

Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

COMMODIFYING WOMEN IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

Lecturer(s)	CHANDRA, ELIZABETH
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2025 Fall
Day/Period	Fri.5
Campus	Mita
Classroom	452
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	06647
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
K-Number	CIN-CO-00223-212-08

▼ Detail

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

This course examines the use and circulation of women in the context of globalization. Globalization has not only stimulated the flow of people, goods, money, and ideas on an unprecedented scale and at unparalleled speed, but it has also encouraged the spread of the capitalist market and consumption patterns. In this framework, women are targeted not only as consumers but also as tools for economic growth and objects of exchange. This is most evident in the mobilization of women for factory labor and their transnational migration for service, care, and other reproductive work—a practice encouraged by many governments in Asia as a strategy for accumulating foreign currency. These changes have profoundly affected the way women’s bodies and labor are utilized, appropriated, and exchanged, with one of the most controversial examples being the use of women in low-income countries as gestational surrogates.

In the early part of the course, we will read anthropological studies on the formation of the patriarchal family system, the history of women’s subordination in society, and archaic forms of exchange using women. We will then explore how capitalism and globalization have transformed gender relations, particularly women’s position in connection to domesticity, work, mobility, and migration. Special attention will be given to the ways in which society and corporate culture contribute to gender regimes that (dis)advantage women.

This course will explore various aspects of the commodification of women in general, occasionally drawing examples from east and southeast Asia, which as a region is a leading supplier of women’s bodies and labor that circulate on the global market as factory workers, domestic workers, sex workers, and gestational mothers.

Active Learning Methods ⓘ [Description](#)

Discussions, Debates
Flipped classroom
Problem-based learning

Preparatory Study

Students should expect weekly reading and writing assignments.

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Introduction

Lesson 2

Women and the Family

Lesson 3

Society and Exchange

Lesson 4

Women as Object of Exchange

Lesson 5

Women in the Capitalist System

Lesson 6

Emotional Labor

Lesson 7

Producing for Global Market

Lesson 8

Globalization

Lesson 9

Global Cities

Lesson 10

Global Women

Lesson 11

Cosmopolitan Sex Workers

Lesson 12

Sex as Work

Lesson 13

Rent-a-womb

Lesson 14

Neoliberal Feminism

Other

Summary

Method of Evaluation

Weekly papers (40%)

Attendance (40%)

Class discussion (20%)

Reference Books

Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Resistance Books, 2004; originally published in 1884)

Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Beacon Press, 1969)

Alison Bailey & Chris Cuomo (eds.), *The Feminist Philosophy Reader* (McGraw Hill, 2008)

Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (University of California Press, 2003)

Ngai Pun, *Made in China: Women Factory Workers in a Global Workplace* (Duke University Press, 2005)

Barbara Ehrenreich & Arlie Russell Hochschild (eds.), *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* (Holt, 2002)

Christine B. N. Chin, *Cosmopolitan Sex Workers: Women and Migration in a Global City* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

France Winddance Twine, *Outsourcing the Womb: Race, Class and Gestational Surrogacy in a Global Market* (Routledge, 2011)

Catherine Rottenberg, *The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

Lecturer's Comments to Students

This course will be conducted in a seminar style, with the class size limited to 15 students. In addition to registering for the course through the system during the first registration period, prospective students must write to Professor Chandra (elizabeth.chandra@gmail.com) with a brief self-introduction, their registered name, and student ID number. Instructor selections will be communicated as the first registration confirmation.

Admitted students must attend the first class session on Friday, October 3. Important details regarding course requirements will be provided during this session and will not be repeated.

Throughout the semester, students will be required to write a weekly one-page commentary on an assigned reading of approximately 30-50 pages. The weekly readings will be made available on Canvas. There will be no final exam.

Question/Comments

Attendance to the first class session is mandatory. Those unable to attend must contact the instructor (elizabeth.chandra@gmail.com) in advance.