

ANTH/WOMN 126: WOMEN AND CULTURE

Spring 2005
Prof. Susan Pollock
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MWF 10:50-11:50
Office Hours: Mon. 1:00-2:30
Fri. 12:00-1:00
and by appointment

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Wed. 12:30-1:30

Course description: "Women and Culture" will introduce students to anthropological approaches to the study of women and gender. Our approach will be cross-cultural and comparative, with case studies drawn from a variety of cultures both western and non-western. Topics to be covered include the construction of gender, sex and sexuality, beauty, women's work, women in the global economy, reproductive rights, women and violence, the intersections of class and race with gender, women's status, women and the family, and more. Although focal points of the course are women and women's positions and experiences in the world, we will see that useful understandings of any of these topics can be reached only when we consider broader contexts, including women's interactions with men and the connections among class, race, culture, and gender. One of the important goals of this course is to encourage each student to reflect upon their own experiences and perceptions in light of other perspectives and other cultural contexts.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Readings: There are four textbooks for this course. All of them may be purchased at the University Bookstore or the Bookbridge:

Brettell, Caroline and Carolyn Sargent (2005) *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Fourth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kimmel, Michael (2004) *The Gendered Society*. Second edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nanda, Serena (2000) *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.

Sanday, Peggy Reeves (2002) *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

One copy of all of these books *except* for Brettell and Sargent is also available at the Bartle Library Reserve Room. All other readings listed on this syllabus are also on reserve, either on electronic reserve (eres) or as a book to be borrowed at the Reserve Room. Additional brief readings may be assigned occasionally during the semester; they will be available as hand-outs, placed on reserve, or in other readily accessible sources (for example, newspapers or news magazines).

All readings should be completed by the class periods for which they are assigned. Lectures and discussions will presume a familiarity with the reading material. Exams, debates, discussions, and written assignments (see below) are all expected to demonstrate your completion and understanding of the readings.

Exams, debates, written assignments, and grades: There will be two exams in this course. The midterm will be an in-class exam on Friday March 4. It will cover lectures, readings, discussions, debates, and films up to that date. Your midterm exam grade will contribute 20% to your final grade in the course. The final exam will be held during exam week. It will be a comprehensive exam, meaning that it will cover all material from the semester. It will count as 20% of your final course grade. No make-ups for either exam are possible except in the case of (documented) medical or other emergency and only if you notify me (by phone, email, or in person) **before** the exam. An exam that is missed without prior notification will be counted as an automatic zero -- **no exceptions**.

During the first part of the semester, each of you will be required to write two short (500 words each) "response" papers. The assignments will ask you to comment or take a position on a specific topic that we have covered in lecture, readings, or films. See the Course Schedule below for the dates on which these papers are due. Each response paper will be worth 10% of your final grade. Late papers will be marked down; no paper will be accepted that is more than three days late.

Throughout the course we will have scheduled debates (see the Course Schedule for the dates on which these will take place). Each of you will be required to participate in one of these debates as part of a team. Details of the structure of the debates will be made available during the second week of class. The debates will require you and your team to do library research in order to develop and support a particular position on a controversial topic. In addition to the actual in-class debate, your team will be required to hand in short, written summaries of the sources (journal articles, books) you have consulted, the argument constructed for your position, modifications in that position resulting from the debate, and an evaluation of your and your teammates' roles in the debate. Your performance in the research, debate, and write-up will contribute 20% of your course grade.

There will be a total of seven debates during the course of the semester. Apart from the one in which your team takes part, you will be required to write a brief (1-2 page) summary of four of

the other debates, in which you provide a capsule summary of the arguments made by each side and a discussion of how (or if) the debate changed your thoughts on the topic. These written summaries will contribute 20% of your course grade (5% each).

Regular class attendance and participation in class discussions are expected. Frequent, unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your grade.

Summary of grading:

midterm	20%
final exam	20%
response papers	20%
debate participant	20%
debate summaries	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

LxC (Languages across the Curriculum) option

Interested students who have some reading proficiency in a language other than English may choose to participate in an LxC component along with this course. If you choose to do so, you will meet with a Language Resource Specialist for an hour's discussion section per week (beginning in the 5th week of classes). In that section, you will read supplementary materials on the topics we are covering in class, giving you a broader and more varied perspective on these subjects as well as helping you put your language skills to practical use.

In addition to attending and participating in the weekly LxC sections, you will write two short papers, one due on April 1 and the other on May 4, that will ask you to integrate the insights you have gathered from your additional readings with the regular readings assigned for the course. If you complete the LxC component including these two papers, you will be exempt from the final exam for the course. Together, the two papers plus the LxC section performance will make up 20% of your total grade. Each of these three parts (two papers and LxC section performance) will count equally toward that 20%.

If you are unsure whether you have the skills to complete an LxC component, you may nonetheless sign up and try it out. Until April 1 you may choose to drop out of the LxC component without any penalty and instead take the final exam for the course. After April 1, you must complete the LxC component.

Academic honesty

Cheating and plagiarism--the misrepresentation of work as one's own which is not--are forms of academic dishonesty that are punishable through university regulations. **Both are serious offenses.** We will discuss rules of citation, referencing, and their relationship to plagiarism and cheating in a workshop in class on Monday January 31. After that, **I will hold each of you responsible for understanding the rules concerning plagiarism and proper referencing.** If you remain unclear about any of these issues, it is your responsibility to speak to me or to one of

the TAs to resolve your confusions. Similarly, if you miss class on January 31, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate and to consult me or the TAs if you have any additional questions. Any form of plagiarism or cheating during the semester will result in a grade of zero for the assignment or exam in question; a repeat offense will result in an F for the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 24 **Introduction – why study women? what is an anthropological perspective?**

Jan. 26-28 **Nature vs. nurture, or what does it mean to be a woman?**

READ: (1) Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* [GS], chap. 2; pp. 52-8, 63-6; chap. 5
(2) M. Ehrenberg, "The Role of Women in Human Evolution," in C. Brettell and C. Sargent (eds.) *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective* [GCCP], pp. 16-21.

Jan. 31 **Workshop on research, citations and references, and plagiarism**

Feb. 2-7 **Sex, sexuality, and gender**

READ: (1) GS, pp. 66-9
(2) Nanda, *Gender Diversity*, introduction, chaps. 1, 5, and 7 plus your choice of chap. 2, 3, or 4

FILM: "You Don't Know Dick"

***** First response paper due Feb. 7 *****

Feb. 9-14 **Gender identity**

READ: (1) GS, pp. 60-3
(2) L. Abu-Lughod, "Is There a Muslim sexuality? Changing Constructions of Sexuality in Egyptian Bedouin Weddings," in *GCCP*, pp. 247-56.
(3) R. Watson, "The Named and the Nameless: Gender and Person in Chinese Society" in *GCCP*, pp. 207-19.
(4) G. Herdt, "Rituals of Manhood: Male Initiation in Papua New Guinea," in *GC-CP*, pp. 203-7.

FILM: "A Veiled Revolution"

Feb. 16 **Women, men and the military**

READ: (1) C. Enloe (1993) "It Takes More Than Two: The Prostitute, the Soldier, the State and the Entrepreneur." *The Morning After*, chapter 5. Berkeley: University of California Press.

(2) L. Peach, "Gender and War: Are Women Tough Enough for Military Combat?" in *GCCP*, pp. 21-30.

Feb. 18 **DEBATE: The meaning of dress**

Feb. 21-25 **Women and the family**

READ: (1) *GS*, chap. 6

(2) C. Stack, "Domestic Networks: "Those You Count On"," in *GCCP*, pp. 363-72.

(3) M. DiLeonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families, and the Work of Kinship," in *GCCP*, pp. 380-89.

FILM: "Chore Wars"

*** * * Second response paper due Feb. 25 * * ***

Feb. 28 **DEBATE: Gay marriage**

Mar. 2 **Review session**

Mar. 4 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Mar. 7-9 **Women and food**

READ: (1) A. Allison, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus," in *GCCP*, pp. 332-48.

(2) S. Bordo "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity," in S. Bordo *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, pp.165-84.

(3) C. Counihan "An Anthropological View of Western Women's Prodigious Feasting" and "Bread as World," in C. Counihan *The Anthropology of Food and Body*

Mar. 11 **DEBATE: Women and housework**

Mar. 14-18 **Beauty, fashion, and the female image**

READ: K. Dettwyler (1995) "Beauty and the Breast: The Cultural Context of Breastfeeding in the United States," in P. Stuart-Macadam and K. Dettwyler *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*, pp.167-215. NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

FILM: "Slim Hopes"

Mar. 19-28 **SPRING BREAK**

Mar. 30 **DEBATE: Body image**

Apr. 1-6 **Women and reproduction**

READ: (1) R. Davis-Floyd, "Gender and Ritual: Giving Birth the American Way," in *GCCP*, pp. 449-61.

(2) A. Roth "Father Earth, Mother Sky: Ancient Egyptian Beliefs About Conception and Fertility," in A. Rautman (ed.) *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record*, pp. 187-201. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.

(3) M. Beck "Female Figurines in the European Upper Paleolithic: Politics and Bias in Archaeological Interpretation," in A. Rautman (ed.) *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record*, pp. 202-14. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.

Apr. 8 **Discussion of Peggy R. Sanday's *Women at the Center***

Apr. 11 **DEBATE: Prostitution**

Apr. 13-15 **Women and work**

READ: (1) *GS*, chaps. 7-8

(2) V. Lockwood, "The Impact of Development on Women: The Interplay of Material Conditions and Gender Ideology," in *GCCP*, pp. 500-15.

(3) K. Hossfeld "Hiring Immigrant Women: Silicon Valley's "Simple Formula"," in M. Zinn and B. Dill *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, pp. 65-93.

FILM: "The Global Assembly Line"

Apr. 18 **Equal opportunity and discrimination**

Apr. 20 **DEBATE: Affirmative action**

Apr. 22-29 **Violence against women**

READ: (1) *GS*, chap. 11

(2) L. Stone and C. James, "Dowry, Bride-Burning, and Female Power in India," in *GCCP*, pp. 310-20.

FILM: "Rape by Any Name: A Discussion"

May 2 **DEBATE: Women, status, and equality**

May 4-6 **Women as consumers (or commodities?)**

FILM: "Killing us Softly III"