

Spring 2011 University of Massachusetts Boston

WOST 110 Women in Global Perspective

Location: Wheatley W02-0198

Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30AM - 10:45AM

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Course Description

In this course, we will undertake critical study of *gender inequality* issues as they exist broadly and specifically in varied parts of the world, and the factors that have created or perpetuate those inequalities. We will investigate the impacts and costs of such inequalities on human personal and social health, development, and stability. We will conclude the course with examination of rights, responsibilities, and possibilities in response to the impacts of inequality, and the processes through which people effectively challenge gender inequalities in diverse societies.

In specific, we will study the construction and reproduction of gender inequalities around the globe, as well as the ways women resist these processes in diverse societies. We will examine how social, economic, and political changes affect women's and men's lives, and their relations, family structures, cultural conceptions. We will explore efforts for gender equality and justice all over the world. We will look at the diversity of experiences across class, racial-ethnic groups, sexualities, cultures, and regions. We will examine the role of international organizations, local and regional unions, civil society, and people to reduce gender inequality. Also, we take a look at effects of globalization in this regard. We will highlight the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 and the UN's role in addressing gender issues. In addition to basic concepts, we will review women's rights and gender inequality from the perspectives of feminist theories. We will cover issues of education; the relationship of gender, development and globalization; migration; sex trafficking; violation and militarism; reproduction, health and HIV/Aids; poverty, and religions.

We will consider sharing power and empowering women through the lens of current women's movements and feminism in varied places. I will share my personal experience as a Muslim woman and former Member of the Iranian Parliament, a human rights advocate, and a current member of the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders.

In order to build their understandings *in practice* of the concepts covered in the course, students will work with a current issue regarding gender inequality to develop strategies for effective political, social, or professional actions.

Goals

- Learning about inequalities that exist in different part of the world
- Understanding cultural, socio- economical, political, religious factors that create these inequalities or those perpetuate them.
- Exploring processes, structures, institutions, and strategies to effectively challenge and change those inequalities.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Illustrate gender issues globally
2. Analyze cultural, economical, and socio-political sources of gender inequalities and solutions for reducing gender inequalities
3. Examine the role of international organizations like the UN or the World Bank in reducing inequality and empowering women
4. Discuss feminist theories and a diversity of approaches that feminist activists use when working for social justice and peace
5. Distinguish and challenge gender as a social construct shaped by key social institutions like government, media, religion, economic systems, and culture
6. Evaluate how gender intersects with factors such as ethnicity, race, class, age sexuality, and religion to shape the lives of women and men in various societies
7. recognize patterns of gender inequality worldwide as well as specific differences between various societies
8. Examine the impacts of gender inequalities on women's health, with particular emphasis on women's increasing vulnerability to acquiring HIV/AIDS
9. Evaluate how feminists have prompted international human rights organizations and institutions to more fully address women's rights issues
10. Use the internet to find a number of key non-governmental and governmental organizations working toward achieving gender justice globally and post to Blackboard Vista.
11. Examine the impacts of amendment of laws, international treaties to improve women's circumstances and to empower women politically, economically, socially.

Books & Readings

1. *The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*; (2008); Joni Seager, published by The Penguin group.
2. *Women across Cultures*; (2010); Shawn Meghan Burn; published by McGraw-Hill
3. *The rest of resources will be posted to the backboard Vista*

Assessment Guidelines

The requirements for this course include class attendance and participation, assigned reading, quizzes, teamwork projects and exams.

Participation (20%)

Participation is essential to an effective learning experience. It is a graded element of this course. Participation includes contributing your thoughts and ideas in class discussion, raising relevant questions, doing the readings assigned for the week before the class discussion, actively listening to lectures and watching films, and responses to questions raised in class or the course Wikispace, posting group discussion summary and assignment notes to the Wikispace.

Most sessions, we are going to have a group discussion on the topic of the week. You need to read a paper based on the questions I am going to assign for each group. You will participate on discussion based on your critical readings, thoughts and experience. A group member will present summary of the discussion to the class as well as posting it to the website. Participation at Wikispace is mandatory. I will send invitation to be members of the course WikiSpace. The WikiSpace's URL is

<http://haghighatjoo.wikispaces.umb.edu/>

More than 2 unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your grade (Each absence will reduce your grade by 1 Point.).

Quizzes (20%)

There are total of 4 biweekly quizzes which will be posted to Blackboard Vista. You can take quizzes starting during Friday noon to Sunday mid-night. There is no make-up for online quizzes; so please mark your calendar in advance. Each quiz has 10 multiple questions and each question has 1 point.

The formula for the quizzes score: $4 \text{ quiz} * 10 = 40/2 = 20$ point out of 100 total of your course grade.

Quizzes	date	Topic
Quiz 1	2/25-2/27	gender & sexuality Feminist theories MDG
Quiz 2	3/11- 3/13	Education & Religion
Quiz 3	4/15- 4/17	Militarism & Work
Quiz 4	4/29- 5/1	Women in Politics United Nations' role

Teamwork projects (20%)

You are expected to do team work/individual projects.

First, writing a paper on a women's issue. You need to come up with a question/s which is important to your team re women's issues in a region your group choose to work on. Then investigate the following questions and develop a response in your essay, concluding your discussion of the issue with recommendations for effective action:

1- To what extent is this an issue in the entire country and how serious a concern is this in comparison to regional or international levels?

2- How do the government, media and various stakeholders treat this issue?

The issue you choose can be one of the topics we will discuss in class. However, you have to narrow down the question/issue you are interested in.

Or choose a local NGO, or international organization; then assess its action & plans for empowering women.

Please email your essay to me, upload it at the Wikispace and provide hard copies. Each group's member at least must use three scholarly references.

Second, watching a movie or a documentary film about women and analyzing it from a feminist perspective. Write a summary of your analysis, citing sources.

I strongly recommend choosing a same issue for movie and essay projects.

Projects should be presented to class with in advance schedules for 25 Min.

Your discussions/presentations will be a part of lectures on a particular issue – with different groups forming and signing up to contribute your research to the preparation for particular week. The group(s) for each week should meet with me in advance. I will provide a rubric for your team projects. Team projects would evaluate by me and whole class according the rubric. **The deadline for all papers is on 4/1/2011**

Note:

Posting any material to the WikiSpace on time is very important otherwise you will lose the grade of that part.

Also, please read carefully *Plagiarism and Policies Regarding Plagiarism at UMass/Boston* to avoid any academic problem. The university takes Plagiarism very seriously.

<http://www.umb.edu/academics/undergraduate/office/wpr/links.html>

Exams (40%)

A mid-term and final exam will be given. Through the exams, we will seek to know how students will carry their understanding from the course outside of the classroom.

NO makeup exams will be given but for exceptional circumstances that can be documented to me in writing. If you miss an exam, let me know by email as soon as possible.

A note on structure and course requirements

Elements of the course outline may be changed during the semester. Any changes will be announced.

BLACKBOARD VISTA

Blackboard Vista will be an important tool for the class. My assistant and I will regularly post handouts, links, and when appropriate, outlines for class lectures and/or discussion questions. A number of our required readings will be posted on the site in a folder under CLASS MATERIALS. You will be responsible for doing these readings, so be sure you can access them in advance of the date by which they should be read.

Course Outline

Introduction to the course

Discussion of terms

1. Women's studies, women's movements and feminism
2. Sex, gender and sexuality
3. Gender inequality
4. Gender Stereotypes

The Millennium Development Goals

Feminist theories and their contributions to gender equality

Areas of concern for women's well-being and empowerment

1. Poverty
2. Education and literacy
3. Reproduction, marriage, sexuality, and health
4. Religion, social change and the state in the globalization Era
5. Violence against women in global perspective
6. War, Militarism and peace-making
7. Work and gender

Building effective action

1. Women in Politics
2. United Nations' role and treaties regarding women inequality
3. Gender Equality Movements

Letter grade:

A	100 - 93
A-	92 - 90
B+	89 - 87
B	86 - 83
B-	80 - 82
C+	79 - 77
C	76 - 73
C-	72 - 70
D+	69 - 67
D	66 - 63
D-	62 - 60
F	59 - 0

Please use a **name badge** throughout the semester in order to know each other.

Weekly Topics and Readings

1/25

Introduction to the course

Getting to know each other

Reviewing the syllabus and expectations

The projects discussion

Policies Regarding Plagiarism

<http://www.umb.edu/academics/undergraduate/office/wpr/links.html>

Blackboard Vista

1/27

Research topic discussion

How to work with REF-WORK as a research tool

Location: the CLI (HealeyLibrary, 4th floor)

2/1

discussion on research topic

2/3

Gender and Sexuality

Group Discussion on terms: Sex, Gender, Sexuality, and Gender stereotype

Reading

1. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 16-19

2. *Sex, gender & sexuality* - Handout

2/8 & 10

The variety of feminisms and their contributions to gender equality

Reading

1. Lorber. *Gender inequality*. PP. 1-18

2. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 2-8

Assignment:

Watch IRON JAWED ANGELS documentary movie on your own (Individual task) and post your evaluation to the class' WikiSpace.

2/15 & 17

Millennium Development Goals

Reading

1. <http://www.mdgender.net/>

2. Official list of MDG indicators after the 2007 revision

3. Chant. Re-thinking the ‘Feminization of Poverty’ in Relation to Aggregate Gender Indices. *Journal of Human Development*. Vol. 7, No. 2, July 2006

4. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 88-89

Group Discussion on Poverty

2/22 & 24

Education and literacy

Reading

1. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 78-85

2. The next generation of literacy statistics. UNESCO

Group Discussion on Education

3/1&3 *Religion, social change and the state in the globalization Era*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 190- 220
2. Haghijatjoo- *Challenges of implementing women's rights in Iran*

Group Discussion

3/8& 10 *Reproduction, marriage, sexuality, and health*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 46-68
2. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 22- 27 & 34-55

Group Discussion on

3/15&17 Spring Vacation

3/22 & 24 *Violence against women in global perspective*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 16-36
2. <http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1772e.htm>
3. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 28- 31 & 56-59
Judge Sydney Hanlon

Group Discussion

Mid-term exam

3/29& 31 *War, Militarism and peace-making*

Reading

1. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 100-103
2. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 & 1820 on women, peace and security
3. Exploring variety of Website on the topic (your preference and report to the class)

Group Discussion

4/5& 7 *Work and gender*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 97-130
2. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 61-71
3. World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report (2010)
4. The Corporation Gender Gap Report by World Economic Forum 2010

4/12 & 14 *Women in Politics*

Reading

1. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 93-99
2. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 225-257
3. Mir-Hosseini. *Fatemeh Haqiqatjoo and the Sixth Majles: A woman in her own right*.

<http://www.merip.org/mer/mer233/mir-hosseini.html>

4. <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>

Film:

Searching for Truth, a documentary film from Iran's parliament

Women World Leaders by Laura Liswood

Group Discussion

4/19 & 21 *United Nations' role and treaties regarding women inequality*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 297-316

Group Discussion

4/26 & 28 *United Nations' role and treaties regarding women inequality*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP. 297-316
2. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 14-15
3. The convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW):

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/3095b06140b17f6dc1257313003b4193/\\$FILE/N9368675.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/3095b06140b17f6dc1257313003b4193/$FILE/N9368675.pdf)

www.ohchr.org

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/daw/index.html>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/index.html>

<http://www.unifem.org/>

Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women:

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/financing_gender_equality/egm_financing_gender_equality.htm

<http://esaconf.un.org/wb/?boardid=financingforgenderequality>

Group Discussion

5/3 & 5 *Gender equality movement*

Reading

1. Burn. *Women across cultures*. PP.262-290
2. Seager. *The Penguin atlas of women in the world*. PP. 104-105
3. Iranian women's movement: Campaign of one million signatures

5/10 *Evaluations, course wrap-up, & review questions*

Final exam will be announced