

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Department of Anthropology

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MAKING GENDER: BODIES, MEANINGS, VOICES (ANT 209)¹

This course explores gendered and sexual identities, relationships, and meanings in a range of cultural and historical contexts. We consider how fieldwork and related approaches can be used to answer questions about the universality or particularity of gendered inequality. We draw on theories about human nature, cultural meaning, and linguistic and social structures, power, and agency to understand alternative representations of “maleness”, “femaleness”, and other sexed/gendered qualities cross-culturally. Finally, we explore the relationship between gender and other relations of difference and inequality. All along, we use these conceptual tools to make sense of both familiar and unfamiliar experience.

FOR PURCHASE AT LABYRINTH:

Begonia Aretxaga (1997) *Shattering Silence*

Gilbert Herdt (2005 edition) *The Sambia*

Serena Nanda (1998) *Neither Man nor Woman*

[OPTIONAL] Rayna Reiter, ed. (1975) *Towards an Anthropology of Women (TAW)*

Readings not included in these books will be found by clicking the “READING” button on the ANT 209 Blackboard (Bb) site.



ASSIGNMENTS (Read the “Assignments” appendix, pp 9-12 below, for full details.)

1. Informed, mutually respectful participation: Everyone is expected to complete the readings on time and come to class ready to help identify key themes and interconnections. Confusions, criticisms, and enthusiasms are equally valuable and welcome. Sadly, past experience suggests that tech (laptops, cell phones, etc.) impedes rather than complements participatory learning ...so... please turn yours off during class. Toward effective “participation”, *I encourage you to post a question or comment on Bb Monday night for Tuesday’s class* and, generally, to use the ANT 209 Bb “discussion board” to jump-start or follow-up class meetings.

2. Class presentations. Students will make brief presentations related to the readings (to be organized on the first day of class) and read from journals. **(See the Appendix for full details!)**

3. Papers and other writing: (a) **Class presentation write-up** (3-4 pages double-spaced, i.e. 750-1000 words) **due as a Bb post** no later than the day after your presentation. (b) **Ethnographic journal entries** (2 pp. dbl-sp, i.e. 400-500 words) **due as a hard copy** in class on Thursdays. (c) **Proposal for final essay** (2.5 pp dbl-sp, i.e., about 500-600 words) **due as a hard copy** in class Tuesday April 18. (d) **Final essay** (10-11 pp. dbl-sp excluding “References Cited”, i.e. 2600-2800 words excluding references) **due as a hard copy** on Dean’s Date. **(Please see the Appendix for full details!!)**

¹ **Read this whole syllabus over carefully:** it describes course themes and assignments substantively and in detail. Your continued enrollment in this course signals your willingness to participate in a cooperative, mutually respectful way in making sense of a number of challenging, sometimes difficult issues. Please see me if you have questions.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Please consider this syllabus itself as one of your course readings!

The paragraphs introducing each set of assignments are leads concerning their relevance to our on-going discussion: use them as prompts for developing connections and questions of your own, whether complementary or critical. The weekly readings are listed in a recommended order: the ones listed last in any week are by no means the least important. Finally, I've provided weekly "Journal entry" prompts to give you ideas, but please don't be limited by my suggestions. *Please do read the journal information on p. 10-11 of the syllabus Appendix.*

CAUSES AND CONDITIONS OF GENDER INEQUALITY (Weeks 1-3): Among the disciplines, anthropology has classically been consulted for answers to queries about human universals ("have people always... everywhere...?"). The question of whether or not gendered inequality is universal among human societies past and present motivated much ethnographic and historical work during the late 1960s and the 1970s. While the work of feminist anthropologists was also mainstream in ways we will discuss, it forced a reevaluation of older ethnographies (descriptions of sociocultural systems and experience) by exposing the authors' "male bias".

Week 1: Introduction to the anthropology of gender. An overview of course themes and assignments. The assigned readings introduce you to how anthropologists make sense of human experience. Besnier/Philips give you a few analytical rubrics (e.g., "indexicality"), drawn from the anthropology of language use, that will come in handy; the excerpts collected in Sunstein/Chiseri-Strater will, among other things, help you think about "ethnographic" journal writing): both readings shed light on how most of the authors of our readings accomplished their research. Come to class prepared to discuss your expectations and questions. As background, please think about how your academic experience has itself been "gendered" (and/or "sexed")?

READING (2/7)

1. Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2002) "Writing self, writing cultures" (*FieldWorking* Chapter 2, pp. 55-104).
2. Besnier and Philips (2013) "Ethnographic methods for language and gender research" (Ehrlich ed. pp. 123-140).

JOURNAL ENTRY #1 (2/9): How have "gender" and "sex" been studied in your prior courses? How has your academic experience itself been gendered? What was most notable about the reading for this week, in light of your own prior experience? (Be specific by giving an example or two from the reading and by describing that experience.) *Please read all of the journal-writing advice in the syllabus Appendix; and turn in your first journal entry for comments.*

Week 2: Has Sexual Equality Ever Existed Anywhere? Consider these ethnographic and/or historical accounts of gender roles and relationships: what are each author's criteria for sexual equality? What sociocultural circumstances do they argue favor equality between men and women? What

presuppositions (e.g., about power, social and economic structures, cultural values and beliefs) underlie their respective analyses? Pay careful attention to Slocum's and especially Sacks's critical points about interpretive biases (by which the authors mean assumptions that filter our observations and color our understanding). Think about the relationship between "difference" and "inequality".

READING (2/14)

1. Slocum (1975) "Woman the gatherer: male bias in anthropology" (Bb and TAW)
2. Brown (1975) "Iroquois women: an ethnohistorical note" (Bb and TAW)
3. Leacock (1980) "Montagnais women and the Jesuit program for colonization" (Etienne and Leacock eds. *Women and Colonization*, pp. 25-42)
4. Draper (1975) "!Kung women: contrasts in sexual egalitarianism in foraging and sedentary contexts" (Bb and TAW)
5. Schlegel (1977) "Male and female in Hopi thought and action" (in Schlegel ed. *Sexual Stratification*, pp. 245-269)
6. Sacks (1976) "State bias and women's status" (*American Anthropologist* 8:565-69)

JOURNAL ENTRY #2 (2/16): In what contexts have you encountered questions concerning the historical and/or cross-cultural "universality" of gendered inequality in present-day conversations or media? What criteria for "equality" and "inequality" have you and others used? What arguments have you encountered concerning the conditions favoring gendered equality or inequality?

Week 3: Causes of Sexual Stratification: Global Answers to Global Questions. We discuss three key texts in an emergent "anthropology of women". Leacock theorizes female subordination as an historically specific (not universal) function of socioeconomic arrangements (especially the emergence of a distinction between the private (or domestic) and the public (or social, economic, political) relations. The other two authors account for the universality of male dominance in sociocultural terms. All of these approaches are either explicitly or implicitly critical of theories that situate "natural facts" (e.g., biology) as causal with respect to social roles and cultural values. Consider what sexual inequality comes down to in each case.

READING (2/21)

1. Leacock (1972) "Introduction", esp. pp. 29 ff. (in Engles *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, pp. 7-67)
2. Rosaldo (1974) "Women, culture, and society: an overview" (in *Women, Culture and Society*, eds. M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere)
3. Ortner (1974) "Is female to male as nature is to culture?" (in *Women, Culture and Society*, eds. M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere)

JOURNAL ENTRY #3 (2/23): (How) do references to political and economic rationales for gender inequality come up in conversation? What about rationales that make reference to "natural" (or "biological" or "universal") facts? Describe one or two of these.

GENDERED INEQUALITY RECONSIDERED (Weeks 4-6): “Objectivist” approaches like those we have been considering over the past two weeks were being questioned even as they created a place for gender studies within and outside of anthropology. The 1980s and 1990s saw increasing skepticism concerning the applicability of the key distinctions upon which global theories about sexual stratification were based: domestic/political and natural/cultural.

Week 4: Thinking Through the Domestic/Political Distinction. We discuss several ethnographic cases which cast doubt on the usefulness of a gendered, ranked distinction between “domestic” (private) and “political” (public) domains in the explanation of gendered inequality (recall Rosaldo’s argument last week, and compare with all of the first week’s readings). We consider cases in which the distinction does not easily translate, and ones in which it may translate a bit too easily.

READING (2/28)

1. Reiter (1975) “Men and women in the south of France: public and private domains” (Bb and TAW)
2. Friedl (1967/86) “The position of women: appearance and reality” (in Dubisch, ed. *Gender and Power in Rural Greece*, 42-52)
3. Herzfeld (1986) “Within and without” (in Dubisch, ed., 215-233)
4. Strathern (1984) “Domesticity and the denigration of women” (in O’Brien and Tiffany, eds. *Rethinking Women’s Roles*, pp. 14-31)

JOURNAL ENTRY #4 (3/2): To what extent is your experience of “domestic” and “public” (e.g., home/work; dorm/class?) gendered? To what extent is the male/female distinction used (explicitly, subtly) to define and rank social contexts and the actions taking place within them?

Week 5: Nature, Culture, and Gender. Following critically from Ortner’s argument (Week 3), we consider how EuroAmerican cultures historically came to treat sex/gender as “natural” facts and we focus in on recent changes in Western understanding. Over the next few weeks, to grasp the cultural particularity of our familiar gendered, ranked distinction between nature and culture, we will explore its implications for cross-cultural comparison and translation. (While we stay “local” this week, the optional Strathern reading is a preview of challenging translation issues!)

READING (3/7)

1. Bloch and Bloch (1980) “Women and the dialectics of nature in 18th century France” (in MacCormack and Strathern, eds., *Nature, Culture and Gender*, pp. 5-41)
 2. Kessler (1990) “The medical construction of gender: case management of intersexed infants” (*Signs* 16(1): 3-26)
 3. Angier (1997) “Sexual identity not pliable after all, report says” (*NYTimes* 03/14/97)
 4. Macur (2014) “Fighting for the body she was born with” (*NYTimes* 10/07/14, B11)
- OPTIONAL (on Bb): Jordanova (1980) “Natural facts: a historical perspective on science and sexuality” (in MacCormack and Strathern, eds., 42-69 – **historical background**); Strathern (1980) “No nature, no culture: the Hagen case” (in MacCormack and Strathern, eds., 175-222); Eugenides (2002) *Middlesex*, 405-39, 478-83.

JOURNAL ENTRY #5 (3/9) In what contexts have you encountered issues like those in this week’s readings? Think generally about contexts in which assertions what’s “natural” (and, as their flip side,

assertions about “unnatural”) are used to comment on or control gender meanings *and vice versa*. Think also about the connotations in ordinary English of natural/unnatural and normal/abnormal, and of the natural/cultural pair.

Reminder: first half of your journal is due next week. If you submitted journal entries for comments during previous weeks, please turn in the commented-on versions. The best way to respond to comments is by *responding to or applying the advice* in future entries: do not revise.

Week 6: Nature, Culture, and Gender: Hijras. An ethnographic case challenging familiar ideas about the binary character of sex and gender: in what senses are hijras “neither man nor woman”? Think about the strengths and weaknesses of Serena Nanda’s strategies of translation and ethnographic contextualization: what else do you want to know (about hijras? About local gender constructs? Etc.?) in order to evaluate her argument or to construct an alternative?

READING (3/14)

1. Nanda (1990) *Neither Man Nor Woman*
 2. NPR 2014 Listen to Terry Gross’s interview with authors of the new book, *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* <http://www.npr.org/2014/07/17/332051691/trans-bodies-trans-selves-a-modern-manual-by-and-for-trans-people> (Both the transcript and the audio link are available on Bb.)
- OPTIONAL (on Bb): Barnard College 2014 policy on transgender; Sampath (2015) “India has outlawed homosexuality. But it’s better to be transgender there than in the US.” (*Washington Post* 01/29/15)

JOURNAL ENTRY #6 (3/16) What elements of your experience of sex/gender is not neatly binary? *The first half of your journal is due now; add a self-assessment after your sixth entry, commenting on what challenged or surprised you about this assignment, on cross-cutting themes that have emerged so far in your journal, and/or on what you plan to work on during the second half of the semester.*



Week 7: Nature, Culture, and Gender: Sambia Male Cults. An ethnographic case poised to challenge familiar ideas about masculinity – for example, that maleness is “natural” – and about sexual preference. Think about the strengths and weaknesses of Gilbert Herdt’s strategies of translation and ethnographic contextualization. Roger Keesing provides a comparative and theoretical overview on initiation, and Terry and Patricia Hays’ article provides a closely-related contrastive case and approach.

READING (3/28)

1. Keesing (1982) “Introduction” (Herdt ed. *Rituals of Manhood*, pp. 1-43)
2. Hays and Hays (1982) “Opposition and complementarity of the sexes in Ndumba initiation” (in Herdt ed. *Rituals of Manhood*, pp. 201-238)
3. Herdt (2005) *The Sambia*

JOURNAL ENTRY #7 (3/30) This week, you might consider formal and informal rituals you have experienced that relate to life cycle transitions (e.g., child to adult woman/man; leaving home for the first time; voting; drinking). Some of these rituals are explicitly gendered: what messages do they convey? (You can identify the expected messages, but please also describe the meaning you or someone you know actually experienced.) What room for *alternative* (non-formal, non-normative) meanings is there? Alternatively, see if you can identify gendered dimensions of transitions that aren't overtly gendered and explore the constraints and freedoms possible in those contexts.

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION: With the decline of objectivist approaches, global theories about sexual inequality gave way to an analytical focus on translation, representation and “voice” that locates the observer and the objects of study explicitly within a common frame of reference. The deepening of ethnographic reflexivity inspired by feminist anthropology did not, however, signal either an avoidance of questions about power and transnational realities like colonialism (on the one hand) or the abandonment of attention to cultural difference (on the other). On the contrary: it deepened the insight that the “cultural” (meaning, value, belief) is itself “political” (embodied, located, engaged).

Week 8: “Double Consciousness”. “Muting”, Voice and Access (1). Can cultural biases – gendered or otherwise – be changed? Are complete or true descriptions of cultures possible? How, exactly, are explicitly woman-centered ethnographies better than conventional, tacitly male-centered ones? Is there something special about women’s perspectives? For example, do women (and other subordinated people) have privileged insight into the workings of stratified societies, compared with men (and other dominant people)? Or, at least, do female (male) anthropologists have special access to, and share the perspectives of, women (men) in other cultures?

Alternatively, is the experience of women and other subordinated people especially incomplete or partial? Are women’s modes of expression “muted” (in the sense that they bear the “burden of translation” vis-à-vis culturally dominant discursive styles)? And what does it take to get “heard” on ones own terms (neither co-opted nor ghettoized)? What does it take to “hear” what “others” are saying?

READING (4/4)

1. Rohrlich-Leavitt et al. (1975) “Aboriginal women: male and female anthropological perspectives” (TAW)
2. Keesing (1985) “Kwaio women speak” (packet; *American Anthropologist* 87:27-39)
3. Keesing (1987) “Ta’a geni: women’s perspectives on Kwaio society” (in Strathern, ed. *Dealing with Inequality*, pp. 33-62)
4. Gal (1991) “Between speech and silence” (DiLeonardo, ed. *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*, pp. 175-203)

OPTIONAL (on Bb): Ardener (1975) “Belief and the problem of women”, “The problem reconsidered” (Ardener, ed. *Perceiving Women*, pp. 1-27)

JOURNAL ENTRY #8 (4/6) Consider the ways in which the gendering of different social spaces give some forms of expression the floor while sidelining others. In such circumstances, what does it take to

get heard? How do those constraints limit or enable what can be said by those who are center stage? Have you experienced – or can you think of – transformations in those constraints? “Having the floor”, “voices”, “being heard” and the like are complex metaphors: think about their connotations and other ways of getting related points across; what are their relative strengths and weaknesses?

Week 9: “Double Consciousness”. “Muting”, Voice and Access (2). We continue last week’s discussion with a particularly powerful case in which silence, embodied actions, and the breaching of taboos were used as forms of politically-charged expression.

READING (4/11)

1. Aretxaga (1997) *Shattering Silence*

JOURNAL ENTRY #9 (4/13) Among many other things, Aretxaga’s ethnography offers a particularly potent example of gendered “symbolic action”: try reflecting on your own experience from that perspective. Remembering our first-week reading by Besnier and Philips (on linguistic approaches to anthropological study) and our on-going discussions, consider the symbolic dimensions of action that you have observed or in which you have participated. Consider the meaning of everyday references to the “pragmatic”, and (developing last week’s discussion) the relative efficacy of acts of speech and silence in different contexts.

***Reminder:* your final essay proposal is due on April 18. Be sure to check the “Assignments” appendix below for details and ideas!**

SITUATING “GENDER”: Over the past 20 years or so, it has become increasingly difficult for anthropologists to separate sexual and gender meanings from other culturally constructed identities and relations of difference, like class, race, and ethnicity, either analytically (that is, for interpretive or explanatory purposes) or strategically (that is, for political purposes). As we have already seen, at the same time, the project of understanding human experience in terms of multiple “relations of difference” casts doubt on what women or men *as such* share. What’s at stake?

Week 10: Gender in Context: Partial Connections. What arguments can be made for and against abstracting “gender” from its entanglements with other culturally-situated relations of difference? More explicitly than other readings we have done this semester, these readings trace the conjunction of race, class, and gender, and their mutual constitution in and through one another. To what extent does “gender” remain a useful analytical category?

READING (4/18) *Final essay proposal due in class today*

1. Ginsburg and Tsing (1990) “Introduction” (Ginsburg and Tsing, eds. *Uncertain Terms: Negotiating Gender in American Culture*, 1-16)
2. Stack (1990) “Different voices, different visions” (Ginsburg and Tsing, eds., p. 19-27)
3. Carothers (1990) “Catching sense: learning from our mothers to be black and female” (Ginsburg and Tsing, eds., pp. 232-247)
4. Zavalla (1997) “Feminist insider dilemmas: constructing ethnic identity with Chicana informants”

(Wolf, ed., *Feminist Dilemmas of Fieldwork*, pp. 138-59)

JOURNAL ENTRY #10 (4/20) Please think about previous readings that could have been used in this set to illustrate ways in which gendered/sexed meanings, identities, and relationships are embedded with other kinds of meanings, identities, and relationships; then see if you can illustrate entanglements from your own experience.

Week 11: Dialectics of Commitment and Critique: Nature/Culture Again. The debate about female initiation surgeries focuses with particular intensity many of the themes we have been pursuing this semester. Additionally, it forces us to clarify our ideas about anthropological approaches to cross-cultural understanding: about commitment (“belief”) and critique (“distance”); about the experience and accountability of “insiders” and “outsiders”; and about comparison, translation, and cultural “relativism”. Our readings illustrate how what we might call the anthropological imagination is moved by arguments over such ideas. They invite us to consider the not-strictly-academic import of disciplined, reflexive cultural analysis.

READING (4/25)

1. Gruenbaum (1982) “The movement against clitoridectomy and infibulation in Sudan: public health policy and the women’s movement”
 2. Gordon (1991) “Female circumcision and genital operations in Egypt and the Sudan: a dilemma for medical anthropology” (and read the short commentaries by various authors, which you’ll find on Bb as separate pdfs)
 3. Walley (1997) “Searching for ‘voices’: feminism, anthropology, and the global debate over female genital operations”
 4. Hastings Center (2012) Public Policy Advisory Network on FGS in Africa: “Seven Things to Know about Female Genital Surgeries in Africa.” (*Hastings Center Report*, no. 6: 19-27)
- [Recall earlier readings on male initiation.]

JOURNAL ENTRY #11 (4/27) Describe a cross-cultural misunderstanding or challenge you’ve experienced that had (or may have had) sexual and gender elements, drawing on this and prior weeks’ reading and discussion to make sense of it. You might describe an experience of incomprehension and/or (mutual or one-way) miscommunication and retrospective insight (aka “kicking yourself”).

Reminder: The second half of your journal is due next week during the semester’s final class. If you submitted journal entries for comments during previous weeks, please turn in the commented-on copies. *Append a self-assessment to your final entry.*

Week 12: Dialectics of Commitment and Critique: Domestic/Political Again. We consider a recent controversy in light of the semester’s work. The first two readings below (together with the provocative optional items) may prompt us to discuss how to think about “progress” when it comes to gender relations, meanings, and consciousness in America. Might a genuinely global (comparative and historical) perspective on human diversity be not just interesting but also useful? Read the second two

selections – concerning the politics of (gay) marriage – with this in mind.

READING (5/2)

1. Slaughter (2012) “Why women still can’t have *it* all.” *The Atlantic* (July). Also available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>
2. Holmes (2013) “Maybe you should read the book: the Sheryl Sandberg backlash.” *The New Yorker* (03/04/2013).
3. Stone (2009) “Gay marriage and anthropology.” *Anthropology News* 45(5)
4. Joyce (2013) “Ask an anthropologist about marriage: you might learn something.” *Psychology Today* (03/27/2013). Available at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-makes-us-human/201303/ask-anthropologist-about-marriage>

[OPTIONAL: Patton (2013) Letter to the Editor: “Advice for the young women of Princeton: the daughters I never had.” Available at <http://dailyprincetonian.com/opinion/2013/03/letter-to-the-editor-advice-for-the-young-women-of-princeton-the-daughters-i-never-had/>. If you do read Patton, then be sure also to read Bahadur (2013) “Susan Patton's 'Daily Princetonian' Article Urges Female Students To Find Husbands Before Graduating.” *Huffington Post*. Available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nina-bahadur/susan-patton-daily-princetonian-find-a-husband-princeton_b_2979789.html]

JOURNAL (5/4): Use our previous weeks’ readings and discussion to make sense of the week’s reading; and remember to append a journal-related self-assessment to your final journal entry.

Appendix: Assignments in detail

1. Oral Assignments (15% at mid-term and 15% at the end of the term)



A. Informed participation:

As noted on the first page of the syllabus, I expect everyone to complete the readings on time and to come to class prepared for discussion. What does “prepared” mean? For our purposes, it means you should **(1) identify each author’s main themes and arguments**, how arguments are supported, and how different authors’ themes relate to one another **and (2) what interested, disturbed, and/or intrigued you** (even if your own attention was drawn to something different from the authors’ main concerns). Then please **(3) prepare one or two comments** that you can raise in class. Confusions, questions, criticisms and enthusiasms are all welcome! (Toward effective “participation”, I encourage you to **post a question or comment on Blackboard (Bb) Monday night** for Tuesday’s class and, generally, to use the ANT 209 Bb “Discussion Board” to jump-start or follow-up class meetings.)

The trick here is to read **both “selflessly” (#1) and “selfishly” (#2)**. “Selfless” reading means doing your best to grasp the authors’ points of view. “Selfish” reading means articulating your own interests and perspectives *in relation* to those of the author.

Clearly, you can’t participate if you don’t show up: I expect everyone to fill me in beforehand if you must miss a class. No one’s perfect; nevertheless, **more than two absences** over the semester will negatively impact your grade, so if you have extenuating circumstances, make an appointment with me to discuss. **If you**

have to miss a reading discussion class, then I expect you to post a reading comment on Bb; **if you have to miss** a journal discussion class, then post part or all of that week's journal entry on Bb.

B. Class presentations:

During the first meeting of each week, students initiate discussion by raising questions about the readings. These presentations may be collaborative, and ought to be no more than **about 5-7 minutes long**: outlining what you plan to say will keep your comments concise; if you'd like to read a draft of your presentation write-up (**see 2A below**), then **2-3 double-spaced pages** (550-750 words) will do it.

Your presentation ought to **(1) "selflessly"** orient the discussion by means of **concise (focused! succinct!!)** summary of the authors' **main** arguments and evidence; and **(2) "selfishly"** set up a question or issue (one or two, not five or ten) for the class to discuss together. You can set up a question or issue by drawing connections among the current week's readings or between one or another of those readings and a previous week's readings or class discussion.

While #1 requires that you do your best to convey that week's **authors'** points of view, #2 is your opportunity to zero in on what interested **you** whether or not your focus converges with the authors' main concerns: take a stand, articulate a confusion or frustration, or explore a connection or implication. Be selfish in your choice of focus, but take care to *be specific* in order to provide the rest of the class with enough background to draw them into your issues!

C. Journal presentations:

During the second meeting of each week, we will sample seminar participants' journal writing (**see 2B below for detailed journal-writing advice**). We won't hear from everyone every week, but each of you should come to class ready to read from your journal entry for that week and you are all welcome to post parts or all of your entries on the ANT 209 Bb discussion board. Journal entry prompts are included in the syllabus above.

2. *Written Assignments (70% of the grade: see below for the breakdown)*

A. Class presentation write-up (10% of course grade):

A final written version (**3-4 pp. double-spaced, i.e. 750-1000 words**) of your oral presentation is **due as a Bb "discussion board" post no later than the day after your presentation**. Your write-up can incorporate what you learned from the general discussion that day: that is, while you can simply turn in a (full sentences, proof-read) version of your presentation, you are welcome to go beyond it by clarifying, modifying, or elaborating what you said in class. You can change your mind about the readings, or explore overlooked implications. (However, you are *not* expected to do additional research.)

B. Ethnographic Journal (35% of course grade – 15% first half; 20% second half):

During the semester you will keep an ethnographic journal: **one entry (2 pp. double-spaced, i.e. 400-500 words) due each Thursday class meeting**. Please append a **self-assessment to the sixth and twelfth journal entries**: that is, write a paragraph or two commenting on what challenged or surprised you about the journal-writing assignment, on cross-cutting themes that have emerged so far in your journal, and/or on what you plan to work on during the second half of the semester.

Comments on the first half (which you'll receive as part of your mid-term assessment) will advise you about how to improve the second half; comments on the second half, together with comments on your project proposal, will provide advice relevant to the final essay: please read all comments (come see me if you cannot decipher them)! The best way to respond to comments is to *comment on and/or apply* what you've learned to future entries – **do not revise your entries**. Journals should be a record of your developing concerns and understanding; those changes will be informative both to you and to me. While I don't want you to revise past entries, you are very welcome instead to work commentary on earlier entries into your ongoing journal writing: elaborate on earlier themes, revise interpretations, and so on.

What's an "ethnographic" journal? For purposes of this course, your journal will not simply be a reading-response record, nor will it be simply a diary of personal experiences and impressions. Instead, aim for a hybrid of those two genres: the "ethnographic" quality of your entries derives from your developing skill in connecting our common course readings and your own everyday experiences (past and present, academic and nonacademic). As we move through the semester, your journal will be strengthened by your capacity to identify connections across our weekly topics (connections between earlier and later readings and class discussions, and connection among your own experiential descriptions, observation, and interpretations).

As our Week 1 readings describe, sociocultural anthropology takes daily life experience seriously as an object of "ethnographic" attention: as something worthy of close observation, description, interpretation, comparative analysis, and critical reflection. Ethnographic attentiveness doesn't come naturally to most people and may be difficult at first. It needs to be learned: that's the point of journal writing. It will take some practice to apply what you are learning from the readings and classroom discussion to your wider experience and, conversely, to bring "real life" experience to bear on your "book-learning". The challenge is to make ones usually inexplicit responses explicit and, in that way, available for critical analysis. Memories, conversations, observations, media encounters—even classroom activities and other schoolwork, viewed from an unfamiliar angle—are all potentially grist for journal writing.

C. Final paper proposal:

A 2-3 double-spaced pp. proposal (500-600 words) for your final paper, drawing on the suggestions listed below, is **due in class during Week 10's first meeting**: about 2 pages describing your topic and a half page list of sources drawn mostly from course readings. When they're ready, please be sure to pick up my comments so you can use them in developing your paper.

D. Final essay (25% of course grade):

Your final paper for this course is due on **Dean's Date**. It ought to be **2600-2800 words, ie, 10-11 pages, double-spaced (excluding "References Cited"**: for citation format, check any of our anthropology readings or, if you're brave, the American Anthropological Association style guide, which I've posted on Bb). During this semester, we will read and discuss key works and issues in anthropological gender studies, with special attention to how and why research questions have developed and changed over the past couple of generations. ***The point of the final assignment is for you pull together and reflect on what you have learned about these trends: all final papers must make serious substantive use of course readings.***

Here are a few ways to accomplish this:

1. **Ripped from the headlines:** choose a more or less recent (2000s) event or topical issue and show how elements of our semester’s work can help us understand it: make theoretical sense of it, put it in a comparative and/or historical perspective, and so on. This approach will give you a framework for drawing on course readings, discussions, and journal-writing while bringing in media and other sources, as needed.

2. **Redesign the syllabus:** an argument for the inclusion of a set of readings not (yet) on the syllabus. I particularly welcome ideas for integrating contemporary issues with themes of this course (as Week 12 does). If you would like to write an essay redesigning the syllabus, you would need to come up with a set of specific readings, discussing their key themes and how they fit together, and the challenges an instructor might face in helping students to make sense of them. The essay would also need to address questions like: what would be removed to make space for the new additions and why? Where would you place the readings and why? What kinds of difference would the new readings make for our understanding of key issues raised in the course as a whole? Addressing kinds of these questions adequately would involve *specific and explicit reference to readings and issues discussed over the course of the semester*.

3. **Review a literature:** You may select one recent (1990s-today) or older contribution to the anthropology of gender (ethnography or edited collection), and discuss and analyze it *specifically and explicitly in light of a selection of readings and issues discussed over the semester*. This will enable you to treat class meetings as a series of common working-group discussions supporting your research project. Developing your essay, you might also use the book’s bibliography to situate it in its own specialist contexts, whether regional (e.g., Latin America, Africa) or topical (economy, sexuality, etc.). As you explore these contexts, ask yourself: to what literatures or conversations is this work a response or intervention? You might find that the reading you have chosen is a response to research and arguments taking place not only within but also outside of the anthropology of gender (or indeed, outside of anthropology or of gender studies). Your paper might consider how these different contexts shape the work, and the effectiveness of the work’s interventions. You might use your contemporary focus to develop a critical perspective on the trends considered in class, or to advocate/speculate on future directions in anthropological gender studies.

4. **Develop a synthesis and critical reflection on an important course theme:** use the syllabus headnotes (blurbs introducing each week’s reading) as springboards in developing this paper idea, being aware that while headnotes introduce particular sets of readings, themes highlighted in one week are elaborated (extended, qualified, even undermined, etc) in later or previous weeks.

5. Finally, your essay—in any of the above formats—may be oriented around or incorporate **informal fieldwork** (that is, ethnographic attentiveness to everyday life – the focus of ANT 209 journal writing) **and/or current media issues:** if you’d like to consider that, then **you must get my permission in advance, so make an appointment to discuss your ideas with me!** As in all of the other paper formats, your paper would still need to engage the syllabus readings in a substantial manner.

You are welcome to propose paper ideas not suggested here: if you would like to do that, see me beforehand and turn in a paper proposal no later than April 18.

*A copy of your final paper is due in the 209 box in the Anthropology office—
116 Aaron Burr Hall—on “Dean’s Date” before 5 pm, when the building locks
itself up.*

