



WARSAW SUMMER SCHOOL GENDER STUDIES IBL PAN

Warsaw Summer School Gender Studies IBL PAN

The Gender Studies Center of the Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences (IBL PAN) in collaboration with the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw and with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw is pleased to announce the first edition of the Warsaw Summer School Gender Studies IBL PAN, to be held **13th August - 24th August, 2012 in Warsaw, Poland**. This year the school's theme is:

The Logic of Backlash, the Logic of Feminism: Comparative Transatlantic Perspectives

Popularized by Susan Faludi (*Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*, 1991), the concept of backlash signifies mainstream culture's conservative reaction to feminism. Backlash both exaggerates and demonizes the legal, economic and cultural gains achieved thanks to feminism's second wave. It relies on two falsehoods: that equality is an accomplished fact and that it has made everyone (especially women) suffer. In the USA, backlash culture had its peak in the 1980s with the conservative turn in the media and popular culture and the rise of the New Right. Although the impact of the second feminist wave of the 1970s in Eastern Europe was negligible, backlash narratives, myths and stereotypes thrived in Eastern Europe both before and after 1989. The paradox of "backlash before feminism" is one of the central themes of feminist scholarship in the region. The re-traditionalization of gender

roles after the 1989 breakthrough was tied to local history but mainstream culture reflected this process in terms strikingly similar to those of backlash in the U.S. The core message is an inversion of the second wave's insights about the social construction of gender: backlash claims that men and women are profoundly different, that this difference is natural and thus immutable, and that equality makes women unhappy (lonely, stressed, frustrated, nostalgic for traditional gender roles).

The 2012 Warsaw Summer School in Gender Studies will examine the internal logics of backlash and feminism, asking how both sets of ideas have traveled to Eastern and Central Europe. How can we define the specificity of both American and Eastern European feminism and resistance to feminism? To what extent has feminism rewritten typical life narratives in the last forty years? To what extent have old plots and assumptions endured? Is American individualism the unexamined given of the U.S. feminist theory? What effect did the experience of living in state-socialist regimes have on perceptions of gender? What was the effect on gender of transition to democracy and to market economy? How were ideologies of gender affected by the rise of nationalisms and by EU accession? What are the key figures of backlash and how has the new generation of feminists in the region reacted to them? These and many other questions will be addressed through study of feminist theory, historical documents, fiction, essays as well as films from the USA, Poland, the Czech Republic, East Germany, Russia, Latvia, Ukraine, Hungary, and former Yugoslavia.

Program and Faculty:

The Warsaw Summer School Gender Studies IBL PAN is an intensive program that offers interdisciplinary knowledge and an occasion for in-depth critical analysis of gender-related issues in several societies. The school offers six main seminar courses. Participants select two of the six courses. The curriculum is complemented by obligatory evening film screenings followed by discussions.

Upon accomplishing all the course requirements, students from outside the Erasmus Program will receive certificates of completion; students from the Erasmus Program receive certificates of completion as well as appropriate course credits (you can get 8-10 ECTS credits altogether).

The faculty of the program this year consists of prominent scholars from the United States, Lithuania, Romania and Poland:

- prof. Ann Snitow (Eugene Lang College The New School for Liberal Arts)
- prof. Laura Grünberg (University of Bucharest)
- prof. Irmina Matonyte (ISM University of Management and Economics, Vilnius)
- Agnieszka Graff, Ph.D. (American Studies Center, University of Warsaw)
- Katarzyna Nadana, Ph.D. (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences)
- Agnieszka Mrozik, Ph.D. (Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences)

Courses:

- **Backlash: A History and a Reconsideration**

Instructor: Prof. Ann Snitow, Eugene Lang College The New School for Liberal Arts

In the first half of the course we will look at the dynamics of backlash in the United States, examining the rise of the Right and right-wing feminism, symbolic shifts in the discourse about abortion, the cultural wars of the 1980s and 1990s, and the economic context which narrowed down earlier radical feminist aspirations. We will then turn to the very different configurations of backlash in East and Central Europe. In the second half of the course, we will make a critique of some feminist ideas and practices that may have contributed to the loss of feminist momentum. Topics will include problems arising from such strategies as anti-trafficking and pornography laws, micro-lending, deregulation of markets, and the limitations of human rights paradigms for achieving long-term feminist goals. We will end with a consideration of generational conflicts and international debates. The central question in this last part of the course: How do we draw the line between backlash and reconfigurations that may look quite different from forms of feminism we recognize but which may sometimes contain new sources of ongoing vitality, growth, and creative invention for future women's movements.

- **Women in Lithuanian Politics: Overview of Main Actors, Structures, Issues and Images**

Instructor: Prof. Irmina Matonyte, ISM University of Management and Economics, Vilnius

The course is shaped by two major concepts: gender justice, with its concern for gender equality in all spheres of public and private life, and gender democracy, envisioning a

democratic process in which the voices, interests, perspectives and representatives of women are fully integrated and accountable as equals in a deliberative decision making process. These two issues, in addition to being of normative interest, also are a matter of empirical investigation. In the seminars we will present and discuss Lithuanian insights from historical accounts (inter-war period and Soviet times), early post-communist transition (nationalist backlash and feminist token politicians), achievements of gender equality in the context of a proceduralist democracy, growing (media) populism and dislocation of multi-partysim in the country. We will conclude by examining how gender democracy operates in a multilevel governance environment (the EU).

- **Five (possible) Steps to Backlash**

Instructor: Prof. Laura Grünberg, University of Bucharest

The course engages in critical reflection on five possible components of backlash: (1) ignoring cultural differences in the process of importing and exporting feminist ideas and strategies; (2) insufficient gender diversification in education; (3) excessive institutionalization of gender issues; (4) the realities of the economic crisis; (5) the effects of the constant surveillance on our daily lives. During discussions we will seek for “nudges” (Thaler and Sunstein), i.e. possible steps towards improving the situation.

- **Gendering Transition: Feminism and Antifeminism in Eastern Europe after 1989**

Instructor: Agnieszka Graff, Ph.D., American Studies Center, University of Warsaw

This course examines Eastern European resistance to gender equality after the 1989 breakthrough, looking at the origins, dynamics and responses to antifeminism in the region. Feminist ideas did not have a chance to take root in the 70s, whereas myths and images of American backlash successfully traveled east in the 1980s and early 90s, but it is more than a matter of timing. We will examine arguments for local specificity: misogyny as reaction to the “fake feeling” around equality caused by communist propaganda; economic pressure on women caused by the turn to neoliberalism; political power of the Catholic Church (in Poland); masculinity as a key aspect of nationalism; is feminism’s reputation as Western import on imposition (a dynamic comparable to backlash in postcolonial contexts). We will base our discussions on feminist essays and documents, using films as a reference point for discussion.

- **Images of Women and Feminism in Polish Neoconservative Discourse**

Instructor: Katarzyna Nadana, Ph.D., Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences.

The seminar will examine the image and place of women in masculine narratives created in Poland after 1989 by conservative and Catholic circles. To what extent are Catholic values inscribed in Polish political conservatism? To what extent is Polish Catholicism undergoing transformation and to what extent does it approve of part of the feminist agenda? We will discuss the attitudes of those circles towards feminism, asking how their traditional imaginary of womanhood has evolved since 1989. How far are those circles willing to go in perceiving some problems of women as political and social problems and inserting them in their agenda?

- **Figures of Backlash**

Instructor: Agnieszka Mrozik, Ph.D., Institute of Literary Research, Polish Academy of Sciences

This course undertakes critical analysis of Eastern European versions of several classic figures of backlash, namely: postfeminism, essentialism, the crisis of masculinity, the figure of Bridget Jones, feminism of power in opposition to the victim feminism, etc. Popular in Western public discourse, these ideas and figures acquire new senses when transferred to, and read within, the cultural, political and economic context of Central Europe. We will try to capture these changing meanings in the course of reading various cultural texts (literature, film, music, television, journalistic articles, etc.).

Eligibility:

The program is designed for students with Bachelor's degrees, postgraduate students, MA and PhD students. Anyone who fulfills this condition may apply, although the course targets young scholars with an interest in women's studies, gender studies or postcolonialism. The program is limited to 60 participants. The working language of the course is English.

Program Costs for Participants:

The total cost of the program is 1000 USD. For more information please contact us at:
info@warsawsummerschool.com

How to apply:

Applicants must submit a CV, a cover letter and a copy of their diploma.

Please place all the current contact information at the top of your CV and send the application documents by e-mail to: **info@warsawsummerschool.com**. Use “Summer School Application 2012” as the subject.

The proposal deadline is May 13th, 2012.

Further information: www.WarsawSummerSchool.com