This course introduces perspectives in transnational feminist theory in order to ask: what is the relationship between culture, capital, and power? How can feminist perspectives from a variety of geographic contexts help us to understand the social, economic, and political conditions of power and agency? Foregrounding literary, ethnographic and visual texts by women and queers of color from the U.S. and the “Third World,” this survey class examines the challenges of the feminist movement at the turn of the twenty-first century.

In this class, the word “transnational” is not equated with “international.” Neither is the word “feminist” equated with “women.” As such, we will not simply be studying women's movements around the world or develop a vision of universal sisterhood. Instead, we will explore how transnational feminist theory makes visible the convergences between gender and globalization; between nationalism and decolonization; and between the power of representation and representations of power. As a theoretical framework, transnational feminism prioritizes intersectionality (of race, sex, class, gender). As a methodological framework, transnational feminism draws upon recent interventions in literary and cultural studies, sociology and anthropology, science and media studies. While the class does not provide an exhaustive overview of the field, we will read major texts in transnational feminist studies to dynamically reconceptualize notions of equality, identity, and difference.

This class is cross-listed as GSST 020: Theory and Method. The class is required for GSST minors and special majors.