

SPRING 2012

GND/POL 3125.45 - WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS

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Office Hours: Tue. & Fri. at 2:30-3:30 pm, Wed. at 6:15-6:45 pm, and by appointment

Course Description:

This course focuses on the definitions of human rights and the ways women's experiences of human rights violations are gendered. It examines the roles of custom and law, international human rights conventions, the shortcomings of the international human rights structures in protecting women's rights, and strategies that women have employed to promote their rights, with an emphasis on the International Women's Convention.

Activities:

The course combines lecture, seminar and workshop models of learning. The earlier class sessions will be based on brief *lectures and discussions* on the development of human rights and of the literature written by feminist scholars who challenge the norms employed in defining human rights in international law. In addition to the theoretical debates, women's efforts and achievements in affecting the international debates and mechanisms to promote and protect human rights will be addressed. Students' comprehension of the assigned literature, lectures and all class discussions will be measured through scheduled or unannounced quizzes (about every other week).

For the *seminar* component, each student will choose a country that ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and examine the kinds of reservations employed, how the reservations on certain articles prevent upholding the Convention, and the periodic government reports submitted to the UN Committee that oversees the implementation of the CEDAW. The purpose will be to assess if the ratification of the convention helped improving women's opportunities and rights. Students will present their analyses and findings to the class, discuss each other's work, and compare different governments' approach to the Convention.

For the *workshop* component, students will establish small teams (3-4 persons) and develop activity plans that would help promote or realize women's rights in the U. S. or in another country of their choice. Workshop projects will be also presented and discussed in class.

Policies:

Since this is a discussion-oriented course, class participation is crucial. *Attendance* is treated as a prerequisite of class participation. The class time is our contracted time; therefore, absenteeism and tardiness for more than one class day, as well as leaving any class session before the class is dismissed, will result in deductions from the class participation grade. Once in class, students are expected to keep their seats and stay until the end of the session, unless there is an emergency.

Computers, cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed, unless the student has a need documented by the Counselling Centre. Students with documented physical, learning, psychological and other disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations. They should contact the Office of Special Services (Hum 0008; 251-6035) or the Counseling Center (251- 6390) and discuss the possible accommodations with the instructor as soon as possible.

For all course related questions, students should contact the instructor during the office hours, in-person or by telephone. E-mail messages can be used only in extraordinary circumstances.

The deadlines for assignments and papers are not negotiable; late submissions will result in a deduction of 10 points from the deserved grade for each late (calendar) day. *E-mail submissions will not be accepted*, and *no incomplete grades* will be granted. Presentation dates will be firm, and failing to show up the presentation will result in a 20-point deduction from the deserved grade of the project. There will be no make-up exams. Cheating on the exams and all forms of plagiarism will result in failure for the course and disciplinary action, as specified by the college's academic integrity policy (see <http://www.purchase.edu/Policies/academicintegrity.aspx>). The weight of each component for the final grade and their dates/deadlines are as follows:

Class participation	25 %	every day
Quizzes & assignments	25 %	various
CEDAW project		
declaring the country choice		February 15
presentation		to be announced
written paper	30 %	April 25
Group project		
declaring the topic & partners		March 14
presentation		May 2
paper	20 %	May 9

However, showing steady and significant improvement throughout the semester will be rewarded by assigning extra weight to the later work.

BOOKS

There are three required and two recommended books for the course. All are available at the Campus Bookstore. Some other required readings are posted on the Moodle page for the course.

Required:

- Agosín, Marjorie, ed. 2002. *Women, Gender and Human Rights: A Global Perspective*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Jain, Devaki. 2005. *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Seager, Joni. 2008. *The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*. Fourth edition, completely revised and updated. London: Penguin Press.

Recommended:

- Scott, Gregory M., and Garrison, Stephen M. 2012. *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*. 7th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Jaquette, Jane S. and Summerfield, Gale, eds. 2006. *Women and Gender Equity in Development Theory and Practice: Institutions, Resources, and Mobilization*. Durham: Duke University Press.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- 1/25 Introduction: The Purpose and Structure of the Course
 CEDAW webpage: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>
 UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights webpage:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/index.htm>
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/> (check women's rights under your human rights>human rights issues)
 UN Women webpage: <http://www.unwomen.org/>

PART I. THE INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS AND DISCRIMINATION ISSUE

- 2/1 What are Human Rights and Human Rights Conventions?
 Arat, Zehra F. K. *Human Rights Worldwide*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 2006, Chapter 1. (ebook can be accessed via college library web page or Moodle.)
 Fraser in Agosin, pp. 15-43.
 Check the following by accessing the Moodle or the OHCHR webpage,
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/> (check related links under your human rights>international law):
UDHR, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
ICCPR, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
ICESCR, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
- 2/8 A. The Divisive Issues: Negative vs. Positive Rights; Individual vs. Group Rights; Relativism vs. Universalism
 Arat, *Human Rights Worldwide*, Chapter 2
Quiz 1. At the beginning of the class session, based on the previous weeks' readings and class discussions, as well as what is assigned for this week.
- B. Viewing Rights, Violations, and Discrimination from Women's Perspective
 Arat, *Human Rights Worldwide*, pp. 83-88.
 Seager, *The State of Women in the World Atlas*
Assignment I: Compare the issues listed in the Atlas with the rights listed in the UDHR, identify the overlaps and gaps in the form of a table, and bring your table and Atlas to the class. Use the guidelines listed at the end of the syllabus.

[Declaration of the Country Choice by 2/15]

PART II. ARTICULATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

- 2/15 The Need for a Women's Convention and the Birth of CEDAW
 Fraser in Agosin, pp. 43-59.
 Stapleton in Agosin
 Jain, Chapters 1-3
CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

- 2/22 CEDAW as a Living Document: General Recommendations and the Optional Protocol
Merry in Agosín.
General Recommendations,
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom4>
The Optional Protocol to CEDAW, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/protocol>
Seager, *The State of Women in the World Atlas*
Assignment II: Compare the issues listed in the Atlas with the rights listed in the CEDAW, identify the overlaps and gaps in the form of a table, and bring your table and Atlas to the class. Use the guidelines listed at the end of the syllabus.
- 2/29 The Violations of Women's Rights
Dauer in Agosín.
Levison and Levison in Agosín.
Chill and Kilbourne in Agosín.
Films: The Last Citizen
Silence and Complicity
AI campaign: Stop Violence against Women
Selbi

PART III. GLOBAL SOLIDARITY, CHALLENGES AND OPPOSITION TO WOMEN'S RIGHTS

- 3/7 Issues of Underdevelopment, Dependency, and Economic Rights
Weatherby, Joseph N., et al. *The Other World: Issues and Politics of the Developing World*. 5th Edition. New York: Longman, 2003, Ch. 2. (Moodle).
Sadasivam, Bharati. "The Impact of Structural Adjustment on Women: A Governance and Human Rights Agenda" *Human Rights Quarterly* 19:3 (August 1997): 630-665. (Moodle)
Suárez-Orozco in Agosín.

[Declaration of Group Project topics and partners by 3/14]

- 3/14 Forms of Oppression and Feminisms
Jaggar, Alison M., and Rothenberg, Paula S., eds., *Feminist Frameworks*. 3rd ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993: 113-126. (Moodle)
Recommended: Part IV in Agosín.
- 3/21 International Women's Movement: Concerns and Accomplishments
Jain, Chapters 3-4
Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women,
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/nfls/Nairobi1985report.txt>
Special Rapporteur on violence against women, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english>
(check under your human rights>human rights issues>women's rights)
Film: Where the Credit is Due
Recommended: Geske and Bourque in Agosín.

- 3/28 A. The Beijing Conference, Five-Year Appraisals, and Millennium Development Goals
 Jain, Chapter 5
 Gaer in Agosín.
 Kaplan in Agosín
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>
 Five, ten and fifteen-year appraisals: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform>
 Recommended:
World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development. Washington, D.C.:
 World Bank, 2011.
<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf>
2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources, including Microfinance. New York:
 United Nations, 2009.
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/WorldSurvey2009.pdf>
- B. Essentializing Religion: The Muslim Case
 Afkhami in Agosín.
 Arat, Zehra F. Kabasakal. "Women's Rights in Islam: Revisiting Qur'anic Rights," in Peter Schwab and Adamanta Pollis, eds., *Human Rights: New Perspectives, New Realities*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000: 69-93. (Moodle)
 Arat, Zehra F. Kabasakal. "Promoting Women's Rights against Patriarchal Claims: The Women's Convention and Reservations by Muslim States," in David Forsythe and Patrice McMahon, eds., *Global Human Rights Norms: Area Studies Revisited*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 2003: 231-251. (Moodle)

[Spring Recess, 3/31-4/8]

PART V. STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

- 4/11 CEDAW Project Presentations I – Students' names TBA
 4/18 CEDAW Project Presentations II – Students' names TBA
- 4/25 A. The United States' Approach and Role
 Arat, *Human Rights Worldwide*, Chapter 4
 Baird, Karen. "Globalizing Reproductive Control: Consequences of the 'Gag Rule'", in Rosemarie Tong, Anne Donchin and Susan Dodds, eds., *Linking Visions: Feminist Bioethics, Human Rights, and the Developing World*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004: 133-145. (Moodle)
 UN Special Rapporteur's report on violence against women in the US (Moodle)
- B. Overall CEDAW and Preparatory work for group presentations
CEDAW Project Reports due
- 5/2 Group Project Presentations
- 5/9 The Final and Open Session, **Group Project reports due**

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

I. THE CEDAW PROJECT:

Go to http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en and examine the list of the countries that ratified the Convention and choose a country. Check if there are any reservations, dates of report submissions, and if the state reports are posted. Check the number of reports submitted at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw%20report%20submission%20status%2031Aug2006.pdf> and their availability online. If no recent reports are available online, then either choose another country or obtain hard copies from the UN. Check if the country of your choice has signed or ratified the Optional Protocol.

An important component of your research will involve *library research*. Check journal data bases for articles on the current assessment of women's lives in the country of your choice, as well as books. Check if there are some women's organizations in the country that prepare alternative (shadow) reports. How do these reports assess the state's efforts (e.g., laws enacted, institutions established, etc.) and the progress? Gather some statistical data on indicators of women's status and opportunities in the county (e.g., literacy, school enrolment, maternal mortality rates, political representation) for different time points (one time point should be date of the Convention ratification and the other one the latest year for which the data are available). Has there been any improvement between the two time-points? *Human Development Report (HDR)*, an annual publication of the United Nations that is accessible at <http://hdr.undp.org/en>, reports statistical data in the last section of the report. Also check for country visits by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, and reports issued by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, World Population Foundation, or other organizations that focus on human rights, gender equality or women's issues.

What is your assessment of the country's success in implementing the Convention? What are the areas of progress? How widely do the improvements affect women? Are there certain segments of women for whom the discrimination is more systematic? In what areas do you see some major problems? What are the persistent obstacles? Can you sort out legal and cultural foundations of discrimination? How effective is the CEDAW in improving women's lives in that country? In other words, if there are improvements, to what extent can they be attributed to the CEDAW?

The paper should be 15-page long (double-spaced typed, in font Times New Roman size 12 or an equivalent, and with one-inch margins on all sides). The APSR citation and bibliography style rules should be followed. (Consult the Scott and Garrison book.) The 10 percent of the grade will be for proper application of style rules. **Warning:** *Papers that do not provide adequate and proper documentation (citation of the sources) will be treated as plagiarized.*

II. THE GROUP PROJECT ON DESIGNING AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM:

You can choose anything that would help promote women's rights in any community or inform women about their rights. You may find something that is immediately applicable (e.g., within Purchase College) as more attractive, but a hypothetical one that is designed for a larger population in the U. S. or another country can be an option, as well. However, note that ultimately the project should be realistic and feasible.

Your project design should include information on the following:

1. the issue and the goal
2. the target population(s)
3. a time table
4. description of the activity or activities
5. means of announcement
6. the cost (of material, regular staff salaries (including yourself), consultants, honoraria, travel, etc. **WARNING:** Time is money. Anytime put in by you or other staff members have to have a dollar amount assigned.
7. sources for funding (in addition to considering some fund-raising projects, you should consider government and foundation grants – you would need to research and name them)
8. expected obstacles and ways of combating them.

Note that how well the above listed items are researched, thought out, and presented will be more important in assessing the quality of the project than the complexity of the project.

The final written report should be about 6-8 pages and follow the style rules that are set for the CEDAW project.

MARCH 14 REPORT – the declaration of topic and partners -- should be a typed page that includes the names of partners and a brief description of the project (in 100-200 words).

III. GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS I AND II

Assignment I:

1. First, list the rights included in the UNDR in Column I and write the article number in Column II.
2. Go over the Atlas and enter the map number of the issue that corresponds to the right indicated in the UDHR in Column III. If there is no issue corresponding to a listed right, leave the cell in the third column blank. You may take notes in the comments column.
3. Identify the issues that are mentioned in the Atlas but not covered as a right in the UDHR, and write each such issue in Column I. Leave the corresponding cell in Column II empty, and enter the map number and title of the issue in Column III.
4. Use the fourth column to take notes on complicated matches/mismatches.
5. Note that more than one article may correspond to the issue(s) covered in a map, or more than one map may correspond to a right or article in the UDHR.

I The issue/right	II UDHR Article number	III Atlas Map number and title	IV Comments
Right to marry and found a family	A16	M5, marriage & divorce	
Right to Y	A?	M?, issue?, and M?, issue?	
Freedom of X	A?		no corresponding maps
Freedom of Y	A?		
Atlas issue X		M?	A? may be interpreted to address it but not explicit
Atlas issue Y		M?	

Assignment II:

Change the Column II heading into CEDAW, list the rights mentioned in the CEDAW in Column I. Repeat the process followed for the first assignment for this one.

GND/POL 3125- Spring 2012, STUDENT DATA & AGREEMENT (Please print your answers)

NAME: _____ MAJOR(S): _____

MINOR(S): _____

YEAR IN COLLEGE: Freshman ___ Sophomore _____ Junior ___ Senior ___

WHY DO YOU TAKE THIS COURSE? (OR, WHAT MAKES YOU INTERESTED IN IT?)

LIST ALL WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSES TAKEN: (Use the back of the sheet if needed)

LIST ALL POLITICAL SCIENCE COURSES TAKEN: (Use the back of the sheet if needed)

HOW WOULD YOU RANK YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE FOLLOWING? Please circle the relevant number (0 stands for none, 5 stands for ability to tutor other students in introductory classes).

Issues of discrimination (gender and other)	0	1	2	3	4	5
Women's issues	0	1	2	3	4	5
Feminist philosophies & theories	0	1	2	3	4	5
Geographic location of countries	0	1	2	3	4	5
Different political systems	0	1	2	3	4	5
World religions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Colonialism and its legacy	0	1	2	3	4	5
World history	0	1	2	3	4	5
Economic problems and theories	0	1	2	3	4	5
International Law	0	1	2	3	4	5
International organizations	0	1	2	3	4	5
United Nations	0	1	2	3	4	5

HAVE YOU EVER TRAVELED ABROAD? YES _____ NO _____

IF YES, WRITE THE COUNTRY NAMES AND THE LENGTH/FREQUENCY OF THE VISITS:

If there is anything that I should know about you, please use the back of the sheet to write them.

STATEMENT: I read the syllabus and project guidelines carefully and understood the course policies; I am fully aware of my responsibilities in this class.

Signature: _____ Date: _____