Evidence of the diversity of women's lives will be examined through listening to their/our stories. We will then critically examine selected perspectives on difference in women's experiences and inequalities in women's lives. The contributions of selected theories including social psychological, psychoanalytic, and biosocial for explaining gender differences and inequality will be discussed. Research evidence concerning the consequences of inequality for women's ways of knowing, mental health, work life and relationships will be discussed. We will conclude with a discussion of some examples of women's individual and collective resistance to inequality.

REQUIRED READING


Selected articles will be distributed during class at several points in the semester or placed on reserve in the Curriculum Resource Center. Suggestions for additional reading are available from the instructor.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE

1. Students are expected to attend class sessions and to participate in class exercises and assignments. The class structure relies on student attendance and active participation. Most work for the course takes place in preparation for, participation in, and reaction to class sessions. To facilitate class participation each student will keep a journal which summarizes her/his reactions to/reflections on the readings assigned for class, the discussions
held in the previous classes and his/her experiences with regard to the topics being discussed. These journals will be handed in to the instructor at least TWICE during the semester, on or before Thursday, FEBRUARY 23, on or before Thursday, MARCH 30, or on or before Thursday, APRIL 20. (Class participation plus journals, 30% of grade)

2. There will be a take-home mid-term examination. The exam will be distributed in class on Thursday, MARCH 9 and DUE back on Thursday, MARCH 23. It will be an essay exam and will require that you critically discuss issues drawn from course readings and discussion. The exam must be typewritten and cannot exceed 8 double-spaced typed pages. (The exam is worth 30% of your final grade)

3. Each student or student team of students (maximum of 3 students) must complete a CLASS PROJECT which will be written up, shared with the class during the final class session and submitted as a written paper (6©10 double spaced typed pages)to the instructor no later than Thursday, MAY 4 in class. If you work in a team (which I encourage) the class presentation should be done as a team BUT each student must submit her/his own individually written paper. Each student or student team must identify one women's project, organization or program that was developed by women, for women, to address a social issue or social problem related to women's psychosocial experiences (e.g., a rape crisis center, an incest support group, a psychology of women research project or journal, a professional women's support network, a lesbian mothers groups, a day care advocacy group, a welfare rights advocacy group, a refugee support or advocacy group for women, an in vitro fertilization clinic, etc).

Your task is to survey the psychological literature about this problem or issue to more fully understand what psychologists have contributed to our understanding of the problem and the development of solutions to it. In addition you should use include a discussion of how this problem/issue is understood and engaged in at least one other non-European country. You should also indicate how psychologists and/or feminists are confronting this issue/problem. How might strategies or solutions developed in the United States be influenced by or influence the international context? Are solutions developed in the United States useful in the country you selected? Might solutions developed abroad be useful in the United States?

You must then contact the organization and its staff and secure information about the program (from written documents interviews with staff and/or clients, your own experience with/in the program, members of the community in which the project is located). NOTE: You should begin by
contacting the program director/coordinator and indicating what your interests are and requesting her permission to talk with other members of the organization. All students should use the letter distributed in class to make this initial contact. Your paper should summarize your review of the literature, your comparison with the issue as approached in another country, and provide a clear and accurate summary of the project/program you visited, including a description of how it is structured, how decisions are made, and how it is funded. Attention to problems encountered in the development or maintenance of the program should be described. You should indicate how the program addressed the social issue or problem it was developed to address, that is, in what ways does it support women as they individually and/or collectively resist inequality. Finally, you should briefly summarize the new issues and/or questions about women's experiences that have emerged for you in doing this study.

Each individual or team will present her/his/its report to the class on Monday, MAY 1 or Thursday, MAY 4. Presentations should include a description of the project and a discussion of how it supports women in their individual and/or collective struggle to resist systems and structures of inequality. Each student or student team should have a one page handout for the class summarizing information about the project/organization. You are encouraged to use other audio-visual aids (film, video, music, etc.) to share this information. The topic for your class project and the members of your team MUST be approved by the instructor no LATER than Thursday, MARCH 2. You MUST submit a one paragraph summary of your issues/problem, the name of the organization/project you will visit, the members of your team and at least 4 references that will be part of your review of the literature BY CLASS TIME on MARCH 2. The final paper is due in class on Thursday, MAY 4. (The project/final paper is worth 40% of your final grade.)

NOTE WELL: ALL DEADLINES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED. FAILURE TO MEET DEADLINES WILL RESULT IN THE LOWERING OF YOUR GRADE FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT BY ONE MARK FOR EACH 24 HOUR PERIOD OR INCREMENT THEREOF, FOR EXAMPLE, AN A BECOMES AN A- IF THE PAPER IS 1-24 HOURS LATE, AN A BECOMES A B+ IF THE PAPER IS 25-48 HOURS LATE, ETC.

FILMS AND GUEST LECTURES WILL SUPPLEMENT CLASS PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS. STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND OUT-OF-CLASS LECTURES ON CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY THAT RELATE TO ISSUES BEING DISCUSSED IN CLASS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM AT RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE IS SPONSORING
ITS ANNUAL LECTURE SERIES OR THE ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN IN PSYCHOLOGY IS HOLDING ITS ANNUAL CONFERENCE HERE IN RI. STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BRING INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER ACTIVITIES TO CLASS FOR SHARING OF RESOURCES AND INFORMATION WITH OTHERS.

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. Diversity in women's lives in 1988 January 23-30

A. Introduction of each other, of course B. The longest war/the age of alliance? T & W, Chs.1,9 C. Gender, race, class & culture: Differences and/or inequality Byerly, pp. 1-71, 125-160

II. "Growing up" - "Grown up" February 2-March 2

A. Biological perspectives on gender T & W, Chs. 3, 4 B. Getting the message Handout, T & W, Ch. 6 C. Earning the bread and baking it Handout, T & W, Ch. 7

PROJECT TOPIC, ETC. DUE IN CLASS, THURSDAY, MARCH 2.

III. Women's psyche and society March 6-April 6

A. Psychoanalytic perspectives T & W, Ch. 5 B. New theoretical perspectives on the psychology of women Handout. C. Constructing knowledge: Introduction to women's ways of knowing Belenky, et al. Intro; Part 1 D. Women, violence and mental health Handout; reserve reading

SPRING BREAK: WEEK OF MARCH 13-17

THURSDAY, MARCH 23. MID-TERM DUE, IN CLASS.

IV. Women's resistance: Individual & collective struggle for change April 10-May 4

JOURNALS DUE, IN CLASS ON OR BEFORE TWO OF THE FOLLOWING THREE DATES: FEBRUARY 23, MARCH 30, APRIL 20

PRESENTATIONS OF CLASS PROJECTS MAY 1 & 4. PAPERS DUE IN CLASS MAY 4.