

Syllabus – Amherst College

Women's and Gender Studies 11

Fall Semester 2007

THE CROSS-CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

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Description: This course introduces students to the social and historical construction of gender and gender roles from a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective. We study gender through a variety of genres: social science studies, novels, historical analysis, and political treatises. This semester we will focus on the impact of political economy on women and gender relations. We begin by considering how early conceptions of "feminism" were a response to and critique of liberalism and colonialism. We then look at the historical changes in the family, economy and society and their impact on the transformation of the role of women and gender relations. The rest of the semester is devoted to understanding how the global rise of neoliberalism has led to a new understanding of the feminist project and set the stage for many of the challenges and opportunities we face in the twentieth-first century.

Requirements: Students are expected to complete the readings before each class and come prepared to discuss them. Participation is integral to the class and will be considered in the final grade. The assignments will include two papers and a final exam.

Books Available for Purchase:

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Slavenka Drakulic, *S.: A Novel About the Balkans*

Assia Djebar, *Fantasia*

Vivian Gornick, *The Solitude of Self*

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

Melissa Wright, *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*

Readings:

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Tuesday, September 4

CONTEMPORARY GENDER POLITICS: POSTFEMINISM

Thursday, September 6

Mary Douglas Vavrus, "Opting Out Moms in the News: Selling New Traditionalism in the New Millennium," *Feminist Media Studies* 7:1 (2007), pp. 47-60. (handout)

Rosalind Gill, "Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility," *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10:2 (2007), pp. 147-166. (handout)

FEMINISM CROSSING CULTURES

Tuesday, September 11

Uma Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border Crossing, and 'Death by Culture,'" in (1997) *Dislocating Cultures*, New York: Routledge, Chapter 3, pp. 83-117. (e-reserve)

THE LIBERAL IMAGINATION AND GENDER DIFFERENCE

Thursday, September 13

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, (1979), *Emile or On Education*, U.S.: Basic Books, pp. 78-93, 357-406. (e-reserve)

Kathleen M. Brown, (1996) *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*, pp. 107-136. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. (e-reserve)

FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF LIBERALISM

Tuesday, September 18

Carole Pateman, (1988) *The Sexual Contract*, pp. 77-153. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (e-reserve)

Patricia Williams, (1991) *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*, "On Being the Object of Property," pp. 216-236, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (e-reserve)

VICTORIAN WOMANHOOD

Thursday, September 20

Nancy F. Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," *Signs* 4:2 (1978), pp. 219-236. (e-reserve)

Harriet Jacobs, (1987) *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Chapters 1-7, 10-11, pp.5-42, 53-62. (e-reserve)

Anne McClintock, (1995) *Imperial Leather*, pp. 207-231. New York: Routledge. (e-reserve)

EQUALITY FEMINISM

Tuesday, September 25

Vivian Gornick, *The Solitude of Self*. (P)

BOURGEOIS FEMINISM

Thursday, September 27

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*. (P)

WOMEN AND COLONIALISM

Tuesday, October 2

Assia Djebar, *Fantasia*. (P)

Thursday, October 4

FALL BREAK

MODERN FEMINISM

Thursday, October 11

Simone de Beauvoir, (1974) *The Second Sex*, pp. xv-xxxiv. New York: Vintage Books. (course packet)

Ruth Rosen, (2001) *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*, pp. 94-260. New York: Penguin Books. (course packet)

WOMEN AND THE MODERN STATE

Tuesday, October 16

Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945", *The Journal of American History*, 78:2, (Sep., 1991), pp. 559-590. (course packet)

Marianne Ferber and Julia A. Nelson, (2003) *Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man*, pp. 1-31, 115-133. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (course packet)

Rebecca Dingo, "Securing the Nation: NeoLiberalism's U.S. Family Values in a Transnational Gendered Economy," *Journal of Women's History*, 16:3, 2004, pp. 173-186. (course packet)

FEMINISM AND NEOLIBERALISM

Thursday, October 18

Wendy Brown, "Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy," *Theory and Event* 7:1 (2003). (course packet)

Lisa Duggan, (2003) *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*, Boston: Beacon Press, pp. ix-xx, 43-66. (course packet)

Kristin Bumiller, *In an Abusive State*, Chapter 1. (course packet)

GENDER AND GLOBAL POVERTY

Tuesday, October 23

Nancy Scheper Hughes, (1992) *Death Without Weeping*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, Chapter 8, pp. 340-399. (course packet)

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, October 25

Pradeep Panda and Bina Agarwal, "Marital Violence, Human Development and Women's Property Status in India," *World Development* 33:5 (2005), pp. 823-850. (course packet)

Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild eds., (2002) *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, pp. 1-13, 85-103, 115-141. New York: Henry Holt and Company. (course packet)

WOMEN IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

Tuesday, October 30

Melissa W. Wright, *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. (P)

Thursday, November 1

Melissa W. Wright, *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. (P)

Constanza Tobio and Magdalena Diaz Gorfinkiel, "The Work-Life Balance I—new gendered relationships in Spain: 'the other' in the care triangle," *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 2007, 20:1, pp. 41-63. (course packet)

CONSUMPTION SOCIETY

Tuesday, November 6

Zygmunt Bauman, (2007) *Consuming Life*, pp. 117-150. Cambridge: Polity Press. (course packet)

Susan Porter Benson, "Consumer Cultures," ed. Nancy Hewitt, (2002) *A Companion to Women's History*, pp. 274-294. UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd. (course packet)

Juliet B Schor, (2004), *Born to Buy*, pp. 9-37, New York: Scribner. (course packet)

BIOPOLITICS

Thursday, November 8

Nikolas Rose, (2007) *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 9-40, Princeton University Press. (course packet)

Deborah Heath, Rayna Rapp and Karen-Sue Taussig, "Genetic Citizenship," in David Nugent and Joan Vincent, eds., *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, (2004), pp. 152-167, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. (M) (course packet)

Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, "Designer Babies and the Pro-Choice Movement," *Dissent*, Summer 2007, pp. 37-43. New York: Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc. (course packet)

Tuesday, November 13

Donna J. Haraway, "Fetus: the Virtual Speculum in the New World Order," in (1997) *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse*, pp. 173-212. (M) New York: Routledge. (course packet)

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, "Is Biopiracy an Issue for Feminists in the Philippines?" *Signs*, (Winter 2007), 32:2, pp. 332-336. (course packet)

GENDER AND GENTRIFICATION

Thursday, November 15

Caitlin Cahill, "At Risk? The Fed Up Honeys Re-Present the Gentrification of the Lower East Side," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Spring/Summer 2006. (course packet)

Trip to "DARE" in Providence, RI

POSTCOLONIALISM

Tuesday, November 27

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (P)

GENDER AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Thursday, November 29

Bina Agarwal, (October 2002) "Gender Inequality, Cooperation and Environmental Sustainability," in Jean-Marie Baland, Pranab Bardhan, and Samuel Bowles eds. (2007) *Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability*, Princeton University Press, Chapter 11, pp.274-313. (course packet)

Wangari Muta Maathai, (2006) *Unbowed*, pp. 119-205. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. (course packet)

South End Press Collective, (2007) *What Lies Beneath: Katrina, Race and the State of the Nation*, pp. 133-166. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. (course packet)

GENDER AND WAR

Tuesday, December 4

Slavenka Drakulic, *S.: A Novel about the Balkans* (P)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Thursday, December 6

Debra L. DeLaet, (2006) *The Global Struggle for Human Rights*, 119-133. Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth. (course packet)

Catharine MacKinnon, *Are Women Human? and other international dialogues* (2006), pp. 237-278, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. (course packet)

Film: Born into Brothels

"The Crushing Burden of Rape: Sexual Violence in Darfur," A briefing paper by Medecins Sans Frontieres, International Women's Day, March 8, 2005. (course packet)

FEMINISM AND A CULTURE OF CONTROL

Tuesday, December 11

Indepal Grewel, "Security Moms in the Early Twentieth Century United States: The Gender of Security in Neoliberalism," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Spring/Summer 2006. (course packet)

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Pierce the Future for Hope: Mothers and Prisoners in the Post-Keynesian California Landscape," in Julia Sudbury, *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison-Industrial Complex*, (2005), New York: Routledge, pp. 231-253. (course packet)

