



# Comparative Perspectives on Women

## Sociology 1333 (Class # 24535)

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**Fall 2012**

**Time/Place:** Tuesday & Thursday 11:00AM-12:15PM in 5201 Wesley W. Posvar Hall (WWPH)

**Instructor:** Melanie M. Hughes, PhD

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 12:30-1:30PM & Thursday 9:00-10:00AM & by appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides an overview of the diversity of women's lived experiences around the world. The course begins with the distinction between one's sex, which is biologically determined, and one's *gender*, which is learned, socially constructed, context specific, and malleable. Throughout the course, students will learn about subjects such as women's bodies and health, women's participation in social movements, and violence against women, each from a comparative perspective. A central focus of the course is the impact that various social institutions--education, religion, work, politics, and family--have on the lives of women. This course introduces gender as a system of stratification worldwide. Yet, the course will also be attentive to the ways in which gender intersects with other social identities, such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

One primary goal of sociology is to challenge "commonly held" or "taken-for-granted" assumptions that may interfere with a more informed understanding of society and the diversity of individual experience. Accordingly, central objectives of this course are:

- 1) to survey a wide range of topics and themes that are important to the understanding of women's status, roles, and experiences around the world;
- 2) to ensure the presentation of diverse and opposing viewpoints;
- 3) to encourage students to develop critical thinking regarding women's issues; and
- 4) to promote the application of these skills so that students may better understand the way that gender influences their own experience.

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

*Textbook:* Burn, Shawn Meghan. 2011. *Women Across Cultures: A Global Perspective, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. McGraw-Hill. (abbreviated as Burn in Course Outline)

*Other Reading:* All other reading will be made available on the CourseWeb system at <https://courseweb.pitt.edu>. (abbreviated as CW in Course Outline). See CourseWeb for a full bibliography of these readings.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

*Attendance:* Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes. Class time will consist of lectures, discussions, films, small group exercises, and exams. Students are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. As chronic absences are likely to negatively affect your grade, I will not penalize you additionally for absences. However, I do keep attendance records for my own reference.

*Reading:* Students will be tested on material covered in the readings, even if it is not discussed in class. Therefore, students are expected to bring any problems in understanding the reading to the attention of the instructor. To facilitate effective discussion, all of the assigned readings are to be completed prior to class on the day scheduled in the Course Outline.

*Participation:* Your active participation is important to the success of the course for both you and your classmates. You will sign up for 2 days over the semester that you will be “on point” to facilitate class discussion. For days on point, you are responsible for bringing an index card with 1-2 questions or discussion points related to the day’s reading. You will submit this card to the instructor, who may draw on your questions during discussion. On these days, you are also expected to answer questions and participate in discussion throughout the class period. When we watch films in class, you will be required to answer questions about what you see in written form. You are also expected to provide feedback to your peers in class as they work on their final projects over the semester. In sum, your participation grade is based on: 1) submitted index card questions and contributions to class discussion, 2) written feedback about in-class films, and 3) peer review of course projects.

*Midterm and Final Exams:* The course will include two exams: a midterm and a final. The midterm exam will be administered during the regular class period on **October 18, 2012**. The final is designed as a non-comprehensive exam but does draw on material from the first half of the course. The final exam will be administered in the regularly scheduled classroom (5201 WWPH) on **Friday, December 14, 4:00-5:50PM**. Both exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short essay questions. The exams will cover all course material, including lecture material, course readings, films, in-class discussions and exercises. **Please do not miss an exam.** I will give make-up exams only in the case of a death of a family member or a verifiable emergency situation. Arrangements must be made in advance with the instructor and documentation must be provided. In cases of emergency, students who do not contact me over e-mail within 24 hours of the exam will not be allowed to take a make-up and will receive a zero for that exam.

*Course Project:* You are expected to complete a course project, due **Thursday, December 6, 2012**. You will select one of two options for data/analysis and then write a 5-7 page paper about your research, drawing on themes from the course. The paper should be submitted in hard copy

form, typed and double-spaced. The descriptions of the two options below will be supplemented with specific guidelines for each type of project.

*Option #1 – Interview Analysis:* Conduct short interviews of at least two individuals who can provide key perspectives on issues related to the course and write about what you learned.

*Option #2 – Data Analysis:* Collect data/statistics that display sex differences and differences across women. Using these data, produce at least one graph or figure to summarize what the data show. Then, write a paper about what you found.

The final project will be graded on both content and form. Content refers to the degree to which you complete the requirements, the extent of mastery shown of course material, and the level of analysis applied. Form refers to the clarity of the work you present in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and writing style. Demonstrated effort will be rewarded, when possible.

You will need to turn in a one-page plan for your final project on **Tuesday, September 18, 2012**. The plan should describe your topic and which of the two options you have chosen.

**Late work will be penalized by a 10 percent grade reduction for the first day of lateness, beginning 10 minutes after class has begun on the due date, and then 10 percent for each additional day of lateness.** If something happens that is beyond your control (alien abduction, homework in dog's stomach), I must have verifiable proof (alien's and/or vet's note). Otherwise, you will be docked points for lateness.

### **COURSE GRADING:**

Your grade is calculated as a percentage of 400 possible earned points in the class.

Participation	40 pts (10%)
Course Project	120 pts (30%)
Midterm	120 pts (30%)
Final	120 pts (30%)

If you believe a grading error has occurred at any point during the class, please see me as soon as possible. I will retain all grading materials for two semesters following this one.

#### *Letter Grades and Percent Ranges:*

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-59
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

### **DISABILITIES:**

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and the [Disability Resources and Services](#) no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability

Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT:**

*Withdrawal:* The deadline for monitored withdrawal is **Friday, October 26, 2012.**

*Classroom Conduct:* This class may at times address sensitive and/or controversial issues. Students are expected to be respectful of diverse opinions and present themselves in such ways as to keep the classroom as safe, open environment for learning.

*Academic Integrity:* Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators. To help identify instances of academic misconduct, I may require you to submit course assignments to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com), an online plagiarism prevention website.

*Email Policy:* Each student is issued a University e-mail address ([username@pitt.edu](#)) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

*Tips for Success:* This course covers a lot of material and moves at a fast pace. I offer five pieces of advice regarding how to survive—and succeed in—Sociology 1333. These are:

1. Come to class regularly.
2. Take good notes.
3. Talk to me about questions or any confusion regarding the material or the assignments.
4. Start things ahead of time.
5. Keep up with the required reading.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

This is a tentative outline for covering particular topics and having readings finished. Students are responsible for adhering to this outline unless otherwise indicated in class.

## PART I: SEX AND GENDER

### **Week 1—Introduction to Course**

8/28: Introduction to the Course

*Reading:* Syllabus

8/30: Women Worldwide

*Reading:* (1) Eber, Christine and Brenda Rosenbaum. 2003. "That We May Serve Beneath your Hands and Feet." (CW); (2) Biswas, Soutik. 2007. "India's 'Pink' Vigilante Women." (CW); (3) Wax, Emily. 2005. "A Place Where Women Rule." (CW); (4) Muir, Jim. 2008. "Taxi Revolution on Tehran Streets." (CW).

*Film:* *Women United*; Selection from Journeyman Pictures

### **Week 2—Gender and Difference**

9/4: Foundational Concepts

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 1; (2) Lorber, Judith. 1994. "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender." (CW)

9/6: Gender as Performance and Performing Gender

*Reading:* (1) Excerpt from West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1(2):125-140. (CW); (2) Taylor, Verta and Leila J. Rupp. 2006. "Learning from Drag Queens." *Contexts* 5:12-17. (CW)

## PART II: WOMEN'S BODIES, HEALTH, AND SEXUALITY

### **Week 3—Beauty, Body, and Womanhood**

9/11: Beauty and Bodies

*Reading:* (1) Wolf, Naomi. 2008. "The Beauty Myth." (CW); (2) Banks, Ingrid. 2012 [2004]. "Hair Still Matters." (CW); (3) Andersen, Margaret. 2010. "Gender and the Body: Weight, Food, and Body Image." (CW)

9/13: Becoming a Woman

*Reading:* (1) Gruenbaum, Ellen. 2013. "Female Genital Cutting: Culture and Controversy." (CW)

### **Week 4—Selling Women's Bodies**

9/18: Business and Women's Bodies

**\*\*\*ONE-PAGE PLAN FOR COURSE PROJECT DUE\*\*\***

(1) Kirk, Gwyn and Margo Okazawa-Rey. 2004. Pp. 113-114 from "Women's Bodies" (CW-K&O I); (2) Johnston, Josee and Judith Taylor. 2012. [2008] "Feminist Consumerism and Fat

Activists: A Comparative Study of Grassroots Activism and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign.” (CW);

*Film: Killing Us Softly 4*

9/20: Sex Tourism and Trafficking

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 7, pp. 165-169; (2) Sullivan, Barbara. 2010. “Trafficking in Human Beings.” (CW); (3) Goodwin, Jan. 2009. “The Ultimate Growth Industry: Trafficking in Women and Girls.” (CW)

### **Week 5—Reproductive Health and Rights**

9/25: Reproductive Health and Rights

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 3

9/27: Maternal Health and Mortality in Africa

*Film: A Walk to Beautiful*

*Reading:* (1) Ismail, Edna Adan. 2008. “On Maternal Mortality: Why Africa Falls So Far Behind.” (2) Human Rights Watch. 2012. “South Africa: Chance to Cut Maternal Deaths.”

### **Week 6—Sex, Gender, and Sexuality I**

10/2: Young Women and Sex

*Reading:* (1) Armstrong, Elizabeth A., Laura Hamilton, and Paula England. “Is Hooking Up Bad for Young Women?” (CW); (2) W., D. 2010. “Eight is Great... But Nine’s Just ‘Slutty.’” (CW); (3) Ford, Allison. 2009. “Too Young to Marry.” Pp. 338-339 in *WW*;

10/4: LGB...

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 4; (2) Rupp, Leila J. and Verta Taylor. 2010. “Straight Girls Kissing.” (CW).

### **Week 7— Sex, Gender, and Sexuality II**

10/9: No Class (Monday classes meet on Tuesday)

10/11: ...TQ

*Reading:* (1) Ward, Martha and Monica Edelstein. 2006. “A Third Sex: Gender as Alternative or Continuum.” (CW); (2) Wright, Kai. “To Be Poor and Transgender.” (CW).

### **PART III: VIOLENCE, WAR, AND MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGE**

### **Week 8—Violence Against Women I / Midterm**

10/16: Intimate Partner Violence; Midterm Review

*Reading:* (1) Duncan, Patti. 2011. Part I of “Violence Against Women Worldwide.” Pp. 349-360 in *WW*. (2) Semple, Kirk. 2009. “Domestic Violence in Afghanistan.” Pp. 394-396 in *WW*.

10/18: Midterm Exam

*Reading:* None

### **Week 9—Violence Against Women II**

10/23: Violence by Communities and the State

*Reading:* (1) Duncan, Patti. 2011. Part II of “Violence Against Women Worldwide.” Pp. 360-374 in *WW*; (2) Amnesty International. 2005. “Killed in the Name of Honor.” Pp. 385-387 in *WW*.

10/25: War Rape

*Reading:* (1) Pankhurst, Donna. 2010. “Sexual Violence in War.” (CW); (2) CBS News and Peter Finn. 2008 and 1999. “War Against Women: Congo and Kosovo.” Pp. 389-394 in *WW*.

10/26: **Deadline for Monitored Withdrawal**

### PART IV: WOMEN AND INSTITUTIONS

### **Week 10—Marriage**

10/30: Partnering in a Global Context

*Reading:* (1) Ward, Martha and Monica Edelstein. 2006. “Patterns of Partnering from Romance to Resistance.”

11/1: Divorce and Widowhood

*Reading:* (1) Akkaya, Betül. 2008. “Widows, Divorced Women face Social Prejudice.” (CW); (2) Braine, Theresa. 2009. “U.N. Tackles Universal Problem for Women: Divorce.” (CW).

*Film:* *Beyond Belief*

### **Week 11— Religion**

11/6: Women in World Religions

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 8

11/8: Veiling Rights and Politics

*Reading:* (1) Ward, Martha and Monica Edelstein. 2006. “Islamic Middle East: Veiled Separations” (CW); (2) Henko, Heiko. 2009. “Are Muslim Women in Europe Threatening the Secular Public Sphere?”

### **Week 12—Work**

11/13: Women’s Work

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 5

11/15: Women, Globalization and Work

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 7, pp. 150-164; (2) Zia, Helen. 1996. “Made in the U.S.A.” (CW).

*Film: China Blue* (2005)

**Week 13—The Military**

11/20: Women in the Military

*Reading:* (1) Peach, Lucinda J. 2013. “Gender and War: Are Women Tough Enough for Military Combat?” (CW); (2) Kirk, Gwyn and Margo Okazawa-Rey. 2004. Excerpt from “Women and the Military, War, and Peace.” (CW).

11/22: Off—Thanksgiving Break

**Week 14—Politics**

11/27: Women and Political Systems

*Reading:* (1) Hughes, Melanie and Pamela Paxton. 2011. “Women and Political Systems Worldwide.” (CW)

11/29: Media Coverage of Political Women

*Reading:* (1) Miller, Melissa K., Jeffrey S. Peake, and Brittany Anne Boulton.” *Politics & Gender* 8(2):169-198. (CW)

**Week 15—Movements**

12/4: Transnational Women’s Movements and Networks

*Reading:* (1) Burn, Ch. 11

12/6: Final Exam Review

**\*\*\*FINAL PROJECTS DUE\*\*\***

**Week 16—Exam Week**

12/14: Final Exam (Friday, 4:00-5:50PM, in 5201 WWPH)