De-Colonial Option(s) & Other Counter Narratives on Gender and Development Theory

Course

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De-Colonial Option(s) & Other Counter Narratives on Gender and Development Theory

**Lecturer:** Dr. Epifania Amoo-Adare

**Course**

**Duration:** Weeklong, 1-5 December 2014

**Time:** Mon 1 Dec, 8-10am, 10.30am-12.30pm & 2-5pm

Tues 2 Dec, 8-10am & 2-5pm

**Venue:** Kankam Twum-Barima Seminar Room, ISSER, University of Ghana, Legon
1. Course Description:

In this course, students will be introduced to various spatially-oriented counter-narratives that contest normative notions of development as a linear process of modernization, the nation state as its nexus, and the presumption of gendered hierarchies of individuals subject to performing within such a progress narrative. More specifically we will look at the significance of the multiply-identified migrating “body,” as agent, interacting in various networks of relationships (and things) within, and beyond, developing societies. We will utilize conceptual frameworks, derived from critical social theory, de-colonial thinking and being, feminisms, and geography to discuss questions such as: How does a spatially-oriented critical reading of the “developing” world inform our social construction of knowledge(s) on it? What is the relationship between spatiality, knowledge and power? How does (hegemonic) knowledge production arise as a consequence of struggles over (academic) place? How is the researcher implicated in appropriating, re-constructing and/or dismantling existing knowledge structures?

The premise of this class is that a critical pedagogy on gender and space (especially the forces involved in the production and reproduction of both) is a necessary condition for a thorough understanding of all societies and the effects (physical, social, economic or cultural) of various development interventions in the quest for modernity. Space is here considered in its multidimensionality, namely physical and socio-cultural spaces and their different dimensions including place, territory, borders and boundaries, mobility, and positionality will be discussed. We will deconstruct widespread understandings of developing societies as being given and set in specific places that are bound by fixed categories such as nation-state; that is, a structure that is developed for and not a context that is developed by society. We will also look at how gender, another socially constructed category, is highly implicated in these ideological processes. We contrast this with an understanding of space and gender as both a manifestation, as well as a vehicle, of the productive relations of power by various bodies acting on, from and within them. Consequently, we will investigate spatial relations, the making of inclusion and exclusion, centrality versus marginality, difference and similarity within the development context and our academic constructions of it.
2. Course requirements:

Reading of Literature: Please read all of the obligatory readings in advance of the classes as these will form the basis of the class presentations and discussions. You should also try to watch the recommended viewings, as well as read some of the recommended literature. Two guidelines have been provided at the end of this syllabus in order to facilitate your process of critically reading the literature (see pages 7-9).

Class Presentations: For the first day of class, please bring in a 'cultural artifact' that represents some aspect of your life. This artifact can be something inherited, bought or found. It can be a photograph or any other object that is significant to you and forms a part of your identity, role, and/or heritage. Be prepared to share the meaning of this artifact with other class members as a way of introducing yourself and one of the things that is important to you.

Class Participation: It is expected that all will participate in the classroom discussions. This is seen as an opportunity to explore ideas, make connections, and share a collective questioning curiosity with each other in ways that encourage us to flourish, while also being challenged. In other words, during class discussions we should aim to create a learning community within which we challenge each other’s ideas and positions with utmost sensitivity and respect so as to enable growth.

Written Assignments: You will be expected to write a final paper that is a critical response to at least two of the obligatory readings. The paper will be a 10-15 pages (double spaced) analytical essay, which could also revolve around a research question—of interest to you—which has been subsequently informed by key concepts in the obligatory course literature of your choosing. You will find the critical response guidelines on page 7 of use for writing your paper. Further guidelines will also be provided for writing this paper, which is due 2 weeks after the class on.
3. Course outline:

Monday, 1 Dec 2014, 8am – 10am (2 hours)

Importance of Critical and Post-Disciplinary Readings of the World

**Obligatory Reading:**


**Recommended Viewing:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Monday, 1 Dec 2014, 10.30am – 12.30pm (2 hours)**

**Positionality; the Situating of Knowledge(s)**

**Obligatory Reading:**


**Recommended Viewing:**


**Recommended Reading:**


Monday, 1 Dec 2014, 2pm – 5pm (3 hours)

Social Construction of Space-Time, Place and Gender

Obligatory reading:


Recommended Viewing:


Recommended Reading:


Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014, 8am – 10am (2 hours)

The Mobilities Paradigm and its Politics

Obligatory Reading:


Recommended Viewing:

**Recommended Reading:**


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**Tuesday, 2 Dec 2014, 2pm – 5pm (3 hours)**

**Gender, Nations, Borders, Boundaries and their Crossing**

**Obligatory Reading:**


**Recommended Viewing:**

**Recommended Reading:**


4. Critical Response Guidelines

A text can convey information to us, but usually when we read a text we respond not to the information (or facts) but to the ideas (interpretations, conclusions, assertions) that the author presents. When we respond to a text critically we are questioning the author’s ideas, methodology, assumptions, techniques, strategies or choices.

A critical response, then, results from questioning. Here are some general questions that you can use as a model to formulate specific questions about a specific text.

* What is the problem or question that motivates the author?
* From what context is the author writing?
* What argument is the author putting forth? What is the thesis?
* What contradictions do you find in the text? Why are they there? How do they affect your understanding of the argument?
* What evidence does the author use to support his or her assertions? Why?
* How is the text structured? How does the structure affect your understanding of the author’s argument?
* What kinds of connections can you bring to the text? How has your own experience informed your reading of the text?
* What do you see as the key passages in this text? Why are they important? How do they work with the rest of the text to convey the author’s meaning?
* What assumptions do you bring to the text? To what extent has the author considered your needs as a reader?

Note: You do not need to use every single question, plus you might have questions of your own making.
5. Dialectical Journal

On the next page is a dialectical journal page, which can also be used to guide the reading of academic literature. As you read, you should select up to 4 quotes from the article or book chapter for any of the following reasons:

- You are moved by what is being said
- You do not understand what is being said
- You have a question about what is being said
- You agree with what is being said
- You disagree with what is being said

You should write the page and paragraph location of your selected quote in the left-hand column provided in the dialectical journal page. To the right of each quote location, you should write your comments or questions. These do not need to be more than 3 to 4 sentences long.

Please save your completed dialectical journal pages and bring them to class. They will be useful for discussions of the literature. They are also useful for when completing written assignments.
Dialectical Journal

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<th>Comments/ Questions</th>
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