

Politics 213:
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GENDER IN ADVANCED CAPITALISM

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Class: King 337, Tuesday and Thursday, 1.30-2.45pm.

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Introduction

Political economy is a discipline whose object of enquiry is the relationship between the state, politics and power, on the one hand, and economic relations and the market, on the other. It is concerned with the ways in which politics affects the structure and performance of the economy, and the economy affects the structures, institutions and practices of politics. At its broadest, then, political economy examines the manner in which power is implicated in economic relationships. As such, any political economy needs to pay attention to gender. Gender is one of the central dimensions along which power and politics are structured in capitalist societies, and economic resources and outcomes systematically vary on the basis of gender. Across the advanced capitalist world, women in the labor force are paid less than men, and occupations tend to be heavily gender segregated. Notions of masculinity and femininity are constitutive of who fills particular jobs, and how those jobs are valued in market societies. Just as political economy as a discipline seeks to break down the boundary between the political and the economic, and to identify how each influences the other, so a gendered political economy examines the permeable boundary between the public sphere of the state and the private sphere of gender relations, the public economy and the household economy, and the manner in which they influence each other.

This course looks selectively at a set of important topics in the political economy of gender. It begins with an examination of the main theoretical approaches to integrating gender into political economy, including neo-classical economics, Marxism, and a range of feminist accounts. We ask how each of these theoretical approaches explain the gender differences that we see in the political economy, and also whether we can identify a distinctive queer political economy. This course is also comparative. It examines a range of concrete forms of political economy among advanced capitalist societies. Just as it is true that some economic outcomes vary systematically on the basis of gender, it is also true that there are substantial differences in the role of women in contemporary capitalist societies, and in the distribution of economic rewards. This suggests that a political economy of gender needs to move beyond general theory to examine the role of political and social movements, state policies and political-economic institutions which explain

gender differences across countries. The final part of the course looks at the successes and failures of policies and practices which attempt to address gender difference in the political economy, including state policies such as affirmative action and pay equity, and collective action on the part of labor unions. Discussion of the topics covered in this course is further complicated by the fact that contemporary capitalism is in a period of rapid change that is transforming the structure of national economies in ways which contribute to a shift in the power and influence of different social groups. Globalization, which is something of a catch-all phrase for the changes taking place, is itself gendered.

Requirements

The main obligation of students is to do the assigned reading (of which there is a great deal, close to 200 pages a week), come to class, and be prepared to participate in class discussions. Whenever possible this class will be conducted like a seminar. Students will on occasion make oral presentations about some of the readings. Each student must write comments (anywhere from a paragraph or two to a page or two) on the readings each week. The purpose of the comments is to identify the main issues, questions and criticisms so that we can incorporate them into class discussion. I will pose some questions to think about when doing the reading at the end of each week. The comments are due either in the box outside my office or in my email Inbox by 6.00am (in the morning) every Tuesday. Please put the words **Weekly Comments** in the subject line of emailed comments. The weekly comments and class participation are worth one-third of the grade. Further explanation of this assignment will be provided on Blackboard and at the end of the syllabus. It should be read carefully.

There will be a take-home mid-term exam, in the form of one or more essay questions, worth one-third of the grade, due just before spring break. Finally, there will be a research and/or policy paper (about 10-15 pages long) due at the end of the semester, also worth one-third of the grade. The research paper can be individual, or collective, done by groups of up to four students. The choice of topic is yours (though I can suggest subjects), but ideally I want you to use this as an opportunity to deal with countries and/or issues in the political economy of gender that we do not get a chance to cover in detail in the course. You must give me a one-page proposal, outlining the topic and providing a preliminary bibliography, by the first Thursday after spring break. These are all requirements and late work will be penalized in the interest of equity.

Finally, there will inevitably be changes to the course as the semester progresses – changes in the readings, additional details of assignments, questions for the weekly comments, and so on – which are not included on this syllabus. I will provide weekly updates in the “announcements” section of the *Blackboard* web site for this course: <http://bb.oberlin.edu/>. You must check the *Blackboard* site at least once a week in case I have announced changes in the readings or assignments. In the unlikely event that you miss a class, you should always check the web site in case I have announced something of importance. Instructions for the use of *Blackboard* are provided at this URL: http://www.oberlin.edu/OCTET/Bb/FAQ_Students.htm. You may need to self-enroll in Blackboard. The password to do so is: **truthiness**.

Course readings

One book has been ordered at the Oberlin Bookstore and you are strongly advised to buy it because we will read it almost in its entirety.

Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*.

For the other readings we will be using Blackboard. Readings are listed in alphabetical order under the “Course Documents” tab. You can then read and print this material. When looking for a particular reading from the syllabus look for the author’s name which is highlighted in **bold** on the syllabus. Check page numbers carefully, so that you read the correct section of each reading at the correct time. In many cases I have had some sections of a book scanned in that you do not need to read, or that you read at different points in the semester, so do be aware of page numbers.

Class Schedule:

February 7th - February 16th Gendering Political Economy

Robert **Kuttner**, *Everything for Sale: The Virtues and Limits of Markets*, chapters 1 & 2 (pages 11-67).

Barry **Clark**, *Political Economy: A Comparative Approach*, chapters 11 & 12 (pages 203-240).

Lourdes **Beneria**, *Gender, Development and Globalization*, chapter 2 (pages 31-62).

Marianne **Ferber** and Julie Nelson, eds., *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and Economics*, introduction, chapters 2, 3 & 7 (pages 1-22, 37-68, 133-168).

Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*, chapters 1, 2 & 3 (pages 3-80).

Heidi **Hartmann**, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” in Nicholson, ed., *The Second Wave Reader* (pages 97-122).

Joan **Acker**, “Revisiting Class” in Mutari and Figart, eds., *Women and the Economy* (pages 13-24).

Erik Olin **Wright**, *Class Counts: Comparative Studies in Class Analysis*, chapter 9 (pages 239-248).

Johanna **Brenner**, *Women and the Politics of Class*, chapter 3 and the conclusion (pages 83-97, and 293-323).

Nancy **Fraser**, “From Redistribution to Recognition?” (pages 68-93) *New Left Review* [1995].

Adolph **Reed**, *Class Notes*, introduction (pages vii-xxviii).

February 21st – 23rd

Queer Political Economy

John **D’Emilio**, “Capitalism and Gay Identity,” in Abelove, Barale and Halperin, eds., *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (pages 467-476).

Amy **Gluckman** and Betsy **Reed**, eds., *Homo-Economics: Capitalism, Community and Lesbian and Gay Life*, introduction and chapters 1, 2, 4, 6-7, 10-11 (pages xi-xxxi, 3-20, and 25-44, 65-86, 135-184).

February 28th - March 2nd

The Rise and Fall of Fordism

Thomas **Weisskopf**, “The Latest Economic Crisis in Historical Perspective,” in Socialist Review Collective, ed., *Unfinished Business* (pages 13-28).

Figart, Mutari and Power, “Breadwinners and Other Workers” in Mutari and Figart, eds., *Women and the Economy* (pages 39-53).

Claudia **Goldin**, *Understanding the Gender Gap: An Economic History of Women*, chapters 1-4 (pages 3-118).

Heidi **Gottfried**, “Compromising Positions: Emergent Neo-Fordisms and Embedded Gender Contracts,” in *British Journal of Sociology*, June 2000 (pages 235-259).

March 7th - March 9th

The Double Burden

Goran **Therborn**, *Sex and Power*, chapter 2 and conclusion (pages 73-106 & 295-315).

Gary **Martin** and Vladimir **Kats**, “Families and Work in Transition in 12 Countries” (pages 3-31) *Monthly Labor Review* [September 2003]. Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2003/09/art1full.pdf>

Barbara **Bergmann**, *The Economic Emergence of Women*, chapter 11 & 12 (pages 255-

298).

Arlie **Hochschild**, *The Second Shift*, chapters 1-4 and 16-17 (pages 1-58 & 239-269).

March 14th - March 16th Social Construction

Alice **Kessler-Harris**, *A Woman's Wage*, chapter 1 (pages 6-32).

Arlie **Hochschild**, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, chapters 1 & 6 (pages 3-23 and 89-136).

Wayne **Lewchuk**, "Men and Monotony" in Mutari and Figart, eds., *Women and the Economy* (pages 65-79).

Christine **Williams**, *Still a Man's World: Men Who Do Women's Work*, chapters 1, 2 & 6 (pages 1-49 and 109-145).

Showing of *Fast Food Women*.

March 21st - April 11th Comparative Cases of Gender and Political Economy

Jane **Jenson**, Elisabeth **Hagen** and Ceallaigh **Reddy**, eds., *The Feminization of the Labor Force: Paradoxes and Promises*, chapter 2 (pages 17-44).

Julia **O'Connor**, Ann Shola **Orloff** and Sheila **Shaver**, *State, Market, Families*, chapters 2 & 3 (pages 43-109).

Diane **Sainsbury**, *Gender, Equality and Welfare States*, chapters 3-6 (pages 49-126).

Beatrix **Campbell**, *Wigan Pier Revisited: Poverty and Politics in the eighties*, "Baths and Bosses" & "Workplace Politics" (pages 97-115 and 129-152).

Mary **Brinton**, *Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan*, chapters 1, 2 & 4 (pages 1-70 and 109-140).

Jane **Jenson** and Rianne **Mahon**, "Representing Solidarity: Class, Gender and the Crisis in Social-Democratic Sweden" in *New Left Review*, #201 (pages 76-100).

Stephen **Rose** and Heidi **Hartmann**, *Still a Man's Labor Market* (pages 1-44). Available at: <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C355.pdf> .

Policy Matters Ohio, *Pink Collar Work: Gender and Wages in Ohio*, October 2002

(pages 1-6).

April 13th - April 18th Globalization and Gender

Barbara **Ehrenreich** and Arlie **Hochschild**, eds., *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, introduction, and essays by Hochschild, Cheever, Parreñas, Hondagneu-Sotelo, Ehrenreich, Zarembka, Brennan, Thai, Sassen, and Espinoza (pages 1-69, 85-103, 142-168 and 230-280).

Soon Kyoung **Cho**, “The Labor Process and Capital Mobility: The Limits of the New International Division of Labor” in *Politics & Society*, 1985 (pages 185-222).

Showing of *Global Assembly Line*.

April 20th - 27th Women and Welfare

Mary **McIntosh**, “Feminism and Social Policy” in Pierson and Castles eds., *The Welfare State Reader* (pages 119-132).

Carole **Pateman**, “The Patriarchal Welfare State” in Pierson and Castles eds., *The Welfare State Reader* (pages 133-150).

Johanna **Brenner**, *Women and the Politics of Class*, chapter 5 (pages 118-154).

Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*, chapters 4 - 7 (pages 83-182).

Ann Shola **Orloff**, “Farewell to Maternalism” conference paper, 2003 (all).

May 2nd - 11th What is to be Done?

Heidi **Hartmann**, Roberta **Spalter-Roth** and Nancy **Collins**, “What do Unions Do for Women?” in *Challenge*, July-August 1994 (pages 11-18).

Chris **Howell** and Rianne **Mahon**, “Strategies for Union Renewal: Women Wage Earners as the New Exemplar?” special issue of *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, November 1996 (pages 499-509).

Dorothy Sue **Cobble**, ed., *Women and Unions: Forging a Partnership*, chapter 2, 3, 11, 12 & 13 (pages 43-84 and 281-336).

Goldberg Moses and Hartmann, eds. *U.S. Women in Struggle*, chapters 10 and 20 by **Cobble** and **Ladd-Taylor** (pages 166-188 & 373-389).

Kitty **Krupat** and Patrick **McCreery**, eds., *Out at Work: Building a Gay-Labor Alliance*, chapter by Krupat (pages 1-23).

Showing of *Out at Work*.

Amy **Gluckman** and Betsy **Reed**, eds., *Homo-Economics: Capitalism, Community and Lesbian and Gay Life*, chapters 15 & 16 (pages 223-240).

Alice **Kessler-Harris**, *A Woman's Wage: Historical Meanings and Social Consequences*, chapter 5 (pages 113-129).

Barbara **Bergmann**, *In Defense of Affirmative Action*, chapters 1, 4, 5 and 8 (pages 1-31, 83-130 & 166-180).

Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*, chapter 9 (pages 209-232).

How To Do The Weekly Reading Comments Assignment

This assignment is not complicated, but it is easy to misunderstand. The purpose of these sets of comments is threefold. First, I want to know that you have read the assigned material ahead of class so that I can structure the class on the assumption that we have a shared starting point, and so that we can set about discussing the reading rather than having me simply lecture on it. This class is reading-driven because I am trying to expose you to a wide range of different viewpoints and approaches to the topic, and that requires that I do everything I can to encourage you to do the reading. Second, I need to know ahead of time if some part of the reading was consistently misunderstood so that I can concentrate on going over that material in class. It is often the case that one author or piece of reading is open to multiple interpretations, and if several students interpret it differently for me, we will need to discuss that. I may be expecting you to get something from the reading when you in fact take away something quite different. There may also be language and concepts that you don't understand, so the written comments are an opportunity to let me know what you would like me to explain in class. Third, your reaction to the reading plays a central role in helping me decide how to organize class discussion. I am particularly interested in which readings resonated with you, and why, and which readings you found weak, irritating, ignorant, or whatever, and why. The critiques of the readings are the best place to start a class discussion – and it means I can call on you to explain your reaction.

What does this mean for the comments you write? It means that, at a minimum, I want the comments to demonstrate that you did the reading. That means a brief summary of the main themes and arguments presented in the reading. You can do this by writing a paragraph on each reading, or by drawing out some themes and using your comments to illustrate how each reading addressed those themes. You do not need to summarize/discuss every reading if you do not want to. I want a sense that you have done all the reading, but if you found some of the reading particularly insightful or heinous, then, by all means, focus on them. Beyond your summaries, I would like you to identify terms, concepts or words that you did not understand (even after using a dictionary!), or would like me to go over in class. Finally, with your summary and questions, please offer comments, critiques and reactions to the readings. Again, you might do this for every reading, or just for a few; you might organize your comments around a generalized critique of the readings for that week, or point to surprising similarities or differences among the readings.

Your written comments should range from a couple of paragraphs to a couple of pages. These can be e-mailed to me or placed in the box outside my door. Here is how I grade the comments. **I DO NOT** make comments on them and hand them back to you, unless you request them ahead of an exam or something similar. If you hand in comments that demonstrate that you have done the reading, or the great bulk of it, regardless of the quality of those comments, you get a tick. If I receive no written comments, or your comments appear to be about reading for another class, you do not get a tick. On very rare occasions your comments may be so insightful that I give you a double tick, and it only happens for comments that go beyond summary and questioning to offer reaction and critique. So, in grading terms, not handing in written comments is not a good idea because the main determinant of the grade is handing them in regularly rather than their quality.