

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History  
Semester I, 1992-1993

History 982

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5125 Humanities  
263-1822

Feminism and Feminist Movements in Latin America

Course Description

Since the 1970s, new and innovative forms of feminism have begun to take shape in Latin America. These feminisms have been influenced by events and tendencies as diverse as the debates over the Cuban Family Code (mid-1970s); the experience of Latin American women in exile in Mexico, the United States, and Europe (1970s and '80s); the international feminist movement; the Nicaraguan revolution and guerrilla movements in Central America; and the rise of strong women's movements in response to scarcity and repression throughout Latin America. Given widespread poverty and the intensity of class and race oppression in Latin America, Latin American feminists have, from the very start, been forced to confront head on the many conditions and factors that divide them from their sisters.

Whether or not Latin American feminists have been successful in meeting the many challenges they face continues to be the subject of fierce debate. The same can be said of their relationship to the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions, to the world feminist movement, and to leftist movements in their own countries. In their own right, and as vital examples of "Third World" feminisms, the theory and practice of Latin American feminists raises important questions for feminists throughout the world.

The purpose of this seminar is to study, and engage in, some of these debates. We will begin by examining the history of feminism and feminist movements in Latin America, from the "first wave" of feminist mobilization in the 1900-1940 period, to the emergency of "revolutionary" feminisms in Cuba and Central America in the 1970s and 1980s. We will then examine the rise of contemporary feminisms in the struggles against authoritarianism and in the movements for redemocratization.

Course Requirements

- 1) Active participation in discussion. This does not mean saying "brilliant" things all the time (who knows what they are anyway, and even if we knew, who could say them all the time?), but taking the time and energy to contribute to class discussion, whether with a comment, question, doubt, or criticism. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasized, since the entire focus and success of the course depends on your participation.
- 2) Two short papers, ca. 10 pages each. The first will be an analysis of a life history, or other work based on oral sources, that has to do with Latin American women. The second will be an analysis of a primary source from one of the Latin American feminist movements (such as a

periodical, or a book by a Latin American feminist), or an overview of the contemporary feminist movement in a specific Latin American country. Though I will be happy to provide some guidelines as to what might be appropriate sources, there is a great deal of flexibility as long as the project is discussed with me ahead of time. Methodologies for analyzing different kinds of texts will be part of our weekly discussion; please feel free to bring up any questions or problems with your research in class or in office hours.

3) Grading: Papers, 25% each; Class participation, 50%.

#### LIST OF ASSIGNED BOOKS

(PLEASE NOTE: Books are listed in the order in which they are assigned, and will be available only at Room of One's Own; articles will be provided on a week-by-week basis for photocopying).

1) Domitila Barrios de Chungara, Let Me Speak! Testimony of Domitila, a Women of the Bolivian Mines (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

2) I...Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala (London: Verso Books, 1984).

3) Daphne Patai, Brazilian Women Speak: Contemporary Life Stories (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

4) K. Lynn Stoner, From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Women's Movement for Legal Reform, 1848-1940 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

5) June Hahner, Emancipating the Female Sex: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Brazil (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

6) Margaret Randall, Women in Cuba--Twenty Years Later (New York: Smyrna Press, 1981).

7) Margaret Randall, Sandino's Daughters (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, 1981).

8) Carol Andreas, When Women Rebel: The Rise of Popular Feminism in Peru (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1985).

9) Jane S. Jaquette (ed.), The Women's Movement in Latin America: Feminism and the Transition to Democracy (Winchester, MA: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1989).

10) Elizabeth Jelin (ed.), Women and Social Change in Latin America (London: Zed Books, 1990).

11) Sonia Alvarez, Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women's Movements in Transition Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

#### SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

##### UNIT I- Personal Experiences, Life History, and Oral History

Week 1- Introduction

Week 2- The Struggle over the Narrative

Reading: Barrios de Chungara, Let Me Speak!

Katherine Borland, "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," in Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History, eds. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 63-75.

Daphne Patai, "U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?" in Women's Words, pp. 137-53.

Week 3- Inside/Outside and the "Other"

Reading: Menchú, I... Rigoberta Menchú.

Claudia Salazar, "A Third World Woman's Text: Between the Politics of Criticism and Cultural Politics," in Women's Words, pp. 93-106.

Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" in Women's Words, pp. 111-19.

Week 4- Constructing or Reading a Life

Reading: Patai, Brazilian Women Speak, pp. 1-35; 63-228; 273-347.

Ruth Behar, "Rage and Redemption: Reading the Life Story of a Mexican Marketing Woman," Feminist Studies, 16:2 (Summer 1990), pp. 223-58.

UNIT II- "First-Wave" Feminisms

Week 5- Cuba

Reading: Stoner, From the House to the Streets.

Week 6- Brazil

Reading: Hahner, Emancipating the Female Sex

Week 7- Some Comparative Perspectives

Reading: Alaide Foppa, "The First Feminist Congress in Mexico, 1916," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 5:1 (1979), pp. 192-99.

Paulina Luisi, "Feminism," in Women's Writing in Latin America: An Anthology, eds. Sara Castro-Klarén, Sylvia Molloy, and Beatriz Sarlo (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 249-53.

Alicia Moreau de Justo, "Women in Democracy," in Women's

Writing, pp. 254-62.

Magda Portal, "from My Name is Magda Portal," Women's Writing, pp. 263-72.

\*\*\*PAPER ON ORAL HISTORY/LIFE HISTORY DUE FRIDAY, OCT. 16TH, AT 5:00 P.M.\*\*\*

UNIT III- Revolutionary Feminisms

Week 8- Cuba

Reading: Randall, Women in Cuba.

Isabel Largaña and John Dumoulin, "Women's Equality and the Cuban Revolution," in June Nash, Helen Safá and contributors, Women and Change in Latin America (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1986), pp. 344-68.

Nicola Murray, "Socialism and Feminism: Women and the Cuban Revolution," Parts I and II, Feminist Review, Nos. 2 and 3 (1979), pp. 57-73, 99-108.

Muriel Nazzari, "The 'Woman Question' in Cuba: An Analysis of Material Constraints on Its Solution," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 9:2 (Winter 1983), pp. 246-63.

Week 9- Nicaragua

Reading: Randall, Sandino's Daughters.

Susan Ramírez-Horton, "The Role of Women in the Nicaraguan Revolution," in Thomas W. Walker (ed.), Nicaragua in Revolution (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), pp. 147-59.

Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua," Feminist Studies, 11:2 (Summer 1985), pp. 227-54.

Maxine Molyneux, "The Politics of Abortion in Nicaragua: Revolutionary Pragmatism--or Feminism in the Realm of Necessity?" Feminist Review, No. 29 (May 1988), pp. 114-131.

Week 10- More on Feminism and Revolution

Reading: Maxine Molyneux, "Socialist Societies Old and New: Progress Toward Women's Emancipation?" Monthly Review, July/August 1982, pp. 56-100.

Maxine Molyneux, "Family Reform in Socialist States: The Hidden Agenda," Feminist Review, 21 (Winter 1985), pp. 47-64.

Teresita de Barbieri, "Feminism and the Cuban Women's Federation," fem., July-August 1980, pp. 65-69.

Lois Wessel, "Reproductive Rights in Nicaragua: From the San-

dinistas to the Government of Violeta Chamorro," Feminist Studies, 17:3 (Fall 1991), pp. 537-49.

UNIT IV- Contemporary Feminisms

Week 11- The Andes

Reading: Andreas, When Women Rebel.

Maruja Barrig, "The Difficult Equilibrium Between Bread and Roses: Women's Organizations and the Transition from Dictatorship to Democracy in Peru," in The Women's Movement in Latin America, pp. 114-48.

Cecilia Blondet, "Establishing an Identity: Women Settlers in a Poor Lima Neighbourhood," in Women and Social Change, pp. 12-46.

Rosario León, "Bartolina Sisa: The Peasant Women's Organization in Bolivia," Women and Social Change, pp. 135-50.

Andean Oral History Workshop/Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "Indigenous Women and Community Resistance: History and Memory," Women and Social Change, pp. 151-183.

Week 12- Brazil

Reading: Sonia Alvarez, Engendering Democracy.

Daphne Patai, Brazilian Women Speak, pp. 39-62, 239-47.

Teresa Pires de Rio Caldeira, "Women, Daily Life and Politics," Women and Social Change, pp. 47-78.

Sonia E. Alvarez, "Women's Participation in the Brazilian 'People's Church': A Critical Appraisal," Feminist Studies, 16:2 (Summer 1990), pp. 381-408.

Floris Verucci, "Women and the New Brazilian Constitution," Feminist Studies, 17:3 (Fall 1991), pp. 551-68.

Week 13- Comparative Perspectives

Reading: Ximena Bunster-Burotto, "Surviving Beyond Fear: Women and Torture in Latin America," in Women and Change in Latin America, pp. 297-325.

Nora Amalia Femenía, "Argentina's Mothers of Plaza de Mayo: The Mourning Process from Junta to Democracy," Feminist Studies, 13: 1 (Spring 1987), pp. 9-18.

María del Carmen Feijoó and Mónica Gogna, "Women in the Transition to Democracy," Women and Social Change, pp. 79-114.

María del Carmen Feijoó, "The Challenge of Constructing

Civilian Peace: Women and Democracy in Argentina," The Women's Movement, pp. 72-94.

Themla Gálvez and Rosalba Todaro, "Chile: Women and the Unions," in Women and Social Change, pp. 115-134.

Patricia M Chuchryk, "Feminist Anti-Authoritarian Politics: The Role of Women's Organizations in the Chilean Transition to Democracy," The Women's Movement, pp. 149-184.

Week 14- Feminism, Sexuality, and Sexual Preference

Reading: Daphne Patai, Brazilian Women Speak, pp. 248-69.

Lourdes Argüelles and B. Ruby Rich, "Homosexuality, Homophobia, and Revolution: Notes Toward an Understanding of the Cuban Lesbian and Gay Male Experience," Parts I and II, Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 9:4 (Summer 1984), pp. 683-99, and 11:1 (Autumn 1985), pp. 120-36.

Roger N. Lancaster, "Comment on Argüelles and Rich's 'Homosexuality, Homophobia and Revolution...'" and Reply by Argüelles and Rich, Signs, 12:1 (Autumn 1986), pp. 188-94.

"International Lesbianism: Brazil," Feminist Review, No. 34 (Spring 1990), pp. 8-13.

Week 15- Feminisms, Latin America, and the "Third World" (Concluding Discussion and Reflections).

Reading: Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," Feminist Review, No. 30, Autumn 1988, pp. 61-88.

Teresa De Lauretis, "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness," Feminist Studies, 16:1 (Spring 1990), pp. 115-50.

**\*\*SECOND PAPER ON PRIMARY SOURCE DUE FRIDAY, DEC. 18TH, AT 5:00 P.M.\*\***