

Gender and Women's Studies 720/Sociology 904 Topics in the Sociology of Gender

Spring 2012 Semester

Sawyer Seminar on Globalization and the New Politics of Women's Rights
Sterling Hall 3304, Fridays (a) 8:30-5:00 and (b) 10-12

Myra Marx Ferree

mferree@ssc.wisc.edu

office hours: Wednesday 9-12

7103 Sewell Social Sciences

608-263-5204 or 608-347-8832

Overview

The seminar will attempt to build a historically self-conscious approach to the ongoing debates about what women are and need as citizens in order to better understand the current global controversies over women's rights, the efforts by women and men in many different countries to change gender relations, and the importance ascribed to gender by major international actors and observers. We attempt to interrogate the insights of world polity theory, which views national political developments as linked by an evolving network of normative expectations, by considering how changes in the dominant forms of social conflict have transformed normative claims about gender relations and women's rights. The seminar will critically examine changes in global normative expectations, in particular the now-current model of an international "clash of civilizations," in which women's rights are invoked as the achievement of "the West." It will also explore the global dimensions of women's mobilizations and political empowerment. To understand these shifts, we will compare the usefulness of different theoretical approaches to changing gender relations, such as intersectionality, discourses about human rights, human capabilities, and human security.

Focused on the dynamics of norms creation, world polity theory has emphasized that the worldwide process of gradually redefining women as citizens began approximately 150 years ago with the emergence of organized demands for women's suffrage. Although first successful at the periphery of the world system (New Zealand and Finland) in the early years of the 20th century, within 60 years women held the right to vote and to hold political office in nearly all the nations of the world. Indeed, in the de-colonization struggles of the post-World War II era, the notion of self-determining nationhood carried with it the automatic expectation that both women and men were political citizens and the right to vote was no longer controversial at all. However, the representation of women in political decision-making remained minuscule and women's access to education, health care, freedom of movement, protection from violence and reproductive self-determination was notably less than men's in all countries, even those considered the most progressive.

Women did not passively accept such marginalization, but the ability of women's groups to organize internationally for political, social and economic rights was limited by two crucial factors: the framing of women as primarily defined by their family status and the polarization of the world into a communist "East" and capitalist

"West." In the world order that was dominant from 1945 to 1989, the communist, "godless" East was framed as hostile to the "traditional family" and favorable to women's equality, while the West claimed the mantle of defenders of faith, family and freedom. In this bipolar world, the "third world" was a target for recruitment to one or the other model of development. Social rights such as freedom of movement, of association and of speech were often counterposed to meeting human needs for economic and social security, as if obtaining the one were contingent on renouncing the other. Communist claims to have liberated women promoted both feminist mobilization and a backlash against women's rights in the West and an ideological self-deception in the East that allowed both the governments and the women of that region to ignore the continuing limits women faced under state socialism.

This world order has ended, but the rethinking of gender relations in the post-1989 organization of global political relations has only begun. The new normative framing of women's citizenship draws from a variety of inspirations. Transnational feminist movements, active throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, made significant headway in shaping these norms through the passage and gradual country by country acceptance of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and through the UN Beijing Platform for Action (PFA, 1995). With the decline of global feminist protest activity, other normative currents that purportedly promote women's rights have taken hold and appear to dominate today.

The polarization of global values is one such discursive current. Like its Cold-War precursor, the discourse of East and West today defines the world polity in bipolar stereotypes, and in this new division, Islam figures centrally. Resurrecting and modifying themes prevalent in the colonial period, this new world order is being actively framed by some as one in which the secular "West" has liberated women of formerly colonized areas from male authority in the family and now made economic progress available to all through participation in the market. This framing of the world as caught up in a "clash of civilizations" follows the older pattern of cold war bipolarity with the position of women as a crucial indicator of a country's location on one or the other side. Inglehart and Norris, for example, define the heart of the conflict between "the West" and "Islam" as a struggle over modernizing gender relations, a struggle which inherently challenges both family and faith authorities.

Another potent normative current has been human rights discourse. Feminist advocacy networks have reframed women's rights as human rights, and campaigned for attention to the violations of rights particular to women. One result of the greater global acceptance of human rights claims has been a shift in women's rights claims to be less narrowly about economics and to include protection by the state from the varieties of violence inflicted upon women: domestic assaults by controlling husbands and fathers (including so-called honor killings), rape and other sexual assaults (by intimate partners, employers or warring armies), and other assaults on human dignity.

Moreover, as focus has shifted to multiple forms of struggle in which gender is just one part, critical analyses of social injustice have also been more willing to approach gender, race, class and sexuality as ongoing processes rather than fixed categories, opening up more room for considering how alliances and conflicting interests are actively constructed out of the variously understood intersections. This seminar explores these developments, encouraging research that considers political

discourses as ways of understanding the processes of intersectional social change at a global level, historically and in the present moment.

Schedule:

The meetings of this seminar will alternate between "open panels" which are day-long events with four invited speakers presenting their views of the issues and "seminar meetings" which are limited to enrolled students. Students enrolled for 1-3 credits are welcome at the seminar meetings as are selected auditors. All attendees in seminar meetings, however, are expected to be prepared to actively discuss the presented material in that session.

Requirements differ by credits taken:

1 credit: students are expected to attend all of the open panels and are invited to participate in seminar meetings to the degree that they wish to engage with specific topics.

2 credits: students are expected to attend all of the open panels and actively participate in all the seminar meetings, including taking the discussion leader role when appropriate.

3 credits: in addition to the work also expected for 2 credits, students are expected to write a 6k-8k word seminar paper based on their own research. The aim of such a research paper is to be a draft of a paper that will be eventually prepared for publication. Early outline due March 9; final paper due May 13. Grade reflects 50% paper, 50% seminar participation.

All enrolled students are expected to consult the course wiki at

<https://sites.google.com/site/uwsawyerseminar/home>

for details of readings for seminar meetings, signup sheets for dinners or for discussant roles, and for continuing information about our proceedings. There is also a Learn@UW website (under Soc 904) for 3 credit students to use as a dropbox for drafts and final papers.

Meeting schedule:

We do not meet every week. In four weeks we have day-long panels which – through challenges of scheduling – meet PRIOR to our discussions of the issues in our two-hour seminar meetings, held on various following weeks.

Week 1

Open Panel 1: What's New about Globalization? Putting Gender Politics in Historical Context

Friday, January 27, 2012 (8:30am – 5:00pm)

Mounira Charrad, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Texas-Austin

Leila Rupp, Professor of Feminist Studies, University of California-Santa Barbara

Joan Scott, Harold F. Linder Professor of Social Science, Institute for Advanced Study

Bonnie Smith, Board of Governors Professor of History, University of Rochester

We begin with consideration of what the intersections of women's rights and globalization have meant in the past and what concrete legacies this history of change and conflict leaves today. Understanding origins, path dependencies, opportunity structures, formative texts, and other features of women's organizing

and the context in which they did what they did seems to be a critical step for seeing what is happening and not happening in current political situations. Consider what is new and what is a legacy of previous women's rights struggles, and also how past and present might relate.

Week 2

February 10 (note date, no meeting Feb 3)

First seminar meeting 10-12

Discussion of first presentations continues along with discussion of readings by speakers.

Pick at least one reading you would like to present with a short (150 word) summary and 2 discussion questions, one highlighting what you consider the most original/significant contribution and one highlighting what you consider the most controversial or problematic aspect of the argument or evidence.

Readings in pdf form can be found at the course Wiki

<https://sites.google.com/site/uwsawyerseminar/spring-2012-schedule-1/papers>

This week's readings include:

Mounira Charrad, 2011. "Gender in the Middle East: Islam, State, Agency" *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37:417-37.

Leila Rupp, 2011. "The persistence of transnational organizing: the case of the homophile movement." *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW* 116 (4): 1014-1039.

Leila Rupp, 1999. "Forging feminist identity in an international movement: A collective identity approach to twentieth-century feminism" *SIGNS* 24(2): 363-386.

Bonnie Smith, 2010. "Women's history: a retrospective from the US" *SIGNS*, 35 (3): 723-747.

Joan Wallach Scott, 2010. "Gender: Still a useful category of analysis?" *Diogenes*, 57 (1): 7-14. (should you not already know it, revisit the 1986 original at *AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW* 91 (5): 1053-1075, also available on Wiki).

Also encouraged to read for a report: Bonnie Smith and Beth Hutchinson, 2004. *Gendering Disability*. Rutgers University Press.

Week 3 (note, no meeting February 17)

Open Panel 2: From Women's Suffrage to Women's Self-determination? Social Movements and the World Polity

Friday, February 24, 2012 (8:30am – 5:00pm)

Kathy Davis, Senior Researcher, Institute of History and Culture, Utrecht University
Elisabeth Friedman, Associate Professor of Politics, University of San Francisco
Dongxiao Liu, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Texas A&M University
Francisco Ramirez, Professor of Education and (by courtesy) Sociology, Stanford University

The second panel takes up the transformation that world polity scholars have posited, the contested self-transformation of women into more empowered citizens. We ask how continuous or discontinuous the efforts of women's movements should be thought of as being in relation to transnational women's mobilizations, national women's organizing, local efforts of feminist grassroots groups of different kinds. Do you find it useful to think of a world polity? What effects might this have on what women's movements do and how feminism travels? On how modernity, globalization, discourse, intersectionality are understood analytically?

Week 4
March 2
Second Seminar Meeting 10-12

Discussion of second panel of presentations continues along with discussion of readings by speakers.

Pick at least one reading you would like to present with a short (150 word) summary and 2 discussion questions, one highlighting what you consider the most original/significant contribution and one highlighting what you consider the most controversial or problematic aspect of the argument or evidence. Sign up on Wiki in advance. Read any four or five articles from the list below.

Articles in pdf form can be found at the course Wiki
<https://sites.google.com/site/uwsawyerseminar/spring-2012-schedule-1/papers>

Readings for this week include:

Francisco Ramirez, Soysal, Y. and S. Shanahan. 1997. "The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship: Cross-National Acquisition of Women's Suffrage Rights, 1890 to 1990." *American Sociological Review*, 62, 5: 735-745

Kathy Davis 2007 "Reclaiming women's bodies: colonialist trope or critical epistemology?" *Sociological Review* 55 (S1): 50-64.

Kathy Davis 2008 "Intersectionality as buzzword: a sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful" *Feminist Theory* 9 (1): 67-85.

Elisabeth J. Friedman 2009. "Re(gion)alizing Women's Human Rights in Latin America". *Politics & Gender* 5 (3): 349-375.

Elisabeth J. Friedman 2003. "Gendering the agenda: the impact of the transnational women's rights movement at the UN conferences of the 1990s." *Women's Studies International Forum*, 26 (4): 313 – 331.

Dongxiao Liu "When Do National Movements Adopt or Reject International Agendas? A Comparative Analysis of the Chinese and Indian Women's Movements." *American Sociological Review* 71: 921-942

Rachel Simon-Kumar, 2011. "The Analytics of 'Gendering' the Post-Neoliberal State." *Social Politics*, 18(3): 441–468.

Sarah Payne, 2011. "Beijing Fifteen Years On: Persistence of Barriers to Gender Mainstreaming in Health Policy" *Social Politics* 18(4): 515–542.

Also I encourage one person to read and report on:

Nitza Berkovich, 1999. *From Motherhood to Citizenship: Women's Rights and International Organizations* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

WEEK 5

March 9, 10-12 am

Third Seminar Meeting

Midsemester discussion of seminar theme and reporting on and reviewing student research projects.

Note there are no meetings March 16 or 23.

WEEK 6

Open Panel 3: Gender Relations and the End of the Cold War: Feminism and Socialism after the End of History

Friday, March 30, 2012 (8:30am – 5:00pm)

Johanna Regulska, Professor of Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University

Andrea Krizsan, Research Fellow at the Center for Policy Studies, Central European University

Jocelyn Viterna, Associate Professor of Sociology, Harvard University

Silke Heumann, Lecturer in Women, Gender and Development, International Institute of Social Studies

Our third panel has regional emphasis in the morning on Eastern Europe and in the afternoon on Latin America. The point of both session is to grapple with one of the major transformations of the world polity, the collapse of many state socialist projects around the world and the demands for democratization that come with many of these. Since feminism was historically associated with the left, the transformation of left politics in Eastern Europe and in Latin America has implications both good and bad for women's rights. Our thinking suggested that economic rights and reproductive rights might diverge, but what might this mean for the politics of actual women's movements in specific parts of the world is unknown.

Spring break

WEEK 7

Seminar Meeting April 13 10-12 am.

Readings for seminar meeting (presenters sign up on wiki):

Andrea Krizsan and Viola Zentai, forthcoming "Institutionalizing Intersectionality in Central and Eastern Europe"

Anne-Marie Kramer, 2009. "The Polish Parliament and the Making of Politics through Abortion: nation, gender and democracy in the 1996 liberalization amendment debate" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11(1): 81-101.

Steve Saxonberg and Dorota Szelewa, 2007. "The Continuing Legacy of the Communist Legacy? The development of family policies in Poland and the Czech Republic." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 14 (3): 351-379.

Alexandra Gerber, 2011. "Cultural Categories of Worth and Polish Gender Policy in the Context of EU Accession" *Social Politics* 18 (4): 490-514.

Jocelyn Viterna and Kathleen Fallon, 2008. "Democratization, women's movements, and gender-equitable states: A framework for comparison" *American Sociological Review*, 73 (4): 668-689.

Christina Ewig, 2006. "Hijacking Global Feminism: Feminists, the Catholic Church, and the Family Planning Debacle in Peru" *Feminist Studies*, 32 (3): 632-659

Maxine Molyneux, 2008. "The 'Neoliberal Turn' and the New Social Policy in Latin America: How Neoliberal, How New?" *Development & Change*, 39(5), 775-797.

Also recommended for reporting:

Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, 2000. *The politics of gender after socialism*. Princeton University Press.

Julie Shayne, 2004. *The revolution question: Feminisms in El Salvador, Chile, and Cuba*. Rutgers University Press.

A classic theoretical statement one should know:

Maxine Molyneux 1985. "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua" *Feminist Studies*, 11 (2): 227-254.

WEEK 8

Open Panel 4: Reframing Gender Politics Internationally: Where do we go from here?

Friday, April 20, 2012 (8:30am – 5:00pm)

Teresa Valdes, Senior Researcher, Center for the Study and Development of Women (CEDEM), Santiago, Chile

Uma Narayan, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and Chair of Philosophy, Vassar College

V. Spike Peterson, Professor of International Relations, School of Government and Public Policy, University of Arizona

Mieke Verloo, Professor in Comparative Politics and Inequality Issues, Radboud University Nijmegen

This fourth and final panel attempts to consider what the transformations of the past and present might suggest about changes in the future. We don't expect globalization to come to a screeching halt, but we are not sure what to expect. Where is the trajectory headed, if there is one? What are the elements of global transformation that deserve the most attention today, and why?

Week 9

April 27 Seminar Meeting 10-12 am

Readings on Wiki for presenters to sign up

Readings TBD

Week 10

May 4

Open Lecture: Sylvia Walby, *The Future of Feminism*