

*The Evergreen State College
Part-Time Studies*

***GENDER, CONFLICT AND CHANGE
IN POLITICAL CONTEXT***

SPRING 2002

8 Credits

***Wednesdays 4-8 PM
Saturdays 10AM-2PM***

Dr. Simona Sharoni
Office: Seminar Bldg., Room 4165
Email: simona_teaching@attbi.com
**Office Hours: Mondays 10-12 & by
appointment**
**Classrooms: *Wednesdays, LIBRARY 1316*
*Saturdays, Lab 1, 1040***

**[My Background & Teaching
Philosophy](#)**

**[Program
Description](#)**
[Readings](#)
[Requirements](#)
[Program Outline](#)
[Weekly Schedules](#)

[Library Resource Page](#)
**Computer Resource
Page**

Program Description

Gender is seldom viewed as a significant element of local and global politics. This program, however, begins with the premise that a careful examination of gender dynamics in various contexts can provide us with invaluable insights. Towards this end, we will critically engage feminist and non-feminist scholarship on militarization, violence and the

construction and transformation of gender identities and roles during times of conflict and change with particular attention to the roles of women's and other social movements in peacebuilding and community transformation. Focusing primarily on the local and global implications of the September 11 attacks, we will explore the interplay between gender and questions of identity, power, culture and politics. More specifically, we will critically examine how these questions play themselves out in the United States and in the Middle East with special reference to the historical context and unfolding political situation and their impact on struggles for gender equality in Afghanistan and in the Palestinian-Israeli context.

The program will be taught in a dynamic workshop format. In addition to lectures, films and guest presentations, students will participate in class exercises and simulations and learn basic communication skills and rudimentary conflict analysis and resolution skills. Students would also sharpen their critical thinking and ability to relate theoretical materials to real-world experiences. Credit will be awarded in gender studies, cross-cultural communication, conflict resolution, diversity and multiculturalism, and international studies.

My Background & Teaching Philosophy

"Curiosity as restless questioning, as movement toward the revelation of something hidden, as a question verbalized or not, as search for clarity, as a moment of attention, suggestion, and vigilance, constitutes an integral part of the phenomenon of being alive. There could be no creativity without the curiosity that moves us and sets us patiently impatient before a world that we did not make, to add to it something of our own making."

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civil Courage*

I chose the above quote from Paulo Freire, a man who has inspired many critical educators and activists worldwide, to share with you some preliminary comments about my background and approach to teaching and learning.

I grew up and lived most of my life in the Middle East and my career path, experiences and interest reflect the impact the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had on my life. In the fall of 1989, I arrived in the United States from Israel and enrolled in the Ph.D program at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, which at the time was the only academic institution offering a degree in this field. The program was

interdisciplinary in scope, focusing primarily on the social sciences and stressing the nexus between theory and praxis. Like many activists in different parts of the world, I thought that pursuing a doctorate degree would allow me to reflect on the work I have been involved in both in dialogue and reconciliation between Palestinians and Jews and in the women's peace movement in Israel.

Against the backdrop of the Palestinian uprising, known as the intifada, that was unfolding on the world's stage, I studied theories of conflict and models designed to resolve them. The process was fairly frustrating. The theories seemed too general and abstract and, like my fellow students who came from other conflict-torn regions, I was put off by attempts to use a one-size-fits-all model for conflicts that seem to have very unique histories and dynamics. Two other things, which I struggled with in the course of my graduate studies, were the privileging of official diplomacy and the lack of attention to women and gender issues in both theory and practice. Notwithstanding my frustration at the time, in retrospect, it seems that graduate school did have a very positive impact on my development as a scholar-activist. I identified areas that I feel strongly about and that have not been adequately addressed in the existing bodies of literature on peace and conflict resolution.

Teaching for me entails more than the mere transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. I am committed to a type of pedagogy that focuses not only on the presentation of content, facts, and information, but also on the ways in which particular theories and topics could be taught so they resonate with your every day lives and experiences. I see academic institutions as sites for personal growth and social transformation, and teaching, mentoring, and supervising as the means to bring about this transformation. My professional training as a teacher, which includes a Masters of Arts degree in Education and Counseling and almost two decades of teaching experience, has provided me with a strong theoretical and practical basis in critical pedagogy and in experiential teaching.

Over the years, I have experimented with a range of approaches and activities. Rather than assuming that I as the teacher have the knowledge and my primary task is to share it with you, I view the class as a learning community, as a context wherein we all learn and teach. As we read, meet with various people and participate in class activities, we will experience a range of emotions, generate an enormous amount of insights and identify many questions. Throughout this process, you will be encouraged to think critically and independently and to question taken-for-granted assumptions. While most students find this approach to teaching and learning more stimulating than the traditional formats of lectures or seminars, the practice of critical pedagogy can sometimes be experienced by both students and professors as painful and unsettling. At the same time, most students, including those who initially don't like this approach, acknowledge the transformative effects it had on their lives. I have been working on an ongoing research project on students' responses to critical pedagogy.

If you who are interested in learning more about this pedagogical approach and especially about

Paulo Freire writings and work, you can check out the following books and web pages.

Recommended Books:

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

_____, *Education for Critical Consciousness*

_____, *Pedagogy of Freedom : Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*

_____, *Teachers As Cultural Workers : Letters to Those Who Dare Teach*

Selected Web pages:

[http:// www.paulofreire.org](http://www.paulofreire.org)(mostly in Spanish)

[http:// www.irn.pdx.edu](http://www.irn.pdx.edu)

<http://www.trubeat.com/>

Readings

- Enloe, Cynthia. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, University of California Press, 2000.
 - Faludi, Susan. *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, Perennial, 2000.
 - Woolf, Virginia, *Three Guineas* (Paperback - June 1963)
 - Card, Orson Scott, *Ender's Game*
 - Deborah Ellis, *The Breadwinner*
 - Reardon, Betty, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*
- Selected articles

Requirements

The requirements and assignments are designed to maximize your learning. They will help you integrate theoretical concepts and reading material with your life experiences. In addition to prompting you to think about certain issues and questions in preparation for in-class workshops or discussions, assignments were designed to improve your critical thinking and writing and research skills (both library and web-based). In addition, you will

learn the basics of webpage design, editing, public speaking such important skills as. Because of the volume of material covered, it is very important that you don't fall behind and submit ALL your assignments on time.

You will have the option to re-write ALL your assignments and re-submit them with your final portfolio.

- *Regular Attendance*

Because this class involves experiential learning in the classroom, which cannot be reproduced if missed, students are expected to attend ALL class sessions, arrive on-time and leave when class ends. More than 2 absences will result in loss of credit.

- *Familiarity with Email, the Internet and Webcrossing*

The Internet has become a major terrain of debate and organizing, including on most issues addressed in this program. As a result and because of the relatively large class size (at least 25), which doesn't allow everyone to sufficiently express themselves, several assignments for this class involve the use of the Internet. You will be expected to check your email regularly and participate in discussions on Webcrossings. If you are not confident yet with this medium of communication, this is your opportunity to gain experience and confidence.

- *Ongoing assessment of expectations and learning goals*

- a. **Assessing one's baggage: expectations, learning goals and worldview (2 pages)**

Following a class exercise on the first day of class, reflect on why you registered for this class, comment on any prior knowledge about or experience with these issues and clearly state what you expect to learn in this class and whatever concerns you may have. In addition, we would like you to focus on some of the key beliefs and assumptions, which underlie your worldview. Your written statement (no more than 2 double-spaced pages) should be posted on Webcrossing. You should also write a summary of the major points on newsprint to display with your collage.

Due Saturday, April 6

- b. **Reflecting on and revising initial statement in light of things you learned in the program (1 page)**

Identify new learning goals, identify central themes and questions that emerged for you in

your learning so far and reflect on changes in your views and perspectives.

Due Wednesday, May 1

c. Self-evaluation (1 page)

Reflect on your cumulative learning, addressing both content and process and relating your evaluation to your initial and mid-quarter statements. Bring rough draft to class on .

Due Wednesday, June 5

- *Gender, Conflict & Change Collage*

On a large page of newsprint, illustrate your relationship with the program's themes, using popular magazines, drawing and some writing

Due Saturday, April 6

- *Media & popular culture Journal*

The journal should include at least one entry per week, examining conventional and alternative media items as well as music and other aspects of popular culture related to class themes. You should keep your journal up to date as we will make an attempt to integrate your journals into our seminar discussions. A 2-3 page summary of your journal entries should be posted on webcrossing three times during the quarter.

First summary due: Saturday 4/27

Second summary due: Saturday 5/11

Third summary due: Saturday 5/25

- *Film or TV show review*

Choose a film (documentary or feature film) or a TV show that addresses at least two central themes we explored in this class and critically examine it in relation to these themes. You should watch the film prior to completing this assignment even if you've seen it before. The review should contain a brief description of the film's content and a major section featuring your analysis of how the book deals with constructions of masculinity and femininity or gender relations for example.

Length: 2-3 double-spaced pages.

Due: Wednesday, April 17

--For detailed instructions on *HOW TO WRITE A FILM REVIEW* click [HERE](#)

--For a preliminary list of films for review click [HERE](#)

--If you decide to choose a film that is not on the list, please send me an email describing your reason for wanting to review this film.

- *Report on a visit to a toy store*
- *Action research paper*

Choose an organization or an individual working to transform gender identities and relations as they relate to the themes of conflict and change. Write a profile of the individual and/or organization, describing their work and critically analyzing its transformative potential. You can choose an organization or individual you know in the area, or someone you came across in the course of your research. You can also focus on an historical figure or an organization that no longer exists. Length: 3-4 double-spaced pages.

Due Wednesday, May 22

- *Creative Group Project*

You will be expected to work collaboratively in groups of 4-6 people to develop a creative project, which addresses at least two central issues discussed in the class or the dynamics of gender, conflict and change in a particular political context that we did not discuss in class. Your project could be a webpage, a radio or TV show, an art exhibit etc. You will also be expected to give a class presentation about your project and to write a project summary (2-3 double-spaced pages per group). You should attach to the summary a personal note about your contribution to the project and your learning through this experience. I will make every effort to structure some class time for you to meet in groups and work on the project but some meetings outside of class may be necessary.

Class presentations: Week 10

Summary report due: Saturday, June 8

Program Outline

**Please note that this is a preliminary schedule, which may change*

Week 1: Group building, program overview, workshop on basic communication skills

Week 2: Conflict analysis in theory and practice, workshop on critical reading of the media

Week 3: Workshops on Dealing with Difference & Power Inequalities and Transforming Enemy Images; September 11 and the subsequent U.S led military campaign in Afghanistan

Week 4: Feminist perspectives on violence, conflict and peace, workshops on conflict styles and gender conflict; Gender, conflict, and

change in U.S. popular culture

Week 5: Men and masculinity, Gender & sexuality conference

Week 6: Post-9/11 Militarization; Women and gender in Afghanistan

Week 7: Visit to military base, The Militarization of Education

Week 8: Gender and Nationalism: Lessons from the Palestine, Israel and the North of Ireland; Is Sisterhood Global? A Critical Assessment of the U.S Women's Movement

Week 9: Feminist perspectives on peace and conflict transformation, Workshop: Conflict resolution for beginners

Week 10: Student presentations; Summary and evaluation of class content and process

WEEKLY SCHEDULES

WEEK 1

DATE	WEDNESDAY 4/3	SATURDAY 1/10
ROOM	L 1316 4-6pm; L 1507-1508 6-8pm 6-7 PC Lab computer center	Lab1 1040
TOPICS	Introductions and syllabus overview; Re-writing of program covenant Introduction to Webcrossing Workshop on basic communication skills	Gender, Conflict & Change Collage Mini-workshop on using the web for research
READINGS	---	---
ASSIGNMENTS	---	Statement of expectations & concerns (for Listserv); Gender Collage

WEEK 2

DATE	WEDNESDAY 4/10	SATURDAY 4/13
TOPICS	Conflict Analysis in Theory and Practice Gender as a Crucial Part of Conflict Analysis	Workshop: Critical Approaches to Media

	<i>Film: The Battle of Algiers</i>	
READINGS	-----	-----
ASSIGNMENTS	Familiarize yourself with the historical background of the anti-colonial struggle waged by the Algerian people against France	Collect examples addressing class topic(s) from both mainstream and alternative media

WEEK 3

DATE	WEDNESDAY 4/17	SATURDAY 4/20
TOPICS	Workshop: --Dealing with Difference & Power Inequalities --Tranforming Enemy Images	September 11 and the War on Afghanistan from the perspective of the victims
READINGS	Selected articles	Ellis, <i>The Breadwinner</i> & selected articles
ASSIGNMENTS	Film/TV show review	

WEEK 4

DATE	WEDNESDAY 4/24	SATURDAY 4/27
TOPICS	Feminist perspectives on violence, conflict and peace Gender, conflict, and change in U.S. popular culture: discussion of film or TV shows reviews	Workshop: --Conflict Styles --Gender Conflicts in Context
READINGS	Wolf	---
ASSIGNMENTS	---	1st summary of journal

WEEK 5

DATE	WEDNESDAY 5/1	SATURDAY 5/4
TOPICS	Men & Masculinity	Gender & sexuality conference

READINGS	Faludi, <i>Stiffed</i>	----
ASSIGNMENTS	Revised statement of expectations	---

WEEK 6

DATE	WEDNESDAY 5/8	SATURDAY 5/11
TOPICS	Post-9/11 Militarization	Women and Gender in Afghanistan
READINGS	Enloe, <i>Maneuvers</i>	Selected articles
ASSIGNMENTS		2nd summary of journal

WEEK 7

DATE	WEDNESDAY 5/15	SATURDAY 5/18
TOPICS	Visit to military base Details TBA	The Militarization of Education Reports from visits to toy stores
READINGS	Ender's Game	
ASSIGNMENTS		Film review for peer review

WEEK 8

DATE	WEDNESDAY 5/22	SATURDAY 5/25
TOPICS	Gender and Nationalism: Lessons from Palestine, Israel and the North of Ireland Film: Daughters of the Troubles	--Is Sisterhood Global? A Critical Assessment of the U.S Women's Movement --Discussion on Action Research Papers
READINGS	selected articles	
ASSIGNMENTS	Action research paper	

WEEK 9

DATE	WEDNESDAY 5/30	SATURDAY 6/1
TOPICS	Feminist Perspectives on Peace and Conflict Transformation	Workshop: Conflict resolution for beginners
READINGS	Reardon, <i>Education for a Culture of Peace</i>	
ASSIGNMENTS		

WEEK 10

DATE	WEDNESDAY 6/5	SATURDAY 6/8
TOPICS	Group presentations	Student Presentations (continued) Summary and evaluation of class content and process
READINGS		
ASSIGNMENTS		Final portfolio and draft self-evaluation

WEEK 11: June 10-15 EVALUATION WEEK

Madeby: Simona Sharoni

E-mail: mailto:%20simona_teaching@attbi.com(simona_teaching@attbi.com)

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