

SOC 234: Gender and International Development

Fall 2012

M/Th 11:10-12:20

PNW 127

Prof. Smitha Radhakrishnan

330 Pendleton East

Office hours: Tuesday 10-11 or by appointment

sradhkr@wellesley.edu

I. Course Description:

This course aims to unpack the relationships between our everyday constructions of poverty, development, and gender, theories of development and gender produced in academic and policy circles, and the everyday lives of the world's poorest. We will focus on understanding and applying a "gender lens" to concrete issues of development, developing a unique set of analytic tools for grappling with the complexities of development questions. To this end, the readings will emphasize theory at the beginning of the course and focus on concrete topics later in the course, but we will always tie these two aspects together during our time in class. This course privileges a sociological perspective on development over a purely economic one, and thus privileges on-the-ground ethnographic scholarship over quantitative studies. Still, this course maintains a focus on the centrality of the economic and material aspects of everyday human lives.

The course is divided into four sections. In the first section, we will build our "toolkit." We will become acquainted with dominant development paradigms and their critiques, and begin to forge an understanding of how a "gender lens" offers us a dramatically new perspective. In the second section of the course, we bring to the fore the notion of "empowerment," a keyword in newly dominant paradigms of gender and development. Using a gendered, transnational view, we will problematize "empowerment" as a concept and as a development goal, with reference to specific case studies. As we include a view of the global economy in this section of the course, we also problematize the divide between "developing" and "developed" nations. In the last part of the course, we hone our skills of gendered critique to focus upon the specific topic of microfinance as a development strategy, reading a range of both critical and laudatory texts. We will aim to expose the presumptions that underpin microfinance programs, and I will engage the class in my own research on the subject. Finally, we conclude the course with an examination of transnational strategies that imagine creative and equitable visions of development worldwide.

II. Grading and assignments:

Students will be graded on the following assignments:

- 1) *Weekly reading responses* (<300 words): In these assignments, you will reflect upon the readings for the week and connect them with material covered earlier in the class. These are *not* summaries, but it will be useful for you to state the key concept/contribution of the reading in your response. Mainly, the responses should focus on what stood out to you about the readings and what it made you think about. Each student must post one response to the appropriate Sakai forum topic per week and I encourage you to read one another's responses.

- 2) **Participation/Attendance:** Discussion, exchange, and participation are critical components of this class and class time will be important in facilitating your understanding of the readings. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. More than two absences during the course of the term will dramatically affect your participation grade. Tardiness is not acceptable; if you are more than 10 minutes late to class, it will count as an absence. If you are consistently late by a few minutes, this will affect your participation grade as well.

Attending class is always your choice. In general, there is no need to contact me to “excuse” your absence. If you are absent **more than twice** during the term for medical or other personal reasons, then please keep me informed. I expect that everyone will have once or twice in the semester when they cannot come due to sickness or an important appointment. More than that, however, and you’re missing out on class!

- 3) **Exams:** There will be two take-home exams covering material presented in the readings and discussion. These exams are to be completed individually. You may refer to any and all course materials in preparing the exam. The second exam will be cumulative in scope, but both exams will be the same length and weighed the same in the grading. **Exam format:** Exams will include several identifications (to be described in a 1-3 sentences), short essays (outlining the key aspects of a specific topic in a paragraph), and one essay (an analytical question that will ask you to draw upon the readings to analyze a specific issue in 2 pages).

- 4) **Oral Book Review:** After week 3, a group of students will present to the class a monograph related to the week’s readings at the end of our classtime each Thursday (or Monday in the cases that a topic concludes on a Monday). I will provide you with a choice of books for each weekly topic. The goal of this assignment is to make students aware of current scholarship in the field and connect this work with our work in class. Details about format and requirements to follow.

- 5) **Analytical Paper:** Students will be required to develop a topic of interest over the course of the semester and turn in a short (5-7 page) paper demonstrating your ability to effectively analyze a specific topic through a “gender lens” by the end of the course. Your paper may build upon the work you have already done for the book review, thus offering you the opportunity to develop a special area of interest within the field of gender and development, and allowing you to work alongside students who share your interest. More details on the requirements of the paper to follow.

Your final grade will be computed as follows:

Participation/Responses:	20%
Exams:	40%
Oral Book Review:	15%
Analytical Paper:	25%

*A note about grading: I grade work according to quality, effort, and a demonstrated understanding of the key concepts of the course/assignment. A grade of “B” indicates *good* work. It means that you have made adequate effort, have shown that you understand the main ideas, and have met the expectations of the class. To get a grade in the “A” range, your work must surpass those

expectations. In short, “A’s” are for work at an *excellent* level. Grades of “C” or below indicate that you have not fulfilled the expectations of the coursework, either by not completing the assignment or by not putting in the required time and effort.

III. Course Materials:

Most of the readings for this course are available either through Sakai resources or electronically through the Wellesley library. In addition, we will be reading the following books. As many of these are available through ebrary, it is up to you whether you wish to purchase them for use in our class. Make sure that you have access to the book by the time we read it in class and are able to access a copy of the reading while in class:

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. (purchase recommended)

Lan, Pei-Chia. 2006. *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*. Duke University Press. (ebrary)

Sharma, Aradhana. 2008. *Logics of Empowerment: Development, Gender, and Governance in Neoliberal India*. University of Minnesota Press. (ebrary)

Karim, Lamia. 2011. *Microfinance and its Discontents: Women in Debt in Bangladesh*. University of Minnesota Press. (ebrary)

IV. Outline of Course:

September 6th: Introduction and outline of the course

PART I: Development & Poverty, Gender & Culture

September 10th: Development and Poverty as Narrative

- Escobar, Arturo. 1995. “The Problematization of Poverty: The Tale of Three Worlds and Development.” In *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 21-54 (ebrary)
- Misturelli, Federica and Claire Heffernan. 2008. “What is poverty? A diachronic exploration of the discourse of poverty from the 1970s to the 2000s.” *The European Journal of Development Research*. Vol. 20, No. 4, December 2008, 666-684. (available online through Wellesley library)

September 13th: Development as (Solvable) Economic Problem

- Adelman, Irma. 2001. “Fallacies in Development Theory and their Implications for Policy.” In *Frontiers of Development Economics*. (102-134) (Sakai resources)
- Sen, Amartya. 1999. “The Ends and Means of Development.” In *Development as Freedom*. Anchor Books. (Sakai resources)

September 17th-20th: Gendering Development I: Cultural Considerations

- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1988. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" *Feminist Review* 30: 61-88. (available online through Wellesley library)
- Cornwall, Andrea, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead. 2009. *Gender Myths and Feminist Fables: The Struggle for Interpretive Power in Gender and Development*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell. Introduction. (ebrary)
- Kabeer, Naila. 1994. "Beyond the Poverty Line: Measuring Poverty and Impoverishing Measures" in *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. New York: Verso (pp 136-162) (Sakai resources)
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 1995. *Introduction*. In Nussbaum, M. C., & Jonathan Glover (eds). *Women, culture, and development: a study of human capabilities*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. (Sakai resources)

September 24th-27th: Gendering Development II: Economic Considerations

- Hartmann, Heidi. 1983. "Capitalism, Patriarchy and Job Segregation by Sex." Pp 193-225 in E. Abel and E.K. Abel (eds) *The Signs Reader: Women, Gender and Scholarship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Sakai resources)
- Elson, Diane. 1999. "Labor Markets as Gendered Institutions: Equality, Efficiency and Empowerment Issues. *World Development*. Volume 27, Issue 3, March 1999, Pages 611-627. (available online through Wellesley library)
- Kabeer, Naila. 1997. "Women, Wages, and Intra-household Power Relations in Urban Bangladesh. *Development and Change*. Volume 28: 261-302. (available online through Wellesley library)
- SIGN UP FOR BOOK REVIEW GROUPS BY SEPTEMBER 27th

PART II: Gendered Empowerment as Development Paradigm

October 1st-4th: States and NGOs

- Tinker, Irene. 2006. "Empowerment Just Happened: The Unexpected Expansion of Women's Organizations." In Jaquette, Jane S. & Gale Summerfield (eds). *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice: Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization*. Durham: Duke University Press. (available through ebrary)
- Sharma, Aradhana. 2008. *Logics of Empowerment: Development, Gender, and Governance in Neoliberal India*. Duke University Press. (selections, available through ebrary)

NO CLASS October 8th (Fall break)

October 11th-18th: The Contradictory Sites of the Global Service Sector

- Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) getting by in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company. (selections)
- Lan, Pei-Chia. 2006. *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domestic Workers and Newly Rich Employers in Taiwan*. Duke University Press. (ebrary)
- Pearson, Ruth. 2008. "Reassessing paid work and women's empowerment: lessons from the global economy. In Cornwall, Andrea, Elizabeth Harrison & Ann Whitehead (eds). *Feminisms in Development: Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges*. Zed Press. (on Sakai)

October 22nd- 25th: Global Factories as Sites of Empowerment

- Pyle, Jean L. & Kathryn B. Ward. 2003. "Recasting our Understanding of Gender and Work during Global Restructuring." *International Sociology*. Sept. Vol 18(3): 461-489.
- Ngai, Pun. 2005. *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace*. Duke University Press. Selections. (ebrary)
- Plankey-Videla, Nancy. 2012. *We are in this Dance Together: Gender, Power, and Globalization at a Mexican Garment Firm* (selections TBA, on Sakai resources)

October 29th: Review for Exam I

November 1st: EXAM I DUE IN CLASS

- Group work for Analytical Paper

PART III. Analyzing Microcredit as Development Strategy

November 5th-November 8th: Critiques of Bangladesh

- Karim, Lamia. *Microfinance and its Discontents: Women in Debt in Bangladesh*. University of Minnesota Press. (ebrary)
- Film: *Small Change, Big Business: The Women's Bank of Bangladesh 10 Years Later* (accessible through Sakai resources)

November 12th-15th: Developing a Gendered Critique of Microfinance

- Hirschmann, David. 2006. "From 'Home Economics' to 'Microfinance': Gender Rhetoric and Bureaucratic Resistance." In Jaquette, Jane S. & Gale Summerfield (eds). *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice: Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization*. Durham: Duke University Press. (available through ebrary)
- Rankin, Katharine N. 2001. "Governing development: neoliberalism, microcredit, and the rational economic woman." *Economy and Society*. Vol 30 (1) February. Pp. 18-37. (online)
- Anthony, Denise and Christine Horne. 2003. "Gender and Cooperation: Explaining Loan Repayment in Micro-Credit Groups." *Social Psychological Quarterly*. Vol. 66(3) 293-302 (online)
- Sanyal, Paromita. 2009. "From Credit to Collective Action: The Role of Microfinance in Promoting Women's Social Capital and Normative Influence." *American Sociological Review*. Vol 74 (August 529-550). (online)
- Rajashekhar, D. 2002. "Impact of Microfinance Programs on Poverty and Gender Equality: Some Evidence from Indian NGOs." In *Shifting Burdens: Gender and Agrarian Change Under Neoliberalism*. Shahra Razavi (ed.). Kumarian Press. (ebrary)

November 19th: Training Women to Be Good Borrowers

- In-class lecture and activity, *Sankalp* video (Ujjivan)

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 22nd (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

PART IV: Looking outward: Feminism in motion

November 26th-29th: Transnational Possibilities

- Baden, Sally and Anne Marie Goetz. 1998. "Who needs [sex] when you can have [gender]? Conflicting Discourses on Gender At Beijing." In Jackson, Cecile and Ruth Pearson (eds.) *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*. London and New York: Routledge. Pp217-239.
- Molyneux, Maxine. 2007. "The chimera of success: gender *ennui* and the changed international policy environment." In Cornwall, Andrea, Elizabeth Harrison & Ann Whitehead (eds). *Feminisms in Development: Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges*. Zed Press.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity with Anticapitalist Struggles." in *Feminists without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham & London: Duke University Press. Pp. 221-253

December 3rd- Feminist Translations and World Travels

- Davis, Kathy. 2007. *The Making of Our Bodies, Ourselves: How Feminism Travels Across Borders*. Duke University Press. Ch 6-7, 169-212 + Appendices. (ebrary)

December 6th: Review for Exam II

December 10th: EXAM II DUE IN CLASS

- Wrap-up/conclude in class

ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 21st, 4PM.