

**Gender, Place and Culture**

WMST 4850A

University of Lethbridge

Fall 2010

**Instructor:** Dr. Tiffany Muller Myrdahl**Email:** [t.mullermyrdahl@uleth.ca](mailto:t.mullermyrdahl@uleth.ca)**Phone:** 403-317-5028**Office:** University Hall C880**Office Hours:** Tuesday & Thursday 12:15-1:45  
and by appointment**Required texts**

- McDowell, Linda. *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.
- Domosh, Mona and Joni Seager. *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World*. New York: Guilford Press, 2001.
- Articles available through the course WebCT site and the U of L library on-line journal catalogue.

**Catalogue Description**

This course will familiarize students with the various topics, interests, and debates within feminist geography and introduces students to the intersection of gender (and other identity categories) and geography. Examination of how gender relations shape different spaces and places and how to 'read' power relations by exploring the symbolic and material construction of spaces/places including the body, home, nation-state, and environment; from the local to the global will be included. *Prerequisite: Previous WMST course; 3rd yr standing. Recommended background: GEOG 2240*

**Course Content and Purpose**

The stated aim of this course is to familiarize you with the various topics and debates within, and approaches to, feminist geography. We will investigate how gender relations shape different spaces and places, and how these relations are in turn shaped by other categories of identity (like race, sexuality, ability, religion, and so on). We will also look at how we 'read' power relations by exploring the symbolic and material construction of spaces/places. Specifically the class will ask: how do gender, race, and other identity markers intersect to produce differing experiences of particular places? We will approach these questions from a variety of scales, including the body, home, state, and environment. This class stresses the importance of these geographic questions to our everyday lives. The course begins by asking what feminism has to do with geography; we then discuss the tools used by feminist geographers before we explore a series of sites including the body, the city, the workplace, and the state.

In addition to introducing you to content, I am want to help you hone your critical thinking, research, and writing skills using feminist geography as a starting point. I hope to make this course relevant to your life, while getting you to critically examine the world around you. Feminist pedagogy holds that the instructor is but one voice in a class. Although this is generally not the accepted practice in Geography or in academia generally, this class will model this idea.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course should provide you with the skills to:

- Invoke feminist analyses of various geographical issues;
- Assess and discuss how gender, race, class, and other forms of social difference intersect to constitute particular spaces/places; and
- Evaluate research methodologies and analyses from a feminist geographical perspective.

**Credit:** This syllabus builds from material developed by Dr. Katrinka Somdahl-Sands.

## Course Schedule

**Be prepared to discuss the readings on the day/s they are listed on the calendar below.**

Please note: Readings, assignments, and due dates occasionally need to be shifted or changed. If I/we need to make any adjustments to the calendar, I will make an announcement in class and via uleth email. Also, there are **four starred (\*) dates below**. Reflective journals are required for all students on these dates.

### SEPTEMBER

#### 8      **Introductions**

- Pascoe, CJ. 2007. "Becoming Mr. Cougar: Institutionalizing heterosexuality and masculinity at River High." In *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

#### \*15      **What is feminist geography?**

- McDowell, chapter 1, pp. 1-33
- Gilbert, M. 1995. Identity, space & politics: A critique of the poverty debates. In J.P. Jones, H. Nast and S. Roberts, (Eds.) *Thresholds in Feminist Geography*, pp. 29-45. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

#### **Suggested additional readings:**

- Hanson, S. 1992. Geography and feminism: Worlds in collision? *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 82: 4, 569-586.
- Staeheli, L. and P. Martin. 2000. Spaces for Feminism in Geography. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 571:1, 135-150

#### \*22      **Finding (inter)disciplinary bearings**

- Valentine, G. 2007. Theorizing and researching intersectionality: A challenge for feminist geography. *Professional Geographer*, 59: 1, 10-21.
- Hyndman, J. 2004. Mind the gap: Bridging feminist and political geography through geopolitics. *Political Geography*, 23, 307-322.

#### **Suggested additional readings:**

- Pratt, G. and S. Hanson. 1994. Geography and the construction of difference. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 1:1, 5-30.
- Peters, E. 2004. Conceptually Unclad: feminist geography and Aboriginal peoples. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, 48:3, 251-265.

#### 29      **Gender & identity in/through the workplace**

- Domosh and Seager, chapter 2, pp. 35-66
- McDowell, chapter 5, pp. 123-147
- Batnitzky *et al.* 2009. Flexible and strategic masculinities: The working lives and gendered identities of male migrants in London. *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, 35: 8, 1275-1293.

#### **Suggested additional readings:**

- Mahtani, M. 2004. Mapping race and gender in the academy. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 28:1, 91-100.
- Desbiens, C. 2004. "Women with no femininity": gender, race and nation-building in the James Bay Project. *Political Geography*, 23: 347-366.

## OCTOBER

### 6 Public, private, gender, & sex

- McDowell, chapters 3-4, 71-122
- Nagar, R. Women's theatre and the redefinitions of public, private, and politics in North India. *ACME*, 1, 55-72.

#### Suggested additional readings:

- Domosh and Seager, chapters 1-2
- Hayden, D. 2002. Housing and American life, in *Redesigning the American Dream*, pp. 19-32. New York: Norton.
- Brown, G et al. 2007. Introduction, or Why have a book on geographies of sexualities? *Geographies of Sexualities*, pp. 1-19. Hampshire, England: Ashgate.

### 13 Methodology & Method: Critical reflections

- Sundberg, J. 2005. Looking for the critical geographer, or why bodies and geographies matter to the emergence of critical geographies of Latin America. *Geoforum*, 36: 17-28.
- Bettie, J. 2003. *Women without Class. Girls, Race, and Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. "Portraying Waretown High," focusing especially on the methodology and method, pp. 1-31.
- Aitken, S. 2009. *The Awkward Spaces of Fathering*. "Stretching the Imagination," pp. 115-126. Ashgate.

#### Suggested additional reading:

- McDowell, chapter 9, 224-248

Oct 14-19 Fieldwork assignment @ Park Place Mall

### \*20 Bodies & the embodiment of research practice

- McDowell, chapter 2, 34-70
- Thomas, M. 2005. 'I think it's just natural': the spatiality of racial segregation at a US high school. *Environment and Planning A*, 37:7, 1233 – 1248.
- Ho, E. 2008. Embodying self-censorship: studying, writing and communicating. *Area*, 40:4, 491-499.

### 27 Scale & mobility

- McDowell, chapter 6, 148-169.
- Gieseeking, J. 2007. (Re)constructing women: scaled portrayals of privilege and gender norms on campus. *Area*, 39:3, 278-286.

## NOVEMBER

### 3 Mobility & identity

- Domosh and Seager, chapter 4, pp. 110-139
- McDowell, chapter 8, 203-223.
- Tucker, A. 2009. Framing exclusion in Cape Town's gay village: the discursive and material perpetration of inequitable queer subjects. *Area*, 41:2, 186-197. [substituted Fiske reading]

10 **State/Nation**

- Domosh and Seager, chapter 5, pp. 140-173
- McDowell, chapter 7, pp. 170-202
- Pratt, G. 2009. Circulating sadness: witnessing Filipina mothers' stories of family separation. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 16:1, 3-22.

Nov 11-16 Fieldwork assignment on campus

\*17 **Practicing visual research**

- Johnsen, *et al.* 2008. Imag(in)ing 'homeless places': Using auto-photography to (re)examine the geographies of homelessness. *Area*, 40:2, 194-207.
- Rose, G. 2001. Researching Visual Materials in *Visual Methodologies*, pp. 5-32. London: Sage.
- Kern, L. 2010. Selling the 'scary' city: gendering freedom, fear and condominium development in the neoliberal city. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 11:3, 209-230.

24 **No class meeting: Research / writing time**

**DECEMBER**

1 **Environment**

- Domosh and Seager, chapter 6, pp. 174-194
- Reed, M. 2004. Moral exclusion and the hardening of difference: Explaining women's protection of industrial forestry on Canada's West Coast. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27: 223-242.

**10 minute research presentations**

8 **Sexuality**

- Jacobs, J. 2009. Have sex will travel: romantic 'sex tourism' and women negotiating modernity in the Sinai. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 16:1, 43-61.
- Muller, T. 2007. 'Lesbian Community' in WNBA Spaces. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 8:1, 9-27.

**10 minute research presentations**

15 **Final paper due via email or in hardcopy**