Iroquois women in the 17th and 18th centuries owned the tools of agricultural production and food preparation, and controlled the distribution of cooked food and of surpluses thereby affecting intertribal trade and politics. Chinese women, in these same years, never played a large part in agricultural work, could not produce or consume goods without male approval, often had their feet bound and were said to live the existence of a "frog in a well." In the 19th and 20th centuries, Yoruba women of Nigeria were active traders in the marketplace, going on their own from town to town when required by business, while at the same time Muslim women in Iraq were confined, when possible, to the women's section of the household and were veiled when they went out. Virginity and marital fidelity strictly enforced, set the terms of the Iraqi women's sexual lives while young Tiwi (near Australia) wives traditionally engaged in a series of extramarital sexual unions with young lovers.

What does all this data mean? What generalizations can we make about the roles of women throughout the world? Are there key factors to look for in any society which will help explain the precise responsibilities of women, the views of them, the degree to which they can support themselves or have sexual freedom, and their input to group decision-making? Is inequality between the sexes universal? How have the processes of Western colonialism affected the positions of women in non-Western societies?

The class will examine these questions through study of the lives of some North American Indian women, women in the Muslim world, and women in China, in both their historical and contemporary aspects. We will also look at feminist critiques of traditional Western anthropology and will consider the implications of "equality" as a Western value and as an ideal goal.

Required Reading - to be purchased
Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, eds., Women and Colonization, Anthropological Perspectives (Praeger P.B.)
Elizabeth Fernea, Guests of the Sheik (Anchor Doubleday)
Jonathan Spence, The Death of Woman Wang, (Penguin)
Delia Davin, Woman-Work, Women and the Party in Revolutionary China, (Oxford)
Reprint Packet - to be purchased in class.
Recommended Reading: Rayna Reiter, ed., Toward an Anthropology of Women

Course Requirements
In addition to their attendance at lectures and their informed participation in tutorials (20%), students will be asked to write a brief "ground-work" paper (5-6 pages, 20%) in preparation for an essay (10-20 pages, 30%) and a take-home exam (30%).

Prerequisite - Women's Studies 100