

Western University
Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
GSWS 3359F – Revolutionary Mothering and Disruptive Mothers

September – December 2022

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Class times: Thursdays 1:30 - 4:30pm Location: TBA

Motherhood is a contested site of engagement, representation, and political participation. It is a topic of much feminist theorizing touching on areas such as fashion (dressing Rihanna's pregnant body), activism (Mothers of the Movement), work (mothering under COVID-19), and debates (Pregnant people? Pregnant women?). Feminist literature informs us that people who identify as mothers can resort to violence in the name of justice and freedom; some leverage maternalism for war or peace; others conform to national and cultural ideals; still others are disruptive and troublesome, charting new and transgressive paths that challenge state and 'traditional' expectations. Through articles, popular culture, media stories, and conversation, this thematically organized survey course explores disruptive and revolutionary motherhood and mothering practices in a global context.

Learning Objectives

- Explore the politics of motherhood
- Examine why motherhood is of interest to the state
- Discuss how mothers have leveraged their status for political gains
- Challenge 'normative' ideas about who is (or can be) a mother
- Explore feminist mothering
- Review popular (and changing) representations of mothers and motherhood

Learning Outcomes

- Informed analysis of feminist views about mothering and motherhood
- Ability to apply theory to real world representations of mothers
- Improved research, writing, and presentation skills
- Familiarity with feminist literature on motherhood

Evaluation

- Attendance and Participation (A & P) – 10%
- Essay – 25%
- Creative Assignment – 30% (To be discussed as a class)
- Final Exam – 35%