Wright State University, Department of Economics,  
Fall 2014, EC 4450/WMS 4000 Political Economy of Women  
T, R: 11:00 – 12:20, Rike Hall 060

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OFFICE HOURS: T, R: 3:30 - 4:30, and by appointment

I encourage you to meet with me. If you must miss a class - read the assigned readings on your own first, and then come and talk to me about the material. You are also welcome to stop by my office and discuss anything about the economy, economics, social theory, and gender, as well as about your studies.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The course offers an introduction to political economy from a gender perspective, focusing on women’s various experiences. To this end, the course critically examines analytical categories, theories, policies, and historical developments. The course includes readings from various disciplines and approaches. Contemporary as well as historical perspectives are incorporated. The course begins with looking at modern production – its global organization and gendered character. Then we proceed to explore a historical perspective of the evolution of production, consumption, capitalism, and generally provisioning within the economy in connection to culture, social beliefs, and the social position of women. We also discuss policy and economic issues pertaining to women’s lives. Topics include global production chains and women’s paid and unpaid work; care policy; care deficits, gendered impacts of economic crisis; fiscal austerity; technology; trafficking; space and gender; consumption; fashion; paid work and family time; intimate labor; and imprisonment, among others. Through the discussion of those topics the course introduces feminist theory and feminist economics, emphasizing the diversity of feminist approaches. Often the topic of women and the economy is formulated as a discussion about integrating women into market activities and about their competitiveness and discrimination within markets. The course goes beyond this formulation and looks at the social and historical evolution of markets, provisioning, and gender relations, in connection to other social processes such as class, race, and citizenship, and to nature. Consequently, the objectives of the course are to show how the economy can be viewed as a broader subject; and to introduce students to both the usefulness and the difficulties around critically thinking about women and the economy.

MODE OF INSTRUCTION: Lecture and Discussion

REQUIRED READINGS

Books


Articles

Articles will be posted on Pilot. You can access Pilot through WINGS. You will need your campus ID name and password. Once you are logged in, click on the Academics tab. For additional help, please contact the Help Desk at 775-4827.

- Bulleted readings are optional. Those are useful and important. Here they are meant either as a theoretical background to a topic, or as readings for further interest into the topic. If you make time to read those readings, they will be helpful for your deeper and more rounded understanding of the subject matter. You also may find them useful for your research papers.

In addition to the listed readings, sometimes I will ask you to look up websites and other sources for data, news, and reports.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance is crucial for your success in this course. In addition to attendance and discussion, participation includes your behavior in class and your attitude towards the course work. Good attitude towards course work includes following these rules:

- Please, do not be late for class, and leave class only if absolutely necessary.
- Please, use lap tops/electronic notebooks only for note-taking. Take a notice of the argument that handwritten note-taking is more effective than using laptops.
- Audio and video recording is not permitted.
- Please, be respectful to your classmates when engaging in class discussion.
- Take the time to familiarize yourself well with the syllabus. If you lose your copy, download another one from Pilot.
- When you meet with me with questions about the material, you need to demonstrate that you have already read the assigned readings and you have put effort on your own. If you miss class, it is not appropriate to expect that I will summarize the class material for you during my office hours. However, you are welcome to bring up questions after you have familiarized yourself with the readings.
- Follow the schedule and read the assigned readings.

GRADING

Participation: 20%

Assignment: 20 % see schedule.

Presentations/Discussion questions: 20% You will be assigned an article from the required readings. You will summarize it for the class, and will bring up two discussion questions to the class. Prepare a one page handout for each of your classmates, which includes the full reference of the reading; summary; and discussion questions.
Topic, Outline, and Bibliography, Draft, and Presentation of Paper: 20%

Research Paper: 20% (Due Nov. 20; 6000 words; no extension for late papers)

Grading Scale:

A  90-100%
B  80-89%
C  70-79%
D  60-69%
F  <60%

University policy prohibits the communication of grades electronically or by phone. Check your grade thorough Wings Express. You can collect your final exam from me during my finals week office hours – these will be announced at the end of the semester.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

If you need special accommodations for the fulfillment of class requirements, contact the Office of Disability Services, and please let me know as soon as possible.

disability_services@wright.edu,
Telephone: (937) 775-5680
E186 Student Union, Wright State University

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The university policy on academic dishonesty can be found in the student handbook which is available on the WSU website and provides information on how to avoid academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty will be prosecuted in accordance with university guidelines.

CLASS SCHEDULE

It is important that you follow this schedule. The assigned reading for each topic should be read before class, and you should be prepared to engage in discussion about the main points that the readings makes. Readings are available through Pilot. I will ask you to keep a handwritten “journal”/notebook while doing the readings. There is no specific required format. The journal/notebook is going to be for your own benefit. When you read a new text usually you learn new names, events, sources, etc. that you find intriguing, or you think may be of use to you in the future. It is good that you jot those down in one place as you read. You can use the journal/notebook to draw diagrams, write down data sources and related references, questions, comments, or ideas about future research that you may have. You may find this useful for narrowing down your paper topic and you can use it in your library research. I will quickly look at your journal once or twice, however do not write this journal for me – it is for your own benefit. Jot down things that you think will be useful to you. Sometimes in the future, beyond this class look back at the journal.
T, 26 Aug. Introduction to the Class

R, 28 Aug. Gendered Economy

Declare your preliminary area of Interest for a research paper (such as: the environment). Note this is not your precise topic, research question, or title.

GCC: Forward; Introduction; and Part I (p. xi – 52)

T, 2 Sept. Households, Labor, and Wages


GCC: Part II (p. 55-87)

R, 4 Sept. Women’s Lives and Structural Transformation


T, 9 Sept. Materiality and Beliefs about Women and the Home: a Historical Perspective

Veblen, Thorstein. 1899. Selected excerpts from the Theory of the Leisure Class (See file on Pilot.)


R, 11 Sept. Gender, Technology, and Consumption

Declare your Topic


T, 16 Sept. Gender and Economic Aspects of Media; Fashion; Industries (Cosmetics, etc.)

Assignment: Find you own article. Share with everybody in Dropbox on Pilot. Write a one page summary with questions/comments. Report to class. Use the Library’s Electronic Journals Database. Further instructions will be given in class.

R, 18 Sept. Gender and Space


T, 23 Sept. Work, Time, the Person, and Family/Community Lives


T, 30 Sept. Precarity, the Flexible Economy, and Women’s Working Conditions

Outline of Research Paper is due (including Research Question; Rationale – situate the question in the literature and events; Preliminary Bibliography)

GCC: Part 3 (p. 91-134)

R, 2 Oct. Commodity Chains, Cultural Diversity in Provisioning, and Nature

GCC: Part 4 (p. 137-171)


T, 7 Oct. Global Labor Chains: Care Labor; Trafficking

GCC: Part 5 (p. 175-205)


R, 9 Oct. Sex Work; Intimate Labor


T, 14 Oct. Defining and Motivating Care

FLAM: ch. 1, 2, and Appendix

R, 16 Oct. Unpaid and Paid Care Work

FLAM: ch. 3, 4, and 5


T, 21 Oct. Policy, Care, and Social Provisioning

FLAM: Ch. 6, 7, and 8

R, 23 Oct. No Class. No office Hours. Prof. is abroad giving a seminar. Work on finalizing paper
T. 28 Oct. Privatization, Reproduction, and Intersectionality

Draft of Paper is due.


- “Learning from the History of Poor and Working-Class Women’s Activism,” (p. 164 – 193) in Lost Ground: Welfare Reform, Poverty and Beyond, eds. Randy Albelda and Ann Withorn, South End Press.

R. 30 Oct. Women and Economic Crises


T. 4 Nov. Gender and Austerity


R. 6 Nov. Gender and the Disciplining Economy

Gill, Stephen and Adrienne Roberts. 2011. “Macroeconomic Governance, Gendered Inequality,
and Global Crises” (p. 155-72) in Questioning Financial Governance from a Feminist Perspective, eds. Brigite Young, Isabella Bakker, and Diane Elson.


T, Nov. 11 Veterans Day. No Class

R, 13 Nov. Women in Economic Theory and Economics; Feminist Economics


T, 18 Nov. Theoretical Ambivalences of Feminism, Economy, and Community


R, 20 Nov. Envisioning Social Provisioning and Economics

Research Papers are due.


T, 25 Nov. Paper Presentations

Thanksgiving break

T, 2 Dec. Paper Presentations

T, 4 Dec. Paper Presentations and Summary

Have a Creative and Fulfilling Semester!