FU/BEST Program

Name: Dr. Heike Schimkat

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Course title: Women's and Gender Studies in Transatlantic Context

Course number: FU-BEST 27

Language of instruction: English

Contact hours: 45

ECTS-Credits: 5    U.S. semester credits: 3

Course description

The sex/gender system, such as many social systems of categorization, serves to group individuals. It represents an act of dividing, i.e. categorizing individuals as male or female; yet it also, paradoxically and simultaneously, connects individuals through shared membership in a category. This course on gender and women’s studies in a transatlantic context focuses on the boundary—that which both divides and unites. We investigate sexed and gendered boundaries between bodies, communities, cultures, classes, races, ethnicities, religions, sexualities, and nations.

Our exploration of boundaries is grouped into three units: In the first, we examine the way sex/gender boundaries are mapped onto the body; this includes the history of sex differences within scientific discourses, transsexual and transgender definitions, and attempts to control women’s health and reproduction. The second unit analyzes conceptualizations of citizenship as practices of drawing boundaries, and we examine how these boundaries can connect individuals in solidarity, as well as separate out others. We look at the gendered ideals of citizenship, the history of women’s rights, women’s movements, and intersectionality between different types of marginalization. The final unit explores the boundary between the public and the private in an investigation of gender (politics), migration and work, including sex work and domestic work.

In this course, we use statistics, history, political and social sciences, filmic representations, news reports, essays, medical texts, biographies and field trips to conduct our interdisciplinary investigation. Our guiding approach is one of transnational feminism, which seeks to find solidarity between women by understanding and embracing their differences. Ultimately, our analysis of a multiplicity of subject positions and histories reveals the overall instability of the sex/gender system. For example, something that one culture views as inherently masculine may be viewed as inherently
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feminine in another. Therefore, our transcultural examination helps us understand the socially constructed nature of a system that is often viewed as natural, unchanging, and stable.

Learning objectives
By the end of the semester, students will be able to:
1. Discuss gender and gender roles in a nuanced manner.
2. Formulate academic theses about some of the major social, medical, and political concerns facing women, transgender, transsexual and intersex people in North America and Europe.
3. Discuss some of the issues related to gender politics in Germany.

Student profile
Second-semester sophomore or above

Prerequisites
None

Course Requirements
Midterm exam: 25%
Term paper: 25%
Final exam: 25%
Class participation: 25% (includes 1 Independent Project report; 1 short oral presentation on one of the readings)

Literature

- Ferree, Myra Marx (2012) Varieties of Feminism. German Gender Politics in Global Perspective
- Photocopied course reader.

Course schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Topics, readings, in-class events, field trips</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All assigned readings are included in course reader or are in Ferree’s Varieties of Feminism; assigned maps come from Seager’s Atlas.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Session 1 | **Introduction to Course**  
**Topic:** Defining Gender in a Transnational & Transatlantic Perspective  
**Readings:** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Unit One—Defining the Boundaries of Sex in the Body</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td>Changing Definitions of the Body</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stryker, Susan (2008). <em>Transgender History</em> (Chapter 1; <em>An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts</em>), pp. 1-29</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Unit One—Defining the Boundaries of Sex in the Body</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td>Gendering Science</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
<td></td>
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| Session 4 | Unit One—Defining the Boundaries of Sex in the Body  
| Topic: Reproductive and Healthcare Rights in the Past and Present  
| Reading:  
| Ferree, Myra Marx (2012) *You Can’t Make A State Without Women* (Chapter 6). In: Myra Marx Ferree, Varieties of Feminism in German Gender Politics in Global Perspective, pp. 144-155  
| Maps: Part Three “Birthrights” and Part Four “Body Politics” |

| Session 5 | Unit Two—Gendering the Citizenship Boundary  
| Topic: Women’s Rights and Women’s Movements in History  
| Field Trip: Feminist Women’s Health Center (Feministisches Frauengesundheitszentrum - FFGZ)  
| Guest Speaker:  
| Cornelia Burgert, 40 Years of Women’s Health Movement  
| Reading:  
| Rupp, Leila J. (2011) *Transnational Women’s Movements*. In: European |
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<tr>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Midterm Exam</th>
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| Session 7 | **Unit Two—Gendering the Citizenship Boundary**  
**Topic:** Institutionalization of the Women’s Movement  
**Field Trip:**  
Center for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies (Zentrum für transdisziplinäre Geschlechterstudien), Humboldt Universität zu Berlin  
**Guest Speaker:** Dr. Karin Aleksander, Teaching Gender with Libraries and Archives  
**Reading:**  
Ferree, Myra Marx (2012) *You Can’t Make A State Without Women* (Chapter 6). In: Myra Marx Ferree, Varieties of Feminism in German Gender Politics in Global Perspective, pp. 156-175  
Hašková, Hana (2011) *The Origins, Institutionalization, and Framing of Gender Studies in the Czech Republic.* In: Binder, Beate et.al. (eds.) Travelling Gender Studies, pp. 132-146  
## Session 8

**Unit Two—Gendering the Citizenship Boundary**  
**Topic:** Intersectionality—A Lens for Understanding Multiple Marginalizations

**Reading:**
- Büchler, Bettina, Anja Sieber and Sara Landolt (2007)  
  “…intersectionality: here is the buzzword…” An interview with Prof. Jasbir K. Puar on her research, interdisciplinarity, intersectionality and assemblages in: genderstudies #11 Herbst 2007, pp. 9-10

**Maps:** 6 “Lesbians” (pp. 26-27)

## Session 9

**Unit Three—Gender and Work: The Public/Private Boundary**  
**Topic:** Gender Boundaries in the Corporate Workplace

**Reading:**
- Hegewisch, Ariane et al. (April 2013) *The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation: Fact Sheet.* Institute for Women’s Policy Research, pp.1-7

**Maps:** Part Five “Work”
### Session 10
**Unit Three—Gender and Work: The Public/Private Boundary**  
**Topic:** Sex Work

**Reading:**  

**Maps:** 19 “Global Sex Trafficking”

### Session 11
**Unit Three—Gender and Work: The Public/Private Boundary**  
**Topic:** Transitory Labor, Migration, and Gender

**Reading:**  

**Maps:** 26 “Migration”

### Session 12
**Topic:** Feminist Sites in Berlin, Review Session and Course Wrap-Up

### Session 13
**Final Exam**