

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester II, 1986-1987

History 982

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Feminism and Feminist Movements in Latin America

Course Description

In the past decade, a new and excitingly innovative form of feminism has begun to take shape in Latin America. This feminism has 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 the United States and Europe; 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 is the subject of fierce debate. So is their relationship to the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions, to the world feminist movement, and to leftist movements in their own countries. Both in its own right, then, and as a particularly vital variant of Third World feminism, Latin American feminism's theory and practice raises important questions for feminists throughout the world.

The purpose of this seminar is to study, and engage in, these debates. Thus we will take on the challenge of contemporary history in its purest form; and since everything we read will be, by definition, a primary document, our course will be a research seminar in every sense of the word.

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, even if only with a question or doubt. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized, since the entire focus and success of the course depends on your participation.
- 2) Presentation of research findings or of rough draft of your research paper to the class in the week decided, as a stimulant for further discussion of general issues as well as those specific to your project.
- 3) A research paper of ca. 10-20 pages (depending on topic and available sources), either an intellectual history of one of the broad issues or debates related to Latin American feminism, or a study of a particular country's movement. Remember: all sources will be contemporary, but they must be treated as primary sources (put in historical context, checked against other sources, assumed to be subjective even

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if they are supposedly "scholarly" treatments, etc.). At the same time, the paper is not a major research paper in terms of length or comprehensiveness.

4) A 1-2 page definition of research topic and available sources, due the fifth week of class.

5) Grading: Papers, 45%; Presentations, 15%; Class participation, 40%.

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).

UNIT I- The Material Context

Week 1- Introduction

Week 2- Urban Working Class Women

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

Week 3- Indian and Peasant Women

Reading: *L. Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala (London: Verso Books, 1984).

Week 4- Women and Repression

Reading: *Manlio Argueta, One Day of Life (New York: Random House, 1983).

*Alicia Partnoy, The Little School: Tales of Disappearance and Survival in Argentina (San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1986).

#Ximena Bunster-Burotto, "Surviving Beyond Fear: Women and Torture in Latin America," in June Nash, Helen Safá and contributors, Women and Change in Latin America (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1986), pp. 297-325.

DEFINITIONS OF RESEARCH TOPIC AND AVAILABLE SOURCES DUE BY WEDNESDAY OF WEEK FIVE

(NOTE: Anyone wishing to add urban middle class women to the list of material conditions and able to read Spanish can consult Maruja Barrig, Cinturón de castidad. La mujer de clase media en el Perú, Lima: Mosca Azul, 1980).

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UNIT II- Women and Revolution

Week 5- The Personal Experience of Revolution

Reading: *Oscar and Ruth Lewis and Susan Rigdon, Four Women: Living the Revolution (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1977).

Week 6- Women in Central America

Reading: *Margaret Randall, Sandinista's Daughters (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, 1981).

#Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, "Women in Revolutionary Movements. The Case of Nicaragua," ms., 1981.

#AMES, "Participation of Latin American Women in Social and Political Organizations: Reflections of Salvadoran Women," Monthly Review (June 1982), pp. 11-23.

#Luz Alicia Herrera, "Testimonies of Guatemalan Women," Latin American Perspectives, VII: 2 and 3 (Spring and Summer, 1980), pp. 160-68.

Week 7- Women and State Policy (I): Cuba

Reading: #Isabel Largaña and John Dumoulin, "Women's Equality and the Cuban Revolution," in Nash and Safá, Women and Change, pp. 344-68.

#Elizabeth Croll, "Rural Production and Reproduction: Socialist Development Experiences," in Eleanor Leacock and Helen Safá (eds.), Women's Work: Development and the Division of Labor by Gender (South Hadley, Mass: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1986), pp. 224-56.

#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.

#"The Cuban Family Code," Granma Weekly Review, March 18, 1975, pp. 7-9.

Week 8- Women and State Policy (II): Nicaragua

Reading: #Susan Ramirez-Horton, "The Role of Women in the Nicaraguan Revolution," in Thomas W. Walker (ed.), Nicaragua in Revolution (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), pp. 117-30.

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

#Jane Deighton, Rossana Horsley et al., Sweet Ramparts: Women in Revolutionary Nicaragua (London: War on Want and the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, 1983), selected pages.

Week 9- Revolution and Sexuality

Reading: #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.

#Carlos Alberto Montaner, "Comment on Argüelles and Rich's 'Homosexuality, Homophobia and Revolution...'" and Reply by Argüelles and Rich, Signs, 11:2 (Winter 1986), pp. 415-16.

#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.

Week 10- Women and Revolution, Take Two (OR: What is all the arguing about, anyway, and where do we begin?)

#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.

#Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," reprinted in Lydia Sargent (ed.), Women and Revolution (Boston: South End Press, 1981), pp. 1-41.

#Iris Young, "Beyond the Unhappy Marriage: A Critique of the Dual Systems Theory," in Sargent (ed.), pp. 43-69.

#Florencia E. Mallon, "Patriarchy and the Transition to Capitalism in Central Peru," Feminist Studies, forthcoming.

#Nilüfer Gâgatay, Caren Crown, and Aida Santiago, "The Nairobi Women's Conference: Toward a Global Feminism?" Feminist Studies, 12:2 (Summer 1986), pp. 101-112.

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#Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial
Feminism," Feminist Review, 17 (Autumn 1984), pp. 3-19.

#Bell Hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Among Women,"
Feminist Review, 23 (Summer 1986), pp. 125-38.

UNIT III- Repression and Survival: The New Latin American Feminism

WEEKS 11-13: PAPER PRESENTATIONS: Additional meetings scheduled as needed.

Week 14- The New Latin American Feminism: Brazil and Peru

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

#Marianne Schmink, "Women in Brazilian Abertura Politics,"
Signs, 7:1 (Autumn 1981), pp. 115-34.

#Angela Neves-Xavier de Brito, "Brazilian Women in Exile: The
Quest for an Identity," Latin American Perspectives, 13:2
(Spring 1986), pp. 58-80.

#"Gracias a la Vida: Recounting the Third Latin American
Feminist Meeting in Bertoga, Brazil, July 31-August 4,
1985," Off Our Backs, XVI:1, January 1986, pp. 1-5.

Week 15- The New Latin American Feminism: Chile

We will view and discuss a video on the Chilean women's movement.