

I Love My Culture, But Where is My Feminism?: Women of Color Responses to the Second Wave

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In this seminar we plan to explore the rise of identity politics during the Second Wave feminist movement, focusing on the contributions of women of color. In examining the literary, artistic, and academic works of African-American, Chicana, Native-American, East-Asian and South Asian American, and Middle Eastern women, we will explore what being a woman means to each culture and how they reconciled the issues advocated during this movement in the United States. These issues include domestic violence, sexual orientation, gender roles, femininity, body image, abortion, labor, family life, and interracial relationships with the various “manifestos” of each group’s movement being the lens to examine these issues.

In order to have an understanding of women of color and cultural feminism we will be using work from the topics of sociology, anthropology, English, history, political science, religion, economics, philosophy, and feminist and gender studies. With the current growth of what has been coined the Third Wave Feminist Movement, the continuing controversy surrounding abortion, and the growing concern over the definition of a family, it is necessary to have a firm understanding of the different dynamics within feminism. Feminism, which can be seen as a solely a political movement, is an ideology that is conveyed through literature, artwork, critical essays, music, and other forms of media. We wish to analyze the work of feminists through several mediums, whether they are magazine articles or independent films. We hope to answer such questions as: About what do feminists of color theorize? What have feminists of color contributed to feminism? How does making race and ethnicity change feminism? Can we assume that there is a universal definition of feminism, or is it relativistic? How do feminists of color deal with issues of sexuality, class, violence, and family? What does it mean to be a woman? What are current feminists taking from Second Wave contributions with regard to issues of race and ethnicity?