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Classroom: W465 South College
Course numbers: WGSS 493V/693V
Office: W405 South College
Office Hours: Wednesdays, from 10:00 am. to 12:30 am.

Title: Human Rights Violence Against Women in Brazil and the US

Seminar Description: This Seminar aims to explore the renewed centrality of gender and the language of “rights” in both Brazil and the U.S. In recent times, we have seen the mainstreaming of “gender”, as gender and women’s demands for inclusion on human rights has emerged as important political categories across local and national boundaries, by women’s organizations and movements, as well in feminist responses in both contexts. The course will highlight transformations of gender in “gender ideology” and also discuss feminist politics and policies in Brazil and Latin America, as well as the United States in the last decades. How is political violation on women’s human rights being mobilized in these sites? What are the ideological commitments being promoted? How is gender and feminism connected to other political movements and struggles in both countries? With the rise of the “New Right” in both national contexts, we will discuss convergences and distinctions in Latin American and US feminist responses, and the resulting possibilities of renewed forms of feminist solidarities and alliances. The course is both interdisciplinary and comparative rather than having a United States focus only.

The course also aims also to promote debate about how (in both regions) people, feminist movements and states are facing anti-feminist policies and the growth of the political violence against women in politics (VAWP). We will also address the dissemination of sexist political violence as an attempt to regain control and to promote state discipline over the women’s bodies, especially those with a political career, both in the executive and in the legislative branch of the state.

Course Requirements:
Students are expected to have read and thought about the assigned readings in advance of each class session. Diligence in keeping up with the reading is essential for a good overall Seminar experience and to your grade.

Class participation, which will count for 40 percent of the grade for this course, will be assessed on the basis of: 1) participation in seminar discussions during the semester (graded Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory); 2) to elaborate a Power Point Presentation about one seminar chosen between a topic of Program (graded on Moodle simply as S or US); and, 3) organization and facilitation of seminar discussion, working with one partner, at least twice during the semester (also graded S or US).
Each week, one student will prepare discussion questions and brief annotations/synopses of all required readings. These should be posted to Moodle no later than 6pm on Monday evening before our class. Facilitators also will prepare brief oral presentations—no longer than 20 minutes each—that pull together the readings into some kind of critical framework, relate them to previous weeks’ readings, and raise questions for class discussion. Teams will meet with one another during the week preceding seminar to plan their collaborative.

Power Point presentations will co-facilitate discussion with the instructor during class. This course aims to develop writing, research and presentation skills. Throughout the quarter you will be working on a research topic, and this research work will culminate in a Power Point Presentation (20% of your final grade, inserted in the 40% presented above), a study case about VAWP in the US (30% of your final grade, just choosing one women representative and presenting her political trajectory) and Final Research Paper (30% of your final grade) towards the end of the quarter.

**Grade Summary**

- Participation – 20%
- PPoint Presentation – 20%
- Case Study on VAWP – 30%
- Final Paper (continuity of case study on VAWP) – 30%

*The final paper* will count for the remaining 30 percent of the grade and will be graded on a conventional A-F scale. You will be required to turn in a one-page proposal of this paper earlier in the quarter. It should be no longer than 8000 words and may take the following forms: a research paper, drawing on course materials and original research specially following one woman representative in terms of VAWP, a draft comp for either the inter/intra-disciplinary field or contemporary theory/ies about political violence and women. The paper will be a Case Exploration where you will study a specific case within a woman representative in the US that experienced political violence. You will then relate this case to an academic theory or reading that we have discussed in seminar this semester. To start thinking about this, you might consult some of the readings suggested under ‘Additional’ for each week. You may also find other pieces on your own. Ideally, you will consult two or three sources, and they can be news items, academic readings, podcasts, etc. Be creative. Write a paper of no more than eight pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font, 1” margin paper describing how the case illustrates or relates to what we have studied so far. You will give a short presentation on the case in seminar on our last classroom.

**Course Materials:** Students are expected to complete the required readings for each class session by the date specified in the Course Outline. Chapter- or article-length required readings will be available on Moodle. These are indicated with an (M) in the Course Outline below. The following books are available for purchase through the Amazon UMass Agreement (or your preferred virtual or real book purchasing venue) and are also on 2-hour reserve at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library.

**Online Research:**

[https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/)

The structure of the course will be fourfold:
- On HUMAN RIGHTS (HR)
- On WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS (W’HR)
- On POLITICAL VIOLENCE (PV)
- On VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS (VAWP)

**COURSE OUTLINE**

September 3<sup>th</sup> – Introducing Seminar Topics and ourselves

September 5<sup>th</sup> – Introducing the “language of rights” and the Social Contract

Recommended:

September 10<sup>th</sup> —Introductory Overview on Seminar first topics

Recommended:
- On HUMAN RIGHTS - HR

**Document:**

- On WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS (W’HR)

**Documents:**

September 12<sup>th</sup>: Human Rights in Context

Human rights have become the main criterion of political legitimacy in humanitarian intervention, international law and global politics and constitute an essential component of our contemporary democratic liberal order. They are presented as natural, inalienable, interdependent, equal rights shared by all on the grounds of our common humanity. But they raise important issues and challenges: it often remains unclear what they exactly mean and what they entail for the understanding of politics today. We will address several fundamental questions in this Introduction to our debates such as: What exactly
is involved in having or exercising a right? What does it mean to possess rights on the grounds of being human? What are the theoretical foundations and historical sources of human rights? On a more practical level, what does the human rights discourse aim to achieve? How does it foster political and social change? What are the challenges posed by globalization, feminism, security, economic interests, nationalism (and so on)? In examining these issues, we will study the relationship between politics, democracy and human rights, explore the foundations and the legitimacy of them, and investigate the norms, institutions, applications of – and challenges to – human rights.

**Recommended:**

**Documents:**
- Magna Carta (1215)
- English Bill of Rights (1689)
- US Declaration of Independence (1776)
- The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)

**Further Readings:**

**September 17th and 19th:** Skepticism, Idealism, the debate Universalism versus Cultural Relativism and their Critiques

**Recommended:**

**Further Readings:**

**September 24th and 26th: Women’s Rights are Human Rights: Feminist perspectives**
The next tree lesson introduces women’s rights as human rights: it’s origins as both a movement and a policy approach. We will identify the key historical developments of the women’s human rights movement and also a set of pre-requisite factors for attaining women’s human rights and also describes the theoretical approaches to studying women’s human rights. This discussion will provide a basis for questions and approaches we will continue to engage as we examine substantive violations of women's human rights in politics.

**Recommended:**
- Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, (2014). *The Situation of Women’s Rights 20 Years after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights*, Academy In-Brief No. 4, Université de Genève, June 2014,

**Online research:**
- For a Timeline and more information: See https://globalfeministjourneys.com/#event-universal-declaration-of-human-rights-udhr

**Further Readings:**
October 01st and 8th: Reactions to Beijing and CEDAW – (we will not have class on 3th October)

Recommended:

Further Readings:
- Htun, Mala and Weldon, Laurel, under review, “Religion, the State, and Women’s Rights: Comparative Analysis of Sex Equality in Family Law.”

October 10th and 15th: 2000’s Transformations - Anti-gender Politics 1
At this part of the Program we will discuss anti-gender politics conducted recently in East Europe and in LAC countries to examines how they violate women's human rights. We will focus a critical framework about these politics through a gender and feminist lens. We explore why and how women as a group will experience discrimination due to these politics as a consequence of their gender and to what extent human rights can be useful to challenge the social, economic and political position of women in these countries. It also aims to explore and discuss how recent changes in gender policy and politics agenda have been simultaneous with some countries de-democratization processes. The emergence from Christian reflections of what the religious defined as “gender ideology” is the backdrop for the emergence of this new conservative wave at the same time moral, political and social.

Recommended:

Kováts, Eszter, p. 175-189. In Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe, 2017; and also Chapter 12. “Similarities/Differences in Gender and Far-Right Politics in Europe and the USA”


Further Readings:


October 17th and 22nd: 2000’s Transformations - Anti-gender Politics 2

Recommended:


24th and 29th October and 5th November: Democracy and Women (North and Global South perspectives)

Recommended:


Further Readings:
- Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian; Flavia Freidenberg; Mariana Caminotti; Tomáš Došek. (2017) Women, Politics, and Democracy in Latin America: An Introduction. (many Chapters)

07th November - Introductory Overview on Seminar last topics
- On POLITICAL VIOLENCE (PV)

- On VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS (VAWP)

12th and 14th November: Political Violence
Political violence is implicated in a range of different phenomena: non-state armed groups, inter-communal conflicts, state violence, large-scale criminal-political violence, rebellions, localized struggles, acts of terror, and violence as a profession where other avenues of social advancement are foreclosed. The lectures and readings of this part will be organized thematically with the emergence of state reaction to social movements protests and the emergence of new right. Gender and Political Violence will be stressed as examples of political violence.

Recommended:
Further Readings:

19th and 21st November: Violence Against Women in Politics (VAFP) 1
Attention to gender and political violence is growing, inspiring a large literature and series of policy interventions related to women in conflict and post-conflict contexts. At the same time, a parallel and sometimes intersecting new area of interest has emerged, focusing on violence perpetrated against politically active women. The issue surfaced organically in different places: in conversations among locally elected women in Bolivia in the early 2000s, who began to theorize what they called ‘political violence and harassment against women’; in Asian networks of political women concerned in the mid-2000s to map and address the problem of ‘violence against women in politics’; and among local and international activists in Kenya in the late 2000s, who observed and sought to combat ‘electoral gender-based violence’. The United Nations General Assembly first recognized it as a problem in 2011, calling for zero tolerance for violence against female candidates and elected officials. After several years of research, UN Women and UNDP published a programming guide for tackling violence against women in elections in 2017. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women prepared a special report on this issue, presented to the General Assembly in 2018.

Recommended:
Document:

Online research:

26th and 28th November: Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP) 2

Recommended:

Further Readings:

Document:
Online research:
- The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a disaggregated conflict collection, analysis and crisis mapping project. ACLED collects the dates, actors, types of violence, locations, and fatalities of all reported political violence and protest events across Africa, South Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America, See https://www.acleddata.com/

3rd December: Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP) and Sexist Political Violence: different approaches
Recommended:

Online research:
- Political violence puts Brazil on alert - The Brazilian Report, see https://brazilian.report/opinion/2018/03/29/political-violence-lula-marielle/

5th December: Final paper discussion and conclusion
This final lesson of the course will focus on the initial research that students have conducted throughout the quarter. Social and political science analysis is an important component of this course and this gives all students the opportunity to share their findings and receive feedback as they complete the research paper assignment. In this final lesson we will have an individual presentation of a one-page proposal of the final paper earlier in the quarter, and we will have a group discussion about it. Finally, this lesson will also serve as a final conclusion to our exploration of women's human rights and political violence experience.

FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 13th December, BY NOON