WOMEN'S STUDIES 200-3
WOMEN'S STATUS AND POWER IN CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Fall 1983
Instructor: Mary Lynn McDougall
Lectures T, Th 11:30
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Course Description

This course critiques western patriarchal conceptions of women's status and powerlessness by a comparative survey of women's productive and reproductive labour, as well as attitudes toward female labour, fertility and sexuality, in five economies ranging from gathering-and-hunting to industrial, and in eight communities reflecting different familial and social patterns. Using anthropological, historical, and sociological evidence and theories and, wherever possible, the essential if often missing autobiographical testimony of women, the course addresses the following questions:

(1) What are women's productive roles, do they control the products of their labour, and how are their work and products valued in different systems?

(2) What are the rituals of reproduction, who controls them, and what are the relations between decisions about family limitation and degrees of female autonomy?

(3) Which economic and familial systems promote women's status and power? What are the effects of social change, notably those associated with "modernization" or development, on women's status and power?

Required Books (available in paperback from the SFU Bookstore):


Shostak, Marjorie, Nisa; The Life and Words of a ! Kung San Woman


Assignments and Grading:

Written report (500-1,000 words) on one assigned reading in Weeks Two through Four - 15% of final grade.
Oral report (10 minutes) on one assigned or additional reading in Weeks Five, Six, Seven, or Nine - 15% of final grade.
Short paper (5 to 7 pages) due in Week Eight - 30% of final grade.
Second paper (7 to 10 pages) due in Week Thirteen - 40% of final grade.