Women in Cross-Societal Perspective  
Gender and Women’s Studies 420

Tuesday and Thursday 1:00-2:15  
3331 Sterling Hall  
Office Hours: Monday 8:00-10:00am 3314 Sterling Hall  
Email: aalonso@wisc.edu

Course Description: This course uses the cross-cultural perspective of anthropology to examine gender relations and ideologies. Drawing on ethnographic texts and films we will study the interrelated economic, social, political and religious forces that shape women’s lives and reflect upon both the commonalities and differences in the experiences of women from vastly different backgrounds. We will engage key issues and contemporary theoretical debates concerning women and gender, including: • Received notions of what is “natural” to female gender; • How institutionalized notions of sex and gender have influenced theories about human evolution and prehistory; • The consequences of being born female in different cultures; • How gender shapes the way we think about the world; and • The question of universal patterns of gender relations. The aim of this course is to expand and challenge our understandings of what it means to be “a woman in different cultural settings.”

Required texts  

All texts are paperback. They are available at A Room of One's Own Bookstore, 317 West Johnson, just west of State Street.  
Copies of the required texts will be on reserve at the Social Science Reference Library, 8432 Social Science Building.  

There will be no course reader. Instead, assigned articles and chapters of books will be placed on electronic reserve for this course. You will be able to access and print out this material online via MyUW and your GWS 420 link to library reserves. You will also be expected to read and discuss current news articles and other online material on women and gender in cross-cultural perspective that will be distributed electronically during the semester through Learn@UW.

Student Responsibilities and important dates:  
There will be an in-class midterm on Tuesday, November 1st.  
There will also be a take-home essay final. The final exam is due in my office, 3314 Sterling Hall, during our class’s assigned examination period, Tuesday, December 20, from 12:25-2:25.

Each student will write three book reviews, about 3 pages in length, that critically analyze each of the required books (book review guidelines will be posted on Learn@UW):  
Schedule for book reviews:  
October 20th Shostak Book Review  
November 10th Lepowsky Book Review  
December 8th Ehrenreich and Hochschild Book Review
Graduate students, and undergraduate students taking the class for honors credit, will also write a term paper, approximately 10-12 pages in length excluding bibliography, on a topic related to the study of women or gender in cultural or cross-cultural perspective. The topic must be approved in advance by the instructor after you have submitted a one-page outline or summary plus working bibliography, due Thursday, October 6. The term paper is due Tuesday, December 6. Students who write papers are expected to present during one part of the last two week of the semester. No late papers will be accepted.

Beginning Thursday, September 15, each student will act as a team discussion leader during one class meeting. Students will form teams of 3-4, then take responsibility for stimulating and leading discussions of readings assigned for their chosen week(s). A successful discussion would engage students to discuss the reading for about 30-45m. Team members will carefully read the material ahead of time, discuss it before class with one another, contextualize the material with other class readings, lectures and films, and jointly draw up a list of questions or points for discussion. The team will email the list of suggested discussion points or questions to the instructor, as well as to the class email list, by 5 p.m. the day before discussion has been scheduled.

Each student in the class is responsible for looking over the discussion points before coming to class. In class, team members will offer brief, informal remarks and then open the floor to class discussions, which they (backed up by the instructor) will facilitate. Team presentations are intended to promote more in-depth critical reading, peer learning, discussion participation, and dialogue. Performance of team discussion leaders will be graded on a satisfactory or unsatisfactory basis. After the class discussion, each team member will write a 2-3 double-space page individual essay reflecting on the team’s analyses of the readings and suggested discussion points and on the in-class discussion. The report will be due in class one week later.

Each student will also be graded on her or his class participation over the course of the semester. An attendance sheet will be circulated during each class. Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions plus as part of your discussion team, are required. You are expected to keep up with required readings. Read the assignments for each week before class so that you may participate meaningfully in class discussions and better understand lectures.

Academic standards and grading policy:

Letter grades will based on the following scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>AB</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>BC</td>
<td>78-82</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Grades will be based on the following:

- In-class essay midterm 20%
- Book reviews 10% (three book reviews 30%)
- Individual essay on team’s analysis of readings and class discussion 10%
- Take-home essay final exam 20%
- Overall class participation, including regular attendance, participation in class discussions, and participation in team research and discussion 20%

In the case of borderline grades, your improvement over the course of the semester will count in your favor. If you have questions about a grade, please discuss it with the instructor first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Department of Gender and Women's Studies Chair or Associate Chair. One of them will attempt to resolve the issue informally, and will inform you of the Appeals Procedure if no resolution can be reached informally.

This class will adhere strictly to prevailing academic standards, UW regulations, and civil law regarding plagiarism, fair use of other people’s intellectual property, and cheating on class assignments. Please ask if you have any questions about what constitutes fair use or proper behavior. The basic rules are to do your own work, respect the work of others -
whether that of a classmate or a published author - and do not attempt take unfair advantage of your classmates as you complete the assignments for this class. Any suspected violations of academic standards will be promptly investigated. Confirmed offenses will result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

**Plagiarism** means presenting the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. It is your responsibility to learn what constitutes plagiarism and the correct rules for citing sources. In general, if your paper implies that you are the author, the ideas and words must be your own. If you use someone else’s exact words, they should be enclosed in quotation marks with the exact source listed. Please, refer to the Dean of Students’ web page for further information:  
www.wisc.edu/students/amsu.htm

Examples of **Academic Misconduct** include but are not limited to: cutting and pasting portions of a text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source; using another person’s ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one’s own by not properly crediting the originator; signing another person’s name to an attendance sheet. For more details refer again to the Dean of Students’ web page:  
www.wisc.edu/students/amsu.htm

**Classroom etiquette:** So that you will not be a distraction to your classmates or to your instructor, and so that you are able to focus on class while in class, **no non-class-related use of the Internet, or of any communication device, is allowed.** This means no texting, Twittering, or checking email, Facebook, YouTube, or any social network websites. No Googling or online searches for non-class purposes. Remember to turn all your phone/electronic device ringers off before class. Also, **no reading of newspapers or other non-GWS 420 material is permitted** once class has begun. **Violation of these rules will be counted against your class participation grade.** Please respect your classmates and your instructor and avoid embarrassment by adhering to these standards of classroom etiquette without having to be reminded in class.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**WEEK ONE**  
September 6, 8: **Studying women’s lives and gender issues in cultural and cross-cultural perspectives.** Feminist anthropology. Field research and cross-cultural understanding. Ways of documenting women, men, and gender relations: ethnographies, life histories, and ethnographic films. Women - and ideas about women - in early anthropology.  
**Readings:**  
- Shostak 41-92  

**WEEK TWO**  
September 13, 15: **Westernizing our understanding of Gender in Prehistory. Archaeology and Gender. Gender in egalitarian societies (intro.).**  
**Readings:**  
- Shostak 1-39, 309-332  
- September 15 Discussion of readings from weeks ONE and TWO

**WEEK THREE**  
September 20, 22: **Gender in egalitarian societies (cont.) Theories.** Definitions and cross-cultural variations. Foragers and horticulturalists in small-scale societies. Matrilineality: kinship systems that center on women.  
**Readings:**  
- Lepowsky vii-xviii, 1-80  
WEEK FOUR
September 27, 29: Growing up female in cross-cultural perspective. Gender and the life course. Culture, personal autonomy, and social transformations.
Readings:
• Shostak 95-157
• Lepowsky 81-124

September 27 Discussion of readings from weeks THREE and FOUR

WEEK FIVE
October 4, 6: Cross-Cultural Variation in Gender Status. Gendered societies.
Outline/abstract of term paper due (honors and graduate students only).
Readings
• Ehrenreich and Hochschild 1-54, 85-103

October 6 Discussion of readings from week FIVE

WEEK SIX
Readings:
• Shostak 159-270
• Lepowsky 125-166

October 13 Discussion of readings from week SIX

WEEK SEVEN
October 18, 20: Sexual meaning (cont.) Gender and religion (intro.)
October 20: Shostak Book review due - all students.
Readings:
• Lepowsky 167-205
• Shostak 270-306

WEEK EIGHT
Readings:
• Lepowsky 206-306

October 27 Discussion of readings from weeks SEVEN and EIGHT

WEEK NINE
November 1, 3: Historical perspectives on gender and sexuality. Transformations over time in the intersections of race, sex, class, and ethnicity.
November 1st: In-class midterm
Readings:

November 3 Discussion of readings from week NINE

WEEK TEN
November 10th Lepowsky Book Review due
Readings:

November 10 Discussion of readings from week TEN

WEEK ELEVEN
November 15, 17: Feminist perspectives on gender (cont.)
Readings:

WEEK TWELVE
Readings:
• Ehrenreich and Hochschild 55-69, 115-141, 154-168, 207-229

November 22 Discussion of readings from weeks ELEVEN and TWELVE

WEEK THIRTEEN
November 29, December 1: Global economies, global cultures (cont.).
Readings:

December 1 Discussion of readings from week THIRTEEN

WEEK FOURTEEN
December 8th Ehrenreich and Hochschild Book Review due
Readings:
• Ehrenreich and Hochschild 254-274


Plus current news stories and posts on MeXicana feminist activism and on Ciudad Juarez.

December 8 Discussion of readings from week FOURTEEN

WEEK FIFTEEN Gender and cultural transformations (cont.)

December 13, 15

Term paper due on Tuesday, December 6 (honors and graduate students only)

Take-home final exam questions posted on Learn@UW Tuesday, December 13.

Readings:


Plus current news stories and posts on women’s social activism in the Middle East and elsewhere.

December 15 Discussion of readings from week FIFTEEN

The final take-home exam is due in my office, 5454 Social Science, during the class’s assigned examination period, Tuesday, December 20, from 12:25-2:25. Take-home finals may also be turned in early in my mailbox, 3321 Sterling Hall. Make a copy of your exam for your own safekeeping.