AN/WS 336 WOMEN AND CULTURE IN SPAIN AND THE MEDITERRANEAN
IES Abroad Barcelona

DESCRIPTION:
This course will introduce students to the social and historical construction of women’s roles in the Mediterranean region, from a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective. Though the course places special emphasis on Spain, by bringing in examples of other Mediterranean countries it will examine if, in terms of the roles traditionally assigned to women, Spain shares more with Mediterranean countries than with northern European societies. Thus, though we will pay attention to existing diversities across the Mediterranean we will also highlight similar understandings of women and culture and how these understandings shape and are shaped by issues such as religion, politics, use of space, family arrangements or migration flows. As this course is a women’s studies course, it will focus on the conceptions of women in Mediterranean societies. Other gender roles, including LGBTQ issues are not a central focus of this course, and will only be touched on tangentially, if at all.

The course is divided into an introductory section, and four topics:

The introductory section provides a discussion of two key concepts: that of gender and its relevance to women’s studies; and the identification of Spain in the Mediterranean, both geographically and culturally. The course then introduces the debate about Western attitudes to women in Islamic societies, in the context of unifying cultural codes across the Mediterranean, with the identification of overarching visions of women’s roles within what is known as the “Mediterranean honor code”. In this way, the course identifies both the unity of cultural codes around the Mediterranean, and at the same time, the concept of the “other” in Western stereotypes about Islam.

From these foundations, the course goes on to introduce students to different fields in which women’s roles are created and recreated in traditional Mediterranean societies, comparing Spain to other societies – principally Islamic societies on the opposite shores of the Mediterranean: The discussion is divided into 4 topics:

Topic 1 introduces students to women’s roles in religion, on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Topic 2 broadly tackles the economy, introducing students to early women’s movements, as well as women’s roles in relation to the family, education and migration.

Topic 3 examines women’s roles in public and private spaces, including their media representation.

Topic 4 examines women’s roles in politics, and ties up the course by looking at early, and recent, feminist movements, and how these have tried to challenge the traditional roles and representations discussed earlier in the course. The course specifically discusses contemporary feminist movements in Islamic societies, which ties back into the debate highlighted at the start of the course.

The course sessions will combine theoretical lectures, class discussions and debates based on the critical reading of assigned articles. The articles are a selection of key academic works chosen with the aim of providing a general understanding of how traditional women’s and men’s roles intersect with other aspects of social and political life in the Mediterranean. There will be also occasional screenings of films and field visits.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: One course in Anthropology, Sociology, or Women’s or Gender Studies is recommended

ADDITIONAL COST: None
METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- **Lectures**: Lectures provide the students with an opportunity to gain an overview of the course content and to clarify issues.
- **Class discussions**: The course is largely discussion-based. Students are expected to come to class prepared (i.e. not only having done the readings but also having considered them in depth) and participate actively in the discussions. The aim of class discussions is to facilitate the students’ ability to apply the theoretical material to lived experience. All required readings can be found on Moodle. The readings listed for a particular session must be completed BEFORE coming to class that day.
- **Class presentations**: Students will be responsible for presenting a session’s readings and leading the discussion in class.
- **Course-related trips**: Professor-guided visits to significant sites related to the content and outcomes of the course.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- **Midterm Exam - 20%**
- **Ethnographic Journal - 20%**
- **Final Paper - 30%**
- **Final Oral Presentation - 10%**
- **In Class Presentation - 10%**
- **Class Participation - 10%**

**Midterm Exam**
Students will have to respond to conceptual questions about topics discussed in class and write a critical review of a short text. The midterm will be held in session 12.

**Ethnographic Journal**
Write a journal for 7 days taking note of cultural differences regarding gender roles that they observe during their stay in Barcelona. Observations could be addressed to investigate how women and men use public space or public transportation, gender dynamics in clubs, gyms or bars; women’s representation in media, gender and politics. Journal must be turned in session 13, though nothing that is revealed in the journal will be made public in the classroom discussion, you will receive comments on it. The journal will be assessed using a rubric that will be previously shared with students.

**Final Paper**
Students will write a 2500-word research paper on a topic of their own choice in consultation with the professor concerning gender roles and culture in the Mediterranean. Students will be required to submit an extended outline (500 words) in session 22. Feedback on this outline will help students to formulate the main questions and parts of the argument to be addressed, and in finding and selecting relevant literature. The final paper should be submitted the last day of class.

**Final Oral Presentation**
During the last week of the course, students will present their final paper in class, students are required to participate and engage in discussion after the presentation. Each presentation should take the form of a succinct summary of the paper topics and findings, of ten minutes’ total. The presentations will be assessed using a rubric, previously shared with students, which will focus on the effective presentation of key findings.

**In Class Presentation**
Students will have the responsibility of initiating discussion of the assigned readings (individually or in pairs). Presentations should consist of a 10-15 minute introductions of the central arguments and conclusions of each piece and raise leading questions. In developing these informal presentations, students are encouraged to work together; it is also helpful to bring in examples that can help the understanding of the readings.

**Class Participation**
Making a substantive oral contribution during class lecture or large-class discussion. Showing the reading has been done. Staying on task in dyads, small groups and activities. When given a task or question to discuss, work to make meaningful and course content-driven contributions, ask questions and brainstorm additional ideas. The following rubric will be used to grade class participation:

- **A = Always prepared**: student comes to class with books/articles, outlines and personal notes on the readings. Student engages generously and intelligently in thoughtful and respectful discussion.
B = Usually prepared: student comes to class with books/articles. Student contributes in the discussion in a somewhat focused manner.

C = Often unprepared: student comes to class. Student talks occasionally without much focus or connection to the readings.

D = Student shows up.

F = Student sleeps or does not come to class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Articulate key concepts and theories in women’s studies
- Explain how gender intersects with politics, cultures and societies in the Mediterranean
- Analyze women’s issues in Spain and the Mediterranean area through the critical reading of a selection of sociological, anthropological and historical works
- Make use of critical tools and concepts drawn from gender and feminist studies to interpret existing diversities and similarities in women’s roles across the Mediterranean
- Describe cultural differences in non-judgmental ways

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance is mandatory for all IES classes, including field studies. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than three classes in any course 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven absences in any course will result in a failing grade.

CONTENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO KEY THEMES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to the course: Goals of course, studying women’s issues in the Mediterranean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Session 6 | TOPIC 1: WOMEN AND RELIGION  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Session 8 | TOPIC 2: WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY; FEMINIST MOVEMENTS, FAMILY, EDUCATION, AND MIGRATION | The Bonnemaison Center La Bonne is a meeting place for cultural exchange and creative feminist projects. We will visit the space and discuss the role of early twentieth century progressive women in promoting women’s rights and access to education.  
Read before course-related trip:  
<p>| Session 12 | MIDTERM EXAM |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Session 14** | **TOPIC 3: REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPACES AND THE MEDIA**  
Women’s roles in film and media (Spain) | • Class discussion based on movies watched before class: *Solas, Te doy mis ojos*.  
• Class discussion based on excerpts of films: 678 is a 2010 Egyptian film by director Mohamed Diab focusing on the sexual harassment of women in Egypt. |
| **Session 17** | **TOPIC 4: WOMEN AND POLITICS; FROM EARLY MOVEMENTS TO CONTEMPORARY FEMINISM**  
• During the workshop students will present and discuss in class their outlines and conceptual frameworks for final projects. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 19</td>
<td>Women and Politics in Spain (II) Course-related Trip: Visit to Ca la Dona and Plaça Vuit de Març</td>
<td>• Ca la Dona is a meeting place for women and women's groups, open to participation and the proposals of women. During the course-related trip we will visit the building that has been recently renovated through a process of participation and discuss the role of this space in facilitating the connection among different feminist groups in Barcelona. • Bustelo, M. (2016). Three Decades of State Feminism and Gender Equality Policies in Multi-governed Spain. <em>Sex Roles</em>, 74(3–4), 107–120.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 24</td>
<td>Final review: summary and conclusions</td>
<td>• Presentations should consist of a 10-15 minute introductions of the central arguments and conclusions of each piece and raise leading questions. In developing these informal presentations, students are encouraged to work together; it is also helpful to bring in examples that can help the understanding of the readings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COURSE-RELATED TRIPS AND GUEST SPEAKERS:**
• Course-related trip to Francesca Bonnemaison Center (La Bonne) in session 10. La Bonne is a meeting place for cultural exchange and creative feminist projects. La Bonne has its origin in the Institute of Popular Culture Francesca Bonnemaison founded in the early twentieth century by Francesca Bonnemaison a pedagogue from a bourgeois family, who in 1909 founded the first public women's library in Europe. After a long history of struggles and several changes in the building, during the 1990s the feminist movement in Barcelona (represented by more than 80 entities) signed a manifesto that claimed the recovery of the space as a center for women's culture.

• Course-related trip to Ca la Dona, in session 19. Ca la Dona is a meeting place for a diverse array of women's groups, open to participation and to the proposals of women who wish it. It was founded in the mid 1980’s as a space to facilitate the coordination of the existing feminist groups that were constituted after the dictatorship. It is a physical space, but above all a symbolic one, a place of political experiences, reflection and production of thought. Ca la Dona has also become a point of reference for many women, since it collects and transmits diverse information related to women resources, for example: how to address issues of harassment, provide information about family planning, AIDS, unions, etc. We will visit the building that host Ca La Dona, which was donated in 2006 by the City Council and has been recently renovated through a process of participation.

• Miriam Hatibi, a Barcelona-born Muslim women with Moroccan parents, an anti-racism, and pro-cultural diversity activist, will speak to the class about the challenges of being a young, Muslim woman, who wears a hijab, in Barcelona.

REQUIRED READINGS:


• Segura, I (1998). The feminist movement in Catalonia or one hundred years of feminism, Catalonia, (8), 26-27.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**


**FILMOGRAPHY:**

• 678 (2010) by Mohamed Diab
• Solas (1999) by Benito Zambrano
• Te doy mis ojos (2003) by Itziar Bollaín