Text:

The primary reader for this course, this edited volume covers the span of topics in contemporary gender studies, including articles on the role of biology in determining male and female roles, domestic and public roles for men and women, cultural constructions of gender, sexuality and the body, differential relations between the state and the genders, household relations, gender and religion, reproduction, and gender shifts due to development.

Articles:

These articles are a sample of the work relating to gender that has been done in the Southwest. While the notion of the Southwest Culture Area is the basis for many, recent sociopolitical developments within the region are also considered, so that the articles reflect a concern with archeology, contemporary Native American culture, Border Studies, as well as Urban Studies.


- Demographic data looks at the confluence of gender and education in determining economic participation and status.


- Looks at the fascinating case of cross-gendered women among Native American groups, a clear challenge to Western gender roles, with a focus on groups in the Plains and Southwest.


- Women’s involvement in drug trafficking both reinforces and subverts the dominant gender roles of local culture. Status within the drug trade, from high-level lord to low-level transporter, is seen as a complicating variable as women construct their roles within the industry.


- Navajo women’s political roles are placed within the traditional gender dynamic, with the suggestion that male cultural privilege affects women’s political possibilities.

- Examines shifts in gender roles due to Athabaskan and Spanish contacts through use of mortuary data. Contends, along with others, that European contact led to a decline in female status and leadership roles.

- Examines shifts from informal to formal community ritual and its relation to gender specific ritual power, with the eventual domination of males.

- Uses the encounter between Franklin Roosevelt and a Navajo woman to extrapolate on how the image of woman is used in the construction of public image related to commerce.

- Examines and compares the political stances of Hispanic and Native American women, arguing that race/ethnicity, along with gender, dictate notions of identity, allegiance, and therefore the political priorities of activist women.

- The Navajo construction of male and female is described, along with its consequences for the cultural construction of health and disease. This is clearly related to religious beliefs, which legitimizes both the healing and gender systems.

- The article argues for the central role of women in the development of agriculture within the region as a result of their role within the division of labor and decision making power.

- Urban data from the Southwestern US compares employment for males and females and draws correlation between group income and political representation and employment status.

- Examines women’s roles in ritual life. While men have traditionally been viewed as dominating ritual life, much of ritual itself emphasizes female traits and reproductive capacity, while women take on “unofficial” roles in ritual.