Course Description

Though this seminar will examine the changing nature of gender relations in Latin America across time periods and cultures, it will tend to concentrate most on recent history—that is, the last thirty to forty years. In doing so, we will focus on the most interesting and innovative approaches to Latin American women, and on the events and processes that have had the most dramatic effect on women's lives and experiences. We will treat recent issues in the literature on women in a specific context of social, cultural, and historical transformation. Some of the issues to be discussed are: the nature and content of patriarchal relations; the historical functions of patriarchy; the interaction of gender, class, and race in defining women's subordination; the effect of industrialization, migration, and agrarian transition on women; the role of women in revolution; women's resistance against dictatorship and repression; and the "new feminism" in Latin America.

Office Hours

Tuesday, 12:30-1:30 (Walk-in)

Thursday, 9:30-10:30 (Walk-in)
12:30-2:00 (By Appointment)

4116 Humanities: 263-1822

Course Assignments

1) To keep up with the readings on a weekly basis, and to participate actively in discussion. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized, since the entire focus and success of the course depends on your participation.

2) Two short papers: a 3-5-page book review on a book from the supplementary lists included in the syllabus and its presentation to the class; and a 10-page paper whose main task is to explore an issue emerging from seminar discussion at greater depth, using a limited amount of outside reading.

3) Grading: Papers, 50% (20% for the shorter; 30% for the longer); Class Participation, 50% (including 10% for class presentation).

Schedule of Topics and Readings

(* Means available at Room of One's Own and on Reserve at Helen C. White; # Means part of a xerox packet from Bob's Copy Shop).

Week 1 - Sept. 2: Introduction

UNIT I WOMEN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Week 2 - Sept. 9: The Universal in Woman's Condition: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

#Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Selected poems in translation, in Aliki and Willis Barnstone, *A Book of Women Poets from Antiquity to Now* (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), especially "She Attempts to Refute..." and "She Proves the Inconsistency...

#Octavio Paz, "Juana Ramírez" (including Translator's Note), *Signs*, 5:1 (Autumn 1979), 78-97.

#Electa Arenal, "Comment on Paz's 'Juana Ramírez'," *Signs*, 5:3 (Spring 1980), 552-55.

Week 3 - Sept. 16: Women, Culture Contact, and Colonization

Reading: *Yolanda and Robert Murphy, Women of the Forest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

Week 4 - Sept. 23: Women and the Transition to Capitalism


UNIT II - WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

Week 5 - Sept. 30: Women and Development: An Overview and Panel Discussion

Common Reading:


Book Review Reading:

A) Women in Agriculture


B) Indigenous Women

C) Women and Work
2) June Nash, Helen Safa and Contributors, Women and Change in Latin America (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1986), Parts I and III.
3) Nash and Safa, Parts I, II, and IV.

Week 6 - Oct. 7: Women Household, and Industrialization


***Book Reviews From Week 5 Are Due On Friday, Oct. 10***


Reading: *María Patricia Fernández Kelly, For We Are Sold, I and my People: Women and Industry in Mexico’s Frontier (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983).

UNIT III - WOMEN AND REVOLUTION

Week 8 - Oct. 21: Women and Revolution: Overview and Panel Discussion


#Isabel Larguía and John Dumoulin, "Women's Equality and the Cuban Revolution," in Nash and Safa, Women and Change, pp. 344-68.


Book Review Reading:
A) Cuba
3) "Packet" on Cuba:


4) Allen Young, Gays under the Cuban Revolution (San Francisco: Grey Fox Press, 1981).

B) Nicaragua


Week 9 - Oct. 28: Women in Cuba


Week 10 - Nov. 4: Women in Nicaragua


***Book Reviews From Week 8 Are Due On Friday, Nov. 7***

Week 11 - Nov. 11: The New Feminine Testimonial: Women Revolutionary Poets


Lourdes Casal, "In Cuba," 130-31, and biographical sketch, 124-25.


Soleida Ríos, "Difficult Hour," 252-53; "Of the Sierra," 252-55; "I Also Sing of Myself," 254-59; "Autumn Rains," 258-61; and biographical sketch, 250-51.


UNIT IV - WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS, FEMINISM, REPRESSION, AND EXILE

Week 12 - Nov. 18: Indigenous Women and Dictatorship


Week 13 - Nov. 25: Latin American Feminism


Week 14 - Dec. 2: Women and Torture


Week 15 - Dec. 9: Women, Repression, and Dictatorship (Or: Women as the Bedrock of Life)


***Long Paper Due by Monday, Dec. 15***