WGSS 5624: WOMEN & SOCIAL CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN
Autumn 2013

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Office hours: T 4:30-5:30 (at office), M right before or after class in UH, or by appointment

Class: 286A UH
M 2:15-5:00

Prerequisites: advanced undergraduate, honors, or graduate status.

Objectives: WGSS 5624 emphasizes use of feminist theories and methods to analyze women’s organizing for social change in Latin America and the Caribbean. The course surveys social change through a focus on women’s experiences, changing roles and values, and social problems as perceived by women themselves and as presented to us by those authors who document them. We will pay special attention to issues of citizenship and political action (revolutions, human rights movements, ethnic/racial/sexual rights movements, feminism).

When students complete this course they should have a good understanding of
1. Women’s perspectives on and experiences in families, communities, societies and how these influence women’s social activism
2. The diversity of women’s experiences across class, age, race, ethnicity, religion, location, and sexuality and how this relates to women’s social activism
3. How women’s social activism has changed the nature of politics, human rights, and social movements in their respective contexts.

Texts: Everyone reads the following. Copies of books are on reserve at the Main Library and the books have been ordered through SBX


Everyone reads one of the following short testimonials: I did not order any copies because I have several to share. Each class member will read only ONE of these short and easy-to-read books. We will decide on assignments at the beginning of the semester.

Elvia Alvarado with Medea Benjamin. *Don't Be Afraid, Gringo. A Honduran Woman Speaks from the Heart*, 1987. (1 have 3 copies)

Films  We will use several films as texts. Some will be viewed in class; others outside of class. Some are personal copies, some will be reserved on our course playlist through the Media Library, others will be available on the internet.
Note  Our readings and/or films will include information on the following countries: Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala, Colombia

Requirements: This course is structured around seminar-style discussions and written assignments. Students and instructor share responsibility for discussions. Attendance is critical to your ability to participate fully and, since we are a small group, your consistent participation is extremely important. Please note that because of Monday holidays this semester, we will meet ONLY 13 times.

Grades will be based on:
1. Class participation (discussions, workshops) (38% of grade)
2. Weekly comments/critiques for class discussion (24% of grade)
3. A seminar paper of about 2500 words on a change topic of your choice (38% of grade)

Class participation  Class participation includes participating in discussion and in-class workshops, leading a discussion, reporting on own on-going paper research or the situation in a country of your choice, tying readings together, summarizing key points readings, discussing your comments/critiques in class, and other in-class activities.

Leading discussion  Students can volunteer to open class discussion. If no one volunteers to do so, I may ask someone to be ready to do so. Let me know ahead of time if there is a particular topic/set of readings for which you would like to open discussion.

Written assignments

Comments/critiques  Each student should prepare comments or critiques on the week’s readings—emphasizing your understanding of a reading or set of readings and bringing specific issues to our class discussion. These will be short—between ½ page and 1 page single spaced. Your comments should be printed, not handwritten. You hand them in after class (do not send them to me by email) and I will provide feedback and return them to you. They should be thoughtful and thought provoking; they make up 24% of your grade.

Seminar paper  This will be a more in-depth analysis of a social change topic of your choice. Examples: film/literature/art as a tool for social change/women’s rights; a case study of a specific women’s group/movement/change issue; analysis of socio-cultural, economic or political factors that place pressures on or provide new opportunities for women; sexuality rights issues and activism in a specific country or in the region; indigenous women’s movements, etc. Feel free to brainstorm ideas with me; I’m happy to provide feedback and may even have ideas on sources.. The paper should be based primarily on scholarly works though news items and country reports by activist organizations can be useful. Appropriate length would about 2500-3000 words. Word count—not including references—should be printed at the bottom of the paper. I don’t care what reference style you use; just choose a style and use it consistently.

Additional instructions for seminar papers and critiques/comments  All written materials must be typed or word processed, with correct spelling and grammar and a standard sized font such as Times Roman 11 pt. [the font you see here]. Margins should be 1 inch all around. Your papers may be single spaced, space a half, or double spaced (your preference). The paper must have a title and you should clearly state your goal early on.

Written work will be evaluated on critical thinking, understanding of issues and accurate use of concepts, logic and coherence of arguments, quality of the analysis in the allotted space/length, and ability to explain ideas clearly and relate them to the themes and issues of this course. Creative approaches and topics are welcome for final papers.

Let me know what your paper topic will be by the 5th week of the semester (send an email or tell me face-to-face)
Testimonios Everyone reads Benedita da Silva’s testimonio. Each class member will read one additional testimonio (Rigoberta Menchú, Domitila Barrios, Maria Teresa Tula, Elvia Alvarado) and a reading guide will be provided for our comparison of them during an in-class workshop.

Course policies Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be referred to university authorities. Cite all sources and words borrowed from others should appear in quotation marks.

Absences for which a student has a) received prior permission from me or b) can produce a valid, verifiable reason will be considered "excused absences." Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the participation grade. If you anticipate a conflict, please contact me as soon as possible so we can work out a solution. Remember we meet only 13 times! One absence equals 7.6% of our total semester class time.

If any student is having difficulty with course materials, deadlines, writing assignments or others, please discuss this with me immediately. If a family emergency comes up, contact me right away so that I can work on a solution with you.

Special needs
Students with special needs should contact the Office for Disability Services, 150 Pomerene Hall, 292-3307. They will help me to work with you to reasonably accommodate your needs. Please let me know of any needs in a timely manner.

SCHEDULE

@ means that reading can be found on Carmen content page
All other articles can be downloaded from the electronic journals site at the OSU library page or from the internet

Class 1 August 26 Introduction: Historical, Spatial, and Cultural Underpinnings

Introduction to the course
Background on the region
Hand in your personal information sheet today

Come to class ready to discuss your particular interest in women and social change in Latin America or the Caribbean and to share any insights that you may have on a particular country or movement.

NO WRITTEN COMMENT TODAY

Today, each student will choose a “testimonio” to read for our October 14 workshop

Maier, Elizabeth. “Accommodating the private into the public domain: Experiences and legacies of the past four decades.” Pp. 26-44 in E. Maier & N. Lebon, eds. Women’s Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship. Rutgers Univ. Press, 2010. [an overview, skim to get a sense of the range of change issues and women’s rights activism] @

**Want to read more?**


**Sept 2 NO CLASS. LABOR DAY.**

**Class 2 Sept 9 Religion/Spirituality in Women’s Lives**

**Assigned readings:**


Read one or both of the following:


**Film** “Flowers for Guadalupe” (Mexico, 57 min.) We will view it in class. [also on our course play list at the Media Library site]

**Want to read more?**


**Class 3 Sept 16 Ethnicity & Class: Zapatistas and Zapotecs**

**Assigned readings:**


Ideas: Check out Chiapas and the Zapatistas online to get some background on both the culture and their resistance to state repression. This will help you understand some of the details in the Eber article. http://mexicosolidarity.org/programs/alternativeeconomy/zapatismo/en
Also check out the Zapotecs as a cultural group. This will provide a context for understanding the women Stephen interviewed. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zapotec_peoples

Film: “Skirt Full of Butterflies” (Mexico, 15 min.) We will view it in class.

Want to read more?
Gill, Lesley. “‘Proper women’ and city pleasures: Gender, class, and contested meanings in La Paz.” American Ethnologist 20, 1, 1993:72-88. (markers of ethnicity in Bolivia)

Class 4 Sept 23 Sexuality and Sexual Rights

Assigned readings:

View the film Sex and the Sandinistas before class. It is about ½ hour long and will be on our class playlist at the Media Library site. [note: there are some voiceover/background noise problems here and there in the film but it is really good]

Want to read more?
Brown, Stephen. “‘Con discriminación y represión no hay democracia.’ The lesbian and gay movement in Argentina.” Latin American Perspectives 29, 2, 2002:119-38. (an earlier version of this article is posted to Carmen on the comments page)
Rivera Fuentes, Consuelo. “‘Todas locas, todas vivas, todas libres’: Chilean lesbians 1980-95.” Pp. 138-151 in From Amazon to Zami: Towards a Global Lesbian Feminism. Cassell, 1996. @

**Recommended Film:** “Lesbians in Buenos Aires” (Argentina, 82 min.) [lesbians going about their daily lives, talking about their lives, families, work, etc. The film came out about the time that the Buenos Aires legislators were passing LGBT rights legislation] Reserved on our course playlist at the Media Library site. We will not view it in class.

**Class 5 Sept 30 Feminist Movements, Advocating for Women’s Rights**

**Assigned readings:**

**Want to read more?**
Molyneux, Maxine. “Analysing women’s movements.” Chapter 6 in Women’s Movements in International Perspective. Palgrave, 2001. @ [Molyneux is one of the most influential feminist theorists on gender analysis in Latin America]

**Class 6 Oct 7 Fighting Gender Violence**

**Assigned readings:**

**Idea:** Choose a country in Latin America or the Caribbean. Check on whether or not there is legislation or activism against gendered violence, often framed as “a woman’s right to a life free from violence.”
**Film**  “El dia que tu me quieras/The day you love me” (Nicaragua, 61 min.) We will view it in class. Also posted to our course playlist at the Media Library site.

**Want to read more?**
Wessel, Lois and Jacquelyn Campbell. “Providing sanctuary for battered women: Nicaragua’s Casas de la Mujer.” *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 18, 1997:455-76. [the precursor to the type of police service that we see in the film]

**Class 7 Oct 14 Testimonios Workshop**

**Assigned readings:**
Bring your testimonio to class and be ready to present and discuss it. Use the questions on the handout for discussion and comparison.

*Read one of the following on the form and function of testimonio literature:*

OR

*Idea: Find information on what has happened to your author since her testimonio was published*

**Class 8 Oct 21 Race, Class & Gender in Brazil (Caldwell book)**

**Assigned reading:**
Caldwell book: All of it (we will go over questions and points that I will provide to you beforehand as well as focus on questions and comments that you bring). What we don’t get to today, we will finish up on next Monday.


**Class 9  Oct 28  Race, Class, & Gender continued & Benedita da Silva**

**Assigned readings:**
Finish discussion on Caldwell
Benedita da Silva book

**Film clip** on Benedita will be shown in class [about 20 min.]

**Recommended:**

**Class 10  Nov 4  Revolutionary Motherhood (Madres de Plaza de Mayo)**

**Assigned reading:**
*Revolutionizing Motherhood*

**Optional:** *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo* is a film (64 min.) that covers much of the historical facts and women’s strategies that are discussed in the book. I have reserved it on our course playlist through the Media Library for this week. We will not view it in class.

**Film** “Scraps of Life” (Chile, 25 min) We will view it in class.

**Want to read more?**

**NOV 11  NO CLASS. VETERAN’S DAY.**

**Class 11  Nov 18  Women in/after Revolutions: El Salvador**

**Assigned reading:**
Shane book, Intro and chapters 1 and 2
View film posted to our course play list at the Media Library site: “Maria’s Story” [60 min.; fall in love with “Maria Serrano,” Salvadoran insurgent leader, and see why this film enraged George Bush, the elder]

“Maria’s Stories. Maria Ofelia Navarrete.” Pp 22-30 in K. Bhavnani, et al. eds. *Feminist Futures*. Zed Books, 2003. (this is the Maria we see in the film.) @

**Want to read more?**

Class 12  Nov 25  Women in/after Revolutions: Cuba & Chile

We will split up the class into two groups. One will read and report on Cuba, the other on Chile.

Shayne book Chapters 3 & 4 (Chile) or Chapters 5 & 6 Cuba; everyone reads the Conclusion.

Class 13  Dec 2  Present & discuss student research papers

BRING COPIES FOR EVERYONE OF A ONE-PAGE, SINGLE-SPACED ABSTRACT FOR YOUR PAPER TODAY

Seminar Papers due today