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Hours: M 4-5 PM; W 2-3 PM

Anth 439/539: Feminism and Ethnography

This course explores the relationship among feminism, ethnography, and representation using current literature on the topic. Since the 1980's there has been a literary, interpretive, anti-positivist turn in ethnography (descriptions of other cultures) focusing on how the "Other" is conceived, documented, and then inscribed in a textual product (the ethnography). It has been pointed out that the anthropologist not only documents the "Other" but also creates the "Other" in relation to the "Self." Questions have been raised about reflexivity, reciprocity, subjectivity, and examining one's own positionality in the texts written about others. Anthropologists are now experimenting with shared authorship, collaboration, and multiple voices and some are committed to a socially engaged, action-oriented public anthropology.

Feminist theory has been concerned with the above issues since the 1980s. Subjectivity and reflexivity have been examined in feminist terms especially in the context of the inequality between men and women and the power of knowledge. Moreover, feminist research methodology has some commonalities with ethnographic methodology such as ethical concerns, sensitivity to hierarchy, and responsiveness to the needs of the informants.

I welcome questions and feedback via email, telephone, in writing, and in person during office hours. I have a comment bag available at every class for quick feedback.

Please turn off all mobile devices during class. Please, no texting. Computer use is permitted for class related activities, such as note taking.

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the UO.

Respect for the instructor and fellow students is imperative. Some of the materials in this class may be controversial. It is important that we listen to and respond civilly to one another, even when we don't agree. I encourage everyone to express their opinions freely.

The class utilizes a **Blackboard** site. Under Course Documents you can find the course syllabus and exams. Under Readings you can find most of the readings.

Requirements:

1. **10%** of your grade is based on attendance.
2. **25%** of the grade is based on oral participation. Discussion is the mode of the course, and students will lead the class in seminar style. 10% is based on general participation, and 15% is based on presentations. Students are required to pick 2 dates on which to present and lead discussion in class on the issues raised in the readings. I will let you know who your partner is. The first date should be approximately during the first 6 classes. Please let me know ASAP which dates you prefer. Using the Blackboard Discussion Board (under Tools), the presenter is required to post a summary/outline and questions for discussion on the readings prior to the oral

presentation (approximately 2 pages, double spaced). In your posting, provide a summary of the main points of the reading, including definitions of key terms; in the interest of sharpening critical faculties, students may wish to comment on the strengths and/or the weaknesses of the author's arguments. The oral presentation should also include a profile of the author and the context of the publication. **The deadline is 6 PM of the day previous to the presentation.** All students are encouraged to use Discussion Board to post ideas, responses and questions.

3. **30% plus 35% (20% plus 25% for graduate students)** of your grade is based on two installments of an evaluative/interpretive/critical journal on the required readings. I suggest that students write a few pages per session, and have them ready before class. These pages can then be re-thought, expanded and/or edited into the journal. The first written installment is due **Feb 9**, 9 pp., covering the readings including Feb 4 (you may omit two articles). The second is due **March 19**, 10 pp., covering the readings through the end of the term (you may omit 2 articles). Guidelines will be mutually developed, see end of syllabus.

Graduate Student Project (20%): Each graduate student will write an original paper or project report (10 pages plus references). Ideally, you will propose a project that relates directly to or is a part of your graduate work. You may choose an ethnography to read and critically review (I can help you find one that dovetails with your interests). You may do a mini-ethnography or prepare systematically for fieldwork. Collaborative projects are welcome. An oral presentation on your project will be made on **March 11** (20-30 minutes). The paper is due **March 13**. A 1-page proposal for the project/paper is due **Jan 21** and a 2-pp. outline is due **Feb 15**.

Readings (most on BB)

All required readings must be read prior to the class in which we discuss them.

Required book in the bookstore:

Wolf, M. 1992. *A Thrice-told Tale. Feminism, Postmodernism and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford University Press.

Optional:

Silverman, Carol. *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora*. Oxford, 2012. (required pages in this book are on BB)

Grading Rubric:

A Outstanding performance relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at the highest level.

B Performance that is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates a mastery of course content at a high level.

C Performance that meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates an adequate understanding of course content.

D Performance that is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F Performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the course content.

Course Objectives

- Identify definitions of feminism, ethnography, gender.
- Trace the trajectory of the study of gender in the discipline of anthropology.
- Trace the issues that arise in feminist fieldwork methods.
- Identify the relationship among feminism, ethnography, and representation.
- Define postmodernism and its relationship to anthropology and feminism.
- Define shared authorship, collaboration, reciprocity, reflexivity, action anthropology and public anthropology.
- Interrogate whether a critical an egalitarian, emancipatory, inclusive, and feminist anthropology is possible.

Outline

1. Jan 5. Overview of the Issues. Discussion of various definitions of feminism and ethnography. Selection of articles for oral presentations.

2. Jan 7. Anthropology of women to feminist anthropology: what are the accomplishments, failures, future directions?

Di Leonardo, Micaela

1991 Introduction: Gender, Culture and Political Economy: Feminist Anthropology in Historical Perspective. In *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*, ed. M. Di Leonardo, University of California, pp. 1-48.

3. Jan 12. Feminist fieldwork methods: what are the issues?

Wolf, Diane

1996 Introduction. In *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, ed. D. Wolf, pp. 1-55. Westview Press.

4. Jan 14. Feminist methods and ethnographic methods: complementary? contradictory?

Abu-Lughod, Lila

1990 Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography? *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Issue #9, pp. 7-27.

Stacey, Judith

1988 Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography? *Women's Studies International Forum* 11(1):21-27.

5. Jan 21. The crisis of representation in ethnography. What is postmodernism?

Clifford, James

1986 Introduction: Partial Truths. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. J. Clifford and G. Marcus, pp. 1-26. University of California Press.

Visweswaran, Kamala. 1994. *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, University of Minnesota Press. pp. TBA

6. Jan 26. Postmodernism and Feminism. Convergences? Critiques?

Mascia-Lees, F., P. Sharpe and C.B. Cohen

1989 The Postmodern Turn in Anthropology: Cautions from a Feminist Perspective. *Signs* 15(1):7-33.

Di Leonardo, Micaela

1993 What a Difference Political Economy Makes: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era. *Anthropological Quarterly* 66(2):76-80.

7. Jan 28. Collaboration: Reflexive, reciprocal methods in fieldwork and text: subjectivity in the field.

Lassiter, Luke

2005 *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. University of Chicago Press, pp. 48-75.

Lawless, Elaine

1992 "I Was Afraid Someone Like You... an Outsider... Would Misunderstand." Negotiating Interpretive Differences Between Ethnographers and Subjects. *Journal of American Folklore* 105(417):302-314.

8. Feb 2. Female ethnographers: writing styles, theoretical viewpoints.

Behar, Ruth

1995 Introduction : Out of Exile. In *Women Writing Culture*, eds. Behar, Ruth and Deborah Gordon, pp. 1-29. University of California..

Powdermaker, Hortense

1967/2012. A Women Going Native. In *Ethnographic Fieldwork; An Anthropological Reader*, eds. A. Robben and J. Sluka, pp. 65-75. Blackwell.

9. Feb 4. Feminist Participatory Research. Action Research.

Cancian, F. and C. Armstead

1992 Participatory Research. In *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, edited by E.F. Borgatta, pp. 1427 - 1432.

Benmayor, Rina

1991 Testimony, Action, Research, and Empowerment: Puerto Rican Women and Popular Education. In *Women's Words: the Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed S. Gluck and D. Patai, pp. 159-174. NY: Routledge.

Video on Benmayor's recent project: U Stories: Latina Life Stories (3:58)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLbh2gw8EsA

Optional: Rina Benmayor (009) Theorizing Through Digital Stories: The Art of "Writing Back" and "Writing For"

<http://www.academiccommons.org/commons/essay/theorizing-through-digital-stories>

10. Feb 9. Journal Due. Film: *Some Women of Marrakech* (E. Fernea, 1977) (in class viewing). Muslim women and visual representation.

She Who Tells a Story: Female Lens on Iran and the Arab world, 19 September 2013

(photography exhibition, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston):

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24119403>

11. Feb 11. Muslim women and representation issues.

Abu-Lughod, Lila.

2002 "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104(3): 783-790.

2013 *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Harvard University Press. Introduction, pp. 1-26, and Chapter 1, pp. 27-53.

12. Feb 16. The question of essentialism: postcolonial women.

Mohanty, Chandra

1984 Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Boundary 2*, vol. 12/13, issue 3/1, Spring/Fall 1984, pp. 333-358.

2003 Under Western Eyes Revisited: Solidarity through Anti-capitalist Struggles. In *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Duke University, pp. 221-251.

13. Feb 18. Guest Lecture, Prof. Lamia Karim: Women, Labor, and Microfinance in Bangladesh.

Karim, Lamia

2011 *Microfinance and Its Discontents*. Chapter 2: The Research Terrain, pp. 35-63. University of Minnesota Press.

2014 Analyzing Women's Empowerment: Microfinance and Garment Labor in Bangladesh.

Fletcher Forum of World Affairs 38(2):153-166.

14. Feb 23. Sexuality, Emotion, Subjectivity.

Kulick, Don and M. Wilson

1995 *Taboo: Sex, Identity, and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*, pp. 1-28
Routledge.

15. Feb 25. Fiction, ethnography, and textual experimentation.

Behar, Ruth

1996 *The Vulnerable Observer*, pp. 1-33. Beacon Press.

Wolf, M.

1992 *A Thrice-told Tale. Feminism, Postmodernism and Ethnographic Responsibility*. Stanford University Press.

16. March 2. Con't : Fiction, ethnography, and textual experimentation.

Con't Wolf.

17. March 4. Romani (Gypsy) women: ethnography and activism in the Balkans and the US.
Videos of Weddings in Macedonia and New York City.

Silverman, Carol

2014 *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora*. Oxford Univeristy Press. Chapter 4 (pp. 59- 81) and Chapter 5 (pp. 83- 99). As you read, make sure to look at some of the accompanying videos and photos, and listen to the music on the website that is referenced on these pages: www.oup.com/us/romaniroutes. The username is Music1 and the password is Book5983. Also read text supplement 4.1 on the website.

18. Mar 9: Balkan Roma: Gender, Activism, and Education

Silverman, Carol.

2012 Education, Agency, and Power among Macedonian Muslim Romani Women in New York City. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (Symposium on Romani Feminisms) 38(1): 30-36.

Explore this website, especially the videos:
<http://www.romawoman.org/>

19. March 11. Presentations.

Graduate paper due Friday March 13.
Journals due Thursday, March 19, noon.

Journal Guide (draft)

Points will be deducted for late papers and for papers exceeding the page limit.

No folders, please: 1" margins, double-spaced, one staple in left hand corner.

You are encouraged to group articles and emphasize theoretical themes, and point out analytical contrasts and similarities.

If you cite relevant authors in the required readings, just cite the page number.

You may omit 2 articles in each journal installment.

1. What are the author's main objectives, goals and agendas?
2. What are the major findings?
3. What is the context for the writing of this article? To what body of theory does the article relate?
4. How does the article relate to the issues and theoretical debates previously discussed in class? You may also bring in readings from outside the class, and of course, your own experiences.
5. Do you agree with the arguments? why? why not?
6. How do you evaluate the article? What questions does it raise for you?

