

GENDER AND THE PAST

T-TH 9:45-11:15

C3 Cooper Hall

LouAnn Wurst
Office: Cooper B4-a
Phone: x5706
E-Mail: lwurst@brockport.edu

Office Hours: T-TH 1:30-3:30
Or by appointment

INTRODUCTION

This course is based on the premise that the past is integrally connected to the way that we think about present gender relations. Either gender relations are based on the biological differences between men and women, implying that they have not varied through time, or gender is culturally constituted, meaning that every culture though time will define gender relations differently. The paradox of this situation is that the past does not exist in the present, and what we know about the past is interpreted through the lens of modern socio-political concerns.

Given this juncture between the past and present, this course has two main goals. The first is to explore the relationship between past and present in the context of interpreting gender roles. This will entail examining the way that we in the present think that gender was like in the past. In this sense, this course is as much about gender in the present as it is about what gender roles were really like in the past. As we will see, the past is often created in our own image and we impose modern gender relations onto the past. The second goal of the course is to evaluate what gender in the past may actually have been like. If gender relations were defined differently in another culture, this opens up the possibility for us to create a different future. In this context, you will learn how to evaluate claims or interpretations based on historical or archaeological data.

Since gendered social relations are an essential part of all human society, we could discuss these issues in any past context. As a survey course, I have selected topics that seem to be most important in terms of galvanizing discussion, controversy, or seem to resonate with modern concerns. You will notice an almost schizophrenic division of topics, heavily focused first on the remotest periods of human history, the Paleolithic, but with an additional emphasis on relatively recent history. This division is intentional and reflects a great deal of the research on gender in the past. The Paleolithic is a key period in terms of our development as human, and thus has been the focus of a great deal of literature, both popular and academic.

TEXTS

Because of the nature of this class, there are no good text books available. The only book that I have ordered is bell hook's *Feminism is for Everybody*. This book presents a general statement about what feminism is and why it is so important to consider in our own lives.

Instead of relying on single text book, this course will be framed around a wide range of

readings found in multiple sources. ***These readings are an essential aspect of this class and you must keep current with the assignments.*** The readings are listed in the course schedule by the authors last name and publication date, and complete citations are provided in the reference section of this syllabus. You should come to class having already read and thought about the readings for that day— that is, the readings must be done before class. These readings are either on reserve in the library (either the book is on reserve or as an electronic reserve) or is available in electronic format (URL links on the class schedule or on the Angel Course page). All references include information on where to find the material. **BE ADVISED:** this is a large class and many people will need access to these materials. I strongly recommend that you plan ahead and copy the articles from reserve books well before they are due. If you wait until the last moment, odds are that you will not be able to complete the readings before class, and this will ultimately affect your grade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As a 300 level course, you will not be simply consumers in this class, but will play an active role in it's production. Gender is a topic that must be talked about, discussed, and even argued about. Therefore, participation forms a significant portion of the final grade and attendance is mandatory. In addition, this course fulfills the oral communication component of the General Education program. You will all be required to participate in class and group discussion, debates, and presentations and these course aspects will be reflected in the final grade.

Reading Responses

To facilitate discussion, you must not only ***do*** the reading assignments, but ***think about them*** as well. Thus, 25% of your grade will be based on reading responses, due for one class each week, as noted on the class schedule. The goal of these responses is to make you better, more critical readers, and to help us focus our class discussions on the key issues, and also to provide a vehicle for us to dialogue about the topic. They offer you a place to question, speculate, hypothesize, wonder, and connect. You can relate your readings to your own experience as a reader and writer, to other readings or class discussions, etc. I am interested in GOOD THINKING here, NOT A SIMPLE SUMMARY.

Some questions that may help you frame your response are:

What is the main point or argument that the author trying to convey?

What data do they use to construct this argument?

Do you feel that they have enough data for their argument?

Were you convinced by their argument, or can you think of other factors or conditions that might have affected their interpretation or might make a more plausible interpretation?

Were you surprised by their argument? Does it reflect or challenge your previous assumptions?

How is the position stated in this article similar or different than other articles we have read, or from issues raised in class?

Obviously, answering the questions listed above could easily be developed into ten page papers. You will probably find the reading responses difficult at first, but they will get easier as you

become familiar with the general literature and arguments surrounding gender and the past. Remember, the goal of these reading responses is to increase your understanding of class material and facilitate discussion. There are many ways to approach them. Feel free to experiment with an approach that works best for you. I expect that each reading response would be from 1-2 pages. The reading responses are due at the end of the class meeting specified on the class list and **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE**.

IMPORTANT NOTE: most of what we will be reading represents professional literature. Most of these articles were not written for students or a lay audience. Thus, you will probably find much of it difficult, and, yes, even tedious. I have tried to keep the difficulty level as low as possible, and, where appropriate, I will provide reading questions to help guide you through even the most complex articles. Also keep in mind that we will be reading a wide range of authors—some may be much more engaging than others.

Class Discussion and Participation

Throughout the semester you will be given a series of short written assignments. These are meant to provide the opportunity for you to really think about and articulate your thoughts on certain issues in advance of class discussions. They will be assigned in class— sometimes with no formal handout— so pay close attention to in-class instructions.

This class must fulfill the student learning outcomes (SLO) for the Oral Communication component of the General Education program. These SLOs include:

1. Students will show proficiency in oral discourse in a variety of contexts
2. Evaluate oral presentations according to established criteria

Several activities throughout the semester are geared towards these student learning outcomes and include weekly class discussion and participation, several in class debates and small group discussion projects, and presentation of research during scheduled poster sessions. Altogether, class participation counts for 80 points toward your final grade (including poster presentations). Attendance is a crucial aspect of class participation since you cannot participate if you do not attend. Attendance counts for 30 points and you can expect that more than four un-excused absences will have a significant negative impact on your grade.

Papers

There will be two major papers (8-12 page) assigned for this course, one for each half of the semester. The first paper focuses on the relationship between the past and present and examines how we use the past in our everyday lives to define gender in the present. The second paper will entail a typical research paper about any topic that relates to gender and the past. We will talk more about both of these papers in class.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a college. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, etc., consult the information on the Angel course page or the course instructor. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported and have serious consequences for your college career.

Electronic Devices: Please turn off cell phones in the classroom. Sending and receiving text messages and calls are not permitted during class time. If you believe you have a legitimate reason for being reached by cell phone during class, please see the instructor for permission. Laptop computers may be used in class for note-taking only.

The breakdown of the various components of the final class grade are as follows.

Reading Summaries (14 @ 7 pts)		100 pts (25%)
Class Discussion and Participation		100 pts (25%)
Several Small Written Assignments		30
General Participation		40
Attendance		30
Paper #1		100 pts (25%)
Journal	20	
Poster Display	20	
Final Paper		60
Paper #2		100 pts (25%)
Abstract		10
Annotated Bibliography		10
Poster Display	20	
Final Paper		60
Total		400 points

Final grades will be calculated on a straight scale (i.e. 90-100%=A; 80-89%=B; 70-79%=C; 55-69%=D). The point value for each grade is presented below.

376-400=A; 360-375=A-; 348-359=B+; 332-347=B; 320-331=B-; 308-319=C+; 292-307=C; 280-291=C-; 240-279=D; <240=E.

Class Outline

Week

1. Jan 24: Introduction: Gender and the Past
Assignment for Thursday: prepare a 1-2 page statement defining the terms “sex,” “gender” and “feminism.”

Jan 26: Discussion: What is gender?
Read: hooks, Introduction and chap 1-4
Assignment: Reading Response
2. Jan 31: Class Discussion: Are men are from Mars and women from Venus? Nature vs. Nurture for the New Millennium
Film: Men, Women and Sex Difference

Feb 2: Picturing the Past: Why does it matter?
Read: Hurcombe 1995
Assignment: Reading Response due; Journal Assignment handed out
3. Feb 7: Gender Difference or Gender Inequality: Where does it come from?
Read: Leacock 1983
Assignment: Reading Response due

Feb 9: Scientific Evidence Shows...
Read: Wylie 1997; Fedigan 1997
4. Feb 14: Bones and Stones: Archaeological Approaches to Gender
Read: Whelan 1991; Hayden 1992
Assignment: Reading Response due

Feb 16: Primates Like Us
Read: Sperling 1991; Angel Link: Bonobo Sex and Society
5. Feb 21: Narratives in Human Evolution: The Original Running Man vs. The Original Eve
Read: Landau 1984
Film: Tales of a Human Dawn

Feb 23: Debate: Man the Hunter and Women the Gatherer: Gender in Human Evolution
Read: Roosevelt 2002; Zilhman 1998 or Fedigan 1986
Assignment: Journal due; Reading Response due
6. Feb 28: The Aggressive Male: The Origins of Warfare?
Read: Haas 1999; Hollimon 2001
Assignment: Reading Response due

March 2: Ideas of Original Matriarchy and the Goddess

Read: Conkey and Tringham 1995 pp. 199-212; Eller 2000 pp. 1-29

7. March 7: Debate: Venus Figurines: Goddesses, Sex Toys or Self-Portraits?
Read: Conkey and Tringham 1995 pp. 212-232; Rice 1991; McDermott 1996
Assignment: Reading Response due

March 9: Poster Session

Assignment: Paper #1 due

8. March 14-16: Spring Break-- No class

9. March 21: Paleo-Artists
Read: Conkey 1997; Russell 1991
Assignment: Paper topics due

March 23: Gender and the Origins of Agriculture

Read: Watson and Kennedy 1991; Crabtree 1991; Hodder 2004

Assignment: Reading Response due

10. March 28: Warrior Women? The Amazons
Read: Angel links

March 30: Gender and the State: The Aztecs and the Inca

Read: Brumfiel 1991, Kellogg 1995, Hastorf 1991

Assignment: Reading Response due

11. April 4: Sex and Gender in Ancient Egypt
Read: Johnson 1996; Angel Links
Assignment: Reading Response due

April 6: Female Power Among the Iroquois

Read: Prezzano 1997; Latta 1991

Assignment: Annotated Bibliography due

12. April 11: Colonialism and Culture Contact
Read: Devens 1986
Assignment: Reading Response due

APRIL 12: SCHOLAR'S DAY

April 13: Salem Witchcraft

Film: The Burning Times

Read: Gregory 1988; Pelka 1992; Gibbon

13. April 18: Victorian "Separate Spheres"
Read: Wall 1991; Kerber 1988
Assignment: Reading Response due

April 20: Western Imperialism and the Creation of the Exotic Other: the Hottentot Venus

Read: Angel links

14. April 25: Making Manliness: Changing Views of the Perfect Man
Read: Kasson 2001 pp 1-76
Assignment: Reading Response due

April 27: (SAAs) Rosie the Riveter

15. May 2: Debate: The 1950s Family: June Cleaver in Context; Or Does Father Know Best?
Read: Coontz 1992 pages 1-41; 255-288; Gillis 1996 Intro and Chap 1-2
Assignment: Reading Response due

May 4: Lessons from the Past; Lessons for the Future
Read: hooks, chap 18-19

Scheduled Final Exam Period: Poster Session and Final Papers Due

Readings

Brumfiel, Elizabeth M.

- 1991 Weaving and Cooking: Women's Production in Aztec Mexico. In *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, edited by J. Gero and M. Conkey, pp. 224-254. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. **(Book on reserve)**

Conkey, M. W.

- 1997 Mobilizing Ideologies: Paleolithic "Art," Gender Trouble, and Thinking About Alternatives. In Lori D. Hager (ed) *Women in Human Evolution*. Routledge, London. Pp. 172-207. **(Book on Reserve)**

Conkey, Margaret W. and Ruth E. Tringham

- Archaeology and the Goddess: Exploring the Contours of Feminist Archaeology. In *Feminisms in the Academy*, edited by D. C. Stanton and A. J. Stewart. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor. Pp. 199-247. **(E-reserve)**

Coontz, S.

- 1992 *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. Basic Books, New York. **(Book on reserve)**

Crabtree, Pam J.

- 1991 Gender Hierarchies and the Sexual Division of Labor in the Natufian Culture of the Southern Levant. In *The Archaeology of Gender: Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Conference of the Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary*, edited by Dale Walde and Noreen D. Willows, pp. 384-391. Archaeological Association, The University of Calgary, Calgary. **(Handout)**

Devens, Carol

- 1986 Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization in New France. *American Quarterly* 38(3) 461-480. **(E-reserve)**

Eller, Cynthia

- 2000 *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*. Beacon Press, Boston. **(Book on reserve)**

Fedigan, Linda Marie

- 1986 The Changing Roles of Women in Models of Human Evolution. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15:25-66 **(E-reserve)**.

- 1997 Is Primatology a Feminist Science? In Lori D. Hager (ed) *Women in Human Evolution*. Routledge, London. pp. 56-75. **(Book on reserve)**

Gibbon, Jenny

- Recent Developments in the Study of The Great European Witch Hunt. **(E-reserves)**

Gillis, John R.

1996 *A World of Their Own Making: Myth, Ritual, and the Quest for Family Values*. Basic Books, New York. **(Book on reserve)**

Gregory, Derek

1988 More at Stake Than Good and Evil. *The Geographical Magazine*. September. pp.24-28. **(E-reserve)**

Haas, Jonathan

1999 The Origins of War and Ethnic Violence. In Carman, John and Anthony Harding (eds) *Ancient Warfare: Archaeological Perspectives*. Sutton Publishing, Phoenix Mill. pp. 11-24. **(E-reserve)**

Hayden, Brian

1992 Observing Prehistoric Women. In *Exploring Gender Through Archaeology*. **(E-reserve)**

Hager, Lori D.

1991 The Evidence for Sex Differences in the Hominid Fossil Record. In *The Archaeology of Gender: Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Conference of the Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary*, edited by Dale Walde and Noreen D. Willows, pp. 46-49. Archaeological Association, The University of Calgary, Calgary. **(Handout)**

Hastorf, Christine A.

1991 Gender, Space and Food in Prehistory. In *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, pp. 132-159. Basil Blackwell, Cambridge, MA. **(Book on reserve)**

Hodder, Ian

2004 Women and Men at Çatalhöyük. *Scientific American*, January 2004. **(E-reserve)**

Hollimon, Sandra E.

2001 Warfare and Gender in the Northern Plains: Osteological Evidence of Trauma Reconsidered. In *Gender and the Archaeology of Death*. Edited by Bettina Arnold and Nancy L. Wicker. Altamira Press, Walnut Creek. Pp. 179-193. **(E-reserve)**

Hurcombe, Linda

1995 Our Own Engendered Species. *Antiquity* 69:87-100. **(E-reserve)**

Johnson, Janet H.

1996 The Legal Status of Women in Ancient Egypt. In Capel, Anne and Glenn Markoe (eds) *Mistress of the House, Mistress of Heaven: Women in Ancient Egypt*. Hudson Hills Press, New York, pp. 175-186. **(E-reserve?)**

Kasson, John F.

2001 Houdini, Tarzan and the Perfect Man: The White Body and the Challenge of Modernity

- in America. Hill and Wang, New York. **(Book on reserve)**
- Kellogg, Susan
 1995 The Women's Room: Some Aspects of Gender Relations in Tenochtitlan in the Late Pre-Hispanic Period. *Ethnohistory* 42(4):563-576. **(E-reserve)**
- Kerber, Linda K.
 1988 Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History. *Journal of American History* 75(1):9-39. **(E-reserve)**
- Landau, Misia
 1984 Human Evolution as Narrative. *American Scientist* 72:262-268. **(E-reserve)**
- Latta, Martha A.
 1991 The Captive Bride Syndrome: Iroquoian Behavior or Archaeological Myth? In *The Archaeology of Gender: Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Conference of the Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary*, edited by Dale Walde and Noreen D. Willows, pp. 375-382. Archaeological Association, The University of Calgary, Calgary. **(Handout)**
- Leacock, Eleanor
 1983 Interpreting the Origins of Gender Inequality: Conceptual and Historical Problems. *Dialectical Anthropology* 7:263-284. **(E-reserve)**
- McDermott, LeRoy
 1996 Self-Representation in Upper Paleolithic Female Figurines. *Current Anthropology* 37(2): 227-275. **(E-reserve)**
- Pelka, Fred
 1992 The "Women's Holocaust." *The Humanist*. September/October. Pages 5-9, 32. **(E-reserve)**
- Prezzano, Susan C.
 1997 Warfare, Women, and Households: The Development of Iroquois Culture. In *Women in Prehistory*, edited by Cheryl Claassen and Rosemary Joyce, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 88-99. **(E-reserve)**
- Rice, P. C.
 1981 Prehistoric Venuses: Symbols of Motherhood or Womanhood? *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37(4):402-414. **(E-reserve)**
- Roosevelt, A. C.
 2002 Gender in Human Evolution: Sociobiology Revisited and Revised. In *Pursuit of Gender: Worldwide Archaeological Approaches*, edited by Sarah Milledge Nelson and Myriam

Rosen-Ayalon. Altamira Press, Walnut Creek. Pp. 355-376. **(E-reserve)**

Russell, Pamela

1991 Men Only? The Myths About European Paleolithic Artists. In *The Archaeology of Gender: Proceedings of the Twenty- Second Annual Conference of the Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary*, edited by Dale Walde and Noreen D. Willows, pp. 346-351. The University of Calgary, Calgary. **(Handout)**

Sperling, Susan

1991 Baboons With Briefcases Vs. Langurs in Lipstick: Feminism and Functionalism in Primate Studies. In Micaela di Leonardo (ed) *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 204-234. **(E-reserve)**

Wall, Diana diZerega

1991 Sacred Dinners and Secular Teas: Constructing Domesticity in Mid-Nineteenth Century New York. *Historical Archaeology* 25(4):69-81. **(E-reserve)**

Watson, Patty Jo and Mary C. Kennedy

1991 The Development of Horticulture in the Eastern Woodlands of North America: Women's Role. In *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, pp. 255-275. Basil Blackwell, Cambridge, MA. **(Book on reserve)**

Whelan, Mary K.

1991 Gender and Archaeology: Mortuary Studies and the Search for the Origins of Gender Differentiation. In *The Archaeology of Gender: Proceedings of the Twenty-second Annual Conference of the Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary*, edited by Dale Walde and Noreen D. Willows, pp. 358-365. Archaeological Association, The University of Calgary, Calgary. **(Handout)**

Wylie, Alison

1997 Good Science, Bad Science, or Science as Usual? Feminist Critiques of Science. In Lori D. Hager (ed) *Women in Human Evolution*. Routledge, London. pp. 29-55. **(Book on reserve)**

Zihlman, Adrienne L.

1998 Women the Gatherer: The Role of Women in Early Hominid Evolution. In *Reader in Gender Archaeology*, edited by Kelly Hays-Gilpin and David S. Whitley, Routledge, New York. Pp. 91-105. **(E-reserve)**