Decolonial Philosophies Feminism Conference

Abstract
For the 2022-2023 academic year, we aim to organize a graduate-level conference and provide an opportunity for interaction, mentoring, and community-building for graduate students working in the areas of decolonial feminism(s). We plan to build a network that recognizes the work of scholars working in the fields of decolonial thought and feminist philosophy. The term ‘decolonial thought’ is used as an umbrella term that accommodates postcolonial feminisms, non-western feminism, categories, and studies that question the analytical term of ‘woman’ and indigenous feminisms. Without the intervention of such feminisms, feminist philosophy and philosophy as a discipline lacks the much-needed intervention and rethinking necessary for revaluation of both disciplines. This initiative will diversify and extend the conversations happening in philosophical circles and bring a much necessary practice of dialogue, solidarity and exchange amongst the scholarship produced from the global south.

Basic Information

Project Coordinator(s)
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Steering Committee
N/A

Funding Amount Requested
$5,000

Expected Project Completion Date
June 2023

Project Description
We are a research interest-led reading group that started in the Summer of 2020 at the University of Oregon. Our group is devoted to the study of decolonial, postcolonial, anti-colonial, and indigenous scholarship with the aim of establishing a conversation between these fields that will help us to rethink and reimagine pathways for decolonization across different geopolitical spaces. Our work is motivated by the conviction that projects which deal with different systems of oppression and historical processes like racism, sexism, capitalism, and nationalism, are interconnected and essential to challenging colonial narratives across the globe. Given our personal research interests, life experiences, and previous assorted readings done in the interest-led research group, we have narrowed down specifically to the theme of decolonial feminisms for the coming academic year. The background of the women students in the research group, ranging from
Iran, Puerto Rico, to Pakistan and India speaks to the broad horizon and scope of the queries we are coming from and grappling with- to address, challenge and trace possible solidarities to the politics of ongoing feminist thought in Philosophy.

In the previous semesters, we have spent time reading various academic scholars and reflecting on their work to expand our understanding of the contemporary manifestations of colonialism. Apart from working as a textual study reading group, our space has been a platform for graduate students and professors to share their ongoing work and research. It has also provided mentorship and feedback opportunities. (Please refer to the link for an archival update: https://decolonialphilosophies.blogspot.com/)

The project for the academic year 2022-23 first aims at a two-day graduate conference at the University of Oregon, Philosophy Department where attendees would be invited from all over the world, to discuss, talk and enrich their own knowledge on themes that pertain to decolonial thinking and feminist thought in Philosophy. More specifically, the platform will provide like-minded scholars working on issues of the global south to connect, bond, and form much-needed scope for intellectual and creative allyship and provide space for crafting networks of solidarity. Secondly, it aims to publish an online site for the articles and exchanges presented during the conference such that it reaches out to a greater audience interested in reading the proceedings of this event. Finally, it aims to continue the conversations, either by aiming to organize a yearly (either online or in-person, will depend on funding logistics) to support a community of mentorship and intellectual exchange in the field of Feminist Philosophy and Decolonial Thought.

**Project Impact**

The need to organize a graduate conference on decolonial feminisms comes from our consistent, laborious, and dedicated work in the field of decolonial thought over the last few years which gave rise to a few observations. Firstly, an overemphasis on particular interpretations of doing 'decolonial thinking' that do not recognize theoretical and praxis-oriented knowledge production happening from other non-western perspectives, especially from the Global South, in Philosophy, and outside the United States as well as within marginalized communities within the United States. Therefore, problematically amplifying a certain way to do philosophy in relation to decolonial thought. The need to broaden the very meaning of what we understand by Decolonial thought in Philosophy is crucial to make space for varying schools of thought from non-western perspectives. As a result of the above disciplinary categorizations, there is a serious lack of internal intellectual dialogue and exchange between marginalized traditions such as decolonial thought, postcolonial thought, and indigenous thinking happening in different geopolitical spaces.

Finally, there is a need for a visible space and community- especially for women and marginalized philosophers who are working both with the issues of the question of ‘women’ and decolonial thought (broadly stated) in the discipline of Philosophy. Given that both traditions are already marginalized by academic philosophy, decolonial feminisms grapples with double marginalization of sorts. Thus, as stated above, we are driven to center ‘decolonial feminist thought’ in part because it leads us to question how we think about the locations of academic production, the politics of visibility (who speaks for whom, how, and when), and how it pushes us to confront the epistemic
categories with which we are used to thinking about the feminist issues, in the discipline of Philosophy. Our group started in a Philosophy department, and we believe that interdisciplinary scholarship and conversation are crucial and inevitable for understanding colonialism in its complexity, especially in relation to the question and category of ‘woman’ in feminist philosophy. Our work in its outreach has led to multiple members from various departments joining the research group, and we have benefitted from these exchanges. The fact that our members work in various disciplines gives us the unique chance of building connections across departments as well as collaborating among scholars from various humanistic disciplines, thereby enriching our research in a fruitful and intellectually exhaustive manner.

**Project Goals**

- Collaborative work and research about decolonial feminism(s):
  - Our focus on decolonial feminism(s) allows us to share, discuss and work on our own research collaboratively and to build a network of solidarity with students and faculty that do work of decolonial, postcolonial and Southern forms of feminisms. The fact that our members work in various disciplines gives us the unique chance of building connections across departments, discussing our research, and collaborating among scholars from various academic backgrounds. Additionally, our group is in a unique position consisting mostly of members who identify as women of color and work on decolonial and postcolonial feminisms. We are hoping that our focus on decolonial feminism(s) will help us not only improve our own scholarly perspectives through the dialogue and feedback resulting from our shared space but to serve as a model for other universities and organizations that want to build networks of solidarity and support among philosophers committed to marginalized forms of feminisms.

- Conference organization and community-building for graduate students and junior faculty working on decolonial feminism(s). Creation of an intellectual community of Decolonial Feminist Philosophers:
  - The conference is intended to take place during Spring 2023 and will focus on decolonial feminism(s). In Fall and Winter, we will work towards preparing for the conference, sending the call for papers, working with professors in the philosophy department that work on feminism, getting additional funding (a process which we have already started), and working with the promotion of both the CFP and the conference. We already have two sources of funding for the next academic year: the Oregon Humanities Center Research Interest Group and the Center for the Study of Women in Society Research Interest Group. Additionally, we most likely will receive funding from the Philosophy Department at UO.

- As long-term goals we hope the organization of this conference opens spaces for collaboration and mutual thinking among students and faculty committed to decolonial feminism(s). We aim to continue with the group’s efforts to expand dialogues across critical traditions to colonialism. This conference is part of larger efforts to create spaces of alliance between members in the philosophical community who are informing and shaping the subject by their bodily and epistemic interventions by bringing in a different way of seeing the pre-given categories in philosophical dialogues through their work and involvement.
**Project Timeline**

Goal: Collaborative work and research about decolonial feminism(s). Timeline: Fall 2022-Spring 2023.

As a part of our ongoing reading series and speaker series as a research group dedicated to understanding decolonial thought*, we have already formed an interdisciplinary space where we have been having biweekly reading group meetings from the Summer of 2020. Although the meetings started with just Philosophy graduate students, it soon became a space for students from other disciplines as well who are interested in matters of anti-colonial thinking, and thinking from elsewhere, if we may put it that way.

These biweekly meetings in the past have also been spaces for workshopping graduate papers, mentorship, having speaker series and hearing professors in the community share their work. We have also been funded in the past by OHC to organize the events listed above in various capacities.

In the Fall 2022, we seek to organize the templates for the CFP for the conference. We plan to send out the call for the conference by October 15th with a December 30th deadline. In Winter 2022, we seek to review the submitted abstracts for the conference. By February 24th, we seek to notify the students and scholars selected to present at the international conference.

In Spring 2023, around May end, we seek to host the conference at University of Oregon, Eugene. If needed, we would work towards making avenues for virtual presentations.

**Project Outreach**

Our conference aim to attract people from the following backgrounds: philosophy graduate students, philosophy junior faculty, and graduate students from different fields that do work on different forms of decolonial feminisms such as postcolonial, indigenous, anticolonial, women of color, black feminist and other traditions of feminism from the global south.

**Accessibility Plan**

Meeting spaces set up to be accessible to those using wheelchairs, scooters, and other mobility devices, with wide aisles and designated wheelchair spaces at the front of the audience area

Quiet room / nursing lounge, with a key available at the registration desk

Seating throughout the meeting venue, including in common areas and at social events

Microphones in larger meeting rooms

In addition, registered meeting participants may request accommodation specific to their needs:

Sign language interpreters

CART captioning

Extended time for presentations
Reserved seating in specific meeting sessions

Microphones in smaller meeting rooms

High or low lighting in meeting rooms

Remote presentation

In order to ensure accessibility needs are met, accommodation must be requested using the form below at least one month prior to the meeting. We will endeavor to provide accommodation requested with less than one month’s notice, but we cannot guarantee that late accommodations requests can be fulfilled.

Remote Presentation: Primary session speakers and commentators with disabilities and/or medical conditions preventing them from participating in the meeting in person are eligible to request remote presentation. Primary session speakers and commentators who are primary caregivers for people with disabilities and/or medical conditions that make them high risk for COVID-19 complications are also eligible to request remote presentation. Session chairs are not eligible for remote presentation, as it is not possible to perform the duties of session chair remotely.

**Evaluation Plan**

After each term, a report, at the end of the term will be submitted to the APA informing about the updates and work-in-progress.

Since the event will actualize in Spring 2023 but will be in works in terms of sending out the CFP, reviewing articles, organizing, scheduling etc throughout the Fall 2022 and Winter 2023, the evaluation can work in terms of a two-page report indicating the goals accomplished at the end of each term.

Some specific benchmarks for evaluating the work as a whole would be the following:

Fall 2022: December 10th Fall term update report will be submitted.

a) Organization: Meeting professors and colleagues invested in the purpose of working on issues of marginalized voices and their representation in Philosophy as well as other disciplines in the community at University of Oregon for support and solidarity for the event.

b) Reaching out to graduate students who would be willing to act as volunteers for the hosting of the conference.

c) Planning the CFP and the themes. Having it approved by faculty co-chairs.

d) Sending CFP out for the conference. e) Finalizing on main speakers and reaching out to them.

f) Continue organizing biweekly meetings to run the decolonial graduate research presentations.

e) Booking space for the event.
Winter 2022: March 25th Winter term update report will be submitted

Reviewing and evaluations of paper presentations received.

Short-listing final presenters and papers. Sending out emails of acceptance to conference members.

Booking main speakers and their hotel accommodation, travel and the conference.

Booking food caterers for the event.

Spring 2023: June 10th Spring Term update report will be submitted

a) A report on the evaluative experience of the conference held and future steps to be taken from the proceedings.

**Online Presence**

The conference will be promoted in the blog of the group:
https://decolonialphilosophies.blogspot.com/

**Budget Narrative**

All items of the budget are expenses for the 2-days conference to be held at the University of Oregon. We came to an estimate of the cost based on a budget that philosophy professor Camisha Russell used to organize a 2-day conference called "Resistant Imaginations" held at the University of Oregon in 2019. We did approximate to the budget the professor shared taking into account the current prices for flights and stays.

**Other Funding Sources**

We would like to note that we have already received funding from Oregon Humanities Center, and the Center for the Study of Women in Society (CSWS), University of Oregon (1000 $ each, 2000$ in total).