

**Gender and Geography
GEOG/WMNST 426Y
Fall 2010**

Location: 101 Leonhard Building

Time: T, TH 4:15-5:30

Instructor: Dr. Lorraine Dowler

Office: 324 Walker Building

Office Hours: Tues 10:30-12:30 or by appointment

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COURSE OVERVIEW:

Feminists have long been concerned with the spatial politics of cultural difference. As a point of entry to discussions of gender, place, and culture, this course will explore the diverse ways in which geographers have conceived of, analyzed, and redefined gender as a contested spatial practice. In particular, using contemporary geographic texts, we will explore the gendered dynamics of geographic research, natural resource management, embodiment and health, labor, nationalism, and globalization, among other topics. By way of a cultural exchange project, emphasis will be placed on recognizing and researching cultural differences between western and non-western students.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of this course is to examine how gender as a contested spatial practice is variously understood and utilized in the field of geography. This course aims to enhance students' knowledge of the relationship between gender and geography through contemporary texts that cover a variety of key topical areas within the discipline: nature/environment, methodology, post-colonialism, labor and work, nationalism, and globalization. This course also aims to enhance students' ability to engage in first-hand critical research, as well as collaborative learning, through a reflexive and on-going process of research and writing over the course of the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to:

- Deploy contemporary debates around gender theory, gendered spatial practices, and cultural difference.
- Critique the cultural and social construction of femininity and masculinity across time and cultures.
- Analyze representations of gender and subjectivity in social institutions and the media.
- Apply theories of gender and cultural difference in the context of conducting reflexive qualitative research.

REQUIRED TEXTS: All Texts are Available through E-Reserve or Angel

REQUIREMENTS:

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| <i>Talking Points</i> | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Discussion Facilitation</i> | <i>10</i> |
| | |
| <i>Cultural Exchange Reflections (5)</i> | <i>(5 X 4pts) 20</i> |
| <i>Cultural Exchange Final Analysis</i> | <i>30</i> |
| | |
| <i>Final Research Paper</i> | <i>30</i> |
| <i>TOTAL</i> | <i>100</i> |

Analysis and Discussion of Readings:

This course will be run as a seminar. Because the readings and discussions are the very basis of this class, attendance is mandatory. To ensure that the classes are successful and interesting, participants should have completed the readings before each class. Endeavor to read critically, seeking not only to understand the content but also to evaluate the significance and validity of an author's argument and evidence. Every student is required to contribute daily (at each class) to the critical discussion of the readings with thoughtful analysis and prepared questions.

Talking Points

In order to facilitate productive discussions at each class meeting, students are required to prepare a short paragraph or list of 'talking points,' to be handed in at each class meeting. These are informal notes and questions (approximately ½ page, typed) that arise during close readings of the assigned texts. They can be as broad or as specific as desired, and can relate to other readings or current events as well.

Talking Points will be graded on relevance to class themes, overall coherence, and demonstration of students' grasp of the reading material. They will help me to both encourage and assess class participation. The examples offered below will give you some idea of how to tackle this:

A Talking Point may be:

- An idea that struck you as particularly important. Why do you think that we should focus on this idea? What does it help us to do, solve, or understand?
- A statement that might be contradictory, controversial, or complimentary to our other readings, or to your own knowledge and experience. Why do you agree or disagree with this particular statement? What other viewpoints exist?
- A phrase or point that needs further clarification – a complicated argument that you need help unpacking.

Discussion Facilitation

In addition to daily talking points, everyone in class will have a turn to act as a discussion leader. During the first week of the semester, each student will sign up for leading specific class days. This facilitation must include offering a brief summary and analysis

of the day's text, coordinating discussion and sharing of talking points, and encouraging participation among all classmates. Leaders are also strongly encouraged to bring in outside material (music, newspaper articles, clips from previous videos), or to develop a short activity or hand out in order to encourage discussion and interaction. Be creative!

Attendance and Lateness

Attendance is mandatory. (*Students cannot make up talking points or class facilitation unless it is cleared ahead of time, or in case of illness or emergency*). More than three absences can result in a 5% reduction (or more) in your final (cumulative) grade. Late papers or any missed deadlines will negatively impact your grade as well; each day late results in a 10% reduction in your grade for that assignment.

Cultural Exchange Assignment:

Each year, Penn State hosts many international students as visiting scholars, graduates, or undergraduate students like yourselves. Many of these students have cultural experiences and insights from which we can learn about other people and places, as well as about ourselves and our own locations. These international students would also like to learn more about American cultures and traditions, as well as to have a chance to practice the English language. In light of this mutual opportunity, a large part of the assignments for this class will involve a series of informal meetings / semi-formal interviews between our class and selected cultural exchange partners.

Meetings and Discussions with Cultural Exchange Partner

Each student is expected to meet with his / her cultural exchange partner *at least* 6 times over the course of the semester (depending on the length of the meetings, the needs and schedules of both parties, and the relevance of the meetings to the students' final projects). Some of these meetings can be group-based (max. four students), and at least some should be primarily social in nature (with no specific agenda). After rapport is built between students, the cultural exchange meetings can and should become more focused in an attempt to explore various cultural differences regarding gender roles and expectations. Themes for discussion can emerge from our course and/or each student's interests. Many different themes may be appropriate: for example, food, work, child care, family and marriage, nature, aging, sports, etc. Your cultural exchange partners will also have intellectual interests, purposes, and needs, so be sure to be conscious and helpful of those as well (education is a two way street).

Journaling – Field Notes and Memoing (Analysis) of Experience

Students should keep journals of their cultural exchange experiences, beginning with initial reactions about this project (fear, excitement), as well as an analysis of the cultural sensitivity training. These journals should encompass two parts of the research process: field notations and memoing. The former refers to what happened, a descriptive account of the event. The latter refers to analysis, connecting the occurrences to readings, intellectual ideas, things you want to investigate more. Figure out some way of distinguishing between these two parts of the journal, perhaps using [brackets] or *italics*. These should be typed. The journals will be handed in at the end of the semester, along with a final analysis (see below).

Cultural Exchange Reflections – Shared Excerpts from Notes and Memoing

During the course of the cultural exchange, it will be important to share thoughts, ideas, and experiences with your peers. Using ANGEL, students will be required to share *not their entire journal but* excerpts that are suitable for public discussion (with class members only). This is intended to be a forum in which to converse constructively about any issues, ideas, or problems that might arise over the cultural exchange process. There are 5 cultural exchange reflections due in total.

Final Analysis of Cultural Exchange – Completed Journal and Afterward

At the end of the semester, the cultural exchange journal will be handed in, along with a final analysis (an introduction and / or afterward to the journal, approximately 2 pages). The analysis should summarize key points or themes that emerged during the exchange, as well as discuss how these points or themes relate to our class readings and theories.

Final Research Paper:

Theoretical and/or empirical argument

In lieu of a final exam, this class will end with student presentations of a paper (approximately 10-15 pages) on any topic relating to gender and geography. These papers can be theoretical in argumentation, drawing heavily on academic texts from class and beyond, or they can be empirically based, drawing from a theme that emerged from the cultural exchange meetings and extending this theme with external research. In other words, this final paper can relate to your cultural exchange experience, but does not have to. If you write about what interests you most, you'll write a better paper.

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and are due in class on the last class day of the semester. Presentations will take place the last week of classes, and should be planned, but short (no more than 5 minutes each) in order to leave room for group discussion. Abstracts of your final papers should be circulated via ANGEL before the last week of classes.

Graduate Students who are enrolled in this course will be held to the same requirements with one exceptions, instead of a cultural exchange with students you have the opportunity, if you wish, to lead an international women's book groups, with international residents.

POLICIES

YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OFFICE HOURS.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in this course will result in academic sanctions at the discretion of the instructor, up to and including a failing grade for the course, as well as possible disciplinary action by the university. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism

(submitting someone else's work as your own), cheating, and fabrication of information or citations. If you have any questions or uncertainty regarding this policy, and particularly regarding the use and citation of sources, you should discuss them with the instructor. For further discussion and links relevant to this policy, please refer to the website: <http://www.ems.psu.edu/students/integrity/index.html>.

Assistance and Special Accommodation

Any student with a learning disability should inform me within the first week of classes. Documentation of the special need will be required. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively; to protect your legal rights you need to act before any course requirements are due.

Course Changes

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule below during the course of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

FOCUS QUESTION 1 – Why study gender and geography?

August 24 – Introductions & Overview of Course

August 26 – Gender and Space

- G Pratt 2005 “Spatializing the Subject of Feminism” in *Working Feminism*

August 31 – Progress in Gender and Geography

- M Domosh 1997 “The Personal and the Political” in *Progress in Human Geography*
- R Longhurst 2000 “Masculinities, Male Identity, and Men” in *Progress in Human Geography*
- J Sharp 2008 “What Belongs to Feminist Geography? Emotion, Power, and Change” in *Progress in Human Geography*

September 2 – What is Power?

- Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. 1993. “Opening” in *The Realm of the Diamond Queen*. Princeton: Princeton Univ Press
- **Cultural Exchange Preparations (TBA)**

FOCUS QUESTION 2 – Who is the Subject of Feminist Research?

September 7 – Postcolonialism and Otherness

- L Johnston 2000 “Postcolonial Feminist Geographies” in *Placebound: Australian Feminist Geographies*
- H Trask 1996 “Feminism and Hawaiian Nationalism” in *Signs*

September 9 – Nonwestern Knowledge

- U Narayan “The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*
- L Tuhuwai Smith “Research through Imperial Eyes” in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*

September 14 – Landscapes of Otherness

- P Hopkins “Young Muslim Men’s experiences of Local Landscapes after 11 September 2001” in *Geographies of Muslim Identities*”
- F Twine 1997 “Brown Skinned White Girls” in *Displacing Whiteness*
- ✓ First Cultural Exchange Reflection Due

FOCUS QUESTION 3 – How do we *do* gender and geography?

September 16– The Politics of Fieldwork

- A Kobayashi 1994 “Coloring the Field” in *The Professional Geographer*
- J Sundberg 2003 “Masculinist Epistemologies and the Politics of Fieldwork in Latin Americanist Geographies” in *The Professional Geographer*

September 21– Mixing Methods

- Kwan 2002 “Feminist Visualization” in *Annals of the AAG*
- Nightingale 2003 “A Feminist in the Forest” in *ACME*

September 23 – NO CLASS: PLAN A CULTURAL EXCHANGE MEETING!

September 28 – Counting

- J Cameron & J.K. Gibson-Graham 2003 “Feminizing the Economy” in *Gender, Place, and Culture*
- Dianne Rocheleau. 1995. Maps, numbers, text, and context: Mixing methods in feminist political ecology. *Professional Geographer*
- ✓ Second Cultural Exchange Reflection Due

FOCUS QUESTION 4 – Whose Nature is it?

September 30 --Gendering the Environment

- M Domosh & J Seager 2001 “The Environment” in *Putting Women in Place*
- TBA (on the social construction of nature)

October 5 – The Gender – Nature Nexus

- A Nightingale 2006 “The Nature of Gender” in *Environment and Planning D*
- *Sistah Vegan Podcasts* 2008 “Thinking About Tomatoes, Cruelty Free, and Veganism in North America” (listen online)

October 7– Gender and Natural Resources

- L Harris 2006 “Irrigation, Gender, and Social Geographies” in *Environment and Planning D*
- J Sundberg 2004 “Identities in the making: Conservation, gender and race in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala,” *Gender, Place, and Culture*

October 12 – The Animal Other

- J Emel 1995 “Are you Man Enough, Big Bad Enough?” in *Environment and Planning D*
- J Seager 2003 “Pepperoni or Broccoli?” in *Gender, Place and Culture*

FOCUS QUESTION 5 – How do we embody gender?

October 14– Able Bodies

- L Newbury 2003 “Will anybody Carry that Canoe” in *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*
- ✓ Third Cultural Exchange Reflection Due

October 21 – Transgressive Bodies

- L Johnston 1996 “Flexing Femininity” in *Gender, Place, and Culture*
- J Floyd 2004 “Coming out of the Kitchen” in *Cultural Geographies*

October 26 – Bodies and Fluidities

- R Longhurst “Pregnant Bodies in Public Spaces” OR “Men’s Bodies and Bathrooms” in *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*

October 28 – Eating Gender

- G Valentine 1999 “A Corporeal Geography of Consumption” in *Environment and Planning D*
- ✓ Forth Cultural Exchange Reflection Due

November 2nd

– Challenging the Masculine

- C Yarnal, L Dowler, and S Hutchinson 2004 “Don’t Let the Bastards See You Sweat” in *Environment and Planning A*

November 4 – Gendered Eating in the Workplace

- G Valentine 2002 “Incorporations” in *Body and Society*
- ✓ Outline of Final Paper Due

FOCUS QUESTION 7 - What is the relationship between gender and nation?

November 9 – National Identity and Difference

- S Radcliffe 1999 "Embodying National Identities" in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*
- R Oza 2001 "Showcasting India" in *Signs*

November 11 – Militarism and Gender

- L Dowler 1998 "And they think I am just a nice old lady" in *Gender, Place, and Culture*
- ✓ Fifth Cultural Exchange Reflection Due

FOCUS QUESTION 8 - How does globalization affect gender?

November 16– The Gendered Politics of Globalization

- R Nagar, V Lawson, L McDowell, and S Hanson 2002 "Locating globalization: Feminist (re)readings of the subjects and spaces of globalization," *Economic Geography*

November 18 – Valuing Women

- M Wright 2003 "From Protests to Politics" in the *Annals of the AAG*

November 23 and 25 Thanksgiving Break

November 30 Film Training Rules

December 2 Discussion Film Training Rule

REFLECTION ON CULTURAL EXCHANGE & RESEARCH

December 7

- ✓ Presentations and Discussion

December 9

- ✓ Presentations and Discussion
- ✓ Final Papers Due