

Gender, Human Rights and Conflict

American University, Spring 2011

Tuesday, 11:20-2pm

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Course Summary:

This seminar examines the gender dimensions of conflict and political violence, with particular attention to the implications of a rights-based framework in conflict scenarios. It explores how each stage of conflict is gendered, including: (1) the origins of aggression and the preparations for war through the militarization of society and the engendering of human security; (2) the conduct of war, wartime atrocities, and the composition, training and performance of armed forces; and, (3) the aftermath of war and conflict prevention attempts through peace agreements, peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, and the structures and practices of transitional justice. Of central concern throughout the course is feminist activism and gendered forms of resistance to and cooperation with political violence. This class demands extensive student participation and it relies heavily on discussion of both recent books and films.

Goals:

- To explore the relevance of gender in the study of peace and conflict, and to consider how gender aids us in the understanding of root causes of conflict and the crafting of long-term solutions to conflict.
- To identify the various individual actors, institutions, and structures involved in the struggles for peace and to explore their normative expectations, interlinkages and mutually constitutive relationships. In particular, the course seeks to identify those actors, institutions and structures that are often left out of studies of peace and conflict.
- To survey recent scholarship on gender and conflict, with particular attention to book manuscripts.
- To apply theoretical perspectives on gender and conflict to concrete case studies.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. **“Weekly” Reaction Papers** – 50% grade (typed, double-spaced 2-4 pages): Students must hand in a reaction to the subject being discussed on the day it is discussed. Papers are graded “check” (adequate; A-/B); check plus (more than adequate, A) ; or check minus (not adequate, B-to C)
2. **The 200 and 1,200 word blog submission** – Students will write a 200 and 1,200 word blog on any advocacy issue related to gender and conflict. They will share their blogs in small (3-5 people) reading groups. These groups will work to make the best assignments possible. At two points in the semester, the groups will choose the best blogs to be presented to the class.

Policy on Participation: Participation may result in raising or lowering grade

Faithful attendance and active, informed participation is required. Please contact me before class if a serious health problem or other emergency will preclude you from attending class (work or internships are not considered an emergency). Three or more unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. On the other hand, superior attendance and participation will boost a borderline grade.

Quality of participation counts more than quantity. This class will work best if everyone engages with the material. Diversity of opinion is welcome and respect for each other’s views and experiences is required. All students will be given one free “pass” that permits them to not do the readings for one class.

Laptop policy

Laptops may ONLY be used in class for the purpose of note taking. Web surfing, games, instant messaging, email, and working on homework for other classes tends to be distracting to others and is prohibited during class time.

Required Books:

This is a “book class.” We will read many books in their entirety, just as the author intended. The good news is that all the books are available in paperback!

Anderlini, Sanam, *Women Building Peace*, Lynne Rienner (2007). SBN-13: 978-1588265128

Enloe, Cynthia, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link Militarization Women’s Lives* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (2007) ISBN-978-0742541122

Kaufman, Joyce and Kristen Williams, *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Crisis*, Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2010. ISBN 978156549309

Kristof, Nicholas and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turing Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, New York: Knopf (2009) ISBN978030267146

Lehring, Gary L, *Officially Gay: The Political Construction of Sexuality by the U.S Military* (Temple University Press, 2003) SBN: 978-1592130351

Sjoberg, Laura and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (Zed Books, 2008)./ ISBN: 978-1842778661

Zeigler and Gregory Gunderson, *Moving Beyond GI Jane*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America (2005) ISBN 0-7618-3093-6

Class Schedule

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class.

Jan. 11: GETTING STARTED

Jan. 18: GENDER AND AGGRESSION / VICTIMS OR VICTIMIZERS?

Sjoberg, Laura and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (Zed Books, 2008)./ ISBN: 978-18427

Film:

The Agressives

Jan 25: GENDER AND MILITARIZATION

Cynthia Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link Militarization*

Women's Lives Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (2007) ISBN-978-0742541122

Film:

Between Men: Masculinity and the U.S. Military

Feb. 1: GENDER AND THE ARMED FORCES

Sarah Zeigler and Gregory Gunderson, Moving Beyond GI Jane Lanham, MD:
University Press of America (2005) ISBN 0-7618-3093-6

Film:

Fly Girls

Feb. 8: GAY AND LESBIAN SOLDERS

Lehring, Gary L, Officially Gay: The Political Construction of Sexuality by the U.S
Military (Temple University Press, 2003) SBN: 978-1592130351

Film:

Coming Out Under Fire

Feb. 15: WAR'S OFFENSIVE ON WOMEN

**PRESENTATION OF "BEST BLOGS" (200 WORDS- Blogs due for everyone;
small group chooses who presents to entire class)**

Mertus, Julie, War's Offensive on Women

Film:

Calling the Ghosts

Mar. 1: WOMEN BUILDING PEACE

Anderlini, Sanam, *Women Building Peace*, Lynne Rienner (2007). SBN-13: 978-1588265128

Mar. 8: Spring Break

Week of March 15: Field Trip to Spy Museum.

Mar. 22: A FEMINIST LENS ON SECURITY POST 9/11

Kouvo, Sari and Zoe Pearson, *Between Resistance and Compliance? Feminist Perspectives on International Law in an Era of Anxiety and Terror* (draft manuscript on file with author/professor).

Mar. 29: WOMEN'S ACTIVISM AND PEACE PROCESSES

Kaufman, Joyce and Kristen Williams, *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Crisis*, Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2010. ISBN 9781565493094

Julie Mertus, "Shouting from the Bottom of the Well: The Politics of International Trials for Wartime Rape," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*.

Mar. Apr. 5: PRESENTATION OF "BEST BLOGS" (1,200 WORDS- Blogs due for everyone; small group chooses who presents to entire class)

Apr. 13: BEST LOG PART 2 / LOOSE ENDS