GENDER, MARGINALITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE
Course Code: SCIL10073

School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh
Honours Option 2014-15

Time and Venue: Tuesday 9.00-11.00
Seminar Room 5, Chrystal Macmillan Building

Course Convenor: Dr. Radhika Govinda
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** Please include ‘GMSC’ in the subject heading of all email correspondence**
Office Hours: Wednesday 9.00-11.00 in Room 6.21 Chrystal Macmillan Building

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** THIS HANDBOOK IS AVAILABLE IN LARGER PRINT IF REQUIRED **
Course Description & Aims
The focus of Gender, Marginality and Social Change is on examining, from a gender analytical lens, the intersections and interactions between people’s lived experiences, socially structured institutional arrangements and processes, and collective action. It aims at developing a better understanding of how these (re)create, challenge and transform marginality and marginalization. The course seeks to uncover different aspects of the gender politics of women’s and social movements, the state, civil society actors, including the role of development NGOs and donors, in attempts to bring about social change. The course draws on concepts and theories from gender studies, development studies, and critical and political sociology.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, students will have learnt about both the theoretical and practical applications of the web of concepts around gender, intersectionality, marginality, rights and social change. They will have developed an understanding of the value of comparative analysis, and obtained skills in examining and articulating about contemporary development processes, social and political movements, and everyday social change, employing a gendered lens.

Teaching Methods & Format
The course will be delivered in one two hour session per week, using a combination of readings and lectures and interactive pedagogies, including by engaging the students through experiential learning, critical thinking, micro-research and presentations. Students will be encouraged to critically engage with relevant scholarly texts, comparative case studies, speeches, manifestos and campaign documents, website information, films, and development reports.

Class Preparation, Readings and Resources
All students are expected to prepare in advance of each session by doing the relevant readings and jotting down 3-5 key points and/or questions per reading, and looking into the weekly resources folder. These readings and resources are likely to be drawn upon during the session, especially in the activities planned before or after the lecture. The lecture slides, readings and resources will be made available through Learn. Please ensure that you regularly check the course-related announcements and folders on Learn.

Discussion of Sensitive Topics
The discipline of Sociology in general and this course in particular address a number of topics that some students might find sensitive or, at times, distressing. Please read this handbook carefully, and if there are any topics by which you may feel distressed, please seek advice from the course convenor and/or your Personal Tutor. For more general issues, you may consider seeking the advice of the Student Counselling Service: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-counselling.

Students with Learning Difficulties
Advice, guidance and support materials are available to students with learning difficulties. Well in advance of coursework deadlines, you should contact the University Disability Office for further information. See the Disability Office website: http://www.disability-office.ed.ac.uk/

Assessment
Assessment for the course is based on a short essay worth 25% and a long essay worth 75%. A list of essay questions and details pertaining to essay writing and submission are provided at the end of this handbook and are also posted on Learn, together with a link to the School-wide marking descriptors.
**Electronic Submission of Essays**
Honours students will submit online using our submission system – ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy. Marked course work, grades and feedback will be returned online – you will not receive a paper copy of your marked course work or feedback. For information, help and advice on submitting coursework and accessing feedback, please see the ELMA wiki at https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA

**Late Submission of Essays**
The School of Social & Political Science does *not* operate a system of ‘extensions’. If you are submitting an essay late you should also complete a Late Penalty Waiver (LPW) form explaining any mitigating circumstances. In the absence of a LPW, or where a LPW is submitted without a genuine case for mitigation late penalties will be applied. Note that if you *do* have good reason for being late with an essay, and you provide adequate evidence explaining this, you will not be penalised! Please see the Sociology Honours Handbook for full details of our procedures.

**Plagiarism**
You must ensure that you understand what the University regards as plagiarism and why the University takes it seriously. All cases of suspected plagiarism, or other forms of academic misconduct, will be reported to the School Academic Misconduct Officer. You’ll find further information in the Sociology Honours Handbook, and at the following site: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/honours/what_is_plagiarism

**Feedback and Evaluation**
The course will be evaluated by questionnaires given to all students at the end of the semester. Comments made by staff, students and external examiners will be fed back into course revision.

**Course Schedule**

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WEEK-WISE SESSION OUTLINE

Week 1 Intersectionality and change
Intersectionality – useful for understanding the interaction between individuals’ lived experiences, socially structured institutional arrangements and processes, and collective mobilizations – has been heralded as the cutting edge of contemporary feminist theory. The first session will introduce the students to the concept of intersectionality, and how it can be, and shall be, employed as a lens to study various actors, issues and contexts pertaining to gender politics, marginality and social change. The session will also problematise ‘gender’, ‘inequality’ and ‘feminist politics’.

Key Readings

Additional Readings

Activities
In-class viewing of clip to problematise gender, identity and feminism (Learn)

In-class discussion based on hooks’ ‘Feminism: a movement to end sexist oppression’ (1984).

In-class review of clips from the film Paradise: Love using the concept of intersectionality (Learn)

Week 2 Class politics, gender and patriarchy

Drawing on historical explorations of industrialization, working class politics and labour movements, this session exposes students to the visible and invisible intersections of gender and class, patriarchy and capitalism. It tackles issues such as gender division of labour, marginal position of women and in the labour market, job segregation by sex, unequal wages, crisis of caregiving and impoverishment of women, which remain of relevance even today.

Key Readings

- Friedan, B. (1965) ‘The problem that has no name’ from The Feminine Mystique Harmondsworth : Penguin pp. 1-32 (Learn)

Additional Readings


Activities

- Viewing and discussion of PBS documentary People Like Us: Social Class in America (Learn)
- Viewing and discussion of video of Betty Friedan on International Women’s Day Strike (Learn)
- Viewing and discussion of A Class Divided
- Critical reflection on Friedan’s ‘The Problem That Has No Name’ (1963) and hooks’ ‘Feminism And Class Power’ (2000)

Week 3 Questions of privilege and ethnocentrism: race, caste, imperialism
The central focus of this session will be on issues of privilege and ethnocentrism in everyday life, feminist praxis and knowledge production. We will identify who are the imagined subjects of women’s and social movements, whether the intersectionality of race/ caste and gender are recognized by movement actors, and if transnational feminist activism is possible given the issues of privilege and ethnocentrism. In particular, we will critically examine women’s condition and the colonial encounter, and comparatively study women in civil rights and women’s movements in the UK and the US and women in Dalit and women’s movements in India.

Key Readings


Additional Readings


Activities

- Privilege walk based on Peggy McIntosh’s (1990) ‘White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack’ (Learn)
- Discussion of excerpts from Katherine Mayo’s *Mother India* (1927)
Compare and contrast the writings of Black feminist scholar activist bell hooks (see hooks 2000) and Dalit (ex-untouchable) feminist scholar activist Annie Namala (see Namala 2008) with reference to women of color/Dalit women, and women in civil rights/Dalit movements and women’s movements in the United States and in India.

- Discussion of excerpts from A.V. Sommer’s Our Moslem Sisters (1907)
- Viewing and discussion of excerpts from PBS documentary Half the Sky (2014)
- Discussion based on excerpts from Rabindranath Tagore’s (1985) The Home and the World and clips from Satyajit Ray’s film adaptation of the same.

**Week 4 Sexual politics and marginality**

This session will engage with ‘normalising’ and ‘alternative’ discourses, activism and the law pertaining to sexual identities. It will critically analyse issues of subjectivity and heteronormativity in society as well as women’s and social movements. Students will be exposed to the challenges and dilemmas that the politics of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex identities and activism pose to feminist praxis and theory as they attempt to emerge from the margins of both. In particular, the session will delve into the origins and basis of queer theory, the intersectional anxieties of gender and sexuality, and the complex relationship between sexuality, law and social change when viewed from a feminist lens.

**Key Readings**


**Additional Readings**

Activities

- Drawing on film clips from *Call Me Kuchu* (2013) (Learn) and newspaper clipping on *Voices Against 377* (Learn), imagine what Ugandan LGBT rights activist David Kato and the representatives of Voices Against 377 would have said to each other had they had the chance to meet. What would they have said to each other about queer intersectionality and LGBT activism in Uganda and India? What advice would Kato have given to the representatives of Voices Against 377? Jot down 5 main points from this imagined conversation in small groups.
- Group discussion on Ismat Chughtai’s *The Quilt* (1942).
- Viewing and discussion of *Out and Around* documentary (still to be released).

**Week 5**  
**Honor, religious identity and fundamentalisms**

The focus of this session shall be on honor, religious identity and fundamentalisms from a gender analytical lens. Religions tend to construct women as weak, subordinate and as biological and cultural reproducers of the community. The honor of the community is typically mapped on the body of the woman. What does this mean for women’s autonomy and agency? Is women’s experience different from that of men’s in contexts of religious fundamentalism and related violence? How do women and men’s activists respond to religious fundamentalism? Students will explore answers to these and other such questions by examining the intersections of religion and patriarchy, and religious fundamentalism and women’s activism in different cultural contexts.

**Key Readings**


### Additional Readings

### Activities
- Film viewing/comic book-reading and discussion on Vincent Paronnaud and Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* (2007) (set in Iran) (Learn)
- Group work to compare and contrast summaries of case studies of feminist and queer activists and organizations resisting and challenging Muslim, Christian and Hindu fundamentalisms in Nova Scotia, Canada, Sub-Saharan Africa, Lebanon, the US, and Gujarat, India, drawing on AWID (2010) *Feminists on the Frontlines: Case Studies of Resisting and Challenging Fundamentalisms*, AWID (Learn)
- Critical reading and discussion of El Saadawi’s ‘Narguiss’ (Chapter 4) in *Devils of Innocence* or excerpts from Suniti Namjoshi’s *The Mothers of Maya Diip* or Margaret Atwood *A Handmaid’s Tale*

### Week 6

**Mobility and gender politics of social and spatial exclusions**
The session will discuss spatial dimensions of gender issues and inequalities in the context of increasing mobility requirements and practices of social life. Evidence will be presented to show that the ability to move in physical and virtual spaces is closely linked to abundant resources and high-level positions in the social structure. The risk of social and spatial exclusions for
disadvantaged and vulnerable women will be discussed. In particular, we will examine how poor transport access, lack of time and traditional roles in conjugal and family life are major obstacles preventing women from widening their activity spaces, and how individuals and families find various ways to adapt and face challenges arising from mobility. These adaptations have a number of important implications for mothers’ lives, some of which will be discussed with reference to issues of mobility and migration.

Key Readings

Additional Readings

Activities
- Critical review and discussion of advertisements and infographics on transport and mobility.
- Spatial and temporal mapping exercise from a gendered lens on mobility in the city of Edinburgh.

**Week 7**

**Women, women’s movements and the state in the Third World**

Do women and women’s movements and the state co-construct each other? Do women and women’s movements engage with the state and make demands from it? Or do they challenge and subvert its authority? Why has the post-colonial state been a central reference point for women and women’s movements? How does the state re-present women in the Third world? What is its position on women’s movements? And is the state a unitary entity? What does looking at it from a feminist lens suggest? In this session, students will historically trace the formation and growth of the nation-state in postcolonial contexts, and interrogate the changing relationship of women and women’s movements with it.

**Key Readings**

Additional Readings

Activities
- Viewing of excerpts from the film Battle of Algiers (1966) (Learn) and group-based in-class review of the film to unpack the notions of nation and citizenship, and the relationship between nationalist and feminist women’s movements and the state from a critical, intersectional lens.
- Viewing of excerpts from the film Silence Broken (1999) (Standard Loan) or the film Comfort Women: One Last Cry (2013) (Learn) and group-based in-class review of the film.

Week 8 Politics of the ‘poor and marginalised’: NGOs, development and feminism
The session will trace the rise and expansion of NGOs, the prevailing discourses and politics of development, especially empowerment, and the opportunities, challenges and dilemmas that they pose for feminism in the era of neoliberal economic policies. It will examine who exactly are the ‘poor and marginalised’ that NGOs choose to work with and in whose name donors are willing to fund projects. What qualifies a certain group to be termed ‘poor and marginalised’ by development actors? Are NGOs truly the vehicles of women’s empowerment? Through case studies, students will critically examine women’s activism in different spatial contexts, with an emphasis on NGOs involved in organizing women. The session will also engage with the debates on ‘professionalization of feminism’, ‘depoliticization of activism’ to evaluate what has been the impact of NGO-led activism on the feminist enterprise.

Key Readings


**Additional Readings**


- Sharma, A. (2008) Logics of Empowerment: Development, Gender and Governance in Neoliberal India, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, Chapter 1 (Learn)

**Activities**

- Critical discussion of IDS Pathways to Empowerment case studies (Learn)

- Viewing and discussion of shorts on women’s empowerment, namely, Nike’s ‘The Girl Effect’ and 10*10’s ‘Girl Rising’ (Learn)

**Week 9 Migration, Globalization and Human Rights**

The session will explore the issue of migration in the context of the global economy, whether and how it is gendered, and what an intersectional lens reveals when examining the experiential narratives of migrant male and female migrant workers. It will pay particular attention to feminization of migrant flows, and the politics surrounding migrant workers’ entitlements and rights. What does globalization have to do with feminization of labour? Do (all) migrants have the same rights in the eyes of nation-states and the law? How are migrant women workers treated by and positioned vis-à-vis (different) states and state actors? The session will probe into these and other such questions.
Key Readings


Additional Readings


Activities

- Viewing and discussion of excerpts from Ursula Biemann’s Remote Sensing (2001), a video essay on routes and reasons of women who travel across the globe for work in the sex industry.
- Viewing and discussion of excerpts from Nilita Vachani’s When Mother Comes Home for Christmas (1996) on women migrant domestic workers from the global south.
- Viewing and discussion of excerpts from Nick Mai’s Normal (2012), a documentary film on migrant sex workers.
Critical reflection on infographic ‘The Journey of a Migrant Domestic Worker’ (2013).

Week 10 Course review and evaluation
In this concluding session, the key ideas from each week of the course will be referred to and pulled together. This will be done through activities in pairs, and reporting back to the whole class. In previous years, this has been an opportunity for students to discuss their essay outlines. Course evaluation forms will be distributed towards the end of the session; these are to be completed and returned anonymously as per the instructions given on the form.
ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DETAILS ON WRITING AND SUBMISSION

Choose any one of the following questions to write your short essay:

1. ‘Since the early 1980s, lesbians, feminists of color, postcolonial critics and queer theorists, as well as post-feminist and anti-feminist women, have exposed the ethnocentric and heteronormative conceits and consequences of western feminism.’ Critically examine the statement in the context of debates on universal sisterhood.
2. Reflect upon the gender and intersectional politics of the August riots which shook the UK in 2011, and of the more recent Ferguson riots in the US this year.
3. Review from the perspective of queer intersectionality the Ugandan film Call Me Kuchu (2013). Available at: http://www.iwannawatch.co/2013/05/call-me-kuchu-2012/ (last accessed 10 December 2014)

SHORT ESSAY SUBMISSION

Your short essay is due no later than noon on Monday 23rd February. You must submit your essay through ELMA. Penalties apply for late submission.

- Your short essay should be between 1400-1600 words.
- Essays above 1,600 words will be penalized using the Ordinary level criterion of 1 mark for every 20 words over length: anything between 1,601 and 1,620 words will lose one point, between 1,621 and 1,640 two points, and so on.
- Note that the lower 1400 figure is a guideline for students which you will not be penalized for going below. However, you should note that shorter essays are unlikely to achieve the required depth and that this will be reflected in your mark.
- Do not put your name/matriculation number on the essay, only your Exam Number.
- Please also state a precise word count.

Essays submitted on time will be marked and returned through ELMA within three working weeks.

Write your long essay on any one of the following topics:

1. What are the key goalposts for gender equality in the 21st century? Justify your answer with examples.
2. ‘If the woman does not want to be mother, the nation is on its way to die.’ Critically examine the relationship between gender, nation-states and nationalisms in the light of this statement.
3. Why is feminization of migration problematic? Explain using relevant examples.
4. ‘It is important to empower girls and women because it leads to economic growth and poverty reduction.’ Unpack the gender politics of neoliberal development with reference to this statement.
5. Should women and women’s movements be in or against the postcolonial state? Justify your answer with examples.
6. Critically examine the relationship between masculinity, marginality and social change.
7. What light does an intersectional lens shed on the project and discourse of human rights?
LONG ESSAY SUBMISSION

Long essays must be submitted through ELMA no later than noon on Monday 27th April.

- Essays should be no longer than 4500 words and no shorter than 3500 words, excluding bibliography. A good essay is likely to be close to the upper limit.
- The penalty for excessive word length in coursework is one mark deducted for each additional 20 words over the limit. The limit is 4500 words, so anything between 4501 and 4520 words will lose one point, and so on.
- Do not put your name/matriculation number on the essay, only your Exam Number.
- Please also state a precise word count.
- Submission procedures are the same as the short essay – you must submit an electronic copy via ELMA.

Students may submit a (non-assessed) long essay plan for feedback– this should be in bullet point form and not longer than ONE A4 side – in Week 10 (please email as file attachments). Comments and advice on these will be given during office hours in Week 11.

Marked essays will be returned through ELMA within three working weeks.

Planning and Writing Your Essays

Here are some useful points to bear in mind:

1. Start in good time! Don’t rush it!
2. First make sure that you understand the question and have defined any key terms. Draft some provisional headings relating to key points/aspects of the question. There is no single formula for an essay plan, but investing time at the planning stage is always worthwhile, however pressed you feel. Writing the question at the head of your plan may help to clarify your thinking and ensure that you answer the question which has been set.
3. Next, identify and review relevant readings. Remember, at Honours level, the reading list is just the beginning point, and for assessment purposes you need to go beyond this list and do further reading. Make notes and organise the readings in accordance with your plan headings, taking the opportunity to revise the provisional headings in the light of your review of the course materials and other relevant readings. You can go beyond the reading list by following up references in the bibliographies of articles and books you have found particularly useful. You can skim through back copies of relevant journals (see reading list for examples) or search the Library catalogue and E-JOURNALS. Social science gateways are often useful ways to access relevant material: see, for example, http://www.jisc.ac.uk/subject/socsci By now, you should be formulating an argued response to the question, and organising the relevant material in a way that will support your argument.
4. Once you are clear about the material, and how it will support your argument, you should organise it into paragraphs. You should try to ensure that the main point conveyed by each paragraph is supported by at least one good example selected from your notes on the relevant material. At this stage, you would do well to consider the maximum word length, and allocate the appropriate number of words to each essay section.
5. When you are ready to write, you need to come up with a good introductory paragraph. This should identify the main issue to be addressed, and indicate your chosen approach to

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it, but try to go beyond a bald re-statement of the question. If you feel stuck, you may find it helpful to write a provisional introduction, then come back and revise it in the light of the completed essay.

6. Be sure to use a **recognised system of referencing and citation** and be careful to cite all sources clearly. Distinguish between academic sources and other less authoritative sources such as articles, blogs, campaign web-sites etc. **DO NOT USE WIKIPEDIA – IT IS NOT FACT CHECKED AND GENERALLY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CREDIBLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION.**

7. Throughout the writing stage, be **prepared to prune** if it becomes clear that you are writing more for a given section than your plan has allowed for. Always keep the needs of the question uppermost in your mind and **ask yourself what work each section is doing** in helping you to answer the question. Think of your essay as an argument, progressing by stages, clearly linked, and supported by well-chosen evidence. Ask yourself: What work is each section doing? Have I linked each section? Have I provided enough signposts?

8. Your essay needs to have a **well-argued conclusion.** Avoid introducing new ideas or arguments right at the end of the essay, or taking off a new direction. Your final paragraphs should **draw together the main threads** of the argument that you have been developing throughout the essay.

9. **Always read through your draft essay carefully and redraft as necessary.** By re-reading or re-drafting, you can at least eliminate the spelling mistakes and awkward phrases that will create an unfavourable impression, and do less than justice to all the work that may have gone into the essay. Reading your essay aloud will help you to identify any troublesome sentence structures. Longer sentences will probably be easier to read if broken down into shorter ones. Ideally, if you are sufficiently organised, leave your essay to one side for a day or two before returning to it for final revisions. You will almost certainly find that things that seemed clear to you at the time of writing are now no longer so clear, and need to be re-worded. You may also find that your brain has been unconsciously working away at the issues raised, and that you now see a better way of arguing your case, or of organising the material.

**Essay Marking**

A copy of the School-wide marking descriptors can be found at [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/honours/assessment_and_regs/marking_descriptors](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/honours/assessment_and_regs/marking_descriptors)

**External Examiners**

University Assessment Regulations require that every course be monitored by an external examiner appointed by the University. This nominated person will also attend the Board of Examiners. The External Examiners for this course for session 2014-2015 are as follows: Dr Professor Bernadette Hayes, University of Aberdeen and Dr Michael Halewood, University of Essex.