Disagreement over human rights and gender justice is intense. At its worst, this controversy has led cultural conservatives to label feminism an imperialist threat, while feminists have attacked culture as irredeemably retrograde. The result is contestation that crosscuts women’s lives as they become markers in a struggle that pits tradition, family, and faith against their individual rights.

This course explores the roots of this disagreement, its relationship to the global women’s movement, and the persistent obstacles to gender justice. We begin with an overview of the evolution of human rights. Next, we examine how scholars challenged and dissembled a number of assumptions about universal rights, culture, sisterhood, and the international women’s movement. The core of the course focuses on a series of contemporary human rights issues from around the globe that raise dilemmas for advocates of gender justice. Case studies include the legal rights of minority women in Great Britain, gay marriage in the US, women’s property rights in India, and genital cutting on the African continent. We conclude by considering innovative reconstructions of universalism, multiculturalism, sisterhood, and the transnational women’s movement, evaluating their potential for advancing gender justice.
Course Requirements and Policies.

- Participation, attendance, and careful reading are essential for every class meeting. A question for each class is listed at the end of the Assignments document posted on Collab. Use the question to guide your note taking and as a basis for class discussion.
- Grading consists of class participation, which will include a mock conference, class presentation and simulation (25%), two 6-7 page essays (40%) and a final research paper (including writing group activities), 17-20 pages (35%).
- As this is a small seminar with discussion a critical portion of the course, please do not bring computers, smart phones etc. to class.
- Follow the honor code. If you have a question about plagiarism, ask.
- Late papers lose 3 points each day for the first two days. Later work will only be accepted as determined by the instructor. All late work must be turned in via the drop box on Collab.
- Back up your work daily. Computer problems are not an excuse for late work.
- All assignments, due dates and class announcements are via Collab. Follow the instructions provided online. When turning in assignments, check to see that your assignment was successfully submitted and that you submitted the correct assignment.
- See the “Assignments” file on collab under the Syllabus tab for further details on written work.

Required Texts to Purchase in order assigned on the syllabus:

- Linda Hirshman, Get to Work...And Get A Life, Before It’s Too Late, Penguin, 2007.
- Mary Shanley, Just Marriage, Oxford University Press 2004 (also available as an e-book on Virgo).

Required texts have been ordered through the UVA bookstore under SWAG 4050 and are also on reserve at Clemons Library. Used copies should be available in town and online.

NOTE: Refer to the reading questions for each class session at the end of the Assignments document posted on Collab
Course Outline
Class 1 (Jan. 19): Introduction

Discussion of class policies, the syllabus, and assignments.

Part I: Constructions
Class 2 (Jan. 24): Universal Human Rights and Cultural Relativism
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.


Class 3 (Jan. 26): Multiculturalism and Human Rights


Class 4 (Jan. 31): Sisterhood and the International Women’s Rights Movement


View a clip of Hilary Clinton’s famous speech at the Beijing Conference.


*Last Day to Add a Class: February 1*

Class 5 (Feb. 2): Obstacles to Gender Justice I


Class 6 (Feb. 7): Obstacles to Gender Justice I, continued

PRESENTATION


*Last Day to Drop a Class Without Penalty: February 2*

II. Deconstructions

Feminists Deconstruct Cultural Relativism and Multiculturalism


Class 8 (Feb. 14): Feminists Deconstruct Sisterhood and the International Women’s Movement: Post-colonial Countries

PRESENTATION


Historical background before doing the second reading: Ending apartheid in South Africa video

Class 9 (Feb. 16): Feminists Deconstruct Universal Sisterhood and the International Women’s Movement: Post-communist Countries


In class: “Gender Check: The Project – Part 01”

*Begin thinking about your Short Essay topic.

Class 10 (Feb. 21): Obstacles to Gender Justice II

PRESENTATION


*Assignments for the roundtable debate in class #11 and the mock conference in class #12 will be posted today. If you are interested in volunteering to present at the first mock conference, please let me know.*
III. Human Rights and Gender Dilemmas
Class 11 (Feb. 23): Bodily Integrity
Roundtable Debate

*Everyone reads pp. 206-211 from the following:

Group A:

Resolved: Female Genital Mutilation should be outlawed and eradicated

Group B:

Resolved: Female Circumcision should be medicalized.

Group C:

Resolved: “Natural” bodies can be bodies that are circumcised.
Class 12 (Feb. 28): Mock Conference I
Half the class will present their short essay ideas to the class. These students must prepare a 5 minute presentation, which will be followed by a 5 minute Q&A from the class.

Presenters will post a short (5-6 sentence) summary of their ideas on collab by noon, Monday February 27. Go to “Discussion and Private Messages” > “Worksite Discussions” > “Mock Conference I”. Ten percent of the essay grade for presenters will be based on the Mock Conference.

Bonus points will be awarded to the two students with the best questions and feedback to the presenters.

All students should read the summaries of the panelists on collab before the conference.

Class 13 (Mar. 1): *First essay due on Collab (go to the Assignments tab) by noon today*

**SPRING BREAK MARCH 3-11**

Class 14 (Mar. 13): Freedom of Expression
PRESENTATION


*Last Day to Drop a Class With “W”: March 16*
Class 15 (Mar. 15): Freedom of Religion

Film clip: Headscarves -- France and in class: France Starts Ban of Full-Face Veils in Public

Class 16 (Mar. 20): Work
PRESENTATION
Linda Hirshman, 2007, *Get to Work...And Get A Life, Before It’s Too Late*, entire (reserve).

*Roundtable debate assignments for Class #19 will be posted on collab today.*

Class 17 (Mar. 22): CLASS CANCELLED
Begin thinking about your second short essay.

Class 18 (Mar. 27): SWAG Alumni Panel
Alumni Panel location TBA.

Lunch included.
Class 19 (Mar. 29): Marriage Rights
Roundtable Debate

Everyone reads:

Assigned Readings:
Group A:

Resolved: The state should not privilege marriage but the caretaker–dependent relationship.

Group B:

Resolved: Gay marriage does not fundamentally change the institution of marriage.

Group C:

Resolved: The state should do away with civil marriage and legalize civil unions.

*Simulation assignments for Class #20 will be posted on collab today.*
Class 20 (Apr. 3): Family Law
The Shah Bano Case: simulation using online materials

Class 21 (Apr. 5): Property Rights
PRESENTATION


Class 22 (Apr. 10): Mock Conference II
The second half the class will present their short essay ideas to the class. These students must prepare a 5 minute presentation, which will be followed by a 5 minute Q&A from the class.

Presenters will post a short (5-6 sentence) summary of their ideas on collab by noon, Monday April 9. Go to “Discussion and Private Messages” > “Worksite Discussions” > “Mock Conference I”. Ten percent of the essay grade for presenters will be based on the Mock Conference.

Bonus points will be awarded to the two students with the best questions and feedback to the presenters.

All students should read the summaries of the panelists on collab before the conference.

Class 23 (Apr. 12): *Second essay due on Collab (go to the Assignments tab) by noon today*
IV. Reconstructions?

Class 24 (Apr. 17): Feminists Reconstruct Universal Human Rights and Multiculturalism


Film clip in class: “The Sixth Sun: Mayan Uprising in Chiapas”

*Discussion of Research Papers and Writing Groups.

Class 25 (Apr. 19): Feminists Reconstruct Sisterhood


Class 26 (Apr. 24): Reconstructing the International Women’s Movement?

Class 27 (Apr. 26): Obstacles to Gender Justice III

*Post a one paragraph research paper topic idea on collab* > “Discussion and Private Messages” > “Research Paper Topic Idea” by 11pm, April 25 and bring a copy of it with you to class.

Writing groups: discuss research paper topics

Class 28 (May 1): Obstacles to Gender Justice III, continued

*Video update on women’s rights in Afghanistan*, 2009.

*Post your research paper thesis statement on collab* > “Discussion and Private Messages” > “Thesis Statements” by 11am, May 1 and bring a copy of it with you to class.

Writing groups: revise your thesis statements and turn them in before the end of class.

Graduation lunch celebration!

*FINAL PAPERS DUE SATURDAY MAY 5*
Turn in as attachments on Collab by noon.