

Women and Political Development

Dr. Bessie House-Midamba
Graduate Seminar

Course Description

This seminar will examine the critical role of women in the process of development. A significant focus will be an analysis of the development of the system of patriarchy and its attendant impact on the participation of women in the economic, political, cultural, and social institutions in society. Several broad theoretical paradigms will be utilized which juxtapose the position of women in society within the much broader context of world politics. These theories include liberal theory, Marxist feminism, dual systems theory, African feminism, and the triple model of oppression for women which focuses on the interrelationship between race, class, and sex. The course will provide analysis of the roles of women in the United States, Great Britain, Asia, and Africa and will conclude with a discussion of possible avenues of structural change which may lead to a positive outcome for women across cultures.

The course has two major goals:

a) to provide an analysis of the complexity of factors (historical and contemporary) which have structured and impacted the position of women cross-culturally.

b) to present major theories in the study of women across cultures.

Course Reading

Chou Bihr, Cal Clark, and Janet Clark, *Women in Taiwan Politics*

Bessie House-Midamba, *Class Development and Gender Inequality in Kenya. 1963-1990*

Jane Ollenberger and Helen Moore, *A Sociology of Women: The Intersection of Patriarchy, Capitalism and Colonization*

Catherine McKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*

V.I. Lenin, *The Emancipation of Women*

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*

Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, *Feminist Epistemologies*

On Reserve (in the political science department)

Sylvia Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy*

Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class*

Caroline Brettell and Carolyn Sargent, *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*

Jean Davison, *Voices from Mutira: Lives of Rural Gikuyu Women*

Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*

Jane Parpart and Kathleen Staudt, *Women and the State in Africa*

Sharon Stichter and Jane Parpart, *Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce*

Dorothy McBride Stetson, *Women's Rights in the U.S.A*

(Additional articles and books assigned for reading will also be placed on reserve in the political science department).

Course Assignments

1. *Participation in the Seminar*. You will be expected to complete all assigned readings by class time and to be prepared to participate actively in the discussion of these materials. Active involvement in class discussion is a vital part of the learning experience.

2. *Agenda Paper*. Each class member will choose a seminar meeting at which to present a brief paper on the assigned readings. This paper can provide one of the following: (1) an overview and critical analysis of the week's readings; (2) critical analysis of some aspect of the week's readings; (3) develop and support a line of argument concerning the week's readings.

The paper should be a coherent, analytical treatment of the topic intended to stimulate discussion.

The paper should be no more than 8-10 typewritten pages. Copies should be made for all class members and the instructor. In the seminar, paper presenters should be prepared to give an oral summary of their papers and help lead the discussion.

3. *Research paper*. Each student will complete a major research paper. The paper should be approximately 20 pages in length. Research papers are due on April 23, 1993.

4. *Grading*: Class Participation 25%
Agenda Paper and Oral Presentation 25%
Research Paper 50%

Course Schedule

Week 1 January 18 No Class

Week 2 January 25

Theoretical Approaches to Understanding the Role of Women in Development

Jane C. Ollenburger and Helen Moore, Chapters 1-4

Week 3 February 1

Women's liberation and Politics

Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation*, chapters 1-7

Dorothy McBride Stetson, *Women's Rights in the U.S.A.*, chapters 1-3

Weeks 4-5 February 8 and 15

Women Race and Class

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*. chapters 1-11

Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* , chapters 1-5

Bessie House-Midamba, "Ethnicity, Class, and the Politics of Gender Inequality in Kenya"

Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara South, *All The Women are White. All the Blacks are Men But Some of Us Are Brave*, pgs. 5-85

Ollenburger, chapter 9

Weeks 6-7 February 22 and March 1
Marxist Feminism

Frederich Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* , entire book

Catherine McKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* , chapters 1-5

V.I. Lenin, *The Emancipation of Women* , entire

Jane L. Parpart, "Toward a Materialist Perspective on African Women" in *Patriarchy and Class*

Jeanne Henn, "The Material Base of Sexism: A Mode of Production Analysis", in *Patriarchy and Class*

Week 8 March 8
Feminist Epistemologies

Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, *Feminist Epistemologies* , chapters 1-7

Janet Kourany and James Sterba, *Feminist Philosophies* , pgs. 261-391

Week 9 March 15
Reproduction

Stetson, chapter 4

Kourany and Sterba, pgs 80-95

Week 10 March 22
Spring Break Week
No classes

Weeks 11-12 March 29 and April 5
The Role of Women in Kenyan Development

Bessie House-Midamba, *Class Development and Gender Inequality in Kenya, 1963-1990*

Thomas Weisner and Susan Abbott, "Women, Modernity, and Stress: Three Contrasting Contexts for Change in East Africa, pgs. 421-451

Jean Davison, *Voices from Mutira: Lives of Rural Gikuyu Women* , entire

Weeks 13-14 April 12 and 19
Women in Asia

Chou Biher and Cal Clark, *Women in Taiwan Politics*, entire

Rubie Watson, Gender and Person in Chinese Society pgs. 120-133 in *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*

John McCreery, "Women s Property Rights and Dowry in China and South Asia," pgs. 268-278.

Weeks 15-16 April 26 and May 3

Women Development and Human Rights

Rhoda Howard, "Womens Rights in English-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa" in *Human Rights and Development in Africa*, pgs. 46-74

Claude Welch, "Human Rights as a Problem in Contemporary Africa", in *Human Rights and Development in Africa* , pgs. 7-11.

Ellen Gruenbaum, "The Movement Against Clitoridectomy and Infibulation in Sudan: Public Health Policy and the Womens Movement," pgs. 411-422 in *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective*

Bankole Thompson, "Marital and Inheritance Laws in Sierre Leone, *African Society of International and Comparative law* ,

Bessie House-Midamba, "The Phenomenon of Legal Pluralism and Attendant Internal Conflicts in Marital and Inheritance Laws in Kenya," *Africa*, upcoming 1994, Rome, Italy.

Week 17 May 10

Final Examination Week