

JUD 251

Women and Gender in Israeli Society

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Office Hours: T-Th 9:30-10:00 a.m., or by appointment.

Dewey Hall, Room 305

Sociology of Gender is the study of how maleness and femaleness have been assigned meaning in society with implications for personal identity, sexuality, family, work, religion, and virtually all aspects of social and personal life. Like most other industrialized countries, one can identify instances of gender discrimination and complex gender relations in Israel. Yet, some of the unique features of Israel, such as the centrality of military service, a militaristic culture, the dominance of the Jewish tradition, pronatalism (high fertility rates) and the importance of the family (among others) make the understanding of gender relations in Israel both important and interesting. The course takes a feminist and sociological perspective to study these issues, and others.

Course Requirements:

The class is discussion-based; you read and evaluate scholarly works and discuss them with each other in class. You are asked to read the required materials before each class! I expect you to know what the papers are about and come up with at least two questions/comments on each of the readings. I may ask each student to offer his/her thoughts on each reading. Please come prepared. (Participation in class discussion = 20%).

1. There is no final paper for this course. Rather, you will submit two types of short papers. A) three (3) literature review short papers (up to 4 double-spaced pages each). B) one (1) “her-story” paper (See below).
2. The three literature review papers will analyze the readings for a specific week. Please let me know in advance for which weeks you plan to submit your papers. Each paper will discuss the readings on a specific issue and each will be worth 20%, for a total of 60%. These papers will include a short description of two of the readings for that week: What do they have in common? How are they different from one another? How do they complement each other? I expect you to move

beyond a pure description and to be able to integrate the two. This part should demonstrate your understanding of the main points of each of the papers. It should not cover each and every point it makes, but you are expected to be able to answer questions about the papers and discuss them in class in more details (up to two and a half pages). The other part of each of these papers would use the readings to analyze a recent event. Find a recent newspaper/news website article discussing an issue relevant for the understanding of the week's reading and discuss it using the arguments developed in the readings. Relevant websites in English are: Jerusalem Post jpost.com; Yediot Ahronot: ynetnews.com; Times of Israel timesofisrael.com; Haaretz haaretz.com. Does the article described go hand in hand with the readings? Does it shed a new light upon the readings' arguments? (1 1/2 pages).

The goal of these short papers is threefold: 1. Demonstrate your understanding of the readings. 2. Help you get a better and more updated sense of gender in Israel today. 3. Enhance class discussions. During class I will ask each student who submit a paper that week, to discuss the main arguments of the papers and present the case she was analyzing. The papers should be submitted no later than Sunday night (midnight) prior to our class. I strongly encourage you not to wait to the last moment to write the paper and come talk to me about the media item you are about to discuss during my office hours.

3. "Her-Story" paper - For the fourth short paper you are asked to provide a gendered critic of the mainstream (masculine) way Israeli history is often portrayed. Choose one of the episodes of the "Tkuma", a TV series about the history of Israel (Will be Available at Neilson Library). As you will note this series takes history to be about "His-Story." Using course and other materials you are requested to identify the ways in which the narrative can be seen as masculine and offer an alternative view. If you were the director of this series, what other questions would you ask? What other facts and story would you include which are not there due to the common exclusion of women and gender issues from the mainstream historical narrative. An excellent paper would not only identify the masculine point of view characterizing the story as it is told, but offer specific alternative stories and questions one may include, based on your readings. You should explain why the introduction of these stories makes the original narrative less masculine. This paper is due May 2. (20%).

Week 1, January 24

Course and Self Introduction

Week 2, January 29, 31

Gender, Feminism and Masculinities: General Sociological Perspectives

What is a “gendered perspective” and why is it important?

Required

Connell, R.W. 2002. *Gender: A Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. Chapters: 1 – “the question of Gender”; 4 – “gender relations”; 6- “gender on the large scale”

E. Fuchs (Ed.)_2005. *Israeli Women's Studies*. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press. Introduction. pp.1-30

Elective

de. Beauvoir, S. (1953). The second sex. New York,, Knopf.

Week 3 February 5, 7 Gender and Zionism in the Pre-state Era

Many of the gender related contracts, institutions and myths which have characterized Israeli gender relations, evolved in the pre state days of the new Israeli political entity, under the Ottoman and British Empires (1880's -1948). This period is known as the *Yishuv* period. The Readings for this week depict these critical first days of Israeli Society and the structuration of the country's most fundamental political, economic and cultural gender institutions.

Required:

Fogiel-Bijaoui, S. (1992). On the Way to Equality? The Struggle for Women’s Suffrage in the Jewish Yishuv, 1917-1926. Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israeli Society. Bernstein. Albany, State University of New-York Press: 261-281.

Izraeli, D. N. (1981). "The Zionist Women's Movement in Palestine, 1911-1927: A Sociological Analysis." Signs 7(1): 87-114.

Berenstein, D. (2005). Daughters of the Nation: Between the Public and the Private Spheres in Pre-State Israel. Israeli Women's Studies. E. Fuchs. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press: 78-89.

Mayer, T. (2000). From zero to hero: Masculinity in Jewish Nationalism. Pp. 97-120 in Israeli Women's Studies.. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press

Elective

Reinharz, S. T. (2005). Manya Wilbushewitz-Shohat and the Winding Road to Sejera. Israeli Women's Studies. E. Fuchs. New Brunswick, NJ, Rutgers University Press.

Fogiel-Bijaoui, S. (1992). Motherhood and Revolution: The Case of Kibbutz Women, 1910 -1948. Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israeli Society. D. Bernstein. Albany, State University of New-York Press: 211-233.

Weeks 4-5, February 12-19 Gender in a Jewish State (Family and Personal Status Law, Religious women and the Struggle over the Public Sphere).

As a Jewish state, separation of state and church has by and large not characterized Israeli society, the country's political leaders have agreed to subordinate issues of matrimony and personal status to the principles Jewish law and rabbinical courts. The readings of this week discuss the role of religious discourse and institutions in shaping gender relations.

Gender in a Jewish state:

Herzog Hanna (2009) "Imagined Communities: State, Religion and Gender in Jewish Settlements." Pp. 51-73 in *Gendering Religion and Politics: Untangling Modernities*, edited by Hanna Herzog and Ann Braude. New York: Palgrave McMillan.

Families and Personal Status Law:

Hacker, Daphna (2012) Religious Tribunals in Democratic States: Lessons from the Israeli Rabbinical Court." Journal of Law and Religion.

Fogiel-Bijaoui, S. (2002) Familism, postmodernity and the state: the case of Israel. Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture, 21 (1-2), pp

Movie - Sentenced To Marriage by Anat Zuria

Religious Women and The Struggle over the Public Sphere:

El Or, Tamar.1993." Are They Like their Grandmothers : A Paradox of Literacy and Modernity in the Life of Ultraorthodox Jewish Women." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 24(1), pp. 61-81.

Greenfield, Zvia (2007) "Is it really so Benign? Gender separation in Ultra-Orthodox Bus Lines." Law and Ethics of Human Rights: 1(1) pp. 237-270.

Sered, Susan (1997) "Women and Religious Change in Israel: Rebellion or Revolution." Sociology of Religion 58(1): 1-24.

Feb 21

No Class due to Rally Day

Week 6, February 26, 28

Gender and the Israeli-Arab Conflict – The Role of Military Service in Constructing Israeli Femininity and Masculinity

Two of the unique features of Israeli society are the centrality of the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) in shaping social and economic relations, and the fact that there is a mandatory draft of women. The readings for this week ask how the centrality of security concerns and of military experience affect gender relations, identities and inequality in Israel.

Required

Sasson-Levy, O. (2007). "Contradictory Consequences of Mandatory Conscription: The Case of Women Secretaries in the Israeli Military." Gender & Society 21(4): 481-507.

Sasson-Levy, O. (2008). "Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests: The Case of Israeli Combat Soldiers." Men and Masculinities 10(3): 296-321.

Levy, Y. (2010). "The Clash between Feminism and Religion in the Israeli Military: A Multilayered Analysis." Social Politics 17(2): 185-209.

Movie - Company Jasmine

Week 7, March 5, 7

Gender and the Israeli-Arab Conflict – Palestinian Women in Israel and the Territories

In Israel:

Sa'ar, A. (2001). "Lonely in your firm grip: women in Israeli-Palestinian families." The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. 7(4): 723-739.

Hasan, Manar (2002) "The politics of honor: patriarchy, the state and the murder of women in the name of family honor," Journal of Israeli History, 21 (1-2)

In the Palestinian Authority

Peteet, Julie (1997) "Icons and Militants: Mothering in the Danger Zone" Signs, 23(1): pp. 103-129

Or.

Amireh Amal (2012) "Activists, Lobbyists, and Suicide Bombers: Lessons from the Palestinian Women's Movement." Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East 32, (2), pp. 431-446.

Movie – *The Lemon Tree*

Week 8, March 12, 14 Women in Israel's politics

Israel was one of the first countries to offer full suffrage for women and declare its commitment to gender equality in politics, but reality was very different and women have been under represented politically both in democratic apparatuses such as the Israeli parliament (Knesset) and cabinet and in social movements. The readings this week look at some of the explanations for this overwhelming gap between ideology and practice.

Required

Yishai, Y. (1997). Between the flag and the banner : women in Israeli politics. Abany, State University of New York Press. "Preface".

Herzog, Hanna. "Feminism in Contemporary Israel." *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*. 1 March 2009. <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/feminism-in-contemporary-israel>

Week 9, March 19, 21 Spring Recess – No classes

Week 10, March 26, 28 Passover (Jewish Holiday) – No Classes

Please use the long break to watch your Tkuma episode (for the "her-story" paper) and sketch your ideas for the alternative point of view. Try to look for alternative materials. You are welcome to e-mail me your ideas and ask for my help in finding literature about specific events or processes.

Week 11, April 2, 4 The Israeli Welfare State and Gender Contract.

Being a strong and highly centralist state, the different state apparatuses in Israel affect many of the aspects of gender relations in Israel. We will discuss these state apparatuses in details, starting with a general discussion of the ways in which the state shaped Israeli femininity, and

how the Israeli welfare state have contributed to the way gender is enacted and experience in the country.

Required:

Berkovitch, N. (1997). "Motherhood as a National Mission: The Construction of Womanhood in the Legal Discourse in Israel." Women's Studies International Forum 20(5-6): 605-619.

Ajzenstadt, M. and J. Gal (2001). "Appearances Can Be Deceptive: Gender in the Israeli Welfare State." Social Politics 8(3): 292-324.

Elective

Ajzenstadt, M. (2009). "Moral panic and neo-liberalism: The Case of Single Mothers on Welfare in Israel " British Journal of Criminology 49: 68-87.

Week 12, April 9, 11

Gender and the Labor Market

As in all other cases, in Israel too, the road to gender equality goes through economic participation. Today's readings look at gender inequality and segregation in the Israeli labor market.

Required

Herzog, Hanna (1998) "Homefront and Battlefield: The Status of Jewish and Palestinian Women in Israel." Israel Studies, 3(1) pp. 61-84.

Haya Stier and Alisa Lewin. 2002. "Does Women's Employment Reduce Poverty? Evidence from Israel". Work, Employment, and Society. 26(2): 211-230

Elective

Stier, H., N. Lewin Epstein, et al. (2001). "Welfare Regimes, Family-Supportive Policies, and Women's Employment along the Life-Course." American Journal of Sociology 106(6): 1731-1760.

Week 13, April 16, 18

Femininity, Masculinity, Health Policy, Local Traditions and Gendered Health

As we have seen in previous classes, state policies contribute much to the gendering of Israeli society and to the construction of femininity, masculinity and gender hierarchies. Today's class will discuss one aspect of this 'contribution,' the shaping of men and women's health and bodies.

We will focus on reproductive policies and their outcomes, but will also mention the role of militarism in shaping the Israeli body.

Required - Three of the Following

Sered, S. S. (2000). What makes women sick? : Maternity, modesty, and militarism in Israeli society. Hanover, NH, Brandeis University Press : University Press of New England. Chapter

Kahn, S. M. (2000). Reproducing Jews : a cultural account of assisted conception in Israel. Durham, Duke University Press. Introduction and chapter 1.

Gooldin, S. (Draft version), The Anorexic Body in Israel: A Cultural Perspective. Will be circulated with author's permission.

Teman, E. (2011). "Surrogate Motherhood and the Politics of Reproduction." Sociological Forum 26(1): 199-201.

Week 14, April 23, 25

Gender and Immigration, and Migration

Being an Immigrants society, the understanding of the role of immigration in shaping gender relations and hierarchies in Israel is crucial. Today's readings look at the unique experience of women who immigrated to Israel from different countries of origin (Iraq in the 1950's, FSU and Ethiopia in the 1990's).

Required

Aziza Khazzoom, "Orientalism at the Gates: immigration, the east/west divide, and Iraqi Jewish women in Israel in the 1950s" Signs 32(1). 2006

Raijman, R. and M. Semyonov (1997). "Gender, Ethnicity, and Immigration: Double Disadvantage and Triple Disadvantage among Recent Immigrant Women in the Israeli Labor Market." Gender and Society 11(1): 108-125.

Fenster, T. (1998). "Ethnicity, Citizenship, Planning and Gender: the case of Ethiopian immigrant women in Israel." Gender, Place and Culture 5(2): 177-198.

Elective

Remennick, L. I. (1999). "'Women with a Russian accent' in Israel - On the gender aspects of immigration." European Journal of Women's Studies 6(4): 441-+.

Week 15, April 30 – GLBT in Israel

Kuntsman Adi. 2003. "Double Homecoming: Sexuality, Ethnicity and Place in Immigration Stories of Russian Lesbians in Israel". Women's Studies International Forums 26(4):299-311.

Belkin, Aaron and Malissa Levitt (2001) Homosexuality and the Israel Defense Forces: Did Lifting the Gay Ban Undermine Military Performance? *Armed Forces & Society* Summer 27 (4) pp. 541-565

Film: Yossi and Jagger

Week 15, May 2 – Wrap Up and Submission of the “Her-Story” paper.