ANTH 269  
Gender, Marriage, and Family

Fall 2006  
M/Th 6:30-9:00pm, PNE 151

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Office Hours: Th 5:30-6:30pm (and by appointment)

Course Description:
This course offers an examination of variations in gender and family life globally, including comparative patterns of behavior and belief systems surrounding marriage, sexuality, parenthood, male and female power, and masculine and feminine temperament. Emphasis on the ways kinship and family life organize society and the ways gender is constructed in conjunction with other identities such as race, class, and nationality. Discussion covers the cultural context of male violence against women and women's rights as human rights.

Course Goal and Objectives
Course readings, discussions, and assignments are intended to foster development of critically reasoning skills, particularly concerning the application of theoretical ideas in empirical contexts. The principal objectives of the course are four-fold: 1) to acquire a broader understanding of forms, structures, and historical patterns in human social organization across cultures, as well as the oft-subtle nuances of their expression; 2) to gain a better appreciation of the historical contexts that have influenced the emergence of major theoretical paradigms relating to gender, marriage, and family; 3) to develop more sophisticated interpretations of evidence that link theory and method to concrete ethnographic examples and ethnological comparisons; and 4) to attain a deeper appreciation for the ways in which assumptions, biases, and other factors may influence observations, considerations of evidence, interpretations, and even the very definitions of data.

Requirements, Evaluation, and Grading
Active participation in weekly discussions will be a significant factor in determination of grades. Regular attendance is expected; absences will be excused (or extensions granted) only in special circumstance, judged in conformity with College practice. Please come to class sufficiently prepared. Assigned weekly readings are expected to be completed prior to class sessions. Participants will be asked not only to respond to questions about the readings, but also to pose questions and comments of their own for consideration and discussion.

Final grades will be determined on the following basis:

- **General Participation: 20%**  
  - Includes active engagement in class discussions and short presentations of assigned material

- **Three (3) Short Papers: 20% each** (totaling 60% of grade)
  - Details regarding each evaluative exercise (~5 pp.) will be made available at appropriate junctures in the course; generally speaking, each requires an informed critique contrasting strengths and weakness of alternative perspectives of a stipulated topic.

- **Final Presentation/Review: 20%**
  - During the final sessions of the semester, each student will present a brief review of one recent book-length anthropological study of their own choice that offers a theoretical perspective for further consideration and discussion. The review will include a well-organized 10 minute oral presentation, as well as a closely-reasoned written analysis of 3-5 pages in length.
Course Texts and Assigned Readings
Several texts for this course (see list below) have been ordered through the Wellesley College bookstore as suggested purchases (you are not “required” to buy any of them). Assigned readings from these main texts are provided in abbreviated form; additional required readings for each weekly session are listed with full bibliographic citations. Note that a Course Conference will be created to facilitate communication, discussion, and exchange of ideas.


Recommended References
There are a number of helpful references on the historical development on anthropological theory, both in text and on-line. Each offers a slightly different focus and interpretation. You are encouraged to consult these resources, on your own initiative. A few helpful entry points include:


For an on-line tutorial on kinship systems: [http://www.umanitoba.ca/anthropology/kintitle.html](http://www.umanitoba.ca/anthropology/kintitle.html)
For links relating to Anthropology & Gender (AnthroNet): [http://home1.gte.net/ericjw1/gender.html](http://home1.gte.net/ericjw1/gender.html)

Please Note:
Students with disabilities who are taking this course and who need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to work with Barbara Boger, the Director of Programs of the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center (if you have learning or attention disabilities), and Jim Wice, the Director of Disability Services (if you have a physical disability or are uncertain) to arrange these accommodations. Their offices are located in the Pforzheimer Learning and Teaching Center in Clapp Library.
Course Outline & Schedule of Assignments

Week 1: Thurs., Sept. 7

Introduction
Recommended:

Week 2: Thurs., Sept. 14

Embodying Gender: Biology & Evolution
  - Ch. 11 – “A Gendered Body” pp. 234-256
  - Ch. 4 - “Courtship and Choice,” pp. 69-100
  - Ch. 6 - “Women in the Wild,” pp. 139-153
  - Ch. 7 - “Lemurs, Monkeys, and Apes,” pp. 154-179
  - Ch. 8 – “Human Apes,” pp. 180-198

Recommended:

Week 3: Thurs., Sept. 21

Cultural Constructions of Gender

Recommended:

Week 4: Thurs., Sept. 28

Beyond Binaries
- Nanda, Neither Man Nor Woman [HQ449 .N36 1990]

Recommended:
- Don Kulick, 1998, Tavesti: Sex, Gender, & Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes, Chicago [HQ77.2.B7 K85 1998]
**Week 5: Thurs., Oct. 5**  
**Essay 1 DUE**  
**Gender, Marriage, & Family among Nomadic Foragers**  
- Shostak, Nisa [DT797.N57 S53]  

**Recommended:**  

**Week 6: Thurs., Oct. 12**  
**Film: “Nai: Story of a !Kung Woman”**  
- Shostak, Nisa *(concluding discussion)*

**Recommended:**  

**Week 7: Thurs., Oct. 19**  
**Ecology, Gender, & Cosmology in Horticultural Societies**  
- Herdt, Guardians of the Flutes  

**Recommended:**  

**Week 8: Thurs., Oct. 26**  
**Male Dominance: Historical or Universal?**  

**Recommended:**  

**Week 9: Thurs., Nov. 2**  
**Matrifocal Communities and Polyandrous Marriage**  
- Yang, *Leaving Mother Lake*  

**Recommended:**
• FILM: “A World Without Fathers or Husbands” (Filmmakers Library)

**Week 10: Thurs., Nov. 9**  
**Essay 2 DUE**  
**Ritual, Exchange, and Affinity**  
• Rubie Watson, 1981, “Class Differences and Affinal Relations in South China,” Man (ns) 16(4):593-614 [JSTOR]

**Recommended:**  
• Jane Fishburne Collier, 1993, Marriage and Inequality in Classless Societies, Stanford

**Week 11: Thurs., Nov. 16**  
**Revolutionizing Gender Relations**  
**Film: ‘Small Happiness’**  
• Yan, Private Life Under Socialism

**Week 12: Thurs., Nov. 23 - No Class - Thanksgiving Break**  
**Recommended:**  
Rest & Relaxation

**Week 13: Thurs., Nov. 30**  
**Gender and Nationalism**  
• Aretxaga, Shattering Silence

**Week 14: Thurs., Dec. 7**  
**Student Presentations**

> **Tuesday, Dec. 12:** Essay 3 Due
> **Thursday, Dec. 21 (4:30pm): Final Reviews Due**