Gender in IR: Security, War and Militarism

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Course Description and Aims
This course is concerned with gender ‘in’ International Relations. More specifically, it is concerned with how the primary function of the sovereign state, security, and the most visible manifestations of state security, war and militarism, both construct and are sustained by specific masculinities and femininities, and how these particular gender constructions impact on the lives of particular groups of men and women.

Since the late 1980s, feminist critiques of so-called ‘Traditional’ International Relations (IR) have been some of the most sustained; accusing the discipline not only of having maintained an almost total gender blindness, but also of an active resistance on the part of many IR scholars to the import of feminist works. And nowhere has such resistance been stronger than in the field of Security, or more accurately, Strategic Studies. This course will explores some of the main areas of contention.

Set against this, the aim of the course is mainly threefold: firstly, to (re)introduce how the discipline has traditionally thought about war and peace; secondly, to reveal the gendered constructions and inequalities that mark the traditional scholarship; and thirdly, to evaluate the specific contribution that feminist critiques have made as part of the so-called ‘Critical Turn’ in IR.

The course can be seen as complimentary to the previous ‘International Security Studies’ course. Although desirable in this way, prior knowledge of Security Studies is not, however, a necessity for taking the course.

Course Structure
Firstly, the general context of the debate is established, before, secondly, going on to look at how the discipline of IR has been constituted and sustained by a number of so-called ‘hegemonic’ masculinities’. Although for some an initial focus on masculinity may well represent an unwanted move away from the feminist project, for others, because International Relations is constructed around men and masculinity, destabilising the subject of ‘man’ necessarily also destabilises the IR field in ways that the so-called ‘add women’ approach perhaps cannot. In the third section, though, the focus indeed shifts to how IR has excluded certain femininities. In particular, it looks at how women can be both the agents and the victims of militarisation and the practices of security, and also at possible resistances to such practices.

Learning Outcomes
The course is designed to produce the following main learning outcomes:
The ability to identify IR’s traditional assumptions informing thinking about war and peace;
The ability to comprehend the gendered nature of what makes war and thinking about war possible;
The ability to recognise in what way feminist-informed critiques of IR both constitute and contribute to debates as part of so-called Critical Security Studies;
The ability to both recognise and formulate questions that contribute to such existing debates.

**Teaching Method**
For this course, there are no lectures. Instead, students will participate in seminars where they are expected to form their own opinions through ‘critical’ evaluation of the readings. At the post-graduate level, it is up to students to do most of the work. Seminar discussion will be structured around a short presentation of the topic, in which students will (briefly) summarise and then critique the readings. For each seminar, there will be one or two key texts (which are in the course reader). The purpose of the seminar is to ‘analyse’ and ‘evaluate’ ideas. Seminar discussion depends on serious preparation by students. It is therefore crucial that you do all of the reading required and come into the seminar fully prepared to actively take part in the discussion. For the topics discussed, there is not necessarily a right answer. What is important is to focus on the way that people think.

**Method of Assessment**
Each student will be assessed through a combination of seminar contribution and written work. In terms of written work, two research papers (approximately 4,000 words) are required; one mid-term and one end-term. The topics for the papers are of the students own choosing. For each of the two research papers 35% of the overall grade is allocated (total 70%). The remaining 30% is devoted to seminar attendance and contribution.

**Guidelines for Assessment**
The research paper is the most important element as part of the overall assessment. In terms of grading the term paper, the categories below provide some guidance as to what qualities assessors are looking for, and what kinds of weakness may incline assessors towards giving a lower mark.

**A** Work of *exceptional quality* that authoritatively demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the topic. Well argued, organised, and structured. Critical awareness of the theoretical and/or empirical material, and shows originality of thought.

**A-** Work of *high quality* that is well above the average for a postgraduate paper. Not necessarily faultless in terms of the above, but still shows some originality of thought.
**B+** A *very competent* piece of work displaying substantial knowledge and understanding. There may well be room for improvement in terms of organisation and structure, although in general terms the work is solid.

**B** Again a piece of *some competence*. More improvement than the above will be required organisationally and structurally. Work at this level may also display some oversimplification and irrelevance.

**B-** An *adequate* piece of work, but where significant improvements must be made. Too much oversimplification and irrelevance. Required points are missing. Work may also contain serious grammatical errors.

**C+** *Inadequate*. A work displaying far too many of the above weaknesses.

**F** A *totally unacceptable* piece of work. Fail.

**Week 1/Seminar 1. Introduction: 1**

This first seminar will act as a brief introductory class where the nature of the course is discussed, together with the expectations of both the professor and students.

**Week 1/Seminar 2. Introduction: 2**

The content of this seminar is to be announced.

**Week 2/Seminar 3. The Nature of the Debate: IR and Gender/Gender and IR (?)**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Christine Sylvester, ‘Tensions in Feminist Security Studies’

**Week 2/Seminar 4. A Question of Men? Masculinities in IR**

**Key Texts:**

**Further Reading:**
Zalewski & Jane Parpart (eds.), *The “Man” Question in International Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), Chapter 3: Steve Smith, “‘Unacceptable Conclusions’ and the “Man” Question: Masculinity, Gender, and International Relations”; Chapter 5: Craig N. Murphy, ‘Six Masculine Roles in International Relations and their Interconnection: A Personal Investigation’.


**Week 3/Seminar 5. Film: Saving Private Ryan**

For this seminar there will be a screening of *Saving Private Ryan*. The film allows for a continued interrogation of hegemonic masculinities and, in particular, the cultural construction of the politics of soldiering: What kind of a ‘man’ does it take to be a soldier? And, also necessarily: What reflections of womanhood make such a construction possible?
Further Reading:

Week 3/Seminar 6. Militarised Masculinity: Men at War
Key Text:

Further Reading:
Zalewski & Papart (eds.), The “Man” Question in International Relations, Chapter 6: Steve Niva, ‘Tough and Tender: New World Order Masculinity and the Gulf War’.

Week 4/Seminar 7. Film: GI Jane
Maintaining the focus on the politics of soldiering, in this seminar there will be a screening of GI Jane. The readings for this seminar (see below) draw attention to how a hegemonic, militarised masculinity is constructed and maintained through processes of ‘othering’ according intersections between gender, national, and racial identities.
Further Reading:

Key Text:
Further Reading:
Sandra Whitworth, Men, Militarism, and UN Peacekeeping (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004), Chapter 4: ‘Canada: Peacekeeping Country Par Excellence?’; Chapter 6: ‘Militarized Masculinities and Blue Berets’; Chapter 7: ‘Conclusion: Do Warriors Make the Best Peacekeepers?’
Enloe, The Morning After, Chapter 1: ‘Are UN Peacekeepers Real Men? And other Cold War Puzzles’.

Key Text:
Further Reading:
Zalewski & Parpart (eds.), *The “Man” Question International Relations*, Chapter 7: Carol Cohn, ‘Gays in the Military: Texts and Subtexts’.

**Week 5/Seminar 10. (Hegemonic) Masculinity and ‘Defence Intellectuals’**

**Key Text:**
Carol Cohn, ‘Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defence Intellectuals’, *Signs*, vol.12, no.4, 1987.

**Further Reading:**

**Week 6/Seminar 11. Gender and the Revolution in Military Affairs**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**

**Week 6/Seminar 12. Film: Fahrenheit 9/11**

For this seminar, there will be a screening of *Fahrenheit 9/11*. In doing so, the purpose is to provoke discussion (for week 7/seminar 13, below) as to how, and with what implications, such a powerful critique of the Bush administration and the US-led war in Iraq nonetheless largely marginalizes women’s voices.
Week 7/Seminar 13. A Question of Women? Femininities (not) in IR

**Key Texts:**

**Further Reading:**

Week 7/Seminar 14. The ‘Feminisation’ of the Military (?)

**Key Texts:**

**Further Reading:**
Week 8/Seminar 15. Militarised Femininity

Key Text:

Further Reading:
Laura Sjoberg & Caron E. Gentry, ‘Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror’, International Relations, vol.22, no.1, 2008.

Week 8/Seminar 16. Film: Rape in the Ranks: The Enemy Within
To be confirmed.

Week 9/Seminar 17. Cultural Constructions of Female Political Violence

Key Text:

Week 9/Seminar 18. Motherhood and Female Peace/Political Violence


Further Reading for 9/17 & 9/18:


**Week 10/Seminar 19. Gender Inequality, Violence and War**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**


**Week 10/Seminar 20. War, Sexual Violence and the Politics of Security**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**


**Week 11/Seminar 21. Gendering the Civilian Immunity Principle**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**


**Week 11/Seminar 22. The Militarisation of Prostitution**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**


**Week 12/Seminar 23. Conclusion**

The content of this seminar is to be announced.

**Week 12/Seminar 24. No Class**