Gender and the Politics of National Security

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OH: Wednesdays 2:30-4:30, Albee 215

This course will introduce students to major theories and issues concerning gender and international security affairs. We will begin by examining the interdisciplinary literature on gender theory and applying its insights to international politics. What does it mean to conduct a “gendered analysis” of global affairs? How do gendered discourses produce our understanding of what is and is not understood as a national security problem? Why has traditional security studies failed to incorporate gender into its analysis? Then, we apply these theoretical frameworks to important security issues such as, the cultural effects of nuclear weapons, the targeting of civilians during armed conflict, sexual violence in war, torture and the war on terrorism, nationalism and the state, human security and development, and post-conflict societies, to name a few. Throughout, the gendered nature of security issues will be explored from multi-disciplinary perspectives drawn from anthropology, sociology, philosophy, politics and rhetoric in order to highlight the complex interconnections among states, societies and individuals. Historical and contemporary case studies will be drawn from a number of countries across the globe. In reexamining key concepts in the study of international politics—namely, sovereignty, the state and insecurity—this course has two goals. First, to expose how gendered discourses of security that focus on the state render invisible a multitude of threats to individual security. Second, to question the role of the state as a security provider by highlighting the insecurities individuals and societies experience as a consequence of state-centered national security policy.

Grading and Requirements

This class will be run primarily as a seminar. Attendance at class is mandatory and participation is a critical component of the final grade. Without informed participation that demonstrates an engagement with the texts covered so far, you cannot do well in this class—and more importantly, the class as a whole will suffer. This class is designed to familiarize you with questions of gender, but equally to get you to think deeply about important issues of national security and global politics—the process of preparation, interaction and critical engagement with the ideas covered is of primary import.

There will be two papers, as well—one at the midpoint and one at the end of the semester. While the topic is flexible, the paper should present a deeper engagement with some of the issues raised in class. External research is not required, but a demonstrable engagement with issues and texts covered in class is. I will provide suggested topics but if there is a particular topic you wish to explore, you may write on it but only with consent of the instructor.

All written assignments should be entirely your own work and are not collaborative; ideas drawn from other sources should be properly cited. Plagiarism of any kind is unacceptable and will result in an automatic failing grade on the assignment and in the course, as well as referral to the College for disciplinary action. Please consult the Bard Student Handbook for the College’s official policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Midterm Paper (5-7 pages)</td>
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<td>Final Paper (10-12 pages)</td>
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Participation:

Attendance—Each student is allowed 2 absences, no questions asked. Every unexcused absence beyond that will lower your participation grade by a 1/2 a letter grade (excused absences do not count toward this total).

Reaction Posts

In order to help our discussion, for each class, you should post a contribution to the Moodle site. That contribution can go one of two ways. You can engage one of the questions/issues to think about that I will provide or you can post a question/comment about the text along with a related passage. Either way you choose, the contribution need not be especially long (a paragraph or less) or even something you necessarily desire to be covered during class (perhaps it simply struck you as worth discussing but not necessarily worth the main focus of the class). These passages must be posted by the day prior to class.

The postings to Moodle have three purposes. First, they are a way to set up the discussion for class by getting you a head start on thinking about some of the crucial themes to be covered in class through informal writing. Second, they are a way to set the agenda for discussion by giving everyone (myself and the seminar as a whole) an idea of what we find most interesting—this works best when you have read others contributions in addition to offering your own. Third, and finally, the Moodle posts are intended as a way for everyone to contribute every class. It is unlikely that we can cover everyone’s contribution to the Moodle site each class, but even if we are not covering your posts directly, they are your easiest way of demonstrating to me your continual participation and work in the class. Everyone is allowed to miss posting for two sessions over the course of the semester—anything beyond that will negatively affect your grade.

Contribution to the Moodle site is a critical part of your participation grade—without satisfactory completion the highest grade you can receive in participation is a B-.

Books for Class

- Jill Steans, Gender and International Relations (New York: Polity, 2013) **3rd Edition**

*If a reading does not come from this book it will be on electronic reserve (reservesdirect.bard.edu).

Syllabus and Course Outline: Themes, Expectations, Introductions
January 30th (M)

I. Gender, International Relations, and Security Studies

Introduction: Gender, Feminism, and International Relations
February 1st (W)

- Jill Steans, “Gender in International Relations” in Gender and International Relations, Chapter 1: 7-24
- Jill Steans, “Feminist International Relations” in Gender and International Relations, Chapter 2: 25-46
Foundational Texts: Tickner and Security
February 6th, (M)

• J. Ann Tickner, “Engendered Insecurities” and “Man, The State and War: Gendered Perspectives on National Security” in Gender in International Relations (New York: Columbia, 1992)

Feminist Philosophy and Security—Normative Questions
February 8th (W)

• Judith Butler, Frames of War (New York: Verso, 2009) selections*

Critical Theory, Feminism, and IR
February 13th (M)


II. Nations, Nationalism, States, and Citizenship

The “Nation” in “National Security”
February 15th (W)

• Jill Steans, “States, Nations, Citizenship” in Gender and International Relations Chapter 3: 47-69

States and Sovereignty
February 20th (M)

• Laura Sjoberg, “Gender, States, and War(s)” in Gendering Global Conflict (New York: Columbia, 2013) Chapter 5: 133-156

*No class*
Wednesday, February 22nd

Women and Nationalism: Empirical and Critical Approaches
February 27th (M)

• Nira Yuval-Davis, “Theorizing Gender and Nation”, in *Gendering the Nation* (London: Sage, 1997) Chapter 1

III. Gender, War, and Armed Conflict

**Militarism**
*March 1st (W)*

• Nicole Detraz *International Security and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), Chapter 2 “Gendered Militarization and Militarism” 24-63

**Conceptualizing War in IR**
*March 6th (M)*

• Laura Sjoberg *Gendering Global Conflict* (New York: Columbia, 2013) “The (Genderless) Study of War in International Relations” Chapter 1: 13-43

**Masculinity, War, and Violence**
*March 8th (W)*


**Sexual Violence in War I**
*March 13th (M)*


*No Class*: *Work on Your Papers!*
*March 15th (W)*

**Midterm Paper Due at 5:00, March 17th (F) to Albee 215**

*No Class*: *Spring Break*
*March 20th (M), March 22nd (W)*

**Sexual Violence in War II**
*March 27th (M)*

• Stacy Banwell, "Rape and Sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo: a Case Study of Gender-Based Violence." *Journal of Gender Studies* 2014 23(1): 45-58
Civilian Targeting
March 29th (W)


Nuclear Weapons
April 3rd (M)


IV. Contemporary Concerns: The War on Terrorism

Terrorism as Concept
April 5th (W)


W is for Women: The US Response
April 10th (M)


Drones, Surveillance and Protection
April 12th (W)


V. Conceptualizing Peace: Gender, Human Security, and Post-Conflict

Human Security
April 17th (M)


UN Peacekeeping and Gender Mainstreaming
April 19th (W)


VI. Different Feminisms, Feminist Differences: Postcolonial, Transnational, Queer, Trans-

Global Feminism and Difference
April 24th (M)

- Jill Steans, “Transnational Feminist Politics” in *Gender and International Relations* Chapter 10: 209-229

Colonialism and Imperialism
April 26th (W)

- Dean Spade and Craig Willse, "Sex, Gender, and War in an Age of Multicultural Imperialism." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 2014 1(1): 5-29

*No Class* - Advising Day
May 1st, 2016 (M)
Queer and Trans-IR I
May 3rd (W)


Queer and Trans-IR II/Wrap-up
May 8th (M)

- Laura Sjoberg, "Toward Trans-gendering International Relations?" *International Political Sociology* 2014 6(4): 337-354

*No Class*- Social Studies Board Week
May 10th (W), May 15th (M)

***Final Paper Due at 5:00, May 19th (F) to Albee 215***