

GENDER RELATIONS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
Anthropology/Women & Gender Studies 275
Winter Term 2005
Wednesdays 1:10-4:00
Carnegie 111

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-3; Fridays 10-12; or by appointment

Rather than a Women's Studies course per se, this is a course on gender relations. In other words, we will undertake a comparative analysis of the social construction of gender in a wide range of contemporary societies, focusing on the contrast between African, Asian and North Atlantic notions of gender identity and gender relations. We will work toward a deeper understanding of gender diversity and the nature of the relationship between femininity and masculinity, here and elsewhere. Additionally, we will study the customary relations between those identified as women and men on this and other continents. In so doing, we uncover our own cultural assumptions. A major component of your learning this winter will involve service work in Lewiston.

Likely Topics: Gender as symbolic ordering; gender as culturally constructed identity; the multiple effects of women's role as prime socializer; domains of power and authority; production and reproduction; class and gender; colonialism capitalism and the global economy; and so-called third world responses to western feminism.

This course has always been a **heavy reading** course organized in a **seminar format**. In recent years, a **service learning** component has been added. The following books are in the bookstore and on reserve: Abu-Lughod Veiled Sentiments; Bornstein Gender Outlaw; Foucault (ed.) Herculine Barbin; Gregor Anxious Pleasures; Martin The Woman in the Body; Nanda Gender Diversity; Pollack Real Boys, Popenoe Feeding Desire, and Stockard Marriage in Culture. On rare occasions, assigned readings will be on reserve in the library. In addition to readings from contemporary social science, our source material may include film and the popular press.

Your service learning project will count for 30% of your grade.
Class attendance and participation the next 30%.
Weekly memo/reading responses form another 30% of your grade.
The remaining 10% will be for your presentations.

The heavy emphasis on participation means that no one should be allowed to remain quiet, and even more important, no one (including the professor) should be allowed to dominate the room. The material with which we will be engaged is intellectually challenging and emotionally charged. It is each of our responsibility to make sure the discussion/presentation time is "working," that everyone gets their chance to have their voice heard. To this end, we may break up into smaller groups at times.

All of these strategies are part of a deliberate pedagogical decision on my part: Our course will be an exercise in minimizing hierarchy, separation, competition and authority while maximizing collective endeavor and sympathetic understanding. For this reason, participation--in all facets of its meaning--is a major consideration in course grades. We will work out some ground rules for discussion and hold seminar members accountable. If you are someone who finds classroom discussion impossible, or someone who cannot limit their own speech when in a public setting or, alternatively, someone who finds what their peers have to say valueless, then there are plenty of other courses at Bates in which you might happily excel. When following this schema both public speaking and attentive listening become key variables.

Think about what you would find truly liberating with regards to evaluation; be prepared to propose your revolutionary strategies. I am willing to experiment, which means, of course, that the criteria for evaluation noted in this syllabus are subject to revision as long as consensus is maintained.

Any relevant learning differences should be brought to the attention of the instructor immediately.

The reading program is also subject to minor revision as the semester progresses. All readings are listed on the day they are due. Everything should be on reserve (let me know immediately if you find a problem). You should read the material in the order in which it appears in this syllabus. The email discussion list for this course is called "wanws275a". Let us make good use of this innovation.

Responsibility for providing snacks will rotate.

READING PROGRAM--AN/WGS 275--WINTER 2005

- 1/12: INTRODUCTION to the course and to each other
reading: handouts
visitor: Sue Martin, Center for Service Learning
- 1/17 MLK DAY EVENTS—required attendance at 2:30 session “Hard Work”
- 1/19 FIELDTRIP to L.A. MUSEUM
reading: Dewalt et al. “Participant Observation” on reserve
video: *Roughing the Uppers* on reserve
writing: short memo concerning MLK day event
- 1/26: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SEX, GENDER, SEXUALITY, SCIENCE
writing: reaction to readings; progress report on service learning
reading: NANDA=s Introduction and Ch.1-3 of Gender Diversity
OBOLER AIs the Female Husband a Man?@ on reserve
FOUCAULT, ed., Herculine Barbin . . . (read Foucault's introduction carefully, read through the Memoirs bearing in mind the questions Foucault raised, then skim the Dossier. Rest of text is not assigned.)
- 2/2 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION, and an AMAZONIAN CASE
writing: on service learning contacts, progress, obstacles; reading reaction
reading: GREGOR Anxious Pleasures
- 2/9 A NORTH AMERICAN CASE
writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: POLLACK Real Boys (Chapters 1-9, Part 4 and Epilogue required; choose what interests you of Chapters 10-14)
- 2/16 ANOTHER NORTH AMERICAN CASE
writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: BORNSTEIN Gender Outlaw (pp 3-31, 46-132, 227-246, 249)
CALIFIA “Future of Gender and Transgender” on reserve
MEKURIA “Female Genital Mutilation...” on reserve
WESTON “Do Clothes Make the Woman?” on reserve
NANDA Chapters 5 and 6
video: *Paris Is Burning; Venus Boyz or Adventures... Gender Trade*
- 3/2 PURITY, POLLUTION AND SHAME

writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: ORTNER "Is Female to Male as...?" in Rosaldo & Lamphere
MARTIN The Woman in the Body (pp. 3-23,92-112,125-135,156-178, 181-203 and either 27-53 or 54-67)

3/9 PURITY, POLLUTION AND SHAME, continued

writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: ABU-LUGHOD Veiled Sentiments (pp9-24 & chapters 3,4,7,8)

3/16 MORE ON BODY POLITICS—A SAHARAN CASE

writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: POPENOE Feeding Desire

3/22 DOMAINS OF AUTHORITY AND POWER

writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: STOCKARD Marriage in Culture
ABU "The Separateness of Spouses" on reserve
EAMES "Why the Women Went to War" on reserve

3/30 NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOR

writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
reading: GROSSMAN Southeast Asia Chronicle on reserve
web: research Bangor's Clean Clothes, SweatX, UNITE, etc.
video: *The Global Assembly Line* and *Chain of Love* on reserve

4/6 LAST CLASS SESSION

writing: memo on service learning, relation to readings
research: bring in an example of "good news" on the gender relations front
reading: NANDA's conclusion

4/16 LAST DAY OF TERM, everything due before noon!

POSSIBLE GROUND RULES FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Acknowledge oppression exists
2. Acknowledge that we are all systematically taught misinformation
3. Actively pursue information that combats myths and stereotypes
4. Use an active listening posture; do not interrupt; be respectful
5. Respect confidentiality

COURSE THEMES EMBEDDED WITHIN THE *MOTHERING ON IFALUK* ARTICLE:

1. How does social stratification impact domestic organization?
2. Do all societies distinguish private domestic labor from public social labor?
3. What is the apparent significance of numerous kin ties and broad social networks for social reproduction?

COURSE THEMES EMBEDDED WITHIN THE '*MANLY*' GETS A MAKEOVER ARTICLE:

1. How is gender performed?
2. How is sexuality socially constructed?
3. How do Americans communicate about gender?

COURSE THEMES EMBEDDED WITHIN THE *SPEAKING OF GIRLS* ARTICLE:

1. How does material circumstance affect gender identity?
2. How does American society reproduce itself?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS CONCERNING *HERCULINE BARBIN*

1. There are two portraits or representations of Barbin in this edition, the autobiographical and what we may call the documentary. One comes from within and is anatomically elliptical; the other comes from without and is bloodlessly explicit. Which discourse provides the more authentic portrait? On what terms, with what assumptions, may we ask such a question?
2. How do the two representations relate to the social scientific distinction, set forth by Nanda in her introduction, between gender identity and gender role?
3. And what is the difference between sex and sexuality? On which does the emphasis fall in these texts? What importance does the distinction between the two have for an interpretation of these texts? How might the rise of social science, especially psychology, relate to this issue?
4. To what extent is Barbin a victim of her/his anatomy? To what extent is Barbin a victim of social constructions of gender? How do these two kinds of victimization intersect and interact?
5. How may we classify Barbin's love for Sara and Sara's for Barbin? Is it lesbian? heterosexual? Or in some new both/and category of its own? Must this love be classified in these terms? Why does the text not challenge the heterosexual classification, or does it?
6. What do you think caused Sarah's mother's blindness? The silence of the first priests and doctors?
7. Foucault romanticizes her/his state as a happy limbo of non-identity. Do you agree? As an outsider, is s/he able to observe things that others cannot? With what consequence? Why, e.g., does Barbin say she/he would make a detestable husband?
8. Barbin's *anatomy* does not conform to social convention, but is her/his *sexuality* pre-cultural, external to the law, unaffected by power relationships? If not, might we discern the process whereby political, cultural (and narrative) conventions produce the tender kisses, the diffuse pleasures, unrequited desires and transgressive thrills of her/his sexual world?

Presentation Signup

Snacks Signup

1/26 _____

Herculine Barbin

2/2 _____

Anxious Pleasures

2/9 _____

Real Boys

2/16 _____

Gender Outlaw

3/2 _____

Woman in the Body

3/9 _____

Veiled Sentiments

3/16 _____

Feeding Desire

3/22 _____

Marriage in Culture

3/30 _____

Global Assembly Line

