Course Description

This course will 1) explore what it means to theorize and how power operates in knowledge production processes; 2) survey contemporary theories of International Relations and how they shape practices of world politics; 3) examine how theories of IR matter for understanding and responding to structural inequalities of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, class and nationality; and 4) familiarize students with feminist perspectives on, and feminist contributions to, theories of International Relations (IR) and Global Political Economy (GPE). Gender is understood here not as a synonym for ‘woman’ but as a hierarchical coding of masculinity and femininity that pervades social relations and institutional practices, with systemic (though not deterministic) effects on inequalities. Gender meanings and practices permeate our lives, and a closer look at these processes is more illuminating than many anticipate, with relevance and implications for who we are, how we think, and how we act – as individuals, groups, communities and nation-states.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to familiarize students with the politics (power relations) of theorizing; how we ‘do’ theory and with what effects; how gender and International Relations are historically constructed and currently shape our lives; and how feminist perspectives challenge and advance theories of International Relations (IR). Readings and discussion will pay particular attention to Global Political Economy (GPE) [also called International Political Economy (IPE)] as a key feature of world politics today.
Course expectations and evaluation

Somehow (bureaucratic enigma), the prerequisites for this course are confusingly represented in various sources, so they have been waived for this semester. Bottom line is that an advanced undergrad course in ‘feminist and IR theories’ presupposes and requires some background in gender studies and IR. In addition, familiarity with ‘theory’ is a definite advantage. If you have no understanding of or background in gender/feminist/women’s studies and/or IR theory you should think about what this means for your learning process and classroom experience. I intend to teach the course as it is described, with relevant expectations. Please contact me sooner rather than later if you need to discuss your participation and/or suggestions for background reading (some of which are already available on our D2L site).

I note here that this is an upper-division 400-level course. I therefore expect students not only to be well prepared (as in lower level courses) but also to show initiative in class participation and in taking up the challenge of critical, intellectual inquiry (as is appropriate for advanced students). I will conduct the course more as a seminar than a lecture, and will expect all students to participate - this is also part of your course grade! Lecture material will 1) focus on background and context, providing a framework for understanding and locating the particular readings, and 2) will emphasize the development of ideas and debates, suggesting where/how the readings are located in regard to theoretical developments and their implications. Because these materials are quite challenging, attendance and participation is imperative to avoid ‘getting lost’ or confused and to enable a collective learning process.

This course is a joint responsibility. I have taken a great deal of time with selecting materials and preparing notes, and I look forward to working with you throughout the semester. I am committed to making this a thought-provoking, stimulating and enjoyable course. But the success of the course depends on you students, and especially, your willingness to engage the materials and ask hard questions about the world(s) we live in. I will expect you to have done the readings before class; to bring questions you have to class; and to be prepared to discuss the readings from the perspectives of analytically engaged, informed students. I encourage you to take the course seriously and learn about some of the most current issues in theories/theorizing, and the power relations of knowledge, gender, and international politics.

Grade components: Your course grade will be a combination of: 1) Essays: three written essay exams or take-home papers (including the final) [60%]. 2) ‘Response pieces’ [RPs]: short essays on the reading(s) assigned for each class session (one response for each and every assigned reading, other than ‘background notes’). RPs must conform to instructions posted on D2L and be submitted to D2L dropbox prior to our class meeting. They provide study notes for exams/papers and will inform our class discussions; for the latter you should also think about how or what you view differently as a consequence of reading the assignment and how the assignment relates to course objectives and topics [30%]. 3) Attendance, preparation, participation — ‘learning is not a spectator sport’ — and presentations/group projects (depending on class size and composition, students may be assigned to lead discussion of reading materials, and/or engage in group projects) [10%]. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored. Excused absences (illness with a doctor’s note, documented family emergency, religious observance, Dean’s approval) will not be counted against you and opportunities for making-up missed assignments will be available. Unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your course grade. See D2L site for comprehensive grading scheme and calculations.
Honors Credit. Course grade for Honors students will reflect my higher expectations of their work on the RPs [30%] and additional questions/expectations to be included when completing the three essay exams/papers [60%].

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice. If you are not in class, for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed, including any new assignments. Any new or revised information will be posted on our D2L webpage, so make sure that you are able to access this site and do so frequently. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding the course, please share them with me sooner rather than later!

NOTE: Laptops, iPads/Pods, cell phones, and other electronic devices may NOT be used in the classroom. All electronic devices must be switched off for the duration of class (not just silenced). They are distracting to others and they disrupt the free interchange of ideas and class discussion. Moreover, the latest research shows that laptop note taking can be "detrimental to learning" (See Mueller and Oppenheimer, 'The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking,' Psychological Science 25 (6), June 2014:1159-1168 ). If you have medical reasons for bringing a laptop into class, please discuss with me to make arrangements [adapted from Professor Roxanne Euben's online syllabus 2015].

Once you have chosen to remain enrolled in this class, I will assume that you are aware of and have accepted these 'ground rules' for the course.

University of Arizona policies

U of Arizona rules regarding the syllabus require that I include the following:


Plagiarism: all work submitted must be the student's own. The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at: http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity.

Threatening behavior by students is not permitted at any time; you are responsible for being familiar with the University’s policies in this regard: http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml

Students with special needs who are registered with the S.A.L.T. Center (http://www.salt.arizona.edu/) or the Disability Resource Center (http://drc.arizona.edu/) must submit appropriate documentation to the instructor if they are requesting special accommodations. Please let me know how I can be helpful.

UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy: http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at: http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/aaindex.html

Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance
Confidentiality of Student Records: http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm

Required texts and reading assignments
Peterson, V. Spike and Anne Sisson Runyan. 2010. Global Gender Issues. 3rd Ed. Westview Press. This is the only required text and we will read almost all of it. It is available in the UA Bookstore and as a used book online. Just make sure you secure the correct (3rd) edition: publication date 2010 (which is NOT the most recent edition).

All additional reading assignments are posted on D2L as pdf files or websites. I have marked with ** those readings of particular importance and indicated why.

Course Outline and Schedule of Topics/Assignments
You are expected to have read the assignments prior to, and be ready to discuss them, on the dates as they appear below. Best read in the order indicated.

I. Theorizing, old and new

Aug 21: Introductions and getting started. No reading assignment, but we will begin discussion on key topics.

Aug 23: Who and what are taken seriously?

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Thick description. In The Interpretation of Cultures. Pp. 3-16 only. This famous social anthropologist urges us to think thickly; do read closely!

Aug 28: Introduction to ‘Gender and International Relations’ (IR)
Steans, Jill. 2013. Chaps 1 and 2 in her Gender & International Relations, 3rd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 7-45 and notes. **This is an especially clear and a useful reading for those less familiar with course topics. Make sure you understand it and it will serve you well throughout the course.

Aug 30: Rethinking thinking/theorizing/assumptions

Sep 4: No Class. Labor Day Holiday.

Sep 6: Rethinking, new thinking, making sense

Sep 11: Gendering Global Politics  
GGI, Chap 1, pp. 1-36.

Sep 13: Contextualizing course topics  

Sep 18: IR theorizing  
**The next six readings on ‘theorizing’ are important course ‘fundamentals’ because they survey key theoretical perspectives we will assume in the remainder of the course.**


Sep 20: IR theorizing  

Sep 25: IR theorizing  

Sep 27: Feminist theorizing  
GGI, Chap 2, pp. 37-59.

Oct 2: Feminist theorizing  
GGI, Chap 2, pp. 59-85.

Oct 4: Feminist theorizing  
GGI, Chap 2, pp. 86-102.

Oct 9: EXAM/PAPER

II. Gender and feminist IR

Oct 11: Gendering Global Politics  
GGI Chap 3, pp. 103-124.

Oct 16: Gendering Global Politics  
GGI Chap 3, pp. 124-143.

Oct 18: Gendering Global Politics  
GGI Chap 4, pp. 143-162.
Oct 23: Gendering Global Politics
GGI Chap 4, pp. 162-182.

Oct 25: Militarism through an intersectional lens
Peterson, V. Spike. 2007. Thinking Through Intersectionality and War. Special Issue on ‘Race, Gender, Class, Sexuality and War.’ Race, Gender & Class 14, 3-4: 10-27.

Oct 30: Gendering Global Politics
GGI Chap 5, pp. 183-217.

Nov 1: Gendering Global Politics

Nov 6: EXAM/PAPER

III. Global inequalities, what, how and why

Nov 8: Imperial practices, enduring effects

Nov 13: Global inequalities and multiplying effects

Nov 20: Queering boundaries and IR

Nov 22: ‘Erased histories,’ enduring effects
Nov 27: Cisprivilege and trans- insecurities

Nov 29: Citizenship as if we knew...

IV: Reviewing and reflecting...

Dec 4: What is to be done?

Dec 6: Concluding?

Dec 13: FINAL PAPER/EXAM  3:30-5:30