

**WGST 225-001**  
**GENDER, POLITICS AND POWER:**  
**A Comparative Perspective**  
**Professor Diane Singerman**

**Ward 107 Spring 2002 Mondays and Thursdays 11:20-12:35**

Ward 242, Department of Government

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This course explores the ways in which the social, political and cultural construction of sexual difference influences the nature and practice of political life. It will examine both theoretically and empirically the ways in which power is gendered and how gender has served as a basis for political organization, the distribution of power, and the boundaries of public life.

Many themes will be examined in the course in order to understand the political and economic context of struggles around gender issues; including the mobilization of women's movements; the interaction of religion and culture; the gendered nature of the state; the institutional nature of particular women's movements and struggles; and feminist methodologies. Although the focus of the course will be on the "political" in the context of comparative politics and the larger discipline of political science, it will also draw heavily from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, women's studies, and political economy, among others. Intentionally, the course includes a balance between empirical knowledge of particular cases and theoretical debates on gender and politics. Students will be expected to master both theoretical and empirical dimensions of the course.

The course is focused on the assigned readings and classroom presentations and discussions. The weekly reading assignments vary in length and difficulty and the core of the course will lie in discussion of the reading materials. Completing the weekly assignments on time is the most important assignment in the course. The other requirements of the course include a short reflective essay on the importance of gender as a category of understanding and a research paper (ten-fifteen pages, not including reference material) on a critical moment in political life which demonstrates how a gendered analysis challenged the status quo and structures of power. There will also be a midterm and two very short (two-page max) analytic reviews of two of the week's reading materials after the midterm. These two analytic reviews will be due on the Monday class, and discuss either the books by Singerman, Gole, or Bouvard. It is up to the students to decide which weeks to chose.

Grading for the course will be calculated in the following manner: *informed* and thoughtful classroom participation (10%); first essay (15%); midterm exam (25%) and final research paper (35%) and two short analytic essays on the major readings after the midterm (15%). Occasionally, course assignments will be altered for various reasons as the course progresses. Please consult the online version of the syllabus on Blackboard as the final authoritative version of the syllabus. Check to see that your email works within the Blackboard course page and check your email regularly for class updates. Late work will be penalized and please communicate by email or telephone about any attendance problems or other difficulties throughout the semester.

Academic Integrity Code

Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. It is expected that all examinations, tests, written papers, and other assignments will be completed according to the standards set forth in this code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this code.

The following texts are available in the American University Campus Store and are on reserve at Bender Library:

Marguerite G. Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood*, SR Books, 1994.

Crittenden, Ann, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2001.

Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left*. Random House, 1979.

Nilufer Gole. *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*. University of Michigan Press, 1996.

Diane Singerman. *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics and Networks in Urban Quarters in Cairo*. Princeton University Press, 1995.

Sandra Harding, ed. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Indiana University Press, 1987.

### **Week One, January 14-18: Introduction**

Monday: Introduction

Thursday: Patriarchy, Gerda Lerner. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. Intro and Ch. 1, ch. 6. Xerox Distributed

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Historical Category." *American Historical Review* 91, 5 (1986): 1053-1075. JSTOR online periodicals accessible from [AU Library page](#). Find the issue of American Historical Review 1986, Volume 91:5, p. 1053, to view article.

**First Writing Assignment due Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, in class. In a three-page brief analytic paper, describe the ways in which taking the notion of "gender" seriously has helped you to understand either; 1) an important issue in your personal experience; or 2) a major issue or situation in the larger world. In this essay discuss how the notion of gender has helped to illuminate the various dimensions of your issue. Without the notion of "gender" how would one understand your dilemma or issue? Consult "Writing Tips" and other information under Assignments on Blackboard for required formatting and reference styles.**

### **Week Two, January 21-25: Gender**

**Monday, January 21: No Class (Martin Luther King Holiday)**

Thursday: Carole Pateman. "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy." In *Public and Private in Social Life*, S.I. Benn and G.F. Gaus, eds., 281-303, Croom Helm, 1983.

Susan Okin. "Gender, The Public and the Private." In *Political Theory Today*, David Held, ed., 67-90, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Laura Nader. "The Subordination of Women in Comparative Perspective." *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 15 (Fall-Winter 1986): 377-397.

Terrel Carver. "A Political Theory of Gender: Perspectives on the 'Universal Subject.'" In *Gender, Politics, and the State*, Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen, eds., 18-28. New York: Routledge, 1998.

**First Writing Assignment due Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, in class.**

### **Week Three, January 28- February 1: Feminist Methods**

Monday: Sandra Harding. "Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?" In *Feminism & Methodology*, Sandra Harding, ed., 1-14. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Vivian Gornick, "Consciousness." In *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader*. Barbara A Crow, ed., 287-300. NY: New York University Press, 2000.

Joyce A. Ladner. "Introduction to Tomorrow's Tomorrow: The Black Woman." In *Feminism & Methodology*, Sandra Harding, ed., 74-83. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Thursday: Chandra Talpade Mohanty. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, eds., 51-80, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

**Research Paper due Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup> in class:** After careful consideration and a preliminary estimation of available sources, write a research paper (ten-fifteen pages, not including reference material) on a critical moment in political life which demonstrates how a gendered analysis challenged the status quo and structures of power. This "moment" need not have led directly to obvious and measurable change or "success" of a movement, but explain and analyze in your paper the fundamental challenge that this campaign raised. You may choose an American or international topic to write about; one that is quite contemporary or more historical in nature. You must include at least five primary source documents in your paper and at least five scholarly sources (in a Works Cited List) and incorporate the various constituencies affected by your issue. Explain the changing macro and micro forces that influenced how and why gender became central to this challenge and the nature of the problem itself. This paper should also incorporate several of the theoretical issues raised throughout the course and certainly can use online sources (properly referenced) as well. Use parenthetical references in your paper and a Works Cited list. Paper Topic, Main Questions, and Preliminary Bibliography due Throughout the Course.

### **Week Four, February 4-8: The State, Institutions, and Dependency?**

MacKinnon, Catherine. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence." In *Feminism & Methodology*, Sandra Harding, ed., 135-156. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Wendy Brown. "Finding the Man in the State." *Feminist Studies* 18: 1 (Spring 1992): 7-34.

Thursday: **Discussion Groups.** Class will meet in smaller sections for general discussion of the assigned reading and the issues they raise.

**Paper Topic Due in Discussion Groups including a paragraph explaining the objective and thesis question of the paper.**

### **Week Five, February 11-15: The Second Wave of Feminism, American Style**

Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left*. Random House, 1979. Please Note and Read the Documents in the Appendix. Chs. 1-6.

### **Week Six, February 18-22: American Feminism (cont.)**

Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement & the New Left*. Random House, 1979. Please Note and Read the Documents in the Appendix. Chs. 6-9.

Bernice Johnson Reagon. "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century." In *Feminism and Politics*, Anne Phillips, ed., 242-253. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

*Recommended:* Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement: A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism." *Signs* 24 (1999): 363-386.

*Recommended:* "Naming/Framing" an Issue: William Gamson, "Constructing Social Protest." In *Social Movements and Culture*, eds. Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, 85-106. University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Thursday, 2/22: **Works Cited List of the paper due in class;** including at least ten sources that are a mix between primary sources, scholarly sources, magazines, memoirs, etc. You are encouraged to use online sources, but must also use printed material.

**Week Seven, February 25- March 1: The Gendered Economy and the Sexual Division of Labor**

Heidi I. Hartmann. "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework." In *Feminism & Methodology*. Sandra Harding, ed., 109-134. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Gayle Rubin. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." In *Feminism and History*, Joan Wallach Scott, ed., 105-151, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Crittenden, Ann, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*. New York, Metropolitan Books, 2001. Chs. 1-9.

**Week Eight, March 4-8: Economic Power and Motherhood**

Crittenden, Ann, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*. New York, Metropolitan Books, 2001. Chs. 10-Conclusion.

**In-class Midterm Exam: Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**Spring Break: March 10-17**

**Week Nine, March 18-22: The Household, Informal Politics, Networks and Political Exclusion**

Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. Intro, Chs. 1-3.

**Recommended** Background Reading: Ann Mosely Lesch, "Comparative Politics Today: Egypt," in *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*, Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., eds. 6th ed., (HarperCollins, 1996), pp. 608-667.

**Week Ten, March 25-29: Informal Politics in Egypt (cont.)**

Diane Singerman, *Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995. Chs. 4-5 and conclusion.

**Recommended** Background Reading: Phillipe Fargues, "From Demographic Explosion to Social Rupture," *Democracy without Democrats*, pp. 156-182 & *Arab Society*, 75-83.

**A Recommended** Update. Diane Singerman, "The Politics of Emergency Rule in Egypt." *Current History* 651 (January 2002): 29-35.

**Analytic Two-page essay on Avenues of Participation due Monday in class. During this half of the class students will chose to write two two-page (double-spaced) essays on either Singerman, Gole, or Bouvard.**

**Week Eleven, April 1-5: Gender, Religion, and Symbolic Politics and Veiling**

Lerner, Gerda. 1986. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 6, "Veiling the Woman." 123-140.

Deniz Kandiyoti. "Islam & Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective." In *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, Nikkie R. Keddie and Beth Baron, eds., 23-42. Yale University Press, 1991.

Arlene MacLeod, "Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo," *Signs* 17 (Spring 1992): 533-557.

Homa Hoodfar, "The Veil in Their Minds and On Our Heads: Veiling Practices and Muslim Women: In *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, eds. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, 248-279. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.

**Week Twelve, April 8-12: Gender, Modernizing Secularism, and Islam: The Case of Turkey**

Nilufar Gole. *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

**Analytic Two-page essay on *The Forbidden Modern* due Monday in class. During this half of the class students will chose to write two two-page (double-spaced) essays on either Singerman, Gole, or Bouvard.**

**Week Thirteen, April 15-19: Gender, Religion, and Masculinities**

Sikata Banerjee, "Warriors in Politics: Religious Nationalism, Masculine Hinduism and the Shiv Sena in Bombay." *Women and Politics* 20, 1999: 1-26.

Michael Kimmel and Abby L. Ferber. "'White Men are this Nation:’ Right-Wing Militias and the Restoration of Rural American Masculinity." *Rural Sociology* 65, 4 (2000): 582-604.

Anthony Oberschall, "The New Christian Right: Culture Conflict in the Eighties." In *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities*, 339-382. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993.

**Thursday: Discussion/Presentation of the Research Papers.**

**Week Fourteen, April 22-26: The Military, Motherhood, and Resistance**

Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking." *Feminist Studies* 6 (Summer, 1980). Marguerite G. Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood*, SR Books, 1994.

**Analytic Two-page essay on *Revolutionizing Motherhood* due Monday in class. During this half of the class students will chose to write two two-page (double-spaced) essays on either Singerman, Gole, or Bouvard.**

**Week Fifteen, April 29**

Conclusions: Monday Class Meets.

**FINAL EXAM: May 6<sup>th</sup>, 11:20a-1:50p 11:20-1:50 Ward 107. Please arrange your travel plans accordingly, there is no flexibility in rescheduling this exam except due to a dire emergency.**