International History

Academic year 2019-2020

Gender, Sexuality and Decolonization in the Global South

HI079 - Spring - 6 ECTS

Wednesday 10h15 - 12h00

Course Description

This course will examine the intersections of gender, sexuality and nationalism within the context of decolonization movements in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean from the late 19th century to the postcolonial period, with a particular focus on the 1920s to 1970s. Case studies will range from analysis of women's mobilization in India to the gender dynamics of armed rebellions in Africa to reproductive politics in the Caribbean. Students will consider how nationalist movements worked to either include or exclude certain genders and sexualities from their discourses and projects, how a variety of actors resisted these prescriptions and tried to pursue different agendas, and how these struggles shaped society, politics, and state-building in postcolonial societies.

Syllabus

This course is organized thematically, with case studies for each week drawn from across a variety of decolonizing societies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. After addressing some of the main theoretical perspectives on nationalism, gender, and sexuality, we will focus in on the following themes: the construction of “femininity,” “masculinity” and “tradition” in colonial and anti-colonial discourses; male nationalist leaders’ views on women’s emancipation; women’s political activism and thought; feminism, nationalism, and internationalism; the gendered dynamics of armed liberation movements; gender, violence and dislocation; body politics; reproduction; sex and the state; and possibilities for sexual decolonization/feminist nationalism. Students are expected to come to each class ready to discuss the arguments and methodology of required readings. Each week (from Weeks 3-12), 1-2 students will also write a short paper examining in more detail the authors’ approach, which they will briefly present at the beginning of the class discussion. Finally, students will prepare a final paper examining a subject of their choosing relevant to the course’s themes.
A course schedule with a weekly reading list is provided below, along with more details on course requirements and policies. All readings will be made available on hold at the library and/or through the course Moodle page. Movies are also available through the course Vimeo account, password HI079. https://vimeopro.com/graduateinstitutelibrary/gender-sexuality-and-decolonisation

COURSE SCHEDULE

I. Introduction

Week 1, February 20: Introduction
Optional Background Readings:
• Students are also encouraged to listen to Kwame Anthony Appiah’s Reith Lecture on the history of nationalism, entitled “Country” http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07zz5mf (This is part of a four part lecture series on “Mistaken Identities”)

Week 2, February 27: Core Concepts: Gender, Sexuality and Nation
Required Readings:

II. Women and Gender in Nationalist Struggles

Week 3, March 5: Gender and Tradition in Colonial and Nationalist Discourses
Required Readings:

Week 4, March 12: Nationalist Leaders and Women’s Emancipation
Required Readings:
• Karen Bouwer, “Introduction: the Gender of Decolonization,” and “Chapter 2: Lumumba
Week 5, March 19: Women’s Political Activism
Required Readings:
- Henrice Altink, “We are equal to men in ability to do anything!”: African Jamaican women and citizenship in the interwar years’, in Francisca de Haan, Margaret Allen, June Purvis, Krassimira Daskalova, eds., Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives from the 1890s to the Present. (Routledge, 2012): pp. 77-89.

Week 6, March 26: Feminism, Nationalism and Internationalism
Required Readings:

Week 7, April 2: Gender and Armed Struggle
Required Readings:

Week 8, April 9: Gender, Violence and Dislocation
Required Readings:
Optional: Watch the films Flame (California Newsreel, 1996) (discussed in Lyons’ chapter) and Earth
April 10-19 – Spring Break

III. Bodies, Reproduction and Sex

Week 9, April 23: Body Politics

Required Readings:

April 28, 16:15 – International History Forum Lecture with Imabong Umoren

Week 10, April 30: Reproductive Control

Required Readings:

Week 11, May 7: Sex and the State


Week 12, May 14: Conclusion: Towards Sexual Decolonization and a Feminist Nationalism?

Required Readings:

Week 13, May 21: No class, holiday.

Week 14, May 28: Wrap-up and Paper Discussion

- No readings: we will reflect on the course as a whole and students will have the opportunity to discuss their final projects.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation: 30%

Students are expected to complete the required readings listed for each week and to participate actively in weekly discussions. While reading, students should pay attention to both the content of the reading and the sources and methodologies employed by the author. See the “Short Paper
Assignment” guidance below for some questions you might think of while reading.

Participating actively will require regular attendance in class; students should email the TA when unable to attend for a legitimate reason. Participation also includes not only talking but also listening to and engaging with one’s colleagues respectfully and fully. This means that phones must be off and put away at all times, and laptops used for taking notes only.

**Reading Commentary: 25%**

Students will sign up for one week from Weeks 3-12 in which they will provide a more detailed commentary on the course readings. This assignment consists of two parts:

1. **Short Paper: 1200-1500 words (excluding bibliography, 12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, Word document, Chicago style footnotes), due the Tuesday before class at 10:00am, submitted online through Moodle.**

   For the paper, students will write a comparative analysis of the required readings for the week, exploring both their content and their underlying methodologies.

   Some content questions to consider while reading: What are some of the author’s key/most interesting points? What does the text tell us about the interactions between gender, sexuality, and nationalism? How does the author’s arguments, conclusions, and approaches compare/contrast to other readings assigned for that week and/or previous weeks?

   Some methodological questions to consider include: What underlying questions is the author trying to answer and how do they narrow their subject matter down? What kind of history/analysis is this (for example cultural, social, political, biographical, collective)? Who are the key actors (ex. political leaders, organizational members, specific communities)? What primary historical sources does the author use to answer their questions (ex. state archival sources, private collections, public speeches, private letters, monuments, myths/stories, oral histories)? What are the strengths and limitations of these sources? What is left unanswered, and how might this affect the story they have told?

Note that you will not have the space to cover every aspect of all of the readings in your paper, nor should it simply be a summary of each reading one after another. Instead, you may want to identify 2-3 central points to trace through the readings, exploring how different readers diverge/depart in their arguments and methodological approaches.

2. **Presentation (maximum 10 minutes)**

   At the beginning of class, students will briefly present their paper, highlighting a few key points and posing questions for discussion. (If two students are presenting during the same week, they will have to decide how they want to divide up the time/readings for the purposes of the presentation, but each must cover all readings when writing the paper).

**Final Paper: 45%**

Students will submit a final paper of 3500-4000 words exploring a topic of their choosing relating to the course themes through a critical analysis of a primary historical source. This could include, for example, the speeches of a nationalist leader, a memoir of a guerrilla fighter, transcripts from a UN debate or conference, a series of newspapers articles, a film, or some other source that is relevant in some way to the theme of gender, sexuality, and nationalism. Your paper should begin by reviewing the relevant theories and historical context, and then explore how the themes and arguments we’ve encountered play out in terms of your selected topic/source. Do you find evidence to support the claims scholars have made regarding the gender/sexual politics of nationalism, or does your analysis challenge some of their core assumptions? In what ways? What are the implications and limits of your analysis? What new questions might it raise? For guidance on analysis of primary sources,
please consult the “Course Resources” section of the Moodle page.

The assignment includes:

1) Proposal – due March 25 at 10:00am, submitted online through Moodle – The proposal should provide a 1-page intro to the topic/source you are going to analyze and a 1-2 page bibliography of secondary sources.

2) Final Paper – due May 31 at 10:00am - 3500-4000 words excluding bibliography (12 pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced, Word document), Chicago-style footnotes, submitted online through Moodle

Resources for final paper: In addition to resources that might be available online or in print, students are encouraged to consult the database “Women and Social Movements, International.” The collection includes over 4000 historical documents from across the globe, and can be searched in multiple ways (source type, country, theme…etc). The database is fully accessible when connected to the Graduate Institute Intranet: http://wasi.alexanderstreet.com/.

COURSE POLICIES

All written work must be submitted to the course Moodle page as a Word document, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font, with standard 2.5cm (1”) margins. Students may choose to submit their work in either English or French. Late submissions of assignments will be penalized at a rate of -0.25 per day. Students seeking an extension due to illness or family emergency must contact the professor as soon as possible and provide documentation indicating the impacted time period.

Papers should use footnotes in the Chicago citation style. Please see Purdue OWL’s Chicago Manual of Style and the sample paper provided on Moodle for guidelines on how to use this format and sample citations.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cheating includes any action in disregard of the rules and standards governing evaluation or re-using, all or part, of coursework for which credits or a degree have already been obtained and presenting it as an original piece of work. Plagiarism includes appropriating the work of a third party and presenting it as one’s own work, copying text, data, figures, images, etc. from external sources without citing the source or presenting ideas of other authors as original work. In the event that cheating or plagiarism are found to have occurred, a “0” grade will be attributed. Depending on the severity of the offence, the student may be excluded from the Institute. Please see the Institute’s “Internal Guidelines” for further information.