can to avoid poor grades, failures, or failures to complete the course. Perfect attendance and active participation will help in borderline grade cases.

Written assignments (see course outline) must be submitted by their due dates (generally before class on the due date unless otherwise indicated) for full credit. Assignments submitted late will generally result in point deductions (typically a half point per each day late with nothing accepted more than one week late) unless there is a documented medical or other emergency/serious problem (including technical ones) *of which the instructor is informed of in advance of the due date* so that adjustments can be made if warranted. Given the collaborative nature of this course, it is vital that students keep up and do their fair share on time so that they are responsive to their student colleagues and do not negatively affect their (and your) work.

You should contact me if you are having technical, assignment, submission, health, or other course problems by email (arunyan1@yorku.ca or anne.runyan@uc.edu or text in emergencies at 513-706-0125). I will respond to queries within 48 hours and will usually complete grading within a week of submission. I will advise students if I will be out of contact or delayed for any longer period.

All are expected to abide by University standards, including the Student Conduct Standards, and other documented policies related to academic integrity found at [www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate\_cte\_main\_pages/ccas.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm) and through standard links in Moodle. Any violation of these regulations, including acts of plagiarism, will be dealt with according to those regulations. The definition of plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: copying another student's work, copying materials without proper citation, paraphrasing without proper citation and failing to cite all sources used and/or consulted. Examples of unacceptable plagiarism can be reviewed at: <http://www.Indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html#original>

If you have any special needs related to your participation in this course, including identified visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical impairment, communication disorder, and/or specific learning disability that may influence your performance in this course, you should contact me (and university services) to arrange for reasonable provisions to ensure an equitable opportunity to meet all requirements of this course.

Grading will follow the regular York University scheme based on points amassed (e.g., 5% equals 5 points) as follows: 90-100 A+; 80-89 A; 75-79 B+; 70-74 B: 65-69 C+; 60-64 C; 55-59 D+; 50-54 D; 40-49 E; 0-39 F.

**Course Outline (subject to some change advised well in advance)**

***Module One: North American Border-Crossings***

Learning Objectives:

Recognize all sorts of borders in the North American region

Recognize the complexities of crossing borders in North America for marginalized people and for social movements

Challenge borders as barriers to social, economic, and political mobility for women, sexual minorities, and racialized peoples in the North American region

**Week 1** (September 14) **Course Introductions: Crossing Identity Borders in a North American Context**

Readings:

Runyan, Anne Sisson, Marianne H. Marchand, and Carolyn Stoll. 2015. “Crossing Borders: Transnational Feminism and Transnationally Networked Learning, “ in *Globally Networked Teaching in the Humanities*, eds. Alexandra Schultheis Moore and Sunka Simon, pp. 110-123. New York: Routledge.

Weber, Cynthia. 2011. Chapter 5 (“Transitions”) excerpt in *I am an American: Filming the Fear of Difference*. Bristol, UK: Intellect.

Anzaldua, Gloria. 1999. “Movimientos de rebeldia y las culturas que traicionan” (Chapter 2, pp. 37-45) in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Agnew, Vijay. 2009. “Introduction” excerpt in *Racialized Migrant Women in Canada: Essays on Health, Violence, and Equity*, ed. Vijay Agnew. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

Assignment:

Introduce yourselves (in writing—about 100 words on Discussion Board Forum by Sept. 16—and in class) in terms of your immigrant and/or indigenous heritage and what/who accounts for you living in Canada or North America; your gender, sexuality, class, and race or ethnicity identification; and what you think makes you “Canadian” and/or “North American” or neither. *Worth 5%.*

**Week 2** (September 21) **Crossing National Borders in “North America”**

Readings:

Runyan et al, Chapter 5 (Lind and Williams)

Pratt, Anna and Sarah K. Thompson. 2008. “Chivalry, ‘Race’, and Discretion at the Canadian Border.” *British Journal of Criminology* 48: 620-40.

Luna-Firebaugh, Eileen M. 2002. “The Border Crossed Us: Crossing Issues of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.” *Wicazo Sa Review* 17 (1): 158-81.

Solomon, Alisa. 2005. “Trans/Migrant” in *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, ed. Eithne Luibheid and Lionel Cantu, Jr. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, pp. 3-29.

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

Assignment:

Post on Discussion Board Forum at least 2 days before class and bring with you images of “borders” that you photograph or find on the web along with explanations (about 100 words) of what kinds and dimensions of borders your image(s) represent with reference to the readings. Each of you must respond (in writing—about 100 words before class--and in class) to one other student’s image in terms of how well it elucidates how borders operate to limit, exclude, and divide based on the readings thus far. *Worth 10%.*

***Module Two: Regional Gender Politics: Inequalities and Rights in “North America”***

Learning Objectives:

Identify competing notions of “North America”

Identify the structural inequalities intensified by NAFTA and other regional agreements/policies

Understand the limitations of and on citizenship rights in the North American region

Evaluate abuses of women’s rights in the North American region

List examples of feminists organizing against NAFTA and its effects in all three countries

**Week 3** (September 28) **Constructing “North America”: Gendered Inclusions and Exclusions**

Readings:

Bayes et al, Introduction

Runyan et al, Introduction and Chapter 1

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

**Week 4** (October 5) **Women’s/Queer Rights in North America in Comparative Perspective**

Readings:

Bayes et al, Chapters 2, 3, 4

Runyan et al, Chapter 7 (Gomez Rossi)

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

**Week 5** (October 12) **NAFTA, Globalization, and Gendered Restructuring in North America**

Readings:

Bayes et al, Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

Film: “Maquilapolis”

Assignment:

Submit an individual reflection paper (5 pages, double-spaced and in Word) which addresses generally why and how gendered inequalities have increased in a post-NAFTA, Fortress(ing) North America based on readings in this module (appropriately quote and cite using authors and page numbers parenthetically). *Worth 15%.*

***Module Three: Gendered Immobilities, Violence, and Citizenships in “North America”***

Learning Objectives:

Understand the limitations of and on citizenship rights in the North American region

Evaluate abuses of women’s rights in the North American region

Analyze readings and films for their ability to raise awareness about the interconnectedness of struggles against gender inequalities and immobilities in the North American region

**Week 6** (October 19) **Labour, Reproductive, and Sexual Immobilities**

Readings:

Runyan et al, Chapters 2 (McDermott and Sanmiguel-Valderrama), 4 (O’Leary and Gardea), 8 (White), 9 (Rosser and Trujillo)

Questions for Class Discussion: posted on powerpoint

Film: “El Contrato”

**Week 7** (October 26) **Gendered Violence**

Readings:

Runyan et al, Chapter 10 (Runyan)

Melissa W. Wright. 2011. “Necropolitics, Narcopolitics and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-US Border.” *Signs: Journal of Women, Culture, and Society* 36(3): 707-731.

Bohrman, Rebecca and Naomi Murakawa. 2005. “Remaking Big Government: Immigration and Crime Control in the United States.” In *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison-Industrial Complex,* ed. Julia Sudbury, pp. 109-126. New York: Routledge.

Thobani, Sunera. 2007. “The Welfare of Nationals” (Chapter 3, pp. 105-140) in *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Questions for Class Discussion: posted on powerpoint

Films to view: “Seniorita Extraviada” (Netflix/free access) and “Finding Dawn” (online url TBA/free access); may watch some of each in class

Assignment: Post on Discussion Board an analytical reaction to the films (about 200 words) and respond to one of other student’s reaction (about 100 words) on the discussion board. *Worth 10%.*

**Week 8** (November 2) **Citizenship Denied**

Readings:

Runyan et al, Chapter 3 (Norman)

Davinda Bhandar. 2004. “Renormalizing Citizenship and Life in Fortress North America.” *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3: 261-278.

Film: “Frozen River”

Assignment: Submit an 8-10 page (double-spaced and in Word) analytical paper. Your paper should address some aspect(s) of the broad theme of “Gendered Implications of the Neoliberalization and Securitization of North America” and must draw from the course readings (at least one each from Modules One, Two, and Three and appropriately citing quotes/paraphrases by author and page number parenthetically). *Worth 30%.*

***Module Four: Local/Transnational Resistances to Nuclear Power/Waste in “North America” from Feminist and Indigenous Perspectives***

Learning Objectives:

Critique the nuclear landscape in North America

Understand the gendered, racialized, and undemocratic nature of nuclear waste regulatory regimes in North America

Analyze the crisis of nuclear waste through the lenses of gender and indigeneity in North America

Engage in group research and writing on a case study

Construct new ways of thinking about and acting for gender, racial, indigenous, and environmental justice in the Great Lakes Region and in a North American context

**Week 9** (November 9) **Critiquing North American** **Gendered and Racialized** **Environmental and Nuclear Colonialism**

Readings:

Endres, Danielle. 2009. “The Rhetoric of Nuclear Colonialism: Rhetorical Exclusion of American Indian Arguments in the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Siting Decision.” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6(1): 39-60.

Nelson, Lin. 1984. “Promise Her Everything: The Nuclear Power Industry’s Agenda for Women.” *Feminist Studies* 10(2): 291-314.

Mollett, Sharlene and Caroline Faria. 2012. “Messing with Gender in Feminist Political Ecology.” *Geoforum* 45: 116-125.

Lovelace, Robert. 2009. “Notes from Prison: Protecting Algonquin Lands from Uranium Mining.” In *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*, eds. Julian Agayeman et al., pp. ix-xix. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Questions for Class Discussion: posted on powerpoint

Assignment: : Organize into groups of 5 to jointly research and write, through the course Moodle Wikis set up per group, a 18-20 page (double-spaced in Word) research paper (plus references) on some aspect of the nuclear fuel chain crisis in North America employing some combination of critical (e.g., feminist, indigenous/decolonial, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, etc) perspectives. Each group will present their papers during the final class. *Worth 30%.*

Note: Course materials can be employed, but you must use at least 8 more sources (academic and policy; media accounts and the like would be beyond the 8). We will devote time in each of the Module 4 classes to this assignment, allowing group members to meet and discuss their topics and progress with each other and the class.

**Week 10** (November 16) **Nuclearism, Nuclear Waste, and North American Regulatory Regimes**

Readings:

Kuletz, Valerie L. 1998. *The Tainted Desert: Environmental Ruin in the American West*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 4 excerpt (“Confusion in the Field”)

Redclift, Michael. 1998. “Mexico’s Nuclear Paradox.” *Energy Policy* (February): 6-10.

Johnson, Genevieve Fuji. 2007. “The Discourse of Democracy in Canadian Nuclear Waste Management Policy.” *Policy Sciences* 40(2): 79-99.

Stanley, Anna. 2009. “Representing the Knowledges of Aboriginal Peoples: The ‘Management’ of Diversity in Canada’s Nuclear Fuel Waste.” In *Nuclear Waste Management in Canada: Critical Issues, Critical Perspectives*, eds. Darrin Durant and Genevieve Fuji Johnson, pp. 106-129. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Murphy, Brenda. 2009. “Canadian Communities and the Management of Nuclear Fuel Waste.” In *Nuclear Waste Management in Canada: Critical Issues, Critical Perspectives*, eds. Darrin Durant and Genevieve Fuji Johnson, pp. 130-149. Vancouver: UBC Press.

The White House Office of the Press Secretary. 2016. “North American Climate, Clean Energy, and Environment Partnership Action Plan.” 29 June. Available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/29/north-american-climate-clean-energy-and-environment-partnership-action>

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

**Week 11** (November 23) **Women in (Trans)Local/Transnational**  **Organizing Against Nuclearism and Ecological Destruction in “Post-Political” North America**

Readings:

Garcia-Gorena, Velma. 1999. *Mothers and the Mexican Antinuclear Power Movement*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. (Chapter 2, “The Origins of the Mexican Antinuclear Movement”)

LaDuke, Winona. 1999. *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. Boston: South End Press. (Chapter 5, “Nuclear Waste Dumping on the Indians”)

McGregor, Deborah. 2009. Honouring Our Relations: An Anishnaabe Perspective on Environmental Justice.” In *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*, eds. Julian Agayeman et al., pp. 27-41. Vancouver: UBC Press.

MacGregor, Sherilyn. 2014. “Only Resist: Feminist Ecological Citizenship and the Post-Politics of Climate Change.” *Hypatia*  29(3): 617-633.

Save Our Saugeen Shores at <http://saveoursaugeenshores.org/>

Stop the Great Lakes Nuclear Dump at <http://stopthegreatlakesnucleardump.com/>

Questions for Class Discussion: posted in powerpoint

Film: “Nuclear Hope”

**Week 12** (November 30) **Prospects for a Nuclear Free Great Lakes?**

Readings:

Barlow, Maude. 2007. *The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. Toronto: McCelland and Stewart. (Chapter 6, “Is Canada’s Water for Sale?”)

Barlow, Maude. 2010.”Our Great Lakes Commons: A People’s Plan to Protect the Great Lakes Forever.” Ottawa: Council of Canadians.

SOS Great Lakes at <http://www.sosgreatlakes.org/>

Assignment: Group Research papers due (see description in Week 9).

Group Research Presentations

Final thoughts/actions on saving the Great Lakes and producing a more equitable, just, and sustainable North America?