

THE GEOGRAPHY OF GENDER: A GLOBAL VIEW

Geography 412/ Women's Studies 493B
Spring 2010, Tues./Thurs. 11:30-12:45
302 Brooks Hall



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Office Hours:
Tues. 1:00 - 2:30
Wed. 10:30 - 11:30
(or by appointment)

Course Overview

In recent decades, geographers have begun to recognize the importance of gender in understanding spatial patterns and social dimensions of human activity. Answers to questions such as *Who does what? Who gets what? Where? and Why?* increasingly address how space relates to gender, and how people are socialized into certain masculine and feminine roles. For example, space that is perceived as safe or unsafe affects how women navigate their environment. In addition, gender roles influence the mobility patterns of men and women and thus their ability to access jobs. Feminist geography analyzes these processes as well as the social construction of race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, nationality, and class in diverse political and economic contexts.

This course examines gendered power relations from a global perspective. Mainstream international politics and economics are often analyzed without concern for the way gender affects the manifestation of power at various international and national scales. In contrast, feminism explores how unequal gender relations in society shape access to and control over resources, and thus influence the distribution of power. We will explore these power relations in diverse political, economic, and social realms of society. For example, states and territories are often dictated by masculinist notions of governance and politics with certain implications for national policy and decision-making. Likewise, economic aspects of our lives that include employment, education, and income are embedded in gender roles and divisions of labor in the household and workplace.

Finally, social relations such as class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age are discussed in this course as they intersect with gender to create systems of inequality in women's lives. Throughout the course, examples from various countries of the world will illustrate the importance of geographical context in understanding gender relations and divisions of labor. Cross-cultural comparisons such as these address the differences and commonalities among women and men throughout the world in their struggles for social and economic empowerment and justice.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the social construction of gender and its impact on power in our lives;
2. Compare women's and gender roles in different geographical contexts;
3. Think critically about the relationship between patterns of privilege and gender, sexuality, race, age and other social dimensions of our lives;
4. Improve their ability to read and write about gender and globalization in an effective and convincing way;
5. Discuss way in which institutions affect the gendered power relations in our daily lives; and
6. Relate course themes and concepts to current events.

Assigned Readings

Students will be responsible for reading the assigned articles and coming to class prepared for discussion. It is very important that you **read the material before class** in order to examine and critique the issues addressed in the articles. The following books are required reading for the course:

- V. Spike Peterson & Anne Sisson Runyan (2010) *Global Gender Issues in the New Millennium*. 3rd Edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Kirsten Johnson (2009) *Footsteps*. Austin, TX: Plain View Press.
- Joni Seager (2009) *The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*. Fourth Edition. New York: Penguin.

Course Requirements and Grading

Evaluation of student performance is based on the following requirements:

(1) **Assignments** (50% of grade, 50 points each, 250 points total)

Five assignments are required throughout the course. Four are indicated in the syllabus and relate to material covered in class.

In addition, students will be asked to attend a **presentation on campus** and write a summary and a critique of the event. The paper should be at least two pages in length and include a summary of the presentation with an emphasis on issues that are addressed in this course. The paper should also include a critique of the topic that reflects your opinion and perspective on the topic. Students may choose from a variety of events organized by the Center for Women's Studies, Geography Program, or a related area of study that has something to do with gender, women, or feminism. A partial list of suggested presentations is available on the course web page.

(2) **Final Exam** (30% of grade, 150 points)

The final exam is a take-home essay exam. The questions will draw from course material and involve the synthesis of concepts and ideas as well as their application to specific case studies.

(3) **Class participation** (20%, 100 points)

Your active participation in class and attendance are the most important aspects of this course. Students are expected to read the articles before each class in order to discuss and raise pertinent questions about the material in class. The current event activities indicated in the syllabus are part of class participation. Finally, **attendance is required** and necessary to gain full advantage of the course material and discussion. Students should contact the professor in advance if they will not be in class. Your absence will be noted and reflected in the evaluation of your participation.

Writing Course Requirements

Those students taking this course for the university writing requirement will have additional instruction and writing throughout the semester. You will receive extra handouts and readings to provide more information about the writing process. In addition, we will meet at least two times during the semester, individually and as a group, to discuss the progress of your writing and other issues. You are expected to rewrite the assignments after getting feedback from the instructor. The overall evaluation of your writing will be based on grammar, organization, content, and originality of your essays and assignments.



General Course Policies

- (1) Assignments are to be turned in both electronically and as a hard copy to the instructor before or during class on the day they are due. Assignments turned after the deadline will be docked 20% each day they are late.
- (2) Assignments will be checked through the software “Turn-it-in” to identify plagiarism.
- (3) Academic integrity in this class will be strictly followed and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsc.html>. Should you have any questions about plagiarism, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter.
- (4) As the instructor, I reserve the right to make any changes to the schedule, readings, and assignments due to unforeseen circumstances, e.g. bad weather. If this is the case, I will notify the class in advance via email or the website.
- (5) Course material and grades are posted on the ecampus website and via my website at www.geo.wvu.edu/~oberhauser.

Social Justice Statement

As a faculty member of West Virginia University, I am committed to social justice and do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. In keeping with this commitment, I expect to maintain a positive learning environment in the classroom based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Any suggestions about how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with WVU Disability Services. For further information contact their office at G-30 Mountainlair, (304)293-6700, or access2@mail.wvu.edu.

<u>Course Outline</u>		
DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
Jan. 12-14	I. Introduction: Themes, Concepts, & Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining gender • Understanding power relations • Intersectional analysis (race, gender, class, etc.) & inequality • Interacting global crises 	Chpt. 1 (p. 1-18) Handout – “Geography of Gender” Choose current event topic
Jan. 19-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contradiction of gender and globalization • Re-positioning gender roles • Neoliberalism / globalization <p style="text-align: center;">Current event discussion</p>	Chpt. 1 (p. 18-35) Atlas #1, 2, & 3

Jan. 26-28	<p style="text-align: center;">II. Looking Through Gendered Lenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding norms, cultural codes • World political lenses/perspectives, e.g., stereotypes, dichotomies, ideologies 	<p>Chpt. 2 (p. 37-76)</p> <p>Johnson, Footsteps (Pt. 1, p. 7-73) Atlas #27 – 30</p>
Feb. 2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positivist and post-positivist epistemology • Political ideologies – power, security, and labor/resources (liberal, social, radical, & post-structural) <p style="text-align: center;">Assignment #1 due Feb. 4th</p>	Chpt. 2 (p. 76-102)
Feb. 9-11	<p>III. Gender and Global Governance – Who’s in charge? What rules?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women & leadership national/ international (IGOs & NGOs) • Organizations of power / feminist perspectives <p style="text-align: center;">Guest speaker - Cynthia Gorman</p>	<p>Chpt. 3 (p. 103-114)</p> <p>Atlas - #35,36 & 37</p>
Feb. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting gender equality – • Opportunities & barriers (social, situational, structural, institutional) • Neoliberal governance 	Chpt. 3 (p. 114-142)
Feb. 18		Johnson, Footsteps (Pt. 2, pp. 75-121)
Feb. 23-25	<p style="text-align: center;">IV. Global Security and Gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist approaches to war, conflict & violence • Women and/in the military <p style="text-align: center;">Current event discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacemaking – (de)militarizing feminism <p>e.g. Afghanistan and Iraq (women in Islam)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assignment #2 due Mar. 4th</p>	<p>Atlas #38 & 39</p> <p>Chpt. 4 (p. 143-182)</p>
Mar. 2-4		
Mar. 9-11	<p style="text-align: center;">V. Gender and Economic Globalization</p> <p>Guest speaker– Naomi Shanguhya (Kenyan development) (Mar. 9th)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and Development (Theories and approaches) 	<p>Johnson, Footsteps (Pt. 3, pp. 123-155)</p> <p>Chpt. 5 (p. 183-200)</p> <p>Atlas - Part 3</p>

Mar. 16-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in the global economy • Microcredit/finance <p>Video “Gender and the Global Assembly Line”</p>	<p>Chpt. 5 (p. 200-215)</p> <p>Atlas - Part 5 & #34</p>
Mar. 23-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In/formal work (homework, sex trafficking, etc.) <p>Guest speaker Arnita Sitasari (human trafficking)</p> <p>Assignment #3 due Mar. 25th (development and gender stats)</p>	<p>Atlas #19 & 20</p> <p>Atlas Part 8 & web resources</p>
Mar. 27-April 4 th	<p>* * * Spring Break * * *</p>	
<p>April 6-8</p> <p>April 13</p> <p>April 15</p>	<p>VI. Globalizing Nature, Power, and the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and natural resources, i.e. fuelwood, water, agriculture -Sustainable development <p>Guest speaker –Bradley Wilson (Nicaragua casestudy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divisions of labor and distribution of resources <p>Video “How Women Feed Africa”</p> <p>Assignment #4 due Apr. 15th</p>	<p>Chapter 5 (cont.)</p> <p>Chpt. 5 (p. 215-230)</p> <p>Johnson, Footsteps (Pt. 4, pp. 157-243)</p> <p>Atlas #24</p>
<p>April 20-22</p> <p>April 27-29</p>	<p>VII. Gendered Resistances: Towards a Feminist New World Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance politics (feminist perspectives) Social movements • Transnational feminist movements Post-colonialism & beyond 	<p>Chpt. 6 (p. 231-245)</p> <p>Atlas #40</p> <p>Chpt. 6 (p. 245-262)</p>
	<p>Final Take-home Exam</p> <p>Due Weds., May 5th (5:00 p.m.)</p>	