

**ANTH 2501/ WSTU 2121
Spring 2014**

**The Anthropology of Gender: Cross-Cultural and
Transnational Perspectives**

Monday & Wednesday 9:35am-10:50am
Corcoran 106

Prof. Attiya Ahmad
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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the anthropology of gender, a realm of scholarly inquiry that is related but not reducible to women's studies, feminist studies and activism, ethnic studies, postcolonial studies, and recent work on globalization and transnationalism.

We begin by examining early anthropological works focusing on women and gender, and different conceptual approaches to this area of study. From here we move on to investigate questions of power, ideology, hegemony and agency more closely. We then turn our attention to questions of racism, colonialism and postcolonialism. We end by examining gender in our contemporary world, a context characterized by processes of globalization, transnationalism, the feminization of labour, and an increased focus on human rights and global social justice.

Learning Goals

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- Understand the social construction of sex and gender, and the historical and socio-cultural variability of gender systems
- Show how gender systems are related to culture, society, political economy, power, race, colonialism, transnationalism and globalization
- Use the category of gender and gendered analyses to critically interrogate socio-cultural processes and phenomena

Books Required:

- Margaret Mead. 2001 [1935]. *Sex & Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*
- Lila Abu-Lughod. 2001 [1986]. *Veiled Sentiments*.

Articles:

Available on class Blackboard page and marked with an asterix (*) in the class schedule below.

Grading:

Class Participation 10%
Short Paper 1 (15%)
Mid-Term Exam (25%)
Short Paper 2 (20%) &
Presentation (5%)
Final Exam (25%)

Due Date:

N/A
February 19
March 17
April 30
April 21, 23, or 28
TBD

Class Participation (10%): attending all lectures is a primary component leading to excellence in this course. Your participation grade will be assessed based on your presence in class and the quality of your participation during the class, including responding to questions posed by the instructor, by student presentations, and by participating in group-work activities. Your active participation is crucial not only to your own learning, but to those of your peers and to your instructor. Participation doesn't necessarily mean speaking a great deal in section. The ability to listen attentively, respond thoughtfully to others' comments and ask questions—including not being afraid to say 'I don't understand'—are productive to discussion and our collective learning. Attendance is therefore required and failure to show up to class without a valid excuse or proper documentation (e.g. physician's note) will adversely affect your final grade. If you miss more than two classes without proper documentation, I reserve the right to drop you from the class.

Short Paper 1 (15%): See Below

Short Paper 2 (20%) and Presentation (5%): Topics will be circulated after the mid-term. During the last two weeks of class (April 21, 23 and 28), you will also give a short 7-8 minute long **presentation** where you will discuss your topic and outline the major argument(s) and themes of your paper.

Assessment

General Basis of Assessment for Presentations:

1. Subject/**Content**: Were the issues raised informative and relevant? Did the presentation have a clear focus?

2. Organization/**Clarity**: Was the presentation easy to follow? Was there a clear introduction? Did it follow a systematic and coherently trajectory?
3. Sensitivity to the **Audience**: Was the presentation engaging? Did ze make effective use of pauses, gestures, change in pace and pitch? Did ze make use effectively of AV aids?

General Basis of Assessment for Papers:

- 1- Do you clearly state your **argument**? Think of your argument as the underlying problematic or question that your paper seeks to address, and that both shapes and provides momentum to your discussion. The strength of an argument relates to how well it enables you to assess and analyse your topic.
- 2- Do you provide **compelling** grounds to support your argument? How well do you draw upon, and make connections with your materials in supporting the point(s) you are making? Do you draw on specific passages or arguments? Are there materials you did not draw on that would have addressed the issue you are discussing more effectively?
- 3- Does your paper demonstrate your **comprehension** of the materials and issues at hand?
- 4- Are you able to **convey** your argument effectively? Here I am referring to the clarity of your writing style, including your spelling, grammar, diction, syntax, etc.

Class Policies

No extensions will be given for assignments or exams. If you are late with an assignment you will be penalized a part-grade for each day it is late (e.g. go from an A to A- or A- to B+). If you fail to attend a class exam you will be assigned a failing grade for the exam. The only valid excuse for missing an exam or being late on assignments (including the paper and in-class presentation) is a personal medical or family emergency. Students must contact me and present an excuse in writing from a professional in order to be allowed to make up work and avoid penalties. Computer failure, travel plans, and work are not acceptable excuses.

I reserve the right to not respond to email questions sent less than 36 hours before an assignment is due, or an exam is scheduled. Please send your questions ahead of time to ensure I have the time to respond to them appropriately.

Electronic media brought to class should only be used for curricular activities (e.g. taking notes) and not for extra-curricular activities (i.e. emailing, checking facebook, online purchases, browsing the internet). If I discover that you are using electronic media for extra-curricular activity you will automatically be penalized by two percent of your overall grade. Please ensure ringers are switched off and/or that your device does not make any sound.

No topics are off-limits during class discussion, however, please be respectful and judicious in your phrasing of comments and in your responses to your peers' comments.

Religious Holidays: please contact me two weeks in advance if you are going to miss class due to religious holidays not recognized by GWU's academic calendar.

Academic Integrity

All students must practice academic integrity. This means doing your own work, and when you use *the words and ideas of others in any written work, you must:* 1) identify direct quotations with quotation marks; and 2) indicate the source of ideas that are not your own by using social sciences notation form. If you have any questions at all about what this means, you should speak to your TAs or the instructor. Plagiarism, and all breaches of academic integrity (for example, the sale of lecture-notes from this class, or the use of content from the internet as though it was your own), will be severely dealt with in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. For more information on The George Washington University's policies on academic integrity, consult:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

Class Schedule and Readings:

Week 1- Introduction

January 13 Introduction: syllabus

January 15 In-class film: Observer Observed
Margaret Mead, Introduction

Week 2- Gender from a Cross-Cultural Perspective I

January 20 MLK Day, NO CLASS

January 22 Margaret Mead, quick-read part 1-3

Week 3- Gender from a Cross-Cultural Perspective II

January 27- Margaret Mead, Conclusion & part 4

January 29- *Michelle Rosaldo

Week 4- Women and Patriarchy: An Anthropological Examination

February 3- Lila Abu-Lughod, first third of the book

February 5- Lila Abu-Lughod, second third of the book

Week 5- Anthropology and Feminism: An Awkward Relationship I

February 10- Lila Abu-Lughod, final third of the book

February 12- * Marilyn Strathern

Week 6- Anthropology and Feminism: An Awkward Relationship II

February 17- President's Day, NO CLASS

February 19- * Saba Mahmood

Reminder: short paper due at the beginning of class

Week 7- Reassessing Gendered Difference: Race, Class and Sexuality

February 24- * bell hooks and *Audre Lorde

February 26- *selections from 'This Bridge Called My Back'

Week 8- Reassessing Gendered Difference: Colonialism and Processes of 'Othering'

March 3- * Chandra Mohanty

March 5- *Abu-Lughod, 'Do Muslim Women Need Saving' (article and books)

Week 9- SPRING BREAK

Week 10- MID-TERM EXAM

March 17- In-class exam

March 19- In-class film: The Global Assembly Line

Week 11- Gendering Globalization

March 24- *Maria Mies

March 26- * Carla Freeman

Week 12- Feminization of Transnational Labour Migration and Care Economies

March 31- * Nicole Constable and *Michelle Gamburd

April 2- * Neha Vora and *Attiya Ahmad

Week 13- Transnational Tourism and Consumerism

April 7- * Bianca Williams

April 9- * Inderpal Grewal, Ch. 2

Week 14- Transnational Feminisms and Rethinking the International Women's
Movement and Human Rights Discourse

April 14- * Pardis Mahdavi

April 16- * Inderpal Grewal, Ch. 3; Kamala Visweswaran ch. 7

Week 15- Class Presentations

April 21- Class Presentations

April 23- Class Presentations

Week 16- Class Presentations and Wrap-Up

April 28- Class Presentations

April 30- Review and wrap up