Course Description and Objectives
This course will take an analytic look at the persistence of gender inequality in the US and worldwide. We will examine how gender inequality has been addressed in the US (starting with the second wave US women’s movement), and the ways in which, and why, despite the significant successes of women’s movements worldwide, gender inequality still persists. We will examine in detail the strategies of feminist movements in the U.S. and in the developing world, and compare and critique the definition of “gender equality” on which these social movements are based. We will study and compare two strategies to achieve gender equality: a legal strategy proposed in the US, called “reconstructive feminism” and the economic development strategy underway in the developing world, called “the girl effect,” or “the double X solution.”

Framing gender inequality and its proposed remedies in global and economic contexts allows us to utilize a macrosociological perspective: that gender inequality is embedded in larger social forces such as economic change, global inequality, race and class inequality, and even environmental degradation. Thus, figuring out solutions to gender inequality may be a linchpin in figuring out how to address these other seemingly intractable social issues.

Compatibly, we’ll use a microsociological perspective: we will examine in some detail the two social institutions that produce and sustain gender inequality in all cultures, the economy and the family. Remember that a social institution is a set of widely accepted practices that accomplish something necessary for societies’ survival. The economy is necessary because it is the way we produce and distribute the resources (food, clothing, shelter, services) to sustain life. The family is necessary because it sustains life by ensuring that the population continues and people are cared for—in fact, the economy depends on the family to produce future citizens and workers, to enable present workers to be productive, and to ensure that past workers are provided for. Societies traditionally accomplished these survival requirements through a division of labor that produced gender inequality by assigning men to production activities in the economy and women to caregiving duties in the family institution. Some of that arrangement has changed; some has not, and these uneven changes will be an enduring part of our class discussions and writings.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:
• Offer a more complete and nuanced understanding of gender equality to social debates about gender;
• Utilize an analytic understanding of the history of the US second wave women’s movement;
• Apply an analytic framework that places gender inequality and its remedies in a larger global and economic context;
• Recognize the institutional practices in families and economies worldwide that maintain gender equality;
• Identify key targets of change in gender arrangements.
Books and Readings

1. There are four required books for this course, all available at the RI Book Company and the URI Bookstore. The Williams and Lorber books are “bundled” for a discount.


2. In addition, there are several required readings on our course Sakai site (under the “Resources” tool). These readings are all from recent media and will help us keep up with recent national and international developments in gender equality strategies.

Course Organization and Class Meetings

We’ll meet twice a week for the semester, a total of 25 meetings. We will use class discussions, in both large and small groups, to discuss and make sense of the readings so that you can use the ideas in your writing. Additionally, some of the writing takes place in class. I expect that some of our interaction will also occur electronically through our Sakai course site: [https://sakai.uri.edu/portal/](https://sakai.uri.edu/portal/).

Since this is a seminar, I anticipate that you will come to class prepared. Usually that will mean reading the assigned reading, even if you struggle with it. On a regular basis, small groups of students will be in charge of leading the discussion on the readings. These groups will have to meet outside of class to plan their discussion. I am happy to help you.

My goal is to do very little lecturing in this class. I’m eager to discuss this reading with you as colleagues who can debate some ideas together and come up with new ways of thinking about gender inequality in our own lives as well as worldwide.

Policies and Resources

- If you find yourself struggling with the reading or class content, please come and talk with me.

- Likewise, if you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please meet with me as soon as possible so that we can make sure to put the accommodations in place quickly. In this regard, you need to be working
also with Disability Services for Students, Office of Student Life, 330 Memorial Union, 874-2098.

• In general, please keep me informed of any circumstances that affect your participation in this course.

• All written assignments (except those written in class) must be typed and proofread. I prefer paper copies, but will accept assignments submitted through Sakai as well.

• I cannot accept late assignments without a valid excuse (most commonly, illness or death of someone close to you).

• Absences from class should be rare and precipitated by justifiable circumstances. Use sensible judgment on illness, but in general, if you can make it through class, or even part of class without a lot of discomfort, please try to attend.

• If you have to miss a class, please call me or email me.

**Writing Help**

Students who want to improve their writing skills are encouraged to visit URI’s Writing Center – located on the 4th floor of Roosevelt Hall - at any time during the semester. There, you will work for 30 minutes with an experienced writing tutor. Each meeting, you should expect to work on only one or two issues; you can always return for more. You and your tutor will decide together what will help you the most for each assignment. For example, you might work together on paragraphing, sentence clarity, sharpening thesis statements, documenting sources, using appropriate evidence, or understanding and practicing specific grammatical concepts. Please know that URI Writing Center tutors will not edit or proofread for you; rather, they will teach you proofreading strategies you can use yourself. Their goal is to help you become a better writer, and this requires both time and effort on your part. Appointments are encouraged (call them at 4-4690), but you may also drop in and see if a tutor is available. For more information go the URI Writing Center’s website at:  
http://www.uri.edu/artsci/writing/Writing_Center_Pages/index.html

**Assignments and Grading**

**Assignments**

1. Discussion Leader Role/Discussion Responder Role (30%)

For both the Collins and Kristof & WuDunn books, you will be assigned into small groups, and take turns leading the discussion of several chapters. Discussion leaders will provide a written outline (or PowerPoint presentation) that provides the following structure to class discussion:
   a) summarizes the chapter(s) in bulleted points,
   b) notes several points of interest for each chapter, and
   c) relates the chapter(s) to the relevant Lorber article(s), and previous class discussion.
Discussion *responders* will be graded on their perceived level of familiarity with the assigned material and the quality of their discussion. In other words, don’t leave your *Leader* colleagues hanging out to dry!

2. **Lorber/Collins Analysis (20%)**

This paper will be an analytical essay summarizing the theoretical underpinnings of the women’s movement. As we read through Collins’ book on the second wave women’s movement in the U.S., we will pair her descriptive account with readings in feminist theory (Lorber), and discuss the various theories from which the women’s movement drew. Thus, we will analyze Collins book from the perspective of how the second wave women’s movement utilized (and/or developed) different feminist theories. To operationalize this assignment: you will compare Collins to several of the chapters from the Lorber book and critique the achievements of the second wave women’s movement against the theoretical goals of different types of feminism. More details to follow.

3. **Discussion Questions from Williams, *Unbending Gender* (25%)**

For each of the chapters in Williams’ book, I will hand out a set of reading/discussion questions that you will answer as you read through each chapter. The answers to these questions need to be handed in the day they are discussed in class. There are 8 chapters and 8 sets of discussion questions, and for half of these, you will meet in groups to discuss and write up your answers, and each member of the group will receive the same grade. You will complete the other half of the discussion questions as individuals. Altogether, I will count 7 discussion question sets in your final grade, and together, these discussion questions will contribute 25 percent to your course grade. We will use these discussion questions as the basis for our class discussions, and to help you frame the final assignment for the course.

4. **Final Synthesis Essay (25%)**

Your final writing project asks you to compare William’s “reconstructive feminism” approach and WuDunn’s “double-x solution.” Are they compatible or contradictory strategies? To what extent does the economic payoff of investing in women complement William’s strategy of making work and family more compatible through social and legal strategies? To what extent does each strategy have potential in addressing other related difficult global issues, such as poverty, environmental degradation, etc.?

In effect, this essay will allow you to summarize the course by creating your own analysis of how the ideas in our course fit together and hold potential for effectively addressing some major global issues. More detail on this assignment will follow.
Grading Scale

93% and up      A      77.0% – 79.4% C+
89.5% – 92.9% A-  73.0% – 76.9% C
87.0% – 89.4% B+  69.5% – 72.9% C-
83.0% – 86.9% B   67.0% – 69.4% D+
79.5% – 82.9% B-  59.5% – 66.9% D

Reading and Assignment Schedule

September 8 - 13  Introduction
  1. Introduction to Course and Course Themes
      Syllabus, books, requirements, course organization
  2. An Overview of Feminisms (lecture)
      Discussion of gender inequality and the economy: Where are we now?
      Reading: Collins, Introduction (pp. 1 - 8);
                Lorber Preface, Introduction (pp. ix – 20)

September 15 - 20 The U.S.'s Second Wave Women's Movement
  Reading and Discussion:
  2. Collins, Part 2: When Everything Changed Chapters 4 – 6 (pp. 63 – 148)
  3. Lorber Part 1, Chapter 1 (pp. 21 – 45)

September 22 - 27 The U.S.'s Second Wave Women's Movement
  Reading and Discussion:
  1. Collins, Part 2: When Everything Changed Chapters 7 – 8
  2. Collins, Part 3: Following Through Chapters 9 - 11
  3. Lorber, Chapter 2 (pp. 46 – 69)
  4. Lorber, Part 2, Chapter 5 (pp. 117 – 141)

September 29 – October 4 The U.S.'s Second Wave Women's Movement
  Reading and Discussion:
  3. Lorber, Chapter 8 (pp. 173 – 192)
  4. Lorber, Chapter 13 (pp. 282 – 314)

Collins analysis due October 11

October 13 - 18 Reconstructive Feminism
  Reading and Assignments:
  1. Williams, Introduction, Chapter 1
     Introduction, Chapter 1 Answers Due in Class
  2. Williams, Chapter 2
     Group answers for Chapter 2 written in class
October 20 - 27  **Reconstructive Feminism**
Reading and Assignments:
1. Williams, Chapters 3 & 4  
   Discussion Questions Due in Class
2. Lorber, Chapter 3 (pp. 70 – 85)

Film: The Corporation

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November 1 - 3  **Reconstructive Feminism**
Reading and Assignments:
1. Discussion of Williams, Part 1
2. Williams, Part 2 Introduction; Chapter 5
   Discussion questions Chapter 5 due in class
3. Williams, Chapter 6
   Group answers to Chapter 6 written in class

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November 8  **Reconstructive Feminism**
Reading and Assignments:
1. Williams, Chapter 7
   Discussion Questions due in Class
2. Williams, Chapter 8
   Group answers written in class

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November 10  **Global Gender Inequality**
Film: Pray the Devil Back to Hell
Reading: 1. Lorber, Chapter 4 (pp. 86 – 115)

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November 15 - 17  **Global Gender Inequality**
Reading and Discussion:
1. Kristof and WuDunn, Introduction, Chpts 1 & 2
2. Kristof and WuDunn, Chapters 3 - 5

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November 22 – December 1  **Global Gender Inequality**
Reading and Discussion:
1. Kristof and WuDunn, Chapters 6 - 8
2. Kristof and WuDunn, Chapters 9 - 11

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December 6 - 8  **Global Gender Inequality**
Reading and Discussion:
1. Kristof and WuDunn, Chapters 12 – 14
2. Lorber, Conclusion (pp. 303 – 313)
   Class summary and conclusion

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December 13  **Final Paper Due**