Fall 2011 Sawyer Seminar:  
GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEW POLITICS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

About the Sawyer Seminar:
This seminar, which is open to graduate students and faculty in the humanities and social sciences, is funded by the Andrew W. Mellon foundation’s John E. Sawyer Seminars program (established in 1994), which provides support for comparative research on the historical and cultural sources of contemporary developments. This particular seminar brings leading international scholars of gender, feminism and social change into an interdisciplinary dialogue about the directions in which women’s rights politics are developing. Women’s rights globally have come into public awareness in recent years in ways we have not seen before, with both interesting and troubling consequences.

Today women’s rights are being variously depicted as critical to addressing problems of third world poverty; women’s education is being described as an essential component in the fight against global terrorism; women politicians are seen by some as a key defense in the fight against government corruption; and gender equality, some argue, serves as the crucible in the clash of civilizations and fight against extremism and Islamic fundamentalism. While these are not new ideas, they have increasingly captured the popular imagination, influencing policymakers, foundations and even military strategists. This seminar explores these changing understandings and it critically examines the impact and implications of these new discourses surrounding women’s rights.

About the organizers and instructors:
The seminar is administered by UW’s Center for Research on Gender and Women, which is directed by Aili Tripp. The three primary faculty sponsors of this program are: Professor Myra Marx Ferree (Martindale-Bascom Professor of Sociology), Aili Tripp (Professor of Political Science and Gender & Women’s Studies) and Christina Ewig (Associate Professor of Gender & Women’s Studies and Political Science). In the Fall of 2011 the seminar will be led by Aili Tripp and in the spring of 2012 by Myra Marx Ferree.

Registering:
The seminar is open to graduate students in the social sciences and humanities. Graduate students may enroll in the course for 3 credits as part of the Gender and Women’s Studies GEN&WS 950 Seminar: Topics in Gender and Women's Studies. Participants taking the course for 3 credits will be required to attend all sessions and write a paper. Alternately, students may enroll in the course for 1-2 credits through Sociology SOC 984: Research: Sociology of Gender Trainees or GWS720: Special Topics in Gender and Women's Studies with modified course requirements. Faculty should write to atripp@wisc.edu to register as a participant, either for a particular session or for all sessions.

Specifics on seminar structure:
Each month during the 2011-2012 academic year, we will have one symposium (approximately 9:00 to 3:00 pm) with four guest speakers and two discussants (including one UW faculty
We will provide lunch during the seminar. We will have one additional 1½ hour session per month to discuss readings. Faculty members and graduate students from across the humanities and social sciences are welcome to participate in these seminar meetings at several different levels of engagement.

Outline of topics for 2011-2012 seminar:

THEME 1 (Fall 2011): Framing Women’s Rights: Globalization and Political Discourse
   A. September 2011: Global and Local Discourses on Women and Islam
   B. October 2011: Framing Women in Foreign and Multilateral Assistance
   C. November 2011: Global Gender Politics: How Local and Global Discourse Influence One Another
   D. December 2011: Discourses on Women and Political Representation

Confirmed speakers include:

Lila Abu-Lughod (Anthropology, Columbia University)
Andrea Cornwall (Development/Anthropology, Institute of Development Studies, UK)
Kate Bedford (Kent Law School)
Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg (Political Science, University of San Francisco)
Sylvia Tamale (Law Faculty, Makerere University, Uganda)
Sally Merry (Anthropology, New York University)
Doris Buss (Law Department, Carleton University, Canada)
Millie Thayer (Sociology, University of Massachusetts)
Mala Htun (Political Science, New York University)
Laurel Weldon (Political Science, Purdue University)
Mona Krook (Political Science, Washington University in St. Louis)
Pamela Paxton (Sociology, University of Texas)

THEME 2 (Spring 2012): Framing Globalization and Citizenship: Perspectives on Gender and Change
   A. January 2012: What’s New about Globalization? Putting Gender Politics in Historical Context
   B. February 2012: From Women's Suffrage to Women's Self-determination? Social Movements and the World Polity
   C. March 2012: Gender Relations and the End of the Cold War: Feminism and Socialism after the End of History
   D. April 2012: Reframing Gender Politics Internationally: Where do we go from here?

Inquiries:
Project director: Celeste Benson (cbenson@ssc.wisc.edu)
Director, Center for Research on Gender and Women: Aili Tripp (atripp@wisc.edu)