WOMEN'S STATUS AND POWER IN CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Lectures: M & W 14:30 - 15:20  Instructor: Mary Lynn Stewart-McDougall
Tutorial: M or W 15:30 - 16:20  Office: AQ 6036

Course description

This course critiques western patriarchal conceptions of women's status and powerlessness by a comparative survey of women's work, as well as attitudes toward female labour, fertility and sexuality, in five economies ranging from gathering-and-hunting to industrial, in eight communities reflecting different familial patterns. Using anthropological, historical, and sociological evidence and, wherever possible, 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 are their work and products valued?

2. What are the rituals of reproduction, who controls them, and how do decisions about family limitation affect 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 development, on women's status and power?

Required Books (available in paperback from the SFU Bookstore)

Tiffany, Sharon, Women, Work and Motherhood: The Power of Female Sexuality in the Workplace; An Anthropological Perspective on Working Women

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

Bourque, Susan, and Warren, Kay, Women of the Andes: Patriarchy and Social Change in Two Peruvian Towns

Assignments and Grading

Written report (1,000 words) on 1 assigned reading in weeks 2 through 4 15% of final grade

Oral report (10 minutes) on one assigned and additional reading in weeks, 5, 6, 7, or 9 15% of final grade

Short paper (5-7 pages), due in Week 8 30% of final grade

Second paper (7-10 pages), due in Week 13 40% of final grade