

## GRADUATE SEMINAR IN ANTHROPOLOGY AND GENDER

ANTH 6317, Sect. #26715

Spring Semester 2018

Thursday evenings, 5:30-8:30 PM, McEl 102

Professor S. Rasmussen, McEl 244, [srasmussen@uh.edu](mailto:srasmussen@uh.edu)

**NOTE: Undergraduates may also enroll in this course by registering for Independent Study, ANTH 4398, Sect.#19699, with Professor Rasmussen's name.**

This course, a seminar emphasizing “round-table”-style discussion with background material and contextualization intermittently provided by the professor, will review cross-cultural studies of gender constructs and relationships through both classic and contemporary paradigms, with emphasis on changing theoretical and ethnographic problems in anthropology, as well as some interdisciplinary works. Emphasis will be upon the location and organization of gender in diverse communities, as well as in anthropological discourse itself. The goal is three-fold: to explore the roots of contemporary gender controversies and debates; review the uses and consequences of knowledge about social, cultural, and political constructions of gender and sexuality and relations between the sexes across diverse cultures and societies; and assess whether and how far gender-related questions and categories have changed, and their implications for anthropology, in terms of the mutual, “cross-cutting” influence—and dissonance—between anthropology and feminism. The beginning of the course briefly reviews the roots of feminist and post-feminist varieties of thought most relevant to anthropology of gender; and subsequent sections emphasize recent and current issues and topics, primarily from post-structural and post-modern perspectives. Topics include pioneering and reformulated theories of: why women and men often have dissimilar economic and symbolic roles and experiences, gendered experiences of the body, differential prestige, power, and autonomy; whether there are any universal patterns in women’s and men’s roles; critiques of essentialist studies of “women” and their deconstruction; interrelationships among gender, sexuality, power, authority, and forms of stratification; alternative masculinities and femininities; gender in culturally expressive systems, for example, ritual and healing; the positioning of gender and relations between the sexes in cultural encounters, “global” processes and socio-cultural transformations; and critiques of anthropological, and more generally scientific, discourse on women, as well as critiques of some “western” feminist discourse.

Grades will be based upon a total of **three complementary and interrelated written assignments**:

- a bibliographic essay (a review of important selected literature on a general topic of the student’s interest, guidelines provided by professor) .
- an abstract (proposal) for the final term-paper, and
- a final term-paper, emerging from this abstract/proposal

Readings: **eight books, (some of which we shall read in their entirety, others from which we shall read selected portions)**, all available at the UH bookstore:

- Civilizing Women: British Crusades in Colonial Sudan, by Boddy, Janice, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2007;
  - Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective, by Brettell, Caroline and Sargent, Carolyn, eds., Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall, (latest edition);
  - Gender and Sexuality in Indonesia, by Davies, Sharyn Graham, Routledge 2010;
  - The Gender and Sexuality Reader, by DiLeonardo, Michaela and Lancaster, Roger, eds., NY: Routledge, 1997 or latest edition;
  - Entrepreneurial Selves, by Freeman, Carla, Duke University Press, 2014;
  - Life and Death on Mount Everest, by Ortner, Sherry, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999;
  - Daughters of Parvati, by Pinto, Sarah, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013;
  - and
  - Other Modernities: Gender in China after Socialism, by Rofel, Lisa, Berkeley: University of California Press 1999
- ...and in addition, a very few articles and chapters on library reserve (hard-copy behind desk and where possible, also on “e-reserve”).