

Gender and Empowerment in Development Practice

Dr. Renata Serra
Center for African Studies, 421 Grinter Hall
(rserra@ufl.edu)

Dr. Rebecca (Becky) Williams
Center for Latin American Studies, 388 Grinter Hall
(rjwillia@ufl.edu)

Spring 2022 (3 credits)
Tuesdays, Periods 2-4 (8:30-11:30)
Architecture (ARCH) 0423

Course description

This course examines the concepts, and associated practices, related to gender equity, women's empowerment and men's involvement. Gender equity is widely perceived as both a goal of development and a means for attaining wider societal goals. Given the predominance of gender norms that place women in an inferior position, increasing women's empowerment and involving men in a process of normative change are widely regarded as preconditions for greater gender equity. However, there are contrasting views, in both research and development practice, on what constitutes women's empowerment, how individual empowerment is linked to societal change, and what works best in attaining gender equity.

This course will encourage students to develop analytical and practical skills for reflecting on, and contributing to, such themes in development theory and practice. After reviewing the key underlying concepts, we will examine the main debates on women's empowerment, men's involvement and gender equity in the literature. We will then review the main practical methods used for assessing and measuring progress. Students will be required to compare distinct contexts within and across regions, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, and analyze how local realities interface with development initiatives and actors.

The course is suitable for graduate students in development studies, in any social or interdisciplinary science, conservation, women's studies, area studies, etc. who aim to deepen their knowledge on how gender considerations affect development work. It is highly recommended that students have taken previous coursework in gender or development or have some relevant field expertise.

Teaching Approach

Classes consist of lectures, class discussions and a variety of individual and group hands-on activities – with an emphasis on peer learning and flipped classroom approaches. Students' contribution is essential for the success of this approach. Students are expected to read the materials before class, submit the assignments by the deadlines, and come to class prepared for critical, cooperative, and collegial discussions and activities.

Course goals

The course aims to provide students with the opportunity to:

- Strengthen their knowledge of key theories and concepts of gender equity, empowerment, and intersectionality.
- Critique assumptions underlying development practice, while appreciating the challenges from integrating gender considerations into development practice.
- Learn from comparing and contrasting different developing contexts/regions.
- Enhance both analytical abilities and practical skills, including qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection, measurement, and analysis.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Discuss and critique the main theories and approaches for explaining gender (in)equality and its impact on development.
- Critically discuss prevailing assumptions underlying past and current development interventions.
- Identify what has (or has not) changed in gender and development in the last ten years.
- Discuss differences across time and geographical areas, using a comparative regional perspective, especially between the regions of Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Locate and interpret gender and development indicators, including for monitoring, evaluation and learning (M&E, MEAL), identifying the pros and cons of qualitative and quantitative methods; and the pros and cons of WEAI-type surveys (including A-WEAI, pro-WEAI, WELI).
- Demonstrate capacity to work in groups to develop, facilitate, and conduct activities around gender and development in and out of the classroom.

Readings

Required readings consist of journal articles, book chapters, policy reports, videos and various online resources. These are fully listed in the weekly pages on UF Canvas E-learning site and available under Modules section (for download or through a website link or through UF library reserve system).

Assignments

The description of activities provided below are a brief explanation of what is required for class. Detailed assignment instructions along with specific requirements and grading criteria will be provided on the Canvas course website.

Weekly Assignments:

- **Engagement and participation in class activities (10% of total grade):** You will be graded on your class participation, engagement in class discussion, and contribution to group activities.
- **Weekly postings (15%).** Each week you will be assigned *either* a discussion *or* a self-reflection. **Discussions** will be submitted to the Canvas discussion board and are meant to demonstrate your understanding of class material and promote class learning. You may be encouraged to comments on other postings as well. **Reflections** are designed to help you

and your instructors monitor your learning during the semester. Reflections focus on “Ah-ha moments,” questions, observations, and experiences. Reflections are (usually – the instructions will be provided each week) confidential and will be seen only by the instructors. Weekly postings should be submitted to Canvas by 11:59pm on the THURSDAY AFTER class.

Unit Assignments: There are four learning units, with one assignment at the end of each unit. They are intended to elicit your knowledge of the unit material and develop your ability to apply some of the skills learned. These are:

- **Unit 1 Essay (15%):** 4-5 pages, double spaced, essay addressing a given question stemming from the literature and your own reflection on it (includes peer review).
- **Unit 2 Proposal for semester project (see Unit 4) (15%).** In preparation for the semester project (see below), you will write a proposal that includes a justification (including how your activity will advance our understanding of gender and empowerment), the relationship to class topics and ideas, and a preliminary literature review (including key literature from class).
- **Unit 3 CHOOSE ONE based on your interest as a researcher (WEAI data exploration) or development practitioner (M&E exercise) (15%):**
 - **WEAI data exploration:** You are to locate, interpret and compare data on women’s empowerment (WEAI or similar) from an existing database or development project.
 - **MEL Plan:** You are to develop a MEL plan for a (given or hypothetical) gender & development project.
- **Unit 4 Semester project (30%).** In the last part of the semester, students will conduct a project of their choice, either a short research piece, data collection/analysis, or a critical assessment of a specific methodology. We will provide some options for you, or you can propose your own project. The purpose is to apply concepts, ideas and methods learned in the course according to personal interests but could also include participation in one of the ongoing research projects undertaken at the University of Florida.

CLASS TIME SCHEDULE AT GLANCE

The instructors reserve the right to make changes to this schedule during the semester.

Week	Date	Topic
Unit 1: Key concepts		
1	1/11	Introduction (BW/RS)
2	1/18	Intra-HH relations (RS)
3	1/25	Intersectionality (BW)
<i>Unit 1 Assignment due Sunday Jan. 30</i>		
Unit 2: Contested issues and practices		
4	2/1	Organizations and Policies (BW/RS)
5	2/8	Women's empowerment under scrutiny (RS)
6	2/15	Approaches to gender under scrutiny (intersectionality, men & masculinities) (BW)
7	2/22	The challenges of measuring (RS)
<i>Unit 2 Assignment due Sunday Feb 27</i>		
Unit 3: Applied research tools and measurement		
8	3/1	Data disaggregation and intersectionality – understanding what the data are telling (BW)
9	3/15	Intra-HH disparities in income and wealth (RS)
10	3/22	M&E for WE interventions (BW)
11	3/29	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (RS)
<i>Unit 3 Assignment due Sunday April 3</i>		
Unit 4. Lessons from class projects and sharing		
12	4/5	Lessons from ongoing projects (RS)
13	4/12	Reflections (BW)
14	4/19	3-minute presentations and conclusions (BW/RS)
<i>Unit 4 Assignment due Sunday April 26</i>		

Instructor Policies

Student Names and Personal Pronouns: We will refer to students with the name and pronoun that feel best for them in class or on assignments. Please advise us of any name or pronoun changes so we can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronouns are respected. If you need any assistance or support, please reach out to the LGBT[QIA+] Affairs, <https://lgbtq.multicultural.ufl.edu/>.

Inclusivity: It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let us know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let us know so that we can make arrangements for you. This classroom will be an anti-racist space and sex, gender, and sexuality inclusive. We will not tolerate hate speech, homophobia, or sexism of any kind in classroom discussions, assignments, or anywhere else.

University Policies

Final grades will be assigned following the scale below:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot %	94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

More information on grading policies can be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)

[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

Requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies. Excuses for missing a class test or a deadline for assignments will only be accepted if appropriately documented and due to illness, serious family circumstances, religious holidays, and other reasons approved by the University. You should give me prior notice whenever possible.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they

receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students at the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

Library Support Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints Campus

On-Line Students Complaints