GWST 381
SEX AND GENDER IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Office Hours: Even days: 10-11 or by appointment

Course: GWST 381
Section: 01A
Term: Spring 2009
Cycle: 2-4-6
Time: 11:20 - 12:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Since contemporary life demands knowledge of the world beyond our borders students in this course will examine issues of sex and gender from cross-cultural perspectives. Along with diversity of global cultures, we need to recognize “gender” as a fundamental variable in analyzing and understanding social, political, and economic developments around the world. However, influence of gender remains invisible unless one’s eye is trained to observe it. In order to fully comprehend the impact of gender, one needs to learn to use a gender lens'. Influence of gender is often manifest intertwined through other factors such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion and economic class distinctions.

This course aims at exploring various topics related to gender such as international sex trade, global women’s movements, GLBT human rights movements, cross cultural conceptions of masculinity and femininity, sex selective abortion, female genital mutilation, and broader topics such as gender and the media, gender and politics, gender and work, gender and health, gender and education around the world.

LEARNING GOALS

The learning goals of the class are:
1. to explore the intersections of biology and gender and how conceptions of sex, gender and sexuality vary internationally in shaping gender identity and gender roles
2. articulate how gender, sex and sexualities are constructed on the global level through the interplay of such forces as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion and differences in political and economic structures
3. explain how the various manifestations of the women’s, men’s, and GLBT movements around the world result from the factors listed in #2 above
4. identify how different cultural practices and traditions regarding gender, sex and sexualities may come into conflict within and across societies
5. analyze topics that address gender inequality and oppression in an international context
6. learn to apply gender as a category of analysis both in academic work and in personal life

**Required Texts (available at the CSB bookstore)**

3. Online readings located on the course Moodle page

**CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

**Class policy**

Class discussions may concern controversial issues. Students are expected to respect the viewpoints expressed by others. If you disagree with what someone has said, you are encouraged to express your disagreement in a respectable and polite manner.

**Attendance policy**

This upper division course is participation based and your attendance is essential. It is expected that you come to class prepared to actively participate in discussion of readings due for each class. After 2 absences, missing this class for any reason will result in a drop of ½ letter grade per absence. You are also responsible for making up any work you miss due to absence from class. If you plan to miss a class, you should turn in your homework the day before. Please contact one of your classmates to get information regarding homework for next class or any additional changes we might have in the calendar.

**GRADING PERCENTAGES**

- 20% Class Participation /Discussion (includes lecture reports/reaction papers/Quizzes)
- 10% Journal
- 10% GWST Event Report (2 events, 5% each)
- 20% Group Research Projects/Presentations
- 20% Assignments (Essays)
- 20% Final Essay /Presentation (collaborative)
GRADING SCALE

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HOW TO PREPARE FOR THIS CLASS

Class Participation and Discussion
Our goal is to use the class time for discussion of the assigned readings/films and the issues they raise. I expect you to come prepared each time, do all the readings, and watch the movies assigned. There will be occasional in-class writing assignments to facilitate the discussion and quizzes to check that you had done the readings. Your class participation grade will include your contribution to class discussion as well as these measures of your preparation.

Journal
The journal will be a place for you to respond regularly to the assigned readings, films, discussions and events. It is designed to stimulate discussion and thoughts about gender issues on global perspectives and should serve as a vehicle for self reflection. I will expect that you have at least 32 entries and will evaluate your journals according to the following criteria: 1) evidence that you have done the readings; 2) critical engagement and depth of thought; 3) creativity. Also, your journal should include reactions to class readings and questions your want to bring in class. Use your journal to make connections between the various readings. Reflect how the readings on a certain topic relate to each other and how they relate to previous readings. In addition, you can include newspaper clippings, additional bibliography, movies etc. Each of these items should be followed by a short commentary about its significance to gender issues. You will turn in your journal the last day of class.

Group Presentation/Discussion (Participation grade)
Each student will be assigned to a student group (3-4 students) to lead class discussion on the readings/films for a specific date. These groups should carefully read the assigned texts in the syllabus and develop a plan to stimulate discussion. The group should prepare questions and is encouraged to incorporate additional material such as video clips, photos, book chapters,
magazine articles etc. Each group will assign specific tasks for each member of that group. After the presentation/discussion of the class, the following class, the group needs to present to the instructor a written summary of the group’s plan and a brief assessment of the class discussion. Do not miss the class for which your group is assigned to lead the discussion since there is no way to make up this assignment.

Group Research Projects/Presentation:
In addition, each group will focus on a specific topic not covered in the assigned readings. You are expected to do independent work outside of class (either in groups or on your own) to prepare this project. You are responsible to do research and find material (readings, films, pictures, etc) related to this topic that will then present as a group in class for a large group discussion. Each group will be assigned for a specific geographical area in order to study the global perspectives on different topics. As with the reading presentations above, each group should prepare questions and topics to stimulate the class discussion and provide a brief assessment of the class discussion.

Final Research Paper (collaborative)
This final research paper will be done in pairs. Choose one of the main topics of the course or a related topic that interest you (women and politics in Liberia, gender and film, etc). You will propose your topic and research it once it is approved (no repeated topics among pairs), finding 6-8 sources on which to base a 10 minute formal presentation during the last cycle of classes. You and your research partner will then write up your research paper in a 6-7 page essay. In addition, each person will submit a brief statement describing her/his role the joint research, presentation, and writing process and comment on how the collaborative process worked.

Assignments (Essays)
There will be two- three assignments. Requirements of the essays will be given with the topics. You will get the topic two weeks and in advance and I will be post it on Moodle as well.

Gender and Women’s Studies Events
You should attend two Gender and Women’s Studies events during this semester. The list of preapproved events will be announced in class the second day of class. You can find on Moodle under Announcements all the GWST events. You are required to go on this events and write a 1-2 reflection paper on it.
Discussion Criteria
As previously mentioned, this course is participation based which means that full participation in class discussion is essential. Students may play various roles in discussion:

Initiator: the one who gets the group going through questions from the readings
Summarizer: the one who summarizes readings and ideas
Facilitator: the one who solicits other students’ participation in the discussion

Notice that Listener is NOT listed below. ALL students should be good listeners, no matter what role they play. Thus listening alone is not enough; it should express itself in active, vocal participation.

The following criteria will determine your discussion grade for the course:

Students who receive an A in discussion are those who:

- Attend virtually every class;
- Come prepared to class, that is, they have done the reading, thought through the study questions and can cite examples from the text to support interpretations;
- Offer insightful and creative interpretations, and do not talk just for the sake of talk alone. In short, they make quality contributions;
- Participate in general group discussions by answering and asking questions;
- Are able to debate interpretations by examining different forms of proof, especially examples from the readings, knowledge of the topic, logic, information from other classes and their own experience;
- In small groups, help the group by asking questions drawing out those who are quiet and clarifying and mediating differences. However, they do not dominate the group’
- Play all of the above discussion roles

Students who receive a B in discussion are those who:

- Have many of the above qualities, but,
- Less consistently present and/or prepared,
- Offer less insightful and well–supported comments, and/or
- Are less active in helping the group work well,
- Play only one or two of the three discussion roles.
Students who receive a C and below in discussion are those who:

- Have a spotty attendance record, or
- Alternately, they come to many classes, but do not participate in discussion.
- Do not consistently do the reading or,
- Alternatively, are not able to cite examples from the reading to support different interpretations
- Do not consistently help the group to work better in any discussion role.