



M.A. (DLB) 0737– FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Elective – Fall 2026

Course Information

Course Duration: 15 weeks

Credit Hours: 60 hours

Meetings: TBA

Prerequisites: None

Equivalent Courses: None

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Debotri Dhar

Bio: Dr. Debotri Dhar's interdisciplinary work spans international relations, women's studies, comparative politics/policy, law, and humanitarian education. She is also a novelist and short story writer. Dr. Dhar has authored and edited 7 books including *Education and Gender* (Bloomsbury: London, New York, New Delhi), published book chapters and journal articles, and her next two books are forthcoming. Dr. Dhar has presented lectures / papers at Harvard, Oxford, Yale, Princeton, Boston, U-Penn, Delhi, JNU, BHU, Ashoka Young India Fellowship, British Council, India Habitat Centre, and wider audiences. Dr. Dhar has served as a reviewer for the National Endowment for the Humanities (USA) and Indian Institute for Advanced Study fellowships, reputed humanities and social sciences publishers, a judge for the Barbara Deming Fund for women writers (New York) and *Kitaab's Best Asian writing series* (Singapore). Dr. Dhar previously lectured at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where she was affiliated with the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Ford School of Public Policy, consulted across sectors, provided public commentaries on global affairs in media, and has been faculty advisor for public diplomacy research. She writes for numerous newspapers and magazines including the *Times of India*, *Deccan Chronicle*, *Asian Age* and *Outlook*. Dr. Dhar earned a B.A in Economics from Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, Masters in Women's Studies, with distinction, from Oxford University, and Ph.D in Women's and Gender Studies from Rutgers University. Dr. Dhar is the founder of the Hummingbird Global Writers Circle and Leaders Forum.

1. Course Description

This course analyzes the frameworks, principles and practices of feminist foreign policy. What makes a country’s foreign policy feminist, and what are its connections with domestic policies? Is feminism/feminist IR only a “Western” concept? We will learn about the experiences of countries in Europe and the Americas that adopted feminist foreign policies, and how some countries in the Global South have adapted feminist foreign policies to their domestic and foreign policy contexts. The course will analyze how gender shapes diplomatic and negotiation practices, using a comparative politics lens to examine how feminist foreign policies can foster inclusive leadership. We will also study about the contributions of foreign policy to addressing gender violence in war, the ‘Women, Peace and Security’ framework, and UN peacekeeping. Attention will be paid to Indian political thought and assessing research and advocacy on feminist foreign policy in an Indian context. Classroom learning will be supplemented with a class trip / panel, and visiting lectures by thought leaders. This course would be of interest to students of international relations, women’s studies, comparative politics/policy, journalism, law, and the liberal arts.

2. Course Intended Learning Objectives(Aim)

Course Learning Outcomes	Teaching-Learning Activities	Assessments/ Activities
<p>1.Scholarly knowledge</p> <p>The primary outcome is for students to gain knowledge about the historical background, objectives, strengths and critiques of feminist foreign policy.</p>	Lectures and class discussion	Class participation, group exercises, class presentation
<p>2.Applied Learning</p> <p>Students learn to consider and assess various feminist policies and their relevance in specific national and regional contexts.</p>	Lectures, discussions, guest presentations	Case studies, policy briefs, expert panel, final country case project
<p>3.Practical Skills</p> <p>Students will learn critical thinking, presentation, writing (including policy writing), and communication.</p>		Group discussions and course assignments

<p>4. Career Goals</p> <p>The interdisciplinary elective is useful for students considering careers in academia, policy and diplomacy, law, journalism and writing.</p>	<p>Lectures and guest presentations/panel</p>	<p>Course assignments, class discussions</p>
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3. Course Modules

MODULE	WEEK	TOPIC
Introduction to Feminist Thought	1	Discussion of diverse streams of feminist thought. Policy-relevant examples.
Is Feminism/ feminist IR a Western concept?	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Exploring feminist and “non-western” international relations; gaps and overlaps; the role of culture b) Feminism, IR and Indian political thought
Feminist Foreign Policy: Background and Goals	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP): History, objectives, strengths, and critiques. b) Country case study of Sweden (the first country to adopt FFP)
Country Case Studies	4	Country case studies of France and Canada (countries that have officially adopted feminist foreign policies)
FFP and the Global South	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The relevance of FFP for postcolonial, developing economies and the Global South b) Country case studies of Mexico and Argentina (two countries in the Global South to adopt FFP)
FFP in India and USA	6	FFP in India and USA (oldest and largest democracies): A Comparative Analysis
Gender, power, leadership	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) How gender shapes diplomacy policies: Female leadership and feminist diplomacy b) Exploring the link between domestic and (feminist) foreign policies
Gender Violence in War and FFP	8	Tackling the use of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a weapon of war. Country-specific examples and the role of FFP.
FFP and UN	9	Contribution of FFPs to United Nations conflict-zone

Peacekeeping		peacekeeping and capacity-building
WSP and FFP	10	a) Relationship between the Women, Peace and Security (WSP) Framework and FFP b) The case of South Asia
FFP in India	11	FFP research and advocacy in contemporary India; future directions
Projects	12	Individual country case presentations
	13	Individual country case presentations (contd.)
Panel	14	Feminist foreign policy conference/panel
Revision	15	Revision of course materials/ exam preparation

4. Course Evaluation

Percentage	Course Assignment
10%	Class participation
30%	Class presentation
30%	Independent country case project
30%	Term-end exam

Class participation: Student engagement is necessary for the success of the course. Please come prepared to class, having done the assigned readings for the day. Your contribution to classroom discussions will be in the form of ideas, questions and comments based on the readings. You are also encouraged to bring newspaper articles on current affairs to share with the class.

Class presentation: Each student will be responsible for a class presentation based on the assigned readings for that day. Your presentation will review the key points in the assigned literature. Then, going beyond summary, please reflect more deeply on the material and describe the perspectives you gained from them. Did these perspectives challenge any of your earlier beliefs and encourage you to think differently? Make your presentation interesting, such as by incorporating exercises, short visual clips, art, and music. Each presentation will be approx. 20 minutes, and will be graded on content, organization, and creative use of course materials.

Independent project: For this assignment, students will choose a country and write a paper (1500-2000 words) analyzing the country's foreign policy through the lens of FFP. This assignment has a rolling deadline and may be emailed at any point in the semester, no later than the 13th week of classes. Students will also make a short class presentation (10 minutes) on their independent project in 12th / 13th weeks.

Term-end exam: The final exam (Q&A essay type, total 1200-1500 words) will be of a duration of 1:30 hours. Multiple choices will be provided, of which students will answer 3 questions (of 400-500 words each.)

5. Grade Definition

Letter Grade	Percentage of Marks	Grade Points	Comments
O	80 and above	8	Outstanding: Exceptional knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and extraordinary critical and analytical ability.
A+	75 - 79	7.5	Excellent: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, thorough understanding of issues; ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles and critical and analytical ability.
A	70 - 74	7	Very Good: Sound knowledge of the subject matter, excellent organizational capacity, ability to synthesize ideas, rules and principles, critically analyze existing material and originality in thinking and presentation.
A-	65 -69	6	Good: Good understanding of the subject matter, ability to identify issues and provide balanced solutions to problems and good critical and analytical skills.
B+	60 - 64	5	Fair: Average understanding of the subject matter, limited ability to identify issues and provide solutions to problems and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B	55 - 59	4	Acceptable: Adequate knowledge of the subject matter to go to the next level of the study and reasonable critical and analytical skills.
B-	50 - 54	3	Marginal: Limited knowledge of the subject matter and irrelevant use of materials, and poor critical and analytical skills.
P1	45 - 49	2	Pass 1: Pass with Basic understanding of the subject matter.
P2	40 - 44	1	Pass 2: Pass with Rudimentary understanding of the subject matter.

6. Academic Integrity

A. Plagiarism Rules:

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas without proper acknowledgement. Any idea you take from a web source (e.g. newspaper articles) or scholarly (i.e. books, book chapters, and journal articles) and other published material must be credited with the original source.

B. Participation/Attendance Policy

Please see JSIA / JGU Attendance Policy. Low class attendance will affect class participation grades.

C. Use of phone/ texting/ laptop

Mobile phones and tablets are not allowed for use during class. Laptops are permitted in class solely for academic purposes and notetaking.

7. Course Material

No textbooks are required for purchase. Course readings, including journal articles and book chapters, will be made available as PDF files. Web links will be provided for online articles, including policy papers and newspaper columns. Below is a non-exhaustive list of reading materials.

1. *Feminist Foreign Policies: An Introduction*. Policy Brief. UN Women
2. L. Thompson and R Clement, *Defining Feminist Foreign Policy*. International Center for Research on Women
3. L Thomson, S Ahmed and Tanya K, 'Defining Feminist Foreign Policy: A 2021 Update.' International Center for Research on Women
4. Ambika V, Aditi M, and Hritik B, 'Inclusivity in Action: Evolution of Feminist Principles in India's Foreign Policy,' 2024
5. Debotri Dhar, 'Does India need a Feminist Foreign Policy?' *Times of India*, 2026
6. Sunaina Kumar, 'Can Women Save Multilateralism?' ORF, 2025
7. Sara A, 'What is American Feminist Foreign Policy,' SAIS Review, John Hopkins, 2021
8. Shweta Singh, "Can Feminist IR Hear Differing Voices?" in Singh and Mohsin ed. *Mapping International Relations in South Asia: Past and Present*. Routledge, 2025
9. Daniela Garcia, 'Mexico's Feminist Foreign Policy: In Search of Accountability and Participation.' International Peace Institute, 2023.
10. Debotri Dhar, 'How Diplomacy Remains Male-Dominated and the Need to Make it a Diverse, Inclusive Space.' *Outlook*, 2022
11. Rachel George, 'Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Can't Be Undone,' *Foreign Policy*, 2022

12. Lyric Thompson, 'A French Feminist Foreign Policy,' *Foreign Policy*, 2019
13. Graciana del Castillo, *Rebuilding War-Torn States: The Challenges of Post-Conflict Economic Reconstruction*, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 29-50
14. S. Anderlini, "UN Peacekeepers' Sexual Assault Problem," *Foreign Affairs* (2017).
15. Rada Ivekovic and Julie Mostov eds. *From Gender to Nation*, Routledge, 2002.
16. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*.
17. Nayanika Mookherjee, *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971*.
18. Tehmeena Rizvi, 'Rethinking Feminist Foreign Policy: A Case Study of Kashmiri Women,' Observer Research Foundation, 2025.
19. Soumita Basu, 'International Dimensions of Feminist South Asia: The Case of the WPS Agenda.'