GENDER, MARGINALITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE
Course Code: SCIL10073

School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh
Honours Option 2013-14

Time and Venue: Monday 11.10-13.00
Seminar Room 5, Chrystal Macmillan Building

Course Convenor: Radhika Govinda
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** THIS HANDBOOK IS AVAILABLE IN LARGER PRINT IF REQUIRED **
Course Description & Aims

The focus of Gender, Marginality and Social Change is on examining, from a gender analytical lens, the intersections and interactions between people’s lived experiences, socially structured institutional arrangements and processes, and collective action. It aims at developing a better understanding of how these (re)create, challenge and transform marginality and marginalization. The course seeks to uncover different aspects of the gender politics of women’s and social movements, the state, civil society actors, including the role of development NGOs and donors, in attempts to bring about social change. The course draws on concepts and theories from gender studies, development studies, and critical and political sociology.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will have learnt about both the theoretical and practical applications of the web of concepts around, gender, intersectionality, marginality, rights and social change. They will have developed an understanding of the value of comparative analysis, and obtained skills in examining and articulating about contemporary development processes, social and political movements, and everyday social change, employing a gendered lens.

Teaching Methods & Format

The course will be delivered in two hour sessions per week, using a combination of readings and lectures and interactive pedagogies, including by engaging the students through experiential learning, critical thinking, micro-research and presentations. Students will be encouraged to critically engage with relevant scholarly texts, comparative case studies, speeches, manifestos and campaign documents, website information, films, and development reports.

Class Preparation, Readings and Resources

All students are expected to prepare in advance of each session by doing the relevant reading, and jotting down 5 key points and/or questions per reading. These are likely to be drawn upon during the session, especially in the activities planned before or after the lecture. The lecture slides, readings and resources will be made available through Learn. Please ensure that you regularly check the course-related announcements and folders on Learn.

Discussion of Sensitive Topics

The discipline of Sociology in general and this course in particular address a number of topics that some students might find sensitive or, at times, distressing. Please read this handbook carefully, and if there are any topics by which you may feel distressed, please seek advice from the course convenor and/or your Personal Tutor. For more general issues you may consider seeking the advice of the Student Counselling Service: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-counselling.

Students with Learning Difficulties

Advice, guidance and support materials are available to students with learning difficulties. Well in advance of coursework deadlines, you should contact the University Disability Office for further information. See the Disability Office website: http://www.disability-office.ed.ac.uk/

Assessment

Assessment for the course is based on a short essay worth 25% and a long essay worth 75%. A list of essay questions and details pertaining to essay writing and submission are provided at the end of this handbook and are also posted on Learn, together with a link to the School-wide marking descriptors.

Electronic Submission of Essays
Honours students will submit online using our submission system – ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy. Marked course work, grades and feedback will be returned online – you will not receive a paper copy of your marked course work or feedback. For information, help and advice on submitting coursework and accessing feedback, please see the ELMA wiki at https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA

**Academic Misconduct in Submission of Essays**

Coursework submitted to the Undergraduate Teaching Office will be regarded as the final version for marking. Where there is evidence that the wrong piece of work has been deliberately submitted to subvert hand-in deadlines - e.g. in a deliberately corrupted file - the matter may be treated as a case of misconduct and may be referred to the School Academic Misconduct Officer.

**Late Submission of Essays**

The School of Social & Political Science does not operate a system of ‘extensions’. If you are submitting an essay late you should also complete a Late Penalty Waiver (LPW) form explaining any mitigating circumstances. In the absence of a LPW, or where a LPW is submitted without a genuine case for mitigation late penalties will be applied. Note that if you do have good reason for being late with an essay, and you provide adequate evidence explaining this, you will not be penalised! Please see the Sociology Honours Handbook for full details of our procedures.

**Plagiarism**

You must ensure that you understand what the University regards as plagiarism and why the University takes it seriously. All cases of suspected plagiarism, or other forms of academic misconduct, will be reported to the School Academic Misconduct Officer. You'll find further information in the Sociology Honours Handbook, and at the following site: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/honours/what_is_plagiarism

**Feedback and Evaluation**

The course will be evaluated by questionnaires given to all students at the end of the semester. Comments made by staff, students and external examiners will be fed back into course revision.

**Course Schedule**

- **Week 1** 13 January: Intersectionality and change
- **Week 2** 20 January: Class, gender and patriarchy
- **Week 3** 27 January: Questions of caste, race and ethnocentrism
- **Week 4** 3 February: Sexual politics and marginality
- **Week 5** 10 February: Honour, religious identity and fundamentalisms
- **Week 6** 24 February: Women and women’s movements in postcolonial nation-states and grassroots democracy
- **Week 7** 3 March: Politics of the ‘poor and marginalized’: NGOs, development and feminism
- **Week 8** 10 March: Mobility, marginality and gender
- **Week 9** 17 March: Migration, displacement and rights
- **Week 10** 24 March: Globalization and pathways of change for the marginalized
WEEK-WISE SESSION OUTLINE

Week 1  Intersectionality and change
Intersectionality – useful for understanding the interaction between individuals’ lived experiences, socially structured institutional arrangements and processes, and collective mobilizations – has been heralded as the cutting edge of contemporary feminist theory. The first session will introduce the students to the concept of intersectionality, and how it can be, and shall be, employed as a lens to study various actors, issues and contexts pertaining to gender politics, marginality and social change. The session will also problematise ‘gender politics’, ‘marginality’ and ‘social change’.

Key Readings

Additional Readings

Activity
- In-class review of clips from the film East is East (1999) using the concept of intersectionality.

Week 2  Class, gender and patriarchy
Drawing on historical explorations of industrialization, working class politics and labour movements, this session exposes students to the visible and invisible intersections of gender and class, patriarchy and capitalism. It tackles issues such as gender division of labour, marginal position of women and in the labour market, job segregation by sex, unequal wages, crisis of care-giving and impoverishment of women, which remain of relevance even today.

Key Readings

**Additional Readings**


**Activities**

- Critical review of excerpts from Elizabeth Roberts’ *A Woman’s Place, An Oral History of Working Class Women 1890-1940* to evaluate its contemporary relevance.

**Week 3 Questions of caste, race and ethnocentrism**

The central focus of this session will be on identifying who are the imagined subjects of women’s and social movements, and exploring whether the intersectionality of race/ caste and gender are recognized by movement actors. The session will critically examine women in Civil Rights and women’s movements in the UK and the US and compare and contrast this with women in Dalit and women’s movements in India to unpack the marginalization of women and gender related concerns in movements against race- and caste-based discrimination, and of women of color and women from lower caste and ex-untouchable communities in women’s movements. It will also examine whether and how women of color and women from lower caste and ex-untouchable communities are subverting, challenging and transforming their experiences of marginalization. In doing so, it will also touch upon the contentious issue of ethnocentrism in feminist praxis and knowledge production.

**Key Readings**


**Additional Readings**


**Activity**

- Compare and contrast the writings of Black feminist scholar activist bell hooks and Dalit (ex-untouchable) feminist scholar activist Annie Namala with reference to women of color/ Dalit women, and women in Civil Rights/Dalit movements and women’s movements in the United States and in India.

**Week 4 Sexual politics and marginality**

This session will engage with ‘normalising’ and ‘alternative’ discourses, movements and development politics pertaining to sexual identities. It will critically analyse issues of subjectivity and heteronormativity in society as well as women’s and social movements. Students will be exposed to the challenges and dilemmas that the politics of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex identities and activism pose to feminist praxis and theory as they attempt to emerge from the margins of both.

**Key Readings**


**Additional Readings**


**Activities**
Imagine Ugandan LGBT rights activist David Kato were to have met the representatives of Voices Against 377 on 11 December 2013. What would they have said to each other about queer intersectionality and LGBT activism in Uganda and India? What advice would Kato have given to the representatives of Voices Against 377? Write up this imagined conversation in small groups and enact it in class.

Group discussion on Ismat Chughtai’s *The Quilt* (1942).


**Week 5 Honor, religious identity and fundamentalisms**

The focus of this session shall be on honor, religious identity and fundamentalisms from a gender analytical lens. Religions tend to construct women as weak, subordinate and as biological and cultural reproducers of the community. The honor of the community is typically mapped on the body of the woman. What does this mean for women’s autonomy and agency? Is women’s experience different from that of men’s in contexts of religious fundamentalism and related violence? How do women and men’s activists respond to religious fundamentalism? Students will explore answers to these and other such questions by examining the intersections of religion and patriarchy, and religious fundamentalism and women’s activism in American, Middle Eastern and Asian contexts.

**Key Readings**


**Additional Readings**


**Activities**

- Film viewing and discussions on Vincent Paronnaud and Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* (2007) (set in Iran) and/or Rakesh Sharma’s *Final Solution* (2004) (set in India).
- Group work to compare and contrast case studies of feminist and queer activists and organizations resisting and challenging Muslim, Christian and Hindu fundamentalisms in Nova Scotia, Canada, Sub-Saharan Africa, Lebanon, the US, and Gujarat, India, drawing
Week 6  Women and women’s movements in postcolonial nation-states and grassroots democracy

Do women and women’s movements and the state co-construct each other? Do women and women’s movements engage with the state and make demands from it? Or do they challenge and subvert its authority? Why has the post-colonial state been a central reference point for women and women’s movements? How does the state re-present women? What is the position of the state on women’s movements? And is the state a unitary entity? What does looking at it from a feminist lens suggest? In this session, students will historically trace the formation and growth of the nation-state in postcolonial contexts, and interrogate the changing relationship of women and women’s movement with it. Students will also examine the more recent renewal of interest in affirmative action, grassroots democracy and the local state vis-à-vis women’s empowerment. Do affirmative action policies promote women’s political participation in grassroots democracy and the local state politics? Does such participation contribute to their empowerment and help achieve the goal of gender equality? Students will be encouraged to explore answers to these and other such questions.

Key Readings

Additional Readings

Activities
- Viewing of film Queens of the Grassroots or Because Our Cause is Just and group-based in-class review of the film.
- Comparing and contrasting women, women’s movements and state relationships in India and Brazil.
Week 7 Politics of the ‘poor and marginalised’: NGOs, development and feminism

The session will trace the rise and expansion of NGOs, the prevailing discourses and politics of development, especially empowerment, and the opportunities, challenges and dilemmas that they pose for feminism in the era of neoliberal economic policies and globalisation. It will examine who exactly are the ‘poor and marginalised’ that NGOs choose to work with and in whose name donors are willing to fund projects. What qualifies a certain group to be termed ‘poor and marginalised’ by development actors? Are NGOs truly the vehicles of women’s empowerment? Through case studies, students will critically examine women’s activism in different spatial contexts, with an emphasis on NGOs involved in organizing women through self-help groups and micro-credit financing initiatives. The session will also engage with the debates on ‘professionalization of feminism’, ‘depoliticization of activism’ to evaluate what has been the impact of NGO-led activism on the feminist enterprise.

Key Readings

Additional Readings

Activities
- Student presentation and discussion: students will have individually or in small groups looked up the websites of NGOs working with women and/or gender-related themes nationally and internationally, and will present, compare and contrast the NGOs’ objectives, ideologies, and issues
- Small group discussion on the ten case studies of women’s movements provided in Batliwala, S. (ed.) (2008) Changing their world: concepts and practices of women’s movements, AWID

Week 8 Mobility, gender and social and spatial exclusions

The session will discuss spatial dimensions of gender issues and inequalities in the context of increasing mobility requirements and practices of social life. Evidence will be presented to show that the ability to move in physical and virtual spaces is closely linked to abundant resources and high-level positions in the social structure. The risk of social and spatial exclusions for
disadvantaged and vulnerable women will be discussed. In particular, we will examine how poor transport access, lack of time and traditional roles in conjugal and family life are major obstacles preventing women from widening their activity spaces, and how individuals and families find various ways to adapt and face challenges arising from mobility. These adaptations have a number of important implications for women and mothers’ lives, some of which will be discussed with reference to issues of mobility and migration.

**Key Readings**


**Additional Readings**


**Week 9 Migration, displacement and rights**

The session will explore recent trends and shifts in migration and displacement patterns and state policies from a gendered perspective. Going beyond these state-centric accounts where migration and displacement are defined in terms of territorial boundaries, the session will also employ an intersectional lens to examine the experiential narratives of the migrant and displaced subjects themselves. It will pay particular attention to feminization of migrant flows, and issues of livelihoods, entitlements and rights. Drawing attention to the political economy of resettlement processes, the session will also explore how social activism can create new spaces for migrant and displaced women and men to assert their rights.

**Key Readings**

Week 10  Globalization and pathways of change for the marginalized
Globalization has been hailed as a new and unique stage in world politics. It has been celebrated for the spread of democracy among societies and peoples across the world. Globalization has also been dismissed as being nothing more than the last stage in capitalism. It has been criticized for the demise of the long standing nation-state. By way of concluding the course, this session will critically examine to which pathways of global social change in the 21st century the lens of intersectionality conceptually and practically lends itself to better. The session will pay special attention to issues of universality and localized specificities in the ways in which the ‘poor and marginalized’ are constructed and engaged with.

Key Readings

Additional Readings

**Activities**

- Group discussion on pathways of change for the marginalized by referring to any one of the thematic sessions in the course, and the aforementioned journal articles and book chapters.
- Survey and critical review of websites of 5 international development organizations and NGOs, and analysis of the language and discourse employed with respect to pathways of change for the marginalized, capturing all references to intersectionality, human rights and social justice.
ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DETAILS ON WRITING AND SUBMISSION

Choose any one of the following questions to write your short essay:


2. Reflect upon the gender politics of two of the more recent popular mobilizations for change, namely, Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street.

3. Review from the perspective of queer intersectionality the Ugandan film *Call Me Kuchu* (2013), with particular reference to issues of gender, marginality and social change. Available at: [http://www.iwannawatch.co/2013/05/call-me-kuchu-2012/](http://www.iwannawatch.co/2013/05/call-me-kuchu-2012/) (last accessed 14 December 2013)

SHORT ESSAY SUBMISSION

Your short essay is due no later than noon on Monday 24\textsuperscript{th} February. You must submit your essay through ELMA. Penalties apply for late submission.

- Your short essay should be between 1400-1600 words.
- Essays above 1,600 words will be penalized using the Ordinary level criterion of 1 mark for every 20 words over length: anything between 1,601 and 1,620 words will lose one point, between 1,621 and 1,640 two points, and so on.
- Note that the lower 1400 figure is a guideline for students which you will not be penalized for going below. However, you should note that shorter essays are unlikely to achieve the required depth and that this will be reflected in your mark.
- Do not put your name/matriculation number on the essay, only your Exam Number.
- Please also state a precise word count.

Essays submitted on time will be marked and returned through ELMA within three working weeks.

Write your long essay on any one of the following topics:

1. What are the key goalposts for gender equality in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century? Justify your answer with examples.
2. ‘Since the early 1980s, lesbians, feminists of color, postcolonial critics and queer theorists, as well as postfeminist and anti-feminist women, have exposed the ethnocentric and heteronormative conceits and consequences of western feminism.’ Critically examine the statement in the context of debates on universal sisterhood.
3. ‘If the woman does not want to be mother, the nation is on its way to die.’ Critically examine the relationship between gender, nation-states and nationalisms in the light of this statement.
5. ‘It is important to empower girls and women because it leads to economic growth and poverty reduction.’ Unpack the gender politics of neoliberal development with reference to this statement.

6. Can the state empower women? Justify your answer with examples.

7. Using any two country case studies, discuss the interplay between masculinities, marginalization and development.

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**LONG ESSAY SUBMISSION**

Long essays must be submitted through ELMA no later than **noon on Monday 28th April**.

- Essays should be no longer than 4500 words and no shorter than 3500 words, excluding bibliography. A good essay is likely to be close to the upper limit.
- The penalty for excessive word length in coursework is one mark deducted for each additional 20 words over the limit. The limit is 4500 words, so anything between 4501 and 4520 words will lose one point, and so on.
- Do not put your name/matriculation number on the essay, only your Exam Number.
- Please also state a precise word count.
- Submission procedures are the same as the short essay – you must submit an electronic copy via ELMA.

Students may submit a (non-assessed) **long essay plan** for feedback—this should be in bullet point form and not longer than ONE A4 side— in Week 10 (please email as file attachments). Comments and advice on these will be given during office hours in Week 11.

Marked essays will be returned through ELMA within three working weeks.

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**Planning and Writing Your Essays**

Here are some useful points to bear in mind:

1. Start in good time! Don’t rush it!

2. First make sure that you **understand the question** and have **defined** any key terms. Draft some **provisional headings** relating to key points/aspects of the question. There is no single formula for an essay plan, but investing time at the planning stage is always worthwhile, however pressed you feel. Writing the question at the head of your plan may help to clarify your thinking and ensure that you answer the question which has been set.

3. Next, identify and review relevant readings. Remember, at Honours level, the reading list is just the beginning point, and for assessment purposes you need to go beyond this list and do further reading. Make notes and organise the readings in accordance with your plan headings, taking the opportunity to revise the provisional headings in the light of your review of the course materials and other relevant readings. You can go beyond the reading list by following up references in the bibliographies of articles and books you have found particularly useful. You can skim through back copies of relevant journals (see reading list for examples) or search the Library catalogue and E-JOURNALs. Social science gateways are often useful ways to access relevant material: see, for example, [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/subject/soesci](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/subject/soesci). By now, you should be formulating an **argued response** to the question, and organising the relevant material in a way that will support your argument.
4. Once you are clear about the material, and how it will support your argument, you should organise it into paragraphs. You should try to ensure that the main point conveyed by each paragraph is supported by at least one good example selected from your notes on the relevant material. At this stage, you would do well to consider the maximum word length, and allocate the appropriate number of words to each essay section.

5. When you are ready to write, you need to come up with a good introductory paragraph. This should identify the main issue to be addressed, and indicate your chosen approach to it, but try to go beyond a bald re-statement of the question. If you feel stuck, you may find it helpful to write a provisional introduction, then come back and revise it in the light of the completed essay.

6. Be sure to use a recognised system of referencing and citation and be careful to cite all sources clearly. Distinguish between academic sources and other less authoritative sources such as articles, blogs, campaign web-sites etc. DO NOT USE WIKIPEDIA—IT IS NOT FACT CHECKED AND GENERALLY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CREDIBLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

7. Throughout the writing stage, be prepared to prune if it becomes clear that you are writing more for a given section than your plan has allowed for. Always keep the needs of the question uppermost in your mind and ask yourself what work each section is doing in helping you to answer the question. Think of your essay as an argument, progressing by stages, clearly linked, and supported by well-chosen evidence. Ask yourself: What work is each section doing? Have I linked each section? Have I provided enough signposts?

8. Your essay needs to have a well-argued conclusion. Avoid introducing new ideas or arguments right at the end of the essay, or taking off a new direction. Your final paragraphs should draw together the main threads of the argument that you have been developing throughout the essay.

9. Always read through your draft essay carefully and redraft as necessary. By re-reading or re-drafting, you can at least eliminate the spelling mistakes and awkward phrases that will create an unfavourable impression, and do less than justice to all the work that may have gone into the essay. Reading your essay aloud will help you to identify any troublesome sentence structures. Longer sentences will probably be easier to read if broken down into shorter ones. Ideally, if you are sufficiently organised, leave your essay to one side for a day or two before returning to it for final revisions. You will almost certainly find that things that seemed clear to you at the time of writing are now no longer so clear, and need to be re-worded. You may also find that your brain has been unconsciously working away at the issues raised, and that you now see a better way of arguing your case, or of organising the material.

Essay Marking
A copy of the School-wide marking descriptors can be found at http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/undergrad/honours/assessment_and_regs/marketing_descriptors

External Examiners
University Assessment Regulations require that every course be monitored by an external examiner appointed by the University. This nominated person will also attend the Board of Examiners. The External Examiners for this course for session 2013-2014 are as follows: Dr Esther Dermott, University of Bristol, and Dr Michael Halewood, University of Essex.