THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE
IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND IN EUROPEAN POLICIES

This course aims to highlight possible directions of using the gender perspective in social and cultural research. Depending on each student’s interest, the offered topics might be discussed more narrowly or broadly.

Through its introductory readings the course discusses the conceptual frameworks and socio-political contexts of feminisms (first world, colored, third world, socialist and post-socialist). Further on it focuses on the developments of women’s studies and the particular features of a feminist research (addressed from the perspective of methods, methodologies, epistemologies and theories on sex and gender). Moreover, the course highlights one of the most neglected aspects of European Studies in Romania, which is, gender policies in the European Union. The relevance of this attempt should be considered in the light of the fact that after the collapse of socialism many ideas and practices, like those related to gender equality, gained a pejorative meaning and it is exactly the accession of Romania to the European Union, which one might expect to become a source for the re-legitimization of the public debates on and actions around these issues.

The analytical and critical tools of an academically accountable and socially responsible feminism inform the theoretical background of the course. This approach is stressing the gendered nature of both social research and public policies, and is focusing our attention on the fact that the latter are shaped by those patterns of the relations between and among men and women of different ethnicity, and by those assumptions about femininity and masculinity, which are dominant at a certain moment in a particular society, including in academy and politics. On the other hand, our perspective is also emphasizing that – at their turn – both social researches and public policies are having an important contribution to the construction of the gender regimes, and might reproduce or change the sexual division of labor and the views about what women and men of different ethnicity should do and are capable of doing within a patriarchal, ethnocratic and gendered order.

At the end of the semester the students should produce an essay of 6-8 pages (80% of the final grade). They need to theoretically clarify what do they understand by feminism, and how do they deal with the possibility of introducing feminism into the analysis of their own research topic. The students have to also write an article to be published in a journal or newspaper from Romania, discussing two topics that they elect from the list below (20% of the final grade).
1-4. FEMINISM AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING WOMEN’S STATUS AND GENDER RELATIONS ACROSS BORDERS

Feminism as social movement and as theoretical paradigm. Feminist waves. Equality and difference feminism. First and third world feminisms, and feminism of color. Feminism, socialism and post-socialism. (Reader Gender perspective)

1. Feminist waves and practices


Susan J. Hekman: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Feminism; The Possibilities of a Postmodern Feminism, in Susan J. Hekman: Gender and Knowledge. Elements of a Postmodern Feminism, Basil Blackwell, 1990, 1-11, 152-191


2. Colored feminisms in the US

bell hooks: Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women, in Diana Tietjens Meyers (ed.): Feminist Social Thought: A Reader, Routledge, 1997, 484-501


3. “Third world feminisms”


Margot Badran: Toward Islamic Feminism: A Look at the Middle East, in Asma Afsaruddin (ed.): Hermeneutics and Honor. Negotiating Female “Public” Space in Islamic/ate Societies, Harvard University Press, 1999, 159-189

4. Feminism, socialism and post-socialism
Barbara Einhorn: Cinderella Goes to Market: Citizenship, Gender, and Women's Movements in East Central Europe, Verso, 1993, 17-148
Enikő Magyari-Vincze: Gender Regimes and Women's Citizenship, in Jasmina Lukic, Joanna Regulskaja and Dasa Zavorsek (eds.): Women and Citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe, Ashgate, 2006, 21-39
Laura Surdu – Mihai Surdu: Broadening the Agenda: The Status of Romani Women in Romania, Open Society Institute, 2006
Nicoleta Bitu: Romani Women in the European Union: Realities and Challenges, 2005

5. WOMEN'S STUDIES AS THE INSTITUTION FOR THE PRODUCTION OF FEMINIST THEORY
Introducing women’s perspective into social analysis and deconstructing the male bias. What is “feminist” in feminist studies? Women’s studies, gender studies and the feminist politics, or the uneasy relationship between theory and practice. (Reader Antropologia genului, Volume I)

Wendy Brown: „The Impossibility of Women’s Studies”, in Differences, Volume 9, Nr.3
Enikő Magyari-Vincze: Talking Feminist Institutions. Interviews with Leading European Scholars, Desire, 2002
6. METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE FEMINIST RESEARCH
The feminist research. Researching women’s lives from a feminist perspective. Methodology and methods in feminist research. Feminist epistemologies: empiricism, standpoint feminism, post-modern feminism. (Reader Antropologia genului, Volume II)

Mary Maynard: Methods, Practice and Epistemology: the Debate about Feminism and Research, in Mary Marnard – June Purvis (eds.): Researching Women’s Lives from a Feminist Perspective, Taylor & Francis, 1995, 10-27
Judith Grant: Feminism and epistemology, in J. Grant: Fundamental Feminism: Contesting the Core Concepts of Feminist Theory, Routledge, 1993, 89-127

7.-8. THEORIES OF SEX AND GENDER
The distinction between sex and gender. Debates on gender within feminist scholarship. The social construction of gender identities. Gender relations. Gender and power. (Reader Antropologia genului, Volume II)

Christine Delphy: „Rethinking Sex and Gender”, in Women’s Studies Int. Forum, Vol. 16, No.1, 1993, 1-9
Joan W. Scott: „Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis”, in American Historical Review, no.91, 1986, 1053-1075
Sandra Lipsitz Bem: The Lenses of Gender. Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality, Yale Univ. Press, 1993, 133-176

9.-10. WOMEN AND GENDER - SUBJECTS OF EUROPEAN POLICIES
Aims and gains of the first and second wave of Western feminism. Inequalities, women, family and work in the European Union today. Women as mothers and workers. (Reader Gender perspective)

Maria Jose Gonzales – Teresa Jurado – Manuela Maldini (eds.): Gender Inequalities in Southern Europe, 2000, 4-35

11.-12. GENDER POLICIES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mark Bell: *Anti-discrimination law and the European Union*, Oxford, 2002: the chapter on European social policy (6-32), the chapter on social citizenship (32-54), the chapter on sexual orientation discrimination (88-121), the chapter on different national legal traditions (145-191), the chapter on new anti-discrimination law in the EU (191-217)

Mariagrazia Rossilli (ed.): *Gender Policies in the European Union*, Peter Lang, 2002 (chapters focused on different policy areas)


Linda Hantrais (ed.): *Gendered Policies in Europe*, 2000, 27-48


13.-14. DISCUSSING STUDENT'S PROJECT PROPOSALS