

**Eras of Feminist Anthropology and Ethnography**  
**Anthropology 2240**

| <b>Era and Dates</b>        | <b>Intellectual Focus</b>   | <b>Historical Context</b>  | <b>Key Players and Scholars</b>   |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| 0: Mid-1800s<br>(Ancestors) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural evolution</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colonialism and observations of 'others'</li> <li>• Biological evolution (Darwin)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Henry Maine</li> <li>• Johannes Bachofen</li> <li>• Karl Marx</li> <li>• Friedrich Engels</li> </ul>             |
| 1: 1880-1920                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural evolution</li> <li>• Biological sex determines social roles</li> <li>• Gender and sex are synonymous</li> <li>• Gender emerges as an anthropological category of analysis</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victorian ideas about the superiority of 'western' values and customs</li> </ul>  | Boasians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boas</li> <li>• Parsons</li> </ul>  |
| 2: 1920-1960                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation of sex and gender as categories</li> <li>• Promotion of a 'woman's point of view' in ethnography</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World War II</li> <li>• Reactions to Eugenics and perceived racial superiority of Europeans</li> </ul>                                  | Boasians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mead</li> <li>• Benedict</li> <li>• Hurston</li> </ul>  |
| 3: 1960-1980                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universals of sexual oppression</li> <li>• Universal sexual asymmetry</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil rights movement in United States</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosaldo &amp; Lamphere (<i>Women, Culture, Society</i>; 1974)</li> <li>• Ortner</li> </ul>                       |
| 4: 1980-1996                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women may be subordinate everywhere but women's experiences are not universally the same</li> <li>• Does a distinction between sex and gender actually make sense</li> <li>• Ethnographies react to and build on male sentiments that women don't do anything novel</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changing political era – to right-wing</li> <li>• interest in women's rights, childcare, reproductive rights</li> <li>• AIDS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abu-Lughod (<i>Writing Women's Worlds</i>)</li> <li>• Behar and Gordon (<i>Women Writing Culture</i>)</li> </ul> |
| 5: 1996-                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queer Issues</li> <li>• Motherhood</li> <li>• Reproductive rights</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIDS around world</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ellen Lewin</li> <li>• Robbie Davis-Floyd</li> </ul>   |

## **Selected Bibliography**

- Abu-Lughod, Lila 1993 *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories*. Berkeley : University of California Press.
- Benedict, Ruth 1934 *Patterns of Culture*. New York: Mentor Books.
- Hurston, Zora N. 1990 *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Lamphere, Louise 1989 Feminist Anthropology: The Legacy of Elsie Clews Parsons. *American Ethnologist* 16( 3):518-533.
- Mead, Margaret 1968 *Coming of Age in Samoa*. New York: Dell.
- Mead, Margaret 1935 *Sex and temperament in three primitive societies*. New York: Morrow.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1996 *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Parsons, Elsie C. 1997 *Fear and Conventionality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Reichard, Gladys A. 1939 *Dezba: Woman of the Desert*. New York: JJ Augustin Publisher.
- Reichard, Gladys A. 1934 *Spider Woman: A Story of Navajo Weavers and Chanters*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Z. and Louise Lamphere 1974 *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Visweswaran, Kamala 1988 Defining Feminist Ethnography. *Inscriptions* 3/427-44.
- Visweswaran, Kamala 1997 Histories of Feminist Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26:591-621 .