Readings in Feminist Theory and International Relations
TTh 12:15-2:45, 793 SWKT. Valerie_hudson@byu.edu. Email me to set up an appointment if you wish to see me.

Prerequisite for this Class: The belief that men and women stand before each other and before the Lord as equals. If you don’t already believe that part of LDS doctrine, this course will be a waste of both your time and my time.

Description of the Course: I am leaving BYU for Texas A&M University in January 2012. Before I leave, I wanted to share some of my favorite readings in feminist theory and international relations with BYU students. We will read 8 books, approximately one per week. We will spend our class time together going through each book, virtually page by page and discussing it. You will answer a series of questions on each book, and turn those answers in the following week. In lieu of a final exam, you will transform the answers to your questions into a 12 page paper (see section on Grading for details).

Texts and Reading Schedule: The books, to be read in this order, are:

Sylviane Agacinski, *The Parity of the Sexes*
Annotation: Sylviane Agacinski is a French philosopher, married to the socialist politician Lionel Jospin. She was instrumental in preventing legalization of same-sex marriage and also surrogate birth in France. This book literally changed the way I looked at my world; her concept of mixity and filiation are very important.
Instructions: We will cover this book the very first week of class. Be sure to have read the first half of this book for the first class period on June 21st. We’ll discuss the second half on June 23rd.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind*
Annotation: Though a bit dated, this is a wonderful tour de force of how beliefs concerning the inferiority of women have been transmitted through Western culture, with an emphasis on American culture, and affected the lives of women. Jamieson was a university president at one point in her career.
Instructions: Read the first half for June 28th, and the second half for June 30th.

Nancy Folbre, *The Invisible Heart*
Annotation: Nancy Folbre is one of the foremost feminist economists in the world. This work, called The Invisible Heart to parallel Adam Smith’s the invisible hand, sets the stage for discussing what is wrong with contemporary economics from a feminist point of view.
Instructions: Read first 2/3 of the book for discussion on July 5th, last 1/3 for discussion on July 7th.
J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*
**Annotation**: This is the book that basically started feminist IR as a subfield (though works by Cynthia Enloe and others preceded it). We will only read selections from Tickner, a professor of IR at USC, and so you will read those selections for discussion the second part of class on July 7th.
**Instructions**: For discussion on July 7th, please read the following chapters and pages: pps. 62-78; 90-96; Chapter 5.

Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky*
**Annotation**: This book has been on the NYT bestseller list for quite some time. The two authors are reporters for the New York Times. This book, filled with the stories of real women from around the world, document both the challenges they face and how they meet them.
**Instructions**: Read first half of the book for July 12th, and the second half for July 14th.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*
**Annotation**: Ayaan Hirsi Ali is the Somali woman who emigrated to the Netherlands and became an MP there. Because of her feminist writings critiquing the treatment of women in Islamic communities and nations, she has received many death threats, and currently lives with an armed guard. This is the story of how, as a Muslim woman, she came to reject her socialization.
**Instructions**: Read first half of book for July 19th, and second half for July 21st.

Ann Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood*
2010, Picador, paperback, **ISBN-13**: 978-0312655402
**Annotation**: Ann Crittenden wrote on economics for the New York Times before she gave birth to her son. Then, as an economist, she discovered in a very personal way what the price of motherhood is in the USA.
**Instructions**: Read first half of book for July 26th, and second half for July 28th.

Joan Williams, *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It*
**Annotation**: Joan Williams is one of the foremost experts on work-family law. In this path-breaking book, she explores how the workplace systemically discriminates against mothers, and what legal remedies could be pursued to mitigate that harm.
**Instructions**: Read first half of book for August 2nd, and the second half for August 4th.
Grading:
- Answers for each book you have read: 8x70 points each: 560 points possible
- Meaningful Participation in class: 14x10: 140 possible
- Ten page paper: 1x300: 300 points possible
Total points possible in class=1000. Divide by ten and round up/down for final grade.

Paper Assignment: You will take the answers to the questions you have previously turned in to me, and you will form a coherent paper summarizing and expounding upon what you have learned this semester in regards to the following questions: “Is there structural gender inequality among human societies? Please give examples of its diversity. How would human society be different if it were based on gender equity? How can we as human beings and as Mormons help bring this about?” The paper must be 10 full pages in length (minimum), and this does not count your cover sheet, notes, or bibliography. The paper will be due Friday, August 12th by 5 PM without fail in my mailbox in 745 SWKT. No late papers will be accepted! The paper assignment will be in lieu of the final exam; there will be no final exam for the course.

Participation: Come to class having read the assigned material beforehand. Participate in a meaningful way that shows me you have really pondered what was in your reading. Let your classmates participate as well. Be respectful of others’ opinions, even if you challenge them.

Book Questions: Below find the list of questions for each book you will read; your answers will probably range from 3-5 pages total:

I. Agacinski:
1. Tell me about Agacinski’s background—who is she? (Look her up online!)
2. What is mixity?
3. Agacinski really dislikes the approaches of Plato and de Beauvoir towards the question of the sexes—why?
4. Why is treating people like individuals instead of as men and women so harmful to women? What does this have to do with Agacinski’s agitation for parity in slates of political candidates?
5. What is this metaphysical fear of division Agacinski speaks of, and why does it result in androcentrism?
6. Agacinski doesn’t mind civil unions between homosexual persons; she does not mind children being raised by homosexuals. What does she object to, and why?
7. How is our recognition of reproductive finitude the beginning of ethics for Agacinski?
8. What is your reaction to Agacinski’s thoughts? Can you think of any other public policies that could be justified on the basis of her thought?
II. Hall

1. “The world taught woman nothing skillful and then said her work was valueless. It permitted her no opinions and then said she did not know how to think. It forbade her to speak in public, and said the sex had no orators. It denied her the schools, and said the sex had no genius. It robbed her of every vestige of responsibility, and then called her weak. It taught her that every pleasure must come as a favor from men, and when to gain it she decked herself in paint and fine feathers, as she had been taught to do, it called her vain.”

--Carrie Chapman Catt, 1902
Please explain what this has to do with the double bind, and please give historical examples from the book about this.

2. Explain how the double bind works in the area of politics. Make reference to recent US elections in this regard.

3. Please reflect upon your own experiences with the double bind. If you are not female, please interview female family/friends/colleagues about their experiences with the double bind and report on what they tell you.

III. Folbre

1. “Family values are inconsistent with the principle that greed is good for everyone except Mom.” Why? What happens to Mom? Why do “caring folks” finish last? Put in as many reasons as you can from Folbre’s analysis.

2. What would it mean to “put the invisible hand in service to the invisible heart”? Could care be strengthened by a reorganization of our economy?

3. Adam Smith wrote, “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from regard to their self-interest.” What’s Folbre’s comeback to that, and why is it important?

4. Comment on your reaction to Folbre’s fairy tale at the beginning of Chapter 2.

5. “Care providers are not in a very good position to bargain for more resources, because such bargaining puts the people they are caring for at risk.” Explain and comment.

6. Explain “Dolly Jones” and what we would learn from her. What distortions occur in our economy and economic policy because we are only looking at Dow and not Dolly Jones? How is this justified, and do you agree?
7. Why are rates of child poverty so high in the USA compared to other developed countries? What is Folbre’s concept of “economic abuse”? What do you think should be done about these high rates of child poverty?

8. Comment: “The new global order seems to offer us two equally unattractive choices: we can go back to a patriarchal society in which women are forced to assume the burden of care for others because their other opportunities are severely restricted. Or we can move to a world in which individuals are on their own and nobody provides care unless it is paid for. Reasonable alternatives to these extremes are hard to imagine and even more difficult to implement. But they are worth fighting for.”

IV. Tickner

1. Realism and Neo-Realism are the dominant paradigms in the academic discipline of IR. Explain why Tickner believes they are strongly influenced by a masculinist perspective. Describe Tickner’s feminist alternative to the above. Discuss its pros and cons.

2. Liberal economic theory is the (currently) dominant paradigm in the study of IPE (International Political Economy). Explain why Tickner believes it is strongly influenced by a masculinist perspective. Describe Tickner’s feminist alternative to the above. Discuss its pros and cons.

3. Do all men subscribe to a masculinist viewpoint? Assuming your answer is no, why is masculinism so dominant? Is its dominance a problem, and if so, how?

V. Kristof and WuDunn

1. The authors give numerous examples of how development interventions have helped women, and several about how such interventions failed to help women. Can you discuss what factors seemed to make success or failure more likely?

2. One frustrating thing about Half the Sky is that it sure seems like the only real way to get women safe/valued is to give them monetary resources. In essence, then, the women are lifted out of abuse because they are finally worth something in economic terms to their families. Why would this be frustrating to someone like your old BYU professor?
3. Fistula: discuss causes, consequences, policy initiatives. How is it that a man can physically destroy a woman and leave her to be eaten by hyenas? How can her own natal family leave her to be eaten by hyenas?

4. Can a nation expect prosperity if it treats half of its citizenry as if they were on a par with livestock? Explicate in detail why not, using examples from the book.

VI. Hirsi Ali

1. Name the steps in Hirsi Ali’s life that caused her to reject her religion. After all, at one point she considered herself very devout in her adherence to Islam.

2. Hirsi Ali has been likened to the Voltaire of the Islamic world—what do you think that means?

3. Some Western feminists have rejected Hirsi Ali because she isn’t being very culturally sensitive. Why is she perceived in this way? Do you believe rejection of Hirsi Ali is a coherent feminist stance?

4. At the end of the book, Hirsi Ali decides she cannot believe in God. Why can’t she believe in God?

5. Do you agree with Hirsi Ali that Islamist movements must be opposed in the name of human rights for women?

VII. Crittenden

1. Please write a 3 page synopsis of the price of motherhood, including as many aspects of that price as you can. At a minimum, talk about wages, taxes, Social Security, divorce practice, and typical business practices.

VIII. Williams

1. Characterize parental discrimination within the modern American workplace.

2. What legal rulings might form the basis (in the US) for increased protections against parental discrimination? Williams suggests that certain legal strategies are more conducive to arguing against parental discrimination than others—explain.
3. How does parental discrimination hurt both women and men? Why would Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles say in his April 2011 conference talk, “I would hope that Latter-day Saints would be at the forefront in creating an environment in the workplace that is more receptive and accommodating to both women and men in their responsibilities as parents”? What would change in the workplace if parental discrimination were prohibited?

4. Is there a business case for greater attention to work-family life balance?