

*The Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program
invites you to an Undergraduate Lecture by*

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“Historicizing Asian/American (Trans)National Feminisms”

**Thursday, February 9, 2017 from 4:00 - 5:15 p.m.
402 Cathedral of Learning (GSWS Classroom)**

Telling the story of Asian immigrant communities in the United States is a complicated business of unpacking an unstable collection of signifiers: “Asian,” “American,” nation, woman, etc. In this talk, through the lens of Asian American postcolonial feminist cultural studies, I illustrate how such hybrid identities as “Asian American” reflect processes through which national belonging is negotiated co-terminously with transnationalism— thus, my marking of the two inextricable but differently visible axes of belonging as “(trans)national.” Anthropologist Aihwa Ong has pointed out how the term *trans* marks new relations between different territories, identities, experiences, and ideas and thus *transgresses* imposed hegemonic boundaries. By this logic, global migration patterns resulting in diasporas are a particular historical expression of (trans)nationalism that create inter-, sub-, or supra-national communities which potentially transgress limiting nationalist discourses.

How, then, to trace and interpret feminist theory, activism, and debates relevant to diasporic ethnic American populations? In terms of global cultures, postcolonial feminists consistently note that construing female liberation as a “Western” ideal is a common assumption of “the white women’s” movement in the U.S. In the national context, Asian American feminisms developed both in conjunction and conflict with prominent African American discourses such as womanism and intersectionality. And within the ethnic subculture of an immigrant population, some Asian Americans deride feminism as an example of cultural assimilation, rather than as evidence of intentional and impactful meaning making. Sexism becomes confused with ethnic solidarity.

This talk offers attendees an opportunity to better understand the histories of Asian Americans and to appreciate the complex issues they encounter in naming and enacting authentically empowering feminisms.

Please contact gsws@pitt.edu or visit
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Gender, Sexuality, &
Women's Studies Program

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