

Womanist/Feminist & Indigenous Epistemologies

We stand at a major threshold in the extension of consciousness, caught in the remolinos (vortices) of systemic change across all fields of knowledge. . . . Many are witnessing a major cultural shift in their understanding of what knowledge consists of and how we come to know, a shift from the kinds of knowledge valued now to the kinds that will be desired in the 21st Century.

---Gloria E. Anzaldúa

"Is human knowledge the only kind of knowledge there is?"

---Craig Womack

Course Description: Employing womanist/feminist and indigenous engagements with Enlightenment-based worldviews, this course explores dominant and subjugated knowledge systems. We examine issues such as the following: What's the relationship between knowledge, perception, belief, action, and social change? How are thought, emotion, language, and material reality interrelated? How might social, geographical, historical, and bodily location affect knowledge production, consumption, and transformation? Is reason gendered and/or 'raced' and/or 'western'? What "counts" as knowledge, as fact/fiction, as truth/story? What are the justifications for these different designations, and when are such distinctions useful? What kinds of knowledge are transformative and for whom? Whose interests are/should be/could be served by diversifying what 'counts' as knowledge and truth? Through engagement with feminist/womanist, indigenous, and other progressive texts, this course examines these and related questions. We focus especially on recent developments in epistemology/ontology/metaphysics and their potential contributions to social-justice work. Some of the areas we investigate include the interconnections between "theory in the flesh," "standpoint epistemology," and "postpositivist realism;" posthumanist epistemologies; epistemologies of ignorance; transformational epistemologies; and epistemologies of 'whiteness.' **Prerequisites:** 9 graduate credit hours in Women's Studies or instructor's approval.

Texts will include all, or part of, the following: Patricia Hill Collins: *Black Feminist Thought* (2nd edition); Gloria E. Anzaldúa: *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (2rd or 3rd edition); BarbaraNeely: *Blanche and the Talented Tenth*; Gregory Cajete: *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*; Elizabeth Loyd Mayer: *Extraordinary Knowing: Science, Skepticism, and the Inexplicable Powers of the Human Mind*; Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter: *Feminist Epistemologies*; The Native Critics Collective: *Reasoning Together*; Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana: *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*; Layli Maparyan: *The Womanist Idea*. (Note: Before the course begins, students must have read Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*; Anna Lee Walter's *Ghost-Singer*; and BarbaraNeely's *Blanche on the Lam*.)

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For further information please contact:

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