Anthropology of Gender 070:511 (Spring 2008)

Instructor:  Professor Dorothy Hodgson
Office:  314 Ruth Adams, Douglass Campus
Tel:  732-932-0633
Email: dhodgson@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours:  Tuesdays, 10am-noon
Class Time:  Tuesdays, 12:35-3:35
Location:  Ruth Adams 305, Douglass Campus

This course will explore the central historical and contemporary debates in the anthropology of gender, including the search for universal principles underlying male dominance (such as nature/culture; domestic/public); relationships among gender, sex, and sexuality; how gender articulates with other forms of difference such as race, class and nation; gendered perspectives on power; the interaction of agency and structure in the production of femininities and masculinities; issues of cultural representation and expression; gender and body politics; feminist positionalities, methods & ethics; feminist transnational activism; and transgender theory and activism. A key concern of the course will be to understand, discuss and debate how the primarily qualitative methods of ethnographic research can inform and further these debates.

We will first review the historiography of theoretical developments in the anthropology of gender and feminist anthropology, then read a mix of classic and contemporary ethnographies to explore how they contribute to our ability to analyze and understand gender.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: This seminar is designed to have the character of an intensive reading group. Principal emphasis will be given to detailed discussion of the texts and you should therefore come to class having read the materials and prepared to share your insights, questions, and concerns.

1) Weekly commentaries: All seminar participants are required to submit a commentary of 1-2 pages on the week’s readings by the Monday afternoon (3:30 pm at the latest) before the Tuesday seminar meeting. This format will allow me to direct the discussion around issues you raise and to identify common issues of confusion or concern. These commentaries will not be graded individually but will be considered in arriving at your cumulative grade at the end of the semester.

2) Facilitators: For the bulk of the course, one seminar participant will assist me in facilitating discussion of each text. You should therefore be prepared to serve at least once during the semester as a facilitator, both introducing and summarizing discussion of the required text.

3) Critical Essay: All seminar participants must write a critical essay of NO MORE THAN 25 double-spaced pages of text (not including endnotes and bibliography). The essay should develop themes related to seminar readings and discussion through critical reviews and/or comparisons of materials read for class, using additional materials where desired. Seminar participants will make short oral presentations based on work in progress, which means that completed research papers are not necessary to make a presentation. In the past, students have found these presentations very useful in helping them formulate and focus their papers and projects. The first draft of the essay is due in class on Tuesday, March 25th, 2008, the final draft is due by 10am in my office on Wednesday, May 7th 2008. No late papers will be accepted, except under the most extenuating circumstances.

Grades will be based on preparation for, and participation in, the seminar as well as timely completion of written course requirements. The essay will count for approximately 60% of your grade, with the remaining 40% determined by regular submission of your critical reviews, and your contribution to seminar discussion, both as a facilitator and a regular participant.

REQUIRED TEXTS (Available from Douglass Student Co-op, on reserve in Douglass Library):


**Recommended Texts:**


**ARTICLES:** Available on course Sakai website (sakai.rutgers.edu)

---

**COURSE OUTLINE**

*RB = Required Book*

*SA = Sakai Article*

Tu, 1/22: Introduction, Overview

Tu, 1/29: Historiographies of Women, Gender and Feminism


Tu, 2/5: Probing the Universal Male Dominance Debate

A. Nature-Culture:

Sherry Ortner. 1974. “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” In *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*, pp. 72-86. (RB)


B. Domestic-Public:


C. The Ambiguities of “Status”: Questions of Power, Dominance and Prestige


Tu, 2/12: Economic Perspectives: Production, Reproduction and the Household


Carla Freeman. 2006. “Femininity and Flexible Labor: Fashioning Class through Gender on the Global Assembly Line.” In Feminist Anthropology: A Reader, pps. 397-410. (RB)

Tu, 2/19: Intersections: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, Class & Nation


Tu, 2/26: Gender, Sex & Sexuality


Tu, 3/4: Bodies


Tu, 3/11: Masculinities

** Spring Break ~ No class Tuesday, March 18th ***

Tu, 3/25: Gender & Globalization
* * NOTE: 1st draft of critical essay due in class **

Tu, 4/1: Rethinking Power

**Mo 4/7: Talk by Micaela diLeonardo, 4:30pm, place TBA**

Tu, 4/8: Feminist Anthropology at Home: Discussion with Professor Micaela di Leonardo

Tu, 4/15: Gendered Agency

Tu, 4/22: Transgender Theory and Activism

Tu, 4/29: Dilemmas of Transnational Activism