Department of Sociology & Anthropology, BGU

Course: Feminist Ethnography

Second Semester, 2009 (2 credits)

Prof. Fran Markowitz

Course description
This course reviews 20th century developments in anthropology that fused feminist approaches with ethnography as research method and writing style. Beginning with the question, "Can there be a feminist ethnography?" the course problematizes "the woman question" and "the female point of view" by considering the uneven impact of race, class, history and sexuality on the category, "woman" through ethnography.

Course Prerequisites: Intro to Anthropology; Qualitative Methods

Course Requirements:

- This course will be conducted as a seminar. That means that each student must come to each and every class having done the reading, prepared to participate in the discussion. Class participation = **25%** of the final grade.
- Oral presentation of a feminist ethnography, including one's own. Students may work alone, or in pairs on a book length ethnography only. Presentation = **25%** of the final grade.
- Written assignment
  a) Critical book review of a feminist ethnography (yes, of course it can be the same book presented orally). 5-10 pages in length; must include bibliography of at least 5 additional sources.
  --or—
  b) Your very own 7-12 page feminist ethnography, including a bibliography of at least 5 sources.
  NOTE: B.A. students must complete (a) **or** (b)
  M.A. students must complete **(b)**
  Written assignment = **50%** of the final grade
  All written assignments must be submitted during class time exactly one month after the semester ends
  No late papers will be accepted

Week	Topic and Reading
1	Introductions
2	Feminist Ethnography: What is it? Why is it? What are the risks and advantages of it…and can it be? **READINGS:** Judith Stacey (1988), "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" and Virginia Bell (1993), "Yes Virginia, there is a feminist ethnography"
3	Histories of Feminist Ethnography

READING: Micaela di Leonardo (1991), Introduction: Gender, Culture and Political Economy, *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*.

4 Politics, Poetics, Problematics of Feminist Essentialist Ethnography
Is "female" a universal category?
READING: Sherry B. Ortner (1974), "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Rosaldo & Lamphere, *Woman, Culture & Society*.

5 In search of the "Ur-Woman"?
READING: Marjorie Shostak (1981), Introduction to *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*, and one additional chapter of your choice—**on reserve at the library.**

6&7 Confronting the Monolith
READINGS: S. Harding (1987), "Introduction: Is there a Feminist Method?" in *Feminism & Methodology*.
Linda Carty (1996) "Seeing Through the Eye of Difference" in Gottfried, *Feminism and Social Change*.
Y. Antonia Chao (1999) "Performing as a *P'o* and Acting as a Big Sister" in *Sex, Sexuality and the Anthropologist* (SS&A).
פנינה מוצפי-הלר (2000) "יש לך קול אותנטית"

8 Postmodernism(s) and Feminism(s)
READINGS:
Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) "Writing Against Culture" in R. Fox, *Recapturing Anthropology (required).*
bell hooks (1990) "Culture to Culture" in *Yearning: Race, Gender & Cultural Politics (required)*.

9 Female (or is it Feminists'?) Dilemmas
READINGS: Jill Dubisch (1995) "Lovers in the Field: Sex, Dominance and the Female Anthropologist" in Kulick & Willson, *Taboo* –or—
Éva Huseby-Darvas (1999) "Deconstructing and Reconstructing My Desexualized Identity" in *SS&A*.

10 **READINGS:** Rose Jones (1999) "Husbands and Lovers: Gender Construction and the Ethnography of Sex Research" in *SS&A* –or—
Fran Markowitz (1999) "Sexing the Anthropologist: Implications for Ethnography" in *SS&A*.

11 Writing Feminist Ethnography
READING: Barbara Tedlock (1995) "Works and Wives: On the Sexual Division of Textual Labor" in Behar & Gordon, *Women Writing Culture*.

12 Reading Feminist Ethnographies
Books:
Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (1992)
Begoňa Aretxaga, *Shattering Silence: Women, Nationalism, and Political Subjectivity in Northern Ireland* (1997)
Ruth Behar, *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* (1993)
Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight* (1995)
Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got to Do With It?* (2004)
Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (1991)
Manda Cesara, *Reflections of a Woman Anthropologist* (1982)
Constable, Nicole, *Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography and "Mail-Order" Marriages* (2003).

Carol Delaney, *The seed and the soil: Gender and cosmology in Turkish village society* (1991)
Tamar El-Or, *Educated and Ignorant; Next Passover*
Donna Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown* (2003)
Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, *Scattered Belongings: Cultural Paradoxes of Race, Nation and Gender* (1999)
Ellen Lewin, *Lesbian Mothers* (1993)
Min-ha, Trinh, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989)
Leith Mullins, *On Our Own Terms: Race, Class and Gender in the Lives of African American Women* (1997).
Esther Newton, *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town* (1993)
Aihwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (1987)
Susan J. Rasmussen, *Those Who Touch: Tuareg Medicine Women in Anthropological Perspective* (2006).
Nadia Seremetakis, *The Last Word: Women, Death and Divination in Inner Mani* (1991)
Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping* (1993)
Susan Sered, *Women as Ritual Experts: The Religious Lives of Elderly Jewish Women in Jerusalem* (1992)
Susan Sered, *What Makes Women Sick? Modernity, Modesty and Militarism in Israeli Society* (2000)
Anna L. Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (1993)
Kamala Visweswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (1994)
Margery Wolf, *A Thrice Told Tale* (1992)
And more…select your own in consultation with the instructor

13 Tentative Conclusions