The Chinese University of Hong Kong

BSSc in Gender Studies

Course Description

**GDRS1001**

**Thinking Gender: An Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies**

This course aims to develop students’ ability to analyze the everyday life through the lens of gender. Drawing on the interdisciplinary nature of Women’s and Gender Studies, the course will guide students to examine how gender works as one of the primary social organizing principles in the movies we watch, the housework we do, the behaviors we express and many other daily activities that have been routinized. The first three lectures will equip students with a critical gender lens by questioning biology and getting familiar with theories of gender role, socialization, gender schema, doing gender and queer theory. All concepts to be explored in class will be explained with reference to research. At the end of the course, students will come to understand how political their personal life is.

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**GDRS1002**

**Feminist Theories**

This course offers an introduction to various areas of feminist thought, including global feminism, poststructural feminism, radical feminism, cultural feminism, socialist feminism and the “third wave,” among others. Students will read a sampling of writing from theorists dedicated to advancing different types of feminist theory, and then analyze some of the possible strengths and limitations of each. The aims of the course are to acquaint students with the diversity of feminist theories, and to introduce some of the issues on which feminists differ.
Quantitative Research Methods in Gender Studies
This course introduces students to quantitative research methods and skills in Gender Studies. Students will be exposed to a variety of quantitative methodologies, and recognize gender bias in the application of research methods. The course adopts a combination of lectures, class discussion, and analytical practices. We will go through the different phases in the research process of formulating research questions, designing measurements and hypotheses, choosing of methods for accessing sources, conducting data analysis, and writing reports. Students will develop the critical awareness of quantitative methods through discussion and application of research methods and be prepared to design their own research project in the real setting with the quantitative research methods they learn in class. They will be able to reflect upon the choice and application of research methods from a gender perspective in their own research.

Qualitative Research Methods in Gender Studies
This course provides an introduction to all the major qualitative methods in gender studies. It will provide students with hands-on experiences with different approaches such as discourse analysis, textual analysis, interviews and focus group studies and ethnography.

Love and Intimate Relationship
This course reviews basic concepts, theories and research findings of romantic love and intimate relationship from the perspective of psychology of gender. Various aspects of romantic love and intimate relationship will be critically reviewed. Based on most-updated research of psychology of gender, we will cover major areas such as the following: different stages in the development of love; interpersonal processes within romantic relationships (such as conversation, conflict, etc.); the role of sexuality in love; gender differences in romantic feelings and behaviors; break-ups and divorce, etc. Upon completion of the course, students should demonstrate basic understanding of structure, functions, dynamics, and development of romantic love and use knowledge from this course as an insight to improve the quality of their own relationships in the future.

Updated as at 7 Aug 2019
Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Society

This interdisciplinary course introduces and examines gender and sexuality from a contemporary and regional perspective. Based on a cross-cultural perspective, we will read and analyze different meanings of gender and sexuality, and how these meanings are constructed. In a context of modernization campaigns and globalization processes, this course illustrates how gender relations and sexual politics are related with historical backgrounds, cultural heritage, market expansion, ideological shifts, and capitalist dynamics. The topics of gender and sexuality will be interwoven with that of migration, work, family, popular culture, mass media, and consumerism. Students will be encouraged to explore localized knowledge and living experiences of gender and sexuality identities, and to think critically about the continuities and changes in social systems of sex and gender.

Living Feminisms

Feminism is not only about rights or liberation, patriarchy and criticism, movement, and legislation. Feminism is also a tool for revealing the reality of everyday life, which includes stereotyping, discrimination, manipulation and power struggles. More importantly, feminism is about adopting a multiple vision and a way of life, which is sensitive to hierarchy, power and relationships, and emphasizes equality and fairness in everyday life. This course aims to help students examine 13 aspects of the Hong Kong socio-political state “through the feminism lens”, from urban planning to the design and management of public space, from the implementation of public policies to gender mainstreaming and government statistics, from political election to district administration and community building.

Understanding Masculinities and Social Change

This course examines men’s diverse experiences as boys/men and public discourses and practices about masculinities. It will focus on how the gendered social order influences men’s actions and the way men perceive themselves, other men, women, and social situations. It will pay special attention to the exploration of the relationships between multiple dimensions of social relations and inequalities including gender, race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation. It will address issues such as: male socialization, boyhood culture, male body images, male friendship, male sexuality and fertility, men’s experiences as fathers, male aggression and violence, men’s commitments to sports and work, and media representations of boys and men in contemporary culture. It will also explore female masculinities and queer masculinities and to what extent they post challenges to hegemonic masculinity. Students will be introduced to the latest developments and their global networks, and to evaluate the prospects for social change in how men may think, feel, and act otherwise.
Public Policy and Social Minorities in Hong Kong

This course examines the social construction of minorities and the history of Hong Kong public policy towards them, including legal changes, social institutions, immigration policy, and political mobilization. Current debates in public policies such as anti-discrimination legislation, education policies of ethnic minorities, disciplining of youth and anti-poverty scheme will also be evaluated within this context. We will draw on an array of intellectual resources ranging from political economy, feminism, phenomenology and queer theory to examine issues about racial/ethnic minorities, the economically underprivileged, minorities with disabilities, sexual/erotic minorities, gender minorities and youth in light of the latest scholarly discussions on multiculturalism, pluralism and the politics of difference and social recognition.

Family and Society

This course explores the concept of the family as a gendered social construction, considering how the institution of the family perpetuates gender roles and how social changes transform the familial structure at the same time. The course puts a premium on feminist thoughts on the reproduction of gendered family. We'll start with introduction to how family is formed in different cultural contexts, and then proceed to discuss how family and kinship can be redefined under the development of reproductive technology, transnational migration, and globalization. Topics will include familial formation in contemporary patrilineal/matrilineral societies, non-mainstream marriages like walking marriage and bride kidnapping practices, gendered division of labor in conducting housework, the social construction of motherhood, domestic violence against women, cohabitation, non-married family, single-parent family, gay family, surrogacy, and transnational adoption and so on.
Engendering Chinese Cultures

Individuals exist in a socio-cultural context, and as such, institutions such as lineage and family, marriage, religion, medical practices, art, education and politics shape our life patterns as well as social mores. Gender, as one of the building blocks of society and culture, shapes our values and is deeply embedded in our daily lives, and it weaves an intricate ideological fabric that strongly impacts our thoughts, feelings and action. Given the ubiquity of the influence of gender, a study of society and culture from this perspective is important for the development of a broad understanding of culture, a major objective in general education. Through the exploration of selected issues in Chinese culture which are significant and relevant to everyday life, this course introduces to students historical materials which relate to, and contemporary research on, the role of gender in the making of history and culture. As they participate in the learning activities of the course, students will be gradually led to understand Chinese culture from a new perspective. Furthermore, students will have a chance to reflect on long-held values and beliefs which they themselves have acquired as members of this culture, or which they witness in the daily life of the community around them.

Gender in China

This course introduces gender as an analytical tool to study Chinese history from ancient times to the present day. It demonstrates how gender challenges mainstream historical analysis and explanations. The focus is placed on the changing meanings and practices of femininity/masculinity across time. Issues such as gender transgression, homosocial relationships, marriage, sexuality and reproduction will be explored, both to shed light on, and to question our familiar perceptions of China. By examining the interaction between historical context and gender politics, this course also provokes reflections on methodologies, sources and discourses.

Internship

This is an experiential course which demands sound planning and a high level of reflection on the part of the students. Before the start of the second year, the student is expected to have completed a three-month supervise internship in an NGO or a university-affiliated unit which is involved with gender-related services or advocacy work. Before the internship starts, the student will prepare her/his proposal, outlining the objectives of her internship, and the theoretical knowledge or insights it rests on. Finally, a final report will be submitted, in which the student demonstrates her/his depth of reflection on her/his field experience, as well as the extent to which theory and practice can be integrated. The student's performance will be evaluated on the basis of his/her final report and the partnering organization’s assessment.
**Thesis**

The course provides an opportunity for students to undertake supervised study on a selected topic of interest. Students will be led to examine aspects of the selected topic, conduct a critical literature review and a systematic investigation of the topic they have chosen. Students are required to regularly discuss with the teacher concrete findings in their research and submit written progress reports as scheduled by the teacher and a complete project report at the end of the term. Students will present their work in an academic mini-conference.

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**Gender Studies: Field Study**

The course is conducted by the teaching staff from this Programme. The content of this course varies from semester to semester, but concentrates either on selected problems related to the encounter with other societies through experiential fieldwork, or on special issues in Gender Studies. Contents of this course will vary with instructors and students. Students are required to join all lectures and workshops to show their capacities in applying those theories, particularly the research skills and methodologies, learnt from different courses. They are requested to put their ideas into practice by engaging with the communities outside Hong Kong. It also aims to strengthen the relationship between teachers, the society, external stakeholders and students so that students’ global citizenship is established and strengthened. It can also provide opportunities for the students to work in a team. They are required to submit an individual report afterwards.
Women's Narratives and Hong Kong History

In 21st century post-colonial Hong Kong, the preservation of ‘collective memory’ of this fast-changing city has become an everyday discourse. From award-winning movies, heart-warming testimonies, tabloid stories to Facebook groups and social campaigns, we have been consuming, constructing, and circulating narratives of ‘the past’. This act of remembering and exploring ‘our history’ questions a mainstream Hong Kong story of success demonstrated by economic development and material wealth, and attempts to identify discontinuities, gaps and silenced voices in the dominating narrative. It has also prompted reflections on the relation between narrative and identity — personal, collective, and spatial — in historical inquiry, and in what ways the writing of history has been shaped by disparate ideals, values, web of relations and power.

This course will revisit Hong Kong’s history through the exploration of narratives documenting women, a group often made invisible in history writing, as social actors in the fabric of colonial Hong Kong. From elites’ households to textile factories, from rural villages, western-district brothels to mid-levels convents, schools and hospitals, women of different generations have worked as caregivers, breadwinners, pioneers, and educators while contesting the prescribed subordinate status as objects of exploitation in a patriarchal society. Drawing from a wide range of sources, including archival documents, published biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, family histories, school histories, and oral histories, this course will seek to introduce a multi-faceted history of colonial Hong Kong with women as the focus of inquiry. The discussion of women’s narratives will be situated in respective historical contexts linking the personal to social, political and economic changes in Hong Kong under colonial rule. It will also discuss the use of auto/biographies and oral histories as a methodology in historical research investigating the relations between memory, self and identity.

Experiential Guided Research

Experiential Guided Research aims at engaging students in research to prepare them better for their thesis projects and future studies and career involving research. More generally, this course is designed to offer students an opportunity to observe research up close and gain hands-on research experience by working as a member in an active research team. No lectures will be given. Students are expected to attend and actively participate in research/supervision meetings.
LGBTQI+ Studies: Identities and social change

This course critically explores the development of LGBTQI+ studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. It traces how LGBTQI+ communities develop against the backdrops of social forces and social oppression. It analyzes the cultural, social and legal environments that LGBTQI+ people live with, in diverse spheres such as families, education, employment, health and the media. The discussions focus on both the structural constraints that LGBTQI+ people face, but also the agency and resilience they display. It explores the development of contemporary LGBTQI+ identities and social movements, as well as the politics involved. The course also asks how gender and sexual diversity is understood in different parts of the world in an era of globalization. Students are also exposed to different practices, policies and laws that are related to LGBTQI+ people’s lives.

Gender in Education/Achievement

Educational and occupational accomplishments vary dramatically among individuals and profoundly affect lives. Identifying the factors that influence educational experiences and outcomes is therefore of great interest to all human beings in contemporary society. Importantly, gender is among the powerful individual characteristics that affect people’s experiences in educational settings. Gender shapes youths’ experience and outcomes of education across the globe and across history. This course is designed to introduce to students, with a critical mindset, important contemporary issues at the intersection of gender and education and achievement. Collectively, the topics address the gender-education nexus in academic, occupational, and social domains from childhood through adulthood. We will pay particular attention to issues that relate closely to daily life, both local and international. Theories and data will be drawn mainly from Psychology but will also come from other disciplines such as Biology and Sociology. Students are expected to engage actively in the identification of the relevant issues in real life, dissecting the root of these issues, and proposing ways to address these issues. All these will be guided by the teaching staff and with a focus on scientific evidence and rigor. At the end of the course, students will be more aware of gender differences and similarities and gendered treatments in learning and occupational contexts, and they will also be more informed about the causes of these phenomena and how to deal with them constructively.

Gender Studies: Advanced Seminars

This course provides opportunities to explore an interdisciplinary and inter-faculty analysis of important topics in Gender Studies. Faculty members in the university with specific interest in Gender Studies will deliver a topic in their field. The focus of the course may vary according to the area of expertise of the instructors and the interests of the class.
The course will examine the relationship between the development of gender and sexual identities and that of the contemporary politics mainly in, but not limited to, Asian societies. We will look into how the contemporary politics and gender structures in the regions interplay and produce racial identities through the lens of gender. For example, the Korean-Japan and China-Japan dispute over issues of comfort women in World War II; Gender activism in Gaza and Arab Spring, the female suicide bombers in middle-East, and religious right-wing movements in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Students will learn how to examine the issues of gender and sexual identities and how they are deeply embedded within the global politics as well as local social mores. Specifically, the course is divided into two parts. First of all, we will review the key theories of citizenship, war, democracy, nationalism, human rights and so on – through the lens of gender. Students are expected to learn the core theoretical debates and methods through reading key texts. The second part of this course will analyze these theories and debates through cutting-edge case studies. Topics will include comfort women, sexual violence in war, terrorism, female suicide-bombers and right-wing religious movements, human trafficking, grassroots feminist organizations, anti-war activism and so on. Students are expected to establish a more solid and critical range of views to examine these global issues and political controversies.
GDRS4008

Gender, Age, Race and Health

The course examines how health experiences and outcomes are shaped by gender and sexuality, with the intersecting influences of age and race. Topics such as health care inequalities, the medicalization of society, and feminization of medical control will be critically examined.

GDRS4011

Gendered Migration in Transnational Asia and beyond

The course will investigate contemporary women's transnational migration from developing countries to newly developed countries in Asia and beyond. We will look at Filipina, Vietnamese and Chinese women migrating to Taiwan, Korea, Japan and the United States for marriage and employment. We will discuss issues related to labor and marriage migrations, as well as trafficking in women, on both macro- and micro-levels. We are going to ask: how does the global economic restructuring shape the gendered migration today? What makes female labor different from male labor in the global labor market? What are push-and-pull factors that trigger these women to leave their hometown to be workers or wives in foreign countries? What difficulties do they experience after entering host societies and what impact would the migration flow bring to both laborer/bride receiving and sending countries? Moreover, we will explore the global market formation of transnational commodified marriages between women from developing countries and men from more developed countries. Taking the matchmaking industry in Taiwan and Vietnam for example, we will ask: how should we perceive the subjectivity of women who marry abroad through brokers? How could we challenge the assumption that the brokerage business in transnational marriage is part of human trafficking practice, and women involved in this activity are victims? To better address this issue, we may also need to address the question: what is trafficking in women? How are women represented in the global anti-trafficking campaign and how the politics of charity influences the state's immigration policymaking and women's transnational mobilities? We will approach these issues from a critical perspective in order to challenge given social perception that ignores women's agency at work. Throughout the semester, we will read theoretical and empirical works from many disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, political economy and women's studies. In addition, we will read primary source materials including news reports, online forums and watch documentaries and film clips.
Gender Development from a Lifespan Perspective

Humans all over the world are inevitably gendered, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in tangible behavior and in perception, from birth to death. Indeed, it is difficult to identify an aspect of human existence, be it ability, health, preferences, beliefs or opportunities, that does not have some flavor of gender. These gender phenomena do not arise from nowhere but from a complex interplay of biological, cognitive and social processes and manifest in rich forms at various points of development. This course tackles the study of gender from a developmental perspective, with the aim of understanding how gender phenomena arise, develop and change from infancy to older age, how they can be described and quantified, and how to explain them with an eclectic theoretical approach that balances various developmental forces. Theories and findings will be drawn mainly from Developmental Psychology but will also come from other disciplines such as animal studies and biology. The course also emphasizes an understanding of the methodology used to study age-related changes and causes and consequences of behaviours. Students are expected to engage actively in the identification and analysis of the relevant issues in real life, both of others and their own. All these will be guided by the teaching staff and with a focus on scientific evidence and rigor. At the end of the course, students will gain a critical understand of the role of gender in shaping human development, gain insight into what has led them to become who they are, and be more informed about how to deal with gender phenomena constructively at various life stages and in different walks of life.

Gender and Work

This course explores the question why women and men are treated differently in the workplace through the lens of performance anthropology, which focuses on how a person can become good at being a man or woman (quite apart from biological sex). The assumption is not that your biological sex affects your success in the workplace, but rather that your success is affected by how well you perform being a man or woman in the eyes of your employer. Our goal is to move beyond the old dualisms by trying to understand how the same person might be treated as a "woman" by one and as a "man" by another. This course will not focus only on theory, it will be examining ethnographic examples of the performances of man and woman-hood in the workplace.
Gender and Law

The course aims to introduce students to the relationship between gender and law in different jurisdictions, to introduce students to the legal concept of equal opportunities under the framework of gender politics and to encourage students to be aware of possible gender bias in their future careers.

For the course descriptions of non-GDRS courses, please refer to the websites of the respective departments