Anthropology of Gender 2080

Spring 2001
Professor Donna Goldstein

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30-5:00 and
Thursday 3:30-5:00; HALE 4TH FLOOR
Please use sign-up sheet on door of office
Office Phone: 492-5484 (If you prefer live contact, please call during office hours)

Class Meetings: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00-12:15 EKLC E1B50

Course Description

The course seeks to provide students with a historical grounding in the field of feminist anthropology, also called the anthropology of gender. It therefore explores the ways in which culture (broadly defined)—ours and those of others—constructs men and women. Cultural anthropologists begin with the assumption that, while biological and biomedical understandings of sex are important and influential, other aspects of the social and cultural realm remain less well-known or naturalized and therefore demand attention.

Because gender is often perceived as a “natural” category, this course seeks to destabilize these categories by delving into specific cases that deal with the following material: Western medical constructions of gender and sexuality; North American and Brazilian examples of masculinity and femininity, transsexuality and transgendering; changing constructions of honor in contemporary Bedouin women’s lives and the reconstruction of Mayan widows’ lives in the aftermath of a civil war.

The course will survey a number of distinct theoretical approaches, including psychological, materialist, and evolutionary and will thereby seek to integrate the understanding of theory through a close reading of popular culture articles, publications in scholarly journals, and full-length ethnographies. I have tried to limit the readings to approximately 100 pages per week, but this has not always been possible.

The class is limited to 40 students and is limited to those students who have already completed Frontiers 2100. There will be no exceptions made to this prerequisite.

It is also mandatory that students attend class, and complete all homework, examinations, and papers on time.

Grading Criteria/Policy

The professor expects students to read carefully for class, attend lectures/discussions, and to take DETAILED notes on readings and on all class discussions and films. There will be two midterm examinations given in class.

1. Mid-term Examinations: Two midterm examinations worth 25% each for a total of 50% of your grade.
2. **Class Participation and Critical Reaction Papers:** It is extremely important to have read all of the materials for class for the day we are discussing the materials and to write four one-page critical reaction papers (out of a total of 5). You will receive guidance on how to write these papers. These four papers together with your class participation is worth 20% of your grade.

3. **Final Paper/Examination Due: April 17 in class.** The final project is a 5-page review of an ethnography of gender that analyzes, evaluates, and critiques that work from one or more of the theoretical perspectives discussed in class. No late papers will be accepted. The Final Paper is worth 30% of your grade.

**The Final Paper is Due on April 17**
The paper should be 5-pages (double-spaced) and follow the same bibliography and footnote style as that in *American Anthropologist*. For convenience, you may put footnotes on the same page rather than as endnotes. The final paper should be carefully proof-read and edited before being handed in. It will be graded for both content and style (organization, spelling, and grammar). You will receive instructions on how to write this paper during the first few weeks of class. **TWO COPIES MUST BE HANDED IN.**

**Breakdown of Grading Criteria**

Midterm Exam #1: 25%  
Midterm Exam #2: 25%  
Class Participation and 4 Critical Reaction Papers: 20%  
Final Examination: (Take-Home Paper due on April 17): 30%

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**Required Texts: Purchase at CU Bookstore or Find Used Around Town:**

5. Your Choice of an Ethnography of Gender for Your Final Paper.

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**Required Packet of Articles**
I will make this packet available to students during the first two weeks of class. You can either get together with a group to photocopy the packet, or take the packet on reserve at Norlin Library and make your own copy. **It is expected that you will have your own copy by the end of the second week of class.**

Week 1: Introduction to the Anthropology of Gender

January 16:
A: Introductions, Syllabus, Reader, and Overview of Class
B: Criteria for Critical Reaction Papers (Each Student will do FOUR) during the semester
   Two copies of each paper must be handed in, or they will not be graded.
C: Class E-mail and Phone lists
D. Groups A and B

January 18: Introduction to Theories that Frame the Anthropology of Gender

January 18: Class
History of the Study of Gender in Anthropology
Analyzing Theories
The Evolutionary Orientation

Critical Reaction Paper #1 (Group A)

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Week 2: Theories that Frame The Anthropology of Gender

January 23:
Read: Gender and Anthropology, Pp. 40-79.

January 23: Class
The Psychological Orientation
The Materialist Orientation
Structuralist Approaches

Critical Reaction Paper #2 (Group B)

January 25
Read: Gender and Anthropology, Pp. 80-106

January 25: Class
Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics
The Reflexive Approach
The Relevance of Anthropology to the Contemporary World

Critical Reaction Paper #3 (Group A)

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Week 3: Male and Female Differences and Culture, Biology, and Feminism/Eastern Europe

January 30: Read

January 30: Class
Film: “Chore Wars: The Battle Over Who Cleans the Toilet” (1995, 44 minutes)

Critical Reaction Paper #4 (Group B)

February 1: Read

February 1: Class
Discussion of Feminism, Biology, and the Role of Women in Eastern Europe by Joanna Mishtal, Graduate Student in Anthropology

Week 4: Gender and Medicalization in Western Society

February 6: Sex Reassignment at Birth/Intersexuality
Read:

February 6: Class
Cheryl Chase Video: “Love with a Ruler: Intersexuality and Social Justice” Thursday, October 19, 2000 GLBT Resource Center or “Redefining Sex”

February 8
Read:

February 8: Class

Film: “Metamorphosis: Man into Woman” or “Transsexual Journey”
Discussion

Week 5: Heterosexual Cross-Dressers and Midterm Examination

February 13: Read

February 13 Class:
Discussion of Miqqui Alicia’s Essay in terms of theories of gender, culture, biology

Critical Reaction Paper #5 (Group A)

February 15: Class
Review of Theories and Articles
Review for Midterm Examination

Week 6: Brazilian Travestis and Transgender Community in New York City

February 20: Class

*****Midterm Examination #1*****

February 22: Read

February 22: Class
Film and Discussion, “Paradise Bent”

Week 7: Brazilian Travestis

February 27:
Read Kulick. pp. 43-133
February 27 Class:  
Discussion of Kulick Book

Critical Reaction Paper #6 (Group B)

March 1:  
MONTOYA VISITS CLASS

March 1: Class  
MONTOYA LECTURE ON GENDER IN EL TULE, NICARAGUA

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Week 8: Gender, Sexuality, Honour and Poetry in the Middle East

March 6:  
Read:  
Ethnographies for Final Projects  
Give back Midterm Examinations  
Talk about final projects

March 6 Class:  
Films About veiling practices in other countries in the Middle East  
How to Write your Final Papers

March 8: Read:  
*Veiled Sentiments*, Pp. 1-70

March 8: Class  
Discussion of *Veiled Sentiments*  
Film about History of Veiling in Egypt

Critical Reaction Paper #7 (Group A)

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Week 9: Veiled Sentiments

March 13:  
Read:  
*Veiled Sentiments*, Pp. 70-159

March 13: Class:  
Discussion of *Veiled Sentiments*

Critical Reaction Paper #8 (Group B)

March 15: Read

1. *Veiled Sentiments* 159-end.  
March 15: Class
Film: “Crimes of Honour” or “Honorable Murder”

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Week 10: Start or Continue Research on Final Papers

March 20: Class
How to give your in-class presentations.
Sign-up for In-Class Presentations.

March 22: Class: Norlin Library

TO THE LIBRARY TO CHOOSE ETHNOGRAPHY FOR FINAL PAPER

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Week 11: Spring Break: Read Ethnography and Start Final Paper

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Week 12: Presentations of Papers

April 3:

In Class: 8 presentations

April 5

In Class: 8 presentations

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Week 13: Presentations of Papers

April 10:

In Class: 8 presentations

April 12:
In Class: 8 Presentations

Week 14: Last Presentations Plus Mayan Widows/Final Papers Due

April 17:
In Class: 8 presentations

**********Final Papers are Due April 17 in Class:
**********Five Pages, Two Copies, Double-Spaced, Stapled (No Covers)

April 19: Mayan Widows
Read: Green. pp. 1-55

April 19 Class:
Film: “Forging Peace in Guatemala” or TBA

Week 15: Mayan Widows

April 24:
Read: Green. pp. 55-111

April 24 Class:
Discussion of Green Book

Critical Reaction Paper #9 (Group A)

April 26
Read: Green. pp. 111-172

April 26: Class
Discussion of Green Book

Critical Reaction Paper #10 (Group B)

Week 16: Review of Course and Midterm Examination

May 1: Review Session

In Class:
Discussion and Review
May 3:

Second Midterm Examination Includes:

Veiled Sentiments
All of the Class Presentations of Your Classmates
Fear as a Way of Life
Travesti
Montoya's Lecture on El Tule