Class code: SOC-UA 9934-001

Instructor Details
Jaroslava Gajdosova, Ph.D
Email: jg3553@nyu.edu
Office hours: by appointment

Current Issues in Society: Gender in Transition in the Czech Republic
Class time: Tuesday and Thursday: 12:00 - 1:50 p.m.
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course provides students with comparative cultural analysis of gender inequalities in a globalizing world, focusing on spheres of market, politics, and culture. The main aim of the course is to help students understand arbitrary nature of gender inequalities arguing that their sources lie in social conditions under which men and women operate rather than in the biological predispositions of both genders. The course addresses two questions about gender identity in a globalizing world: “How can women become who they want to be?” and “Who do men want to become?” Students will learn to analyze and understand similarities and differences between the postcommunist “eastern” and the globalizing “western” worlds as well as the changing gender identities in response to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. In this comparative context, students will identify dominant gender ideologies, stereotypes and myths and will locate different social institutions—such as work place, labor market, politics, and family—that continue to perpetuate gender inequalities in the “East” and the “West”. Texts studied in this course will challenge conventional perceptions of femininity and masculinity as stable categories of identity and will show how shared beliefs in these categories facilitate uneven distribution of power among genders and how gender asymmetries are reproduced, reinforced, undermined and transformed. Debates in this course will be profusely supported by visual materials, including films, documentaries, video clips, internet resources, and will revolve around the topics like public/political vs. private/domestic realms, body, beauty, market, war, media, migration, gender minorities etc.

Format of the course: seminar, lecture

Desired Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:
- Comprehend, analyze and explicate processes of cultural construction of gender identities and their transformations.
- Understand, utilize and critically evaluate concepts of femininity, masculinity, gender asymmetry, relations of gender domination and subordination, male gaze, hegemony of masculinity, globalization of gender identities, etc.
- Critically analyze and (re)interpret gender relations in their own cultural backgrounds.
- Compare, assess and deconstruct gender relations in different cultural and socio-historical contexts.
- Recognize and re-consider arbitrary nature of social relations and values that are taken for granted.

Assessment Components
- Class participation: 20%
- Three response essays (1000 words each): 30%
- Mid-term exam: 20%
- Final paper (3000 words) & paper draft presentation: 30%

Assessment
Grade A: Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp
Expectations of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.

**Grade B**: Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.

**Grade C**: Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.

**Grade D**: Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.

**Grade F**: Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

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**Grade conversion**

**Grading Policy**

**Class participation**: This class will function primarily as a seminar therefore class participation informed by the required reading materials is essential. For each class session, students will post on NYU blackboard electronic reading notes on assigned texts.

**Presentations**: Each student will deliver one 15 minute presentation on their prospective research paper. A presenting student will prepare a written handout for his/her classmates and the instructor. When presenting, the students will also be evaluated on leading of the discussion.

**Response essays**: Students will write three response essays (1000 words each) during the course of the semester.

**Assessment criteria**: Quality of in-depth analysis and critical reflection of case studies discussed in the seminar; knowledge, comprehension and application of relevant theoretical concepts and categories, knowledge of academic citation.

**Midterm Exam**: Students will take a take-home written exam consisting of short essay answers.

**Term paper**: A 3000 words research paper following standard citation criteria (MLA or Chicago style) in the following format: font – Times New Roman, size – 12, spacing – double), is expected of each student.

**Assessment criteria**: State an argument of their own, relate it to relevant concepts and categories, apply them to a case study of their own choice; analyze and illuminate given issues in the context of examples, identify their similarities and differences, outline solutions; demonstrate knowledge of academic citation. Students are encouraged to choose their topic as soon as possible and consult their research statement with me. No extension will be granted, unless there are compelling and legitimate medical reasons. Late assignments will be subject to grade reduction.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Attendance Policy**

Each unexcused absences will result in your final grade being reduced by 3%. Absences only for medical reasons will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor’s note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). Absences due to travel will not be excused.

**Late Submission of Work**

Assignments submitted with delay will be marked one grade down per every day of delay.

**Plagiarism Policy**

According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:
Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically, plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science’s Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

“presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt.”

“Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university.” (Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook)

Required Text(s)

NYU course readers

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-P Library)

Tony Morrison: Paradise

All materials are available in NYU library in Prague or on NYU blackboard.

Internet Research Guidelines

Additional Required Equipment

None

Session 1

Overview of course:

P. Berger: “Sociology as an Individual Pastime” (pp. 1-33).

Session 2

Language of science and the construction of gender roles


Session 3

Public/private distinction in Western and Eastern Europe

Tuesday, February 19


**Session 4**

Thursday, February 21

**Session 5**

Friday, February 22
(Make up for Tuesday classes)

**Session 6**

Tuesday, February 26

**Session 7**

Thursday, February 28

**Session 8**

Women in post-socialist condition: Czechoslovakia

**Session 9**

Thursday, March 7

**Session 10**

Wednesday, March 12

**Session 11**

Tuesday, March 12

Global gender issues in post-communism

<p>| Session 13 | Feminism and the media |
| Thursday, March 21 | Documentary: The Beauty Exchange. cultural Analysis and Comparison Response essay due: March. 26th |
| Session 15 | Women, nationalism, violence |
| Session 16 | Women, race, and ethnicity |
| Session 17 | Postmodern politics of the body |
| Session 18 | Video: Reality TV “Makeover” |
| Session 19 | Postmodern deconstruction of sexual identities |
| Session 20 | Tony Morrison: Paradise. (selected pages) |
| Spring Break | Take home MIDTERM EXAM |
| April 1-5 | |
| Session 21 | Postmodern politics of the body |
| Session 22 | Video: Reality TV “Makeover” |
| Session 23 | Postmodern deconstruction of sexual identities |
| Session 24 | Video: Reality TV “Makeover” |
| Thursday, April 21 | Butler, J. “Bodily inscriptions, performative subversions” in Gender Trouble, pp. 175-193. |</p>
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Tuesday, April 16</td>
<td>Video: New School Conference on “New Feminism”</td>
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(Butler, J. “Monique Wittig: bodily disintegration and fictive sex” in *Gender Trouble*, pp. 151-174.) |
| Session 21, Tuesday, April 23 | Masculinity and feminine world  
Pierre Bourdieu. *Masculine Domination*. Preface + pages 22-42. (NYU library) |
| Session 23, Tuesday, April 30 | Video: *Everest: Beyond the Limits*  
Response essay due: May 7th |
| Session 24, Thursday, May 2 | Masculinity and globalization  
| Session 25, Tuesday, May 7 | Post-Macho era?  
| Session 26, Thursday, May 9 | Students’ presentations |
| Session 27, Tuesday, May 14 | Students’ presentations |
| Session 28, Thursday, May 16 | Gender politics  
Exam week |
| Session 29 | |
Thursday, May 23
Final exam

Classroom Etiquette

No use of electronic devices; no food in classroom.

Required Co-curricular Activities

Suggested Co-curricular Activities