

Women & Men: Anthropological Perspectives

ANT/WMST 206W & ANT450

Instructor: Risa Cromer

Spring 2010

Class Hours: Thurs 6:00-8:40pm
Class Location: Department of Anthropology, Davis Hall 219
Office Hours: Davis 418, Thurs 4:45-6:00pm, or by appt.
Contact Info: rcromer@gc.cuny.edu or risa.cromer@lehman.cuny.edu
Blackboard Login Page: www.cuny.edu



"As far as I'm concerned, being any gender is a drag." Patti Smith

"One is not born a wo/man, one becomes one." Simone de Beauvoir



"You're born naked, and the rest is drag." Ru Paul

"We must be the change we wish to see in the world." Audre Lorde



A. Course Description

Welcome! This course seeks to provide students with grounding in one of the most significant topics within the field of cultural anthropology: *gender*. As a group, we will endeavor to expand our personal and academic understanding of the role of gender, sex and sexuality in people's lives both in the United States and throughout the world. We will aim to meet the following objectives

1. To understand, use, and relate key concepts and theoretical vocabulary relating to the study of gender.
2. To interrogate universalisms and myths of "nature" related to bodies, parenting, marriage, gender norms, sexuality, and work through critical, cross-cultural examples.
3. To demonstrate in written, oral, group and individual work an understanding of the diverse structures and power relations in which people's lives are embedded.
4. To practice critical thinking skills.

To do so, we will address these questions: Why does gender matter? How does our gender intersect with other axes of difference such as race, class, sexuality, citizenship, etc? What does gender have to do with power? We will approach these questions through theories of gender, in-class activities, films, and lectures. Careful reading, clear writing, and thoughtful, respectful speaking are the most important skills that we will develop as we investigate issues throughout this course.

****If you have a disability for which I can make an accommodation, please come speak with me****

NOTE: All students are encouraged to contact me if some personal problem is affecting your performance in class.

B. Required Readings

Articles: Readings are listed in the Course Schedule below on the day they are *due*. You will access the required articles by downloading and printing from the Blackboard course website in the "Course Documents" tab; they are organized by week. It is expected that you print each reading and bring it to class with you with reading notes and questions prepared. I encourage you to create a binder to house all the readings for the term that you bring to class. **Note:** all readings on Blackboard are in .pdf format. Visit www.adobe.com to download the free software for opening .pdf files in you do not have this software already.

C. Course Expectations

Attendance and Lateness

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. If a student has a valid reason to be absent, email me before missing class, otherwise the absence is not excused. Valid reasons for absence include: documented illness, medical or other emergency, death in the family, religious obligation, or non-reschedule-able appointment with the government. If a student is more than ten (10) minutes late to a class, this will be considered an absence.

Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by failing grades, suspension, or expulsion. Academic Dishonesty includes cheating on exams or quizzes, as well as plagiarism. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and "cutting & pasting" from various sources without proper attribution. *Student's caught plagiarizing will receive a failing grade.* Visit these websites to familiarize yourself with plagiarism so you can avoid doing it unwittingly:

<http://www11.georgetown.edu/programs/gervase/hc/plagiarism.html> or <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html> .

Blackboard

You are responsible for activating your Lehman email account and checking it regularly. To access Blackboard to receive course announcements and download readings, you need to activate your CUNY Portal account. Any technical assistance you may need with Blackboard can be found at the IT Center in Carman Hall (718-960-8421 or itr@lehman.cuny.edu). How do I get to our class Blackboard page? Go to the Lehman home page (<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/lehman/>). Click on Library. Click on Blackboard. Sign-in to the CUNY portal (in order to do this, you need to have an active Lehman email account and a CUNY Portal Account. If you need help with this, go to the IT help Desk in Carman Hall a.s.a.p.). This will take you to the courses in which you are enrolled this semester. Click on our ANTH 341 class.

Standard Paper Format

All writing assignments (except for those completed in class) should be typed using standard format: 1x1.25 in margins, 12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and edited for grammar and spelling mistakes. All writing assignments are due in hand at the beginning of class – late or emailed papers will not be accepted.

Personal Electronics

Please put away any electronics (e.g. cell phones, PDAs, mp3 players, headsets) that you have upon entering class and silencing your phones.

D. Course Requirements

Collegiality – 20%

Each of you is an important part of this class. We all bring with us into the classroom our own experiences and can learn a great deal from each other as we explore the course materials.

- Collegiality is demonstrated through your preparation for class, active participation, satisfactory completion of in-class activities, and contributions to a healthy classroom environment. This includes attending all class and arriving on time.
- Active Participation means asking relevant questions about the course materials, sharing your ideas in class, and listening respectfully to your classmates.
- Comprising half of this grade is discussion leadership, which students will do 1-2 times during the semester. A discussion sign-up sheet will be circulated for students to select topics of their choice. You will be assessed based on completing the preparation guide (download from Course Information) and leading the discussion.

Reading Responses – 20%

A central part of this course will be participation on the Discussion Board. These weekly discussions are designed to help you synthesize the reading material, to foster critical thinking, and to learn from your peers' insights. Students are encouraged to use these postings as testing grounds for position paper topics. Over the course of the semester, each student is responsible for the following:

- 5 Posts (15pts): Everyone will respond to five readings. These postings must relate primarily to the reading material and consist of about three paragraphs (500-700 words). They should *not summarize the reading*, but

informally react to themes, issues, and arguments presented as well as draw connections between the readings. You will be assigned certain “reading response” weeks at the beginning of the class, which will be spread evenly across the term.

- 5 Comments (5pts): Everyone will comment on five different posts made by your classmates. It is up to you to choose the posts that you wish to comment on. Comments can be shorter than posts (200-300 words) and should respond thoughtfully to the points made in the original post.

Discussion Board postings will be integrated into classroom discussion, so be prepared to discuss your contributions in class. In order to receive credit for your posts and comments, **they must be posted by MIDNIGHT each Wednesday before the scheduled Thursday class**. Responses are graded pass/fail; late responses will not be accepted and inadequate responses will receive a zero.

Position Papers – 45% (15% each)

Of the four Units, students will select three (3) Units to write position papers about and turn them in according to the Course Schedule deadlines. These 4-5 page papers should develop an *interpretation of your own* based on themes and issues from the particular Unit. Like your reading responses, these are **not summaries** but *your own views, analyses, and arguments*. Students are encouraged to use the reading responses as space to develop ideas for paper topics. Each paper should follow essay format and contain: 1) an introduction with a clearly articulated thesis statement; 2) body paragraphs with topic sentences relating back to the thesis and using specific examples from the readings; and 3) a conclusion paragraph. Some Units will have question prompts, and others will be open ended.

Quizzes & Final – 15%

Quizzes are open-note, but not open-book, and are cumulative. Questions can include definitions, short answers and essays and will cover all readings, lectures, student presentations and films up to that point. The nature of the final assessment will be at the discretion of the instructor. Students will either complete an in-class comprehensive final on May 13th or the scheduled day of the final, or students will prepare select essays at home and submit them electronically. Details will be announced in April.

E. Grading Distribution

Thus, your final grade will be determined by the following:

| | |
|-------------------|------|
| Collegiality | 20% |
| Reading Responses | 20% |
| Position Papers | 45% |
| Quizzes & Final | 15% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

F. Reading Tips

Keep the following questions in mind as you read and take notes to help you formulate your thoughts for each reading:

- What is the main message or argument the author is trying to convey? Does her/his evidence support it?
- How do the texts relate to each other and to themes we’ve encountered in class?
- What concepts seem significant, and why?
- What questions are you left with after reading the piece?
- Were there parts of the reading that you found intriguing, troubling, insightful, or informative? Why?
- Do you disagree with any points the author made and why?
- Have you had similar experiences to those discussed in the text?

G. Course Schedule

Note: This is a tentative schedule. It is intended to provide the student with the specific topics covered. The instructor has the discretion to adjust this calendar to fit instructional needs and concerns. G# signifies blogging schedule.

| WEEK | DATE | TOPIC/ACTIVITY | Readings and Assignments DUE |
|---|--------|---|--|
| Unit I. Foundational Concepts & Histories | | | |
| 1 | Jan 28 | Course Overview | |
| 2 | Feb 4 | Introduction to Cultural Anthropology <i>Film: Killing Us Softly 3</i> | Kulick, <i>Travesti</i> , Introduction Alma Gottlieb, "Interpreting Gender and Sexuality" |
| 3 | Feb 11 | Premises of Gender | Maxine Baca Zinn, "Sex and Gender Through the Prism of Difference" Kulick, <i>Travesti</i> , Ch 5 |
| Unit II. (Un)Doing Sex, Gender & Sexuality | | | |
| -- | Feb 18 | <i>No Class – Monday sched</i> | |
| 4 | Feb 25 | The Role of Science in Producing Difference (G1) <i>Film: Is it a Boy or a Girl?</i> | Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm" Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and Inventions of the Homosexual Body" Fausto-Sterling, "Of Gender and Genitals: The Use and Abuse of the Modern Intersexual" |
| 5 | Mar 4 | Constructions of Femininity (G2) | Don Kulick, <i>Travesti</i> , Ch 1-2 |
| 6 | Mar 11 | Constructions of Masculinity (G1) <i>Film: Hip Hop: Beats & Rhymes</i> | Meika Loe, "Fixing Broken Masculinity" Yen Le Espiritu, "All Men Are <i>Not</i> Created Equal" Matt Gutmann, "Meanings of Macho" |
| Unit III. Relationships & Kinships | | | |
| 7 | Mar 18 | Families We Choose (G2) <i>Film: Southern Comfort</i> http://www.logotv.com/video/misc/127961/southern-comfort-part-1-of-10.jhtml?id=1600437 | UNIT 2 Paper DUE Don Kulick, <i>Travesti</i> , Chapter 3 Kath Weston, <i>Families We Choose</i> , excerpts <i>Recommended</i> : Chrys Ingraham, "Thinking Straight" |
| 8 | Mar 25 | Redefining Motherhood: Poverty, Science & the State (G1) | Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Lifeboat Ethics" Gail Kligman, "Political Demography in Ceausescu's Romania" <i>Recommended</i> : Rayna Rapp & Faye Ginsburg, "Fetal Reflections" |
| -- | Apr 1 | <i>SPRING BREAK</i> | |
| 9 | Apr 8 | Redefining Kinship: Reproductive Technologies (G2) | Helena Ragoné, "Chasing the Blood Tie" Elizabeth Roberts, "Extra Embryos" VISIT : Making Visible Embryos |
| Unit IV. Work & Labor | | | |
| 10 | Apr 15 | Divisions of Labor (G1) <i>Film: Travesti doc.</i> | UNIT 3 Paper DUE Don Kulick, <i>Travesti</i> , Ch 4 |
| 11 | Apr 22 | War (G2) <i>Film: Lioness</i> | Elizabeth Bumiller, "Letting Women Reach Women" Steven Lee Myers, "A Peril In War Zones" Lizette Alvarez, "Wartime Soldier, Conflicted Mom" |
| 12 | Apr 29 | Globalization (G1 & G2) <i>Film excerpt: Life & Debt</i> | Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich, "Women in the Global Factory" Denise Brennan, "Selling Sex for Visas" |

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|----|--------|-------------------------|---|
| 13 | May 6 | Gender-Bending Activity | |
| 14 | May 13 | Review and Wrap-up | UNIT 4 Paper Due Final Essay Due MAY 19th by midnight |

Bibliography of Assigned Readings

- Brennan, Denise
2003 Selling Sex for Visas. *In* Global woman : nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy. B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild, eds. Pp. 154-168. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Enloe, Cynthia H.
2000 Maneuvers : the international politics of militarizing women's lives. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Espiritu, Yen Le
2007 All Men are Not Created Equal. *In* Men's lives, 7/e. M.S. Kimmel and M.A. Messner, eds. Pp. 21-29. Boston, MA: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.
- Fuentes, Annette, and Barbara Ehrenreich
2003 Women in the Global Factory. *In* Conformity and conflict : readings in cultural anthropology. J.P. Spradley and D.W. McCurdy, eds. Pp. 164-171. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
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1997 Creating Citizens, Making Men: The Military and Masculinity in Bolivia. *Cultural Anthropology* 12(4):527-550.
- Ginsburg, Faye D., and Rayna Rapp
1999 Fetal Reflections. *In* Fetal subjects, feminist positions. L.M. Morgan and M.W. Michaels, eds. Pp. 279-295. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gottleib, Alma
2002 Interpreting Gender and Sexuality: Approaches from Cultural Anthropology. *In* Exotic no more : anthropology on the front lines. J. MacClancy, ed. Pp. 167-189. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gutmann, Matthew C.
1997 Meanings of Macho: Changing Mexican Male Identities. *In* Situated lives : gender and culture in everyday life. L. Lamphere, H. Ragoné, and P. Zavella, eds. Pp. 223-234. New York: Routledge.
- Ingraham, Chrys
2005 Introduction. *In* Thinking straight : the power, the promise, and the paradox of heterosexuality. Pg. 1-11. New York: Routledge.
- Kligman, Gail
1995 Political Demography in Ceausescu's Romania. *In* Conceiving the new world order : the global politics of reproduction. F.D. Ginsburg and R. Rapp, eds. Pp. 234-255. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kulick, Don
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- Martin, Emily
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2005 Lifeboat Ethics. *In* Gender in cross-cultural perspective. C. Brettell and C.F. Sargent, eds. Pp. 31-37. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
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- Weston, Kath
1991 Families we choose : lesbians, gays, kinship. New York: Columbia University Press.
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