

Teaching about Trafficking: Opportunities and Challenges for Critical Engagement

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When I was first invited to teach a women's studies course called Sex Trafficking in 2002, most of my students had never heard of the issue. Internet and literature searches for "trafficking" mostly turned up references to trafficking in drugs and weapons, not people. When I revised the course for a topical capstone in Criminology, Justice, and Policy Studies in 2006, all of my students had heard about human trafficking, and a handful had already studied it in other classes. The availability of books, films, scholarly articles, and advocacy pieces had all increased exponentially since I first became engaged in the field. This bounty provided a wealth of resources for teaching but also presented a greater challenge when it came to deciding which texts to include. It also added to the inevitable pedagogical angst over what to leave out.

I came to know about trafficking by accident, when I was hired as a research assistant at The Protection Project (TPP) in 1999. In my time at TPP I authored a literature review on human trafficking. At that time, my comprehensive database of sources contained fewer than one hundred

books and articles, a few UN documents, a handful of films, and some websites from nongovernmental organizations. My review of the literature inevitably reflected the ideological chasm between those who saw trafficking as primarily a labor, migration, and rights issue and those who saw it as primarily a sexual exploitation issue. On the policy end, these ideological orientations created bizarre bedfellows of individuals and organizations that otherwise would have been at odds. The ideological divide has not diminished in the intervening years, and it is important to be aware of and to negotiate in designing a course on trafficking.

As a feminist teacher, I was very aware of the divisions among feminists on the subject of trafficking, and was interested in communicating these differences to students who were not well versed in the varieties of feminist thought. I was also mindful of the difficulties my American students had engaging with some of the course texts and issues the first time around. For some students, moral judgments about prostitutes were as far as they were able to go in engaging with the course. These

students could not find a way in to think about the many issues involved in trafficking. How could I reach them?

In this article, I share some of my texts and tactics with others who might find themselves in a position to teach about human trafficking. I include my case for why feminist teachers should teach trafficking, an overview of the debate that divides the field, my rationale for organizing the course the way that I did, issues to consider when designing a course on trafficking, and some suggested readings, films, and web resources.

WHY SHOULD FEMINIST TEACHERS TEACH ABOUT TRAFFICKING?

Given the recent increase in interest in human trafficking, perhaps best (or worst) illustrated by the 2005 Lifetime Television mini-series by that name or by the linking up of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) and Violence Against Women Act in 2000, it has become increasingly important for feminist scholars to understand and participate in public discourses on trafficking. This is an extremely politicized issue and the debate is filling a variety of symbolic functions for a number of constituencies. Symbolic battles over issues like sexuality, gender, globalization, and migration are the reasons that trafficking has received so much attention in recent years. As in the earlier spate of interest in “white slavery” in the early 1900s, concerns about the women’s movement, women’s sexuality, women’s place in society, and women’s bodies, rather than changes in trafficking itself or some objective interest in harm to women, are driving the international focus on trafficking. Given this reality, it is very important for feminist scholars to be aware of these

political developments and to participate in the public discussion.

Regardless of the reasons for increased attention to trafficking, many colleges and universities now offer stand-alone courses on the issue in programs as diverse as women’s and gender studies, economics, geography, political science, public health, sociology, law, and international studies. In addition to these dedicated courses, many other courses now include sections on trafficking as part of investigations of issues like the sociology of gender, public policy, migration, globalization, human rights, labor issues, and organized crime.

Teaching about trafficking is complicated by its location at the intersection of a number of major social and structural categories. As a result, a number of factors affect students’ ability to think clearly about the issues involved in trafficking, including deeply entrenched stereotypes, ignorance, and bias against sex workers, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, women, and poor people. This same location is what makes trafficking such an interesting topic to teach. Teachers and students must consider the complicated and interrelated factors that contribute to the problem in order to understand it. Trafficking makes visible the intersectional nature of structural and ideological contributions to exploitation, oppression, and violence. It also confounds traditional liberal/conservative political divisions.

Feminist scholars have a responsibility to teach about this issue because of what we can contribute to understanding the phenomenon of trafficking, the nature of interest in the problem, and the implications of policy development for women. In short, feminism’s analyses of power

in general and the social construction of sexuality, sex, and gender in particular have something special and essential to contribute to the conversation.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DEBATE ABOUT TRAFFICKING

Like any other social issue, the research and writing on trafficking originates from implicit or explicit theories about the nature, causes, and implications of the problem. Naturally these lead to different ideas about the best way to address it. Since trafficking touches on so many symbolically loaded issues, it is not surprising that these debates are especially contentious. Trafficking includes many forms of work such as farm work, construction, cleaning, and apparel production in addition to sex work. However, debates about what it means to sell sexualized services for money are central to the history of policy development around trafficking. Without going into explicit detail about the long history of internecine feminist and anti-feminist debates about what is variously termed sex work, prostitution, or commercial sexual exploitation, recognition and understanding of this debate are essential to decoding the literature on trafficking. For those who are new to this area of inquiry, I will provide a very simplified overview of the major divides as I see them.

ANTI-PROSTITUTION APPROACHES

Despite the existence of trafficking for multiple forms of labor, the deep divide in opinions about how to characterize and respond to trafficking turns on ideas about selling sex. On one side, there are scholars and others who see prostitution as emblematic of women's place in society. Prostitution, this side argues, is

rightly seen as a “paradigm of degradation and as a practice of inequality” (Balos and Fellows 1220) that “objectifies women by reducing them to sex; sex that incites violence against women and that reduces women to commodities for exchange” (Barry I). For this side, prostitution is the quintessential manifestation of patriarchy, and distinguishing between consensual and nonconsensual prostitution misses the point. Women's inferior social position and the fusing of their identities with their sexualized and objectified bodies serves to limit their choices until they are meaningless and reinforces the distinction between women who are worthy of human rights and dignity and those who are not. Accordingly, this side sees all prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation as forms of trafficking.

In this view, prostitution is inherently a form of violence against women because it reinforces the view of women as commodities. This side sees patriarchy, and men's prerogative to access to and control over women's bodies, as the cause of trafficking, and trafficking/prostitution as a logical expression of patriarchy. Many of the scholars writing about trafficking from this position self-identify as radical feminists. Others identify with variations of Marxism that take gender as the central social class category. Scholars who take this position often criticize liberal feminism as inadequate for responding to trafficking because it does not address the problem of normative patriarchal sexuality and marriage. This side argues that patriarchal marriage is essentially parallel to prostitution (Barry). Some people inaccurately view this radical feminist approach as “the” feminist approach to trafficking. In reality, there are a variety of feminist

approaches to the issue, and they are intensely debated.

On another side, there is a different set of commentators and activists who do not distinguish between trafficking and prostitution but who support patriarchy. This is what I will call the conservative position. These activists see prostitution as immoral because it is an inappropriate expression of women's sexuality, which they believe should be reserved for heterosexual marriage. From this view, sex is "ordained by God for marriage" and prostitution "perverts the covenant of marriage by turning what God intended as a sacred act into a commercial transaction" (The Social Action Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada). In this view, the offense is not related to women's lack of choices due to patriarchy or objective harm done to her, but instead is primarily an affront to Christian standards for normative patriarchal sexuality. While the anti-prostitution feminist approach sees patriarchy as the root cause of trafficking and prostitution, the conservative approach sees the containment of sex to the patriarchal nuclear family as the solution to trafficking.

Like the anti-prostitution feminist approach described above, the conservative approach has sought to designate prostitution as the definitive form of violence against women. Unlike the anti-prostitution feminist approach, they see this as a way to attack the "shrill cacque of academic feminists and their radical chic allies" and gain influence over voters who might otherwise concern themselves with (and vote on) issues like women's, labor and abortion rights (Horowitz 14–17). The right labels radical and academic feminists its enemies despite its professed alliance with radical academic feminists

like Donna Hughes, who is a leading figure on this side of the debate. Despite their antagonism to and misrepresentation of feminism, the conservative side has formed a political alliance with some anti-prostitution feminists to lobby for the production of "a system of grant programs in four major areas: victim services, prosecution of pimps, prosecution and education of johns, and reform of vice squads" (Horowitz).

As a result, millions of dollars worth of anti-trafficking grants are now going to right wing organizations that lobby against prostitution, immigration, and feminism. Funding is also going to those feminist groups with explicit anti-prostitution missions to rescue women from prostitution or re-educate "johns." As a result of the Bush administration's conflation of prostitution and trafficking, many of the same anti-feminist activists who have attacked anti-domestic violence and rape laws like the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) as "promoting a culture of victimhood" (Young) are grantees under the TVPA, which now incorporates VAWA. Despite their frequent and ongoing disparagement of women who tell their stories of rape or domestic violence in order to educate the public about those issues, stories of victimization and rescue are at the very core of conservative lobbying efforts around trafficking.

Significantly, the conservative side seeks "to 'blacklist' [organizations who do not explicitly condemn prostitution] from funding and from any vestige of moral or operational credibility" (Kinnell) regardless of their work to end trafficking, other forms of violence against women, or AIDS and HIV. Despite their diametrically opposed views on patriarchy, sexism, and feminism, these two sides have politically aligned

themselves in the effort to pass specific trafficking laws in the United States. This political alliance is as contradictory and problematic as it sounds, and I will leave readers to draw their own conclusions as to what motivates each side, as I leave it to my students when I teach the class.

Also aligned with the conservative approach are a number of liberal politicians and feminists who are anti-prostitution. This constituency focuses on violence against women in prostitution and characterizes prostitution as a harm to women without embracing the radical feminist critiques of compulsory heterosexuality and the patriarchal family, although they may see ending prostitution as somehow related to increasing women's social status. Although some scholars believe that feminists have driven the anti-prostitution coalition (Weitzer), the political right has been the driving force behind the shift of attention away from other forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls to trafficking. Liberals who want to address violence against girls and women have taken up the anti-trafficking cause without challenging traditional norms for femininity or dealing with messy issues like globalization, migration, and what happens after "rescue."

WHAT ARE "END DEMAND" APPROACHES?

End demand approaches are the key factors that allow these normally diametrically opposed groups to work together on trafficking. The end demand approaches to sex work advocated by the right and some radical and liberal feminists attempt to address trafficking by reducing demand for sex work. Most of these programs focus on prosecuting male customers, sometimes fining them or charging fees

to attend "John Schools" that are then used to provide services for women trying to leave sex work. Although conservatives and radical feminists approach this tactic from very different directions, this approach has a political and financial dividend for both sides.

For radical feminists opposed to prostitution, the existence of sex work is both a manifestation and a major cause of women's dehumanization and oppression (Barry; Stark and Whisnant). Accordingly, this group believes that it is possible to send all men a strong message against the dehumanization of women by demonstrating that buying sex is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Furthermore, feminists have long criticized approaches to sex work that have focused exclusively on the women (Alexander). They may see the attention to men as a correction of this sexist approach to prostitution. Critics point out that despite the noble goal of decreasing women's oppression and men's violence, in reality the programs that exist to end demand use a combination of punishment, shame, and fear in an effort to decrease recidivism, although research has shown these approaches are ineffective deterrents (Sex Workers Outreach Project). In addition, programs that try to scare men by telling stories about sex workers harming men may decrease empathy even further for women who do sex work, possibly increasing the likelihood of future violence (Sex Workers Outreach Project). Programs that use shame, such as publicly posting images of men arrested for solicitation, ignore the research that indicates that shame is a major contributing factor in men's use of violence (Gilligan). Still, proponents of the Schools for Johns and other anti-prostitution programs can receive funding from

the government for their programs aimed at ending demand, including services for women who want to leave sex work.

For conservatives, end demand approaches provide a new source of funds as well as an avenue to discuss the depravity of sex outside of marriage, an opportunity to crack down on immigration, and a way to proclaim support for an issue that affects women without requiring them to advocate women's equal human rights or autonomy. For example, Sam Brownback, one of the politicians most interested in trafficking for sex work, has repeatedly linked the problem to "increased interconnection between the countries and ease with which people can travel" (Reuters). "The trafficking in the United States is significant, but it's even larger in some other regions where the borders are not as patrolled and guarded," argues Brownback. However, research on trafficking, significantly that which asks survivors what is needed to stem the problem, indicates that tighter immigration restrictions and border control actually make trafficking more likely to occur. This is especially true since immigration laws often target women in the name of protectionism, limiting their ability to get legitimate visas for work abroad.

In addition to politicians, conservative organizations like Concerned Women for America have received grants to address trafficking even as they work to create the conditions that promote violence against women. They lobby against the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Violence Against Women Act, the Equal Rights Amendment and other tools for women's rights and safety, which they describe as anti-family, emasculating, and pro-lesbian. Taking up

the trafficking issue allows conservative organizations to receive millions of dollars in funding that might otherwise go to organizations that work to support human rights and oppose discrimination against women. It also allows a showy pronouncement of opposition to violence against women and girls without requiring local action to address the patriarchal gender norms that promote women's and girls' vulnerability to violence in the domestic context.

I don't doubt that almost everyone abhors trafficking. It is an unthinkable horrific crime that is frighteningly easy to carry out. I do doubt that approaches to trafficking embraced by the very same individuals and organizations that actively work to create the conditions in which it is most likely to occur, conditions of profound social and economic inequality between women and men, whites and people of color, North and South, East and West, developed and developing nations, will be able to decrease it. Furthermore, these programs have the unintended effect of making sex work more dangerous for women and do little to address trafficking for other forms of labor.

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES

On the other side, there are scholars and advocates who see trafficking "not as the enslavement of women, but as *the trade and exploitation of labor under conditions of coercion and force*" (Kempadoo, "From" viii). The human rights-based approach stresses the importance of distinguishing between voluntary participation in illegal activities, like prostitution and unauthorized migration, and trafficking under coercion, deception, or force. This side advocates for a broader view of trafficking that

recognizes trafficking for multiple forms of labor, and as affecting women, men, and children. Rather than seeing sexuality at the core of trafficking, rights-based approaches see trafficking at the convergence of a number of contributing factors. While they recognize sexism as a major contributing factor to trafficking, they see this as inextricably related to other social facts like poverty, globalization, labor rights, and migration law. Scholars on this side do not believe that it is possible to concurrently condemn prostitution and support the rights and humanity of the people who do sex work. Accordingly, they criticize American policies that deny funds to organizations that actually have contact with sex workers and provide them assistance other than “rescue.”

The rights-based approach to trafficking is also feminist. It proposes a “focus on gendered labor migrations and working conditions in multiple sectors and sites. This side acknowledges injustices and violence to women that are created or exacerbated by UN and governmental anti-trafficking initiatives” as well as by conditions of prostitution (Kempadoo, “From” xiv). Rights-based approaches focus on the real outcomes of anti-trafficking policies and seek to advance grassroots work to ameliorate exploitation and improve the situation of women in sustainable ways (Kempadoo, “From”; Kempadoo and Doezema). For example, rights-based approaches have been used to critique American and other trafficking policies that treat victims of trafficking as criminals and illegal aliens unless they agree to testify against their traffickers, including incarcerating them in immigration detention or deporting them back to the untenable situation that put them at risk for trafficking in the first

place. Even those victims who cooperate with efforts at prosecution are not necessarily allowed to stay in the U.S. (Kempadoo, “From”). When they are deported, they face the risk of being re-trafficked because nothing substantive was done to get them the help they need.

The fundamental issue for those working on trafficking from human rights perspectives is that work to secure human rights for everyone should be the basis of anti-trafficking efforts because such an approach “acknowledges the root causes of trafficking, such as discriminatory practices in education, health and education marginalizing women, girls and minorities, and focuses on empowerment models to reduce or eliminate the vulnerability of persons to being trafficked” (Huda). This approach is contrasted with punishment-based programs that seek to criminalize trafficking as a deterrent rather than addressing contributing factors.

In addition, those working from a human rights approach have called for attention to trafficking for all kinds of labor; responsible representations and use of research; clear definitions of trafficking and demand; recognition that there are adults who consent to illegal forms of work and migration; distinctions between consensual sex work and trafficking; and the incorporation of input from sex workers and grassroots organizations who work with the people who will be affected by the policies (Steinman; Kempadoo, “From”). Scholars on this side use the designation “radical feminist” to refer to anti-prostitution feminists who self-identify as such. In other words, while conservatives attack rights-based approaches as “radical feminist,” this is not a term that these groups generally use to describe themselves.

WHAT DO THESE POSITIONS HAVE IN COMMON?

Despite their diametrically opposed politics, there are significant areas of common ground across these groups. Everyone agrees that poverty plays a primary role in engendering trafficking. Everyone states that violence against women is unacceptable. Everyone agrees that trafficking has gendered characteristics. Everyone agrees that traffickers should be accountable for the harm and exploitation they cause. The debate is about how to address these problems and should be recognized as such.

How I structured my course

Given the controversies described above, designing a course on trafficking requires significant attention to course structure and content. In teaching about an issue as complicated and horrific as trafficking, providing a framework for the students helps them to organize and analyze the information that they are exposed to during the course. In my case, I chose to structure the course around the political debate described above. American public policy has driven international debate on trafficking, so this approach included a substantial focus on American policy, its origins, and its implications, as well as substantial content on UN policies and tools. In the Canadian context, I also included major sections on Canadian policy, which has provided some interesting contrasts.

This approach meant spending more time on trafficking for sex work and less time on trafficking for other forms of labor exploitation like nannying, agricultural work, construction, restaurant work, and manufacturing. I made a conscious choice

to focus on the debate since it is central to the development of policy in the US and at the UN and because the literature really reflects the debate. Providing this structure and background helps the students to place each text in context and to evaluate the whole picture. This does not mean all feminist teachers should arrange their courses this way. Different forms of organization will promote discussion of different issues, and the strengths and gaps in individual programs or departments will guide these choices.

Depending on the location of the school and level of the course, laying the groundwork may take up more or less of the course time. For example, when I taught the course in the United States where most forms of sex work are illegal and sex workers are openly reviled, I had to do more to humanize sex workers than I did for the course in Canada. In Canada, certain forms of sex work, including prostitution, are legalized, and the dominant way of thinking about the issue assumes that this should be so. In this context, I had to do less groundwork in order to prepare the class to think critically about the implications of different forms of legalization and criminalization. At the same time, more progressive mores about sex work do not mean that most students do not hold derogatory attitudes about the women and men who do sex work. In some ways the social pressure to accept it inhibits open discussion about the negative aspects of sex work and the problems that legalization or decriminalization do not fix. In each geographic area, local ways of thinking about sex work strongly affected the shape of the course as well as the allocation of time spent on different topics.

I introduced the debate by assigning readings from different “sides” early on in

the course. I asked the students to practice critical reading and thinking skills by identifying the thesis of each text, and the evidence cited to support the arguments presented. I asked the students to describe the positions in the debate based on these early readings. At every stage of the course, students were encouraged to consider which aspects of the texts fit into what position in the debate and why.

Issues to Consider When Designing a Course on Trafficking: Thinking about Privilege, Power, and Oppression

The location of trafficking at the meeting point of multiple political controversies means that teachers need to address a number of foundational issues before diving into the discussion of trafficking, as well as revisit them throughout the course. Trafficking is inherently repulsive, and students will likely want to oversimplify its causes and solutions. A good course on trafficking will probably raise more questions than it answers, but it can provide an introduction to some ways of thinking about the problem, the programs that grow out of those ways of thinking, and their implications and outcomes. Some foundational issues that I have found it helpful to address in the course include: student attitudes about poverty; racism and “Othering” of different cultures; student attitudes about migration; student attitudes about sex work and sex workers; student attitudes about gender, sex, and sexuality; variation within feminism; data reliability issues; history of attention to trafficking; and definitional and terminological debates. Although these are broad ranging and complicated issues that are challenging to address in any class, they

also provide potential ways in for many students with different interests and perspectives to find compelling connections to the issue of human trafficking.

STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT POVERTY

For many university students, the privilege that allows them to attend school can make it difficult to imagine life with fewer possibilities. Depending on the demographics at your school, it may be more or less difficult to talk to students about poverty and the ways that it constrains free choice, earning power, and survival. Attitudes that pathologize poverty should be addressed. The gaps between the socioeconomic status of different countries also need to be addressed, including a discussion of changing labor patterns resulting from globalization and austerity programs such as those imposed by the World Bank and IMF. I found it most useful to discuss these issues as they arose for students.

Activity:

Divide the students into groups and give each group a card containing a trafficking scenario taken from published scholarly, NGO, or government sources. Draw a continuum on the board that has “consensual” and “forced” as the poles. Students discuss the scenarios in their groups and determine where their scenario would fall in the continuum. Encourage students to consider all possibilities and to articulate the factors that they consider in deciding where to place the card. Groups report to the class the location they chose, explain why they chose it, explain what factors were key for them in making this decision, and tell about disagreements within the group. You can ask questions to probe assumptions about choices and the structural factors that

limit them. Note the assumptions that come up and return to them throughout the course, referring students to this ranking activity and asking if later readings or discussion would alter their earlier decisions about where to place scenarios.

RACISM AND “OTHERING” OF DIFFERENT CULTURES

Most of the trafficking stories that your students will see in popular media and in the images of trafficking found on the United States Department of State websites will be of women and girls of color in other countries. Due to the focus on external locations of trafficking, it is essential to talk about how racism and culturalism contribute to the production of these images and the policies they represent and support. According to Yasmin Jiwani, culturalism is a phenomenon where white North Americans in particular attribute social problems like patriarchy and woman abuse to Other cultures, externalizing factors that also exist in North America. This externalization allows white North Americans to avoid addressing the domestic factors that contribute to social problems here and abroad (Jiwani). At the same time, racism and racialized standards of beauty, such as light-skin preference, contribute to the fetishization of certain kinds of women for sex work.

Activity:

Have students compare news stories about trafficking for sex work with local stories about sweatshops, migrant workers, or other forms of labor exploitation and illegal immigration. How do the stories frame the problem? Are the frames the same or different? How? Why might this be the case?

STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT MIGRATION

Closely linked to racism are anti-immigrant sentiments. Their manifestations will vary from location to location, but local attitudes about and understandings of immigration are essential parts of course subject matter. You may find it useful to compare immigration policies in different countries and the proposals of groups like the International Organization for Migration. Many students will be unaware of the gendered nature of immigration policies that make it more difficult for women to receive legitimate visas for work abroad, forcing them to turn to illegal forms of migration to support themselves and their families. Again, the need and opportunities for migration are shaped by changes in the global economy.

STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT SEX WORK AND SEX WORKERS

Since so many of the images of trafficking and the legislation itself have historically focused on sex work, the ways that students think about sex work are central to their thoughts about trafficking. Moralistic judgments that render women who do sex work less than human, deserving of abuse, or as passive “fallen women” can make critical thinking extremely difficult for many students.

Activity:

Having guest speakers from local organizations that provide assistance to sex workers, many of which include staff that are current or former sex workers themselves, can provide one way to encourage thoughtful consideration of their experiences.

Since many students conflate sex work as labor with a special class of

people called “prostitutes” or “strip-pers,” having a guest speaker who can talk about the nature of sex work, which is often temporary, intermittent, and combined with other forms of work, can challenge their thinking about sex work as about identity rather than labor. The guest speakers can talk about the work they do, the needs of sex workers in the area, and how they are affected by various laws and policies. Often, students will have their ideas about sex work as a moral choice challenged when they hear about the limitations placed on others’ choices by the economic realities of life.

STUDENT ATTITUDES ABOUT GENDER, SEX, AND SEXUALITY

In order for students to understand why the trafficking debate has focused on sex work, students will need to understand the social construction of sexuality, sex, and gender and how these are intertwined with hierarchies of power. Without understanding how women’s value is linked to their display of normative patriarchal heterosexuality, it will be impossible for students to understand how women can be completely dehumanized in the trafficking process and how violence against women functions as social control. I find it useful to define and discuss the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality since many students will not be familiar with these distinctions. Talking about the social construction of sex, gender, and sexuality allows for an examination of the relationships between these categories, revealing ways that assumptions about sex and gender color our views of sexuality and vice versa. This discussion is also important to bring into the open enduring hierarchies of gender and sexuality based on heterosexual patriarchal norms.

ACTIVITY I:

Discussions about the nature and impact of patriarchal sexual norms may help students to understand the reasons for the stigmatization of sex workers. In a women’s studies context, refresh student memories about discussions of patriarchal and heteronormative assumptions about sexuality. In the criminology context, this may be the first time the students have thought about these norms. I like to use the “woman box” activity as one of the earliest exercises in this class. Draw a box on the board. Write “woman” above the box. Ask students to brainstorm stereotypes associated with “real women” and write them inside the box. Outside the box, write the things that people say about women who do not conform to these stereotypes. Repeat with the “man box.”

Discuss the formal and informal rewards for conformity and sanctions for failure to conform. Use this opportunity to define sex and gender and the ways both are culturally constructed.

ACTIVITY II:

This activity can lead to its sister activity, the “compulsory heterosexuality box.” Locate the statements about sexuality in the previous activity and repeat the activity with a box that describes the characteristics of normative sexuality for women, and then for men. This discussion will include factors related to expectations for who you partner with and how, incorporating norms for heterosexuality, double standards for chastity and promiscuity, etc.

ACTIVITY III:

Ask the students to puzzle out how the above activities and sets of social norms are related. The ensuing dis-

discussion will provide opportunities for defining many terms that you will use throughout the class. The activities also lay the groundwork for asking what is left out of policy and media discussions of trafficking and why the debate is focused on trafficking for sex work.

VARIATION WITHIN FEMINISM

One of the biggest challenges for teaching about trafficking is the students' lack of knowledge about feminism in general and the different approaches to feminism in particular. I find that teaching about some of the theoretical approaches to feminism helps students to understand that the trafficking debates are not simply divided along feminist/anti-feminist lines. It is essential to cover the basic distinguishing features of traditional categories like liberal, radical feminism and more complex approaches to feminism that consider the intersection of multiple oppressions as a local and transnational phenomenon. Students may not understand that feminism is not monolithic. Defining these categories allows students to think about each reading in terms of the categories it supports and challenges. The trafficking debate breaks down traditional liberal/conservative/radical political alliances and it is useful to have students consider why this might be.

DATA RELIABILITY ISSUES

Trafficking is an extremely covert activity. There are no accurate statistics on its incidence or prevalence, no definitive research on the relationship between demand or prostitution and trafficking, and yet organizations from the United States Department of State to the United Nations to various NGOs make wildly different claims about these things. All

of these numbers are akin to speculation, and it is a good idea to talk about why these numbers are presented in the absence of solid data, why the estimates might look so different from one another, and how and what we can learn about the magnitude of trafficking despite these gaps in data.

Like other sensitive, illegal, and covert issues, research on trafficking is better suited to some forms of investigation than others. Studies conducted with trafficking victims, traffickers, or others are often more amenable to qualitative methods that can reveal something about the nature of trafficking, the tactics traffickers use, and the conditions that contribute to its occurrence. This provides an opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods for learning about covert and stigmatized human activity. The covert nature of trafficking also calls into question the investment of huge amounts of federal money to research on the incidence and prevalence of prostitution, which is not a proxy for trafficking. Students can search for claims about the numbers of traffickers and trafficking victims throughout the term, investigate the sources they cite, and analyze these claims.

HISTORY OF ATTENTION TO TRAFFICKING

The history of attention to trafficking is closely linked to ideas about race, sex, sexuality, nationality, and migration. A good way to address this in class is to compare current discourses and policies on trafficking with the so-called "white slavery" panics of the 1900s. There are excellent articles and book chapters available on this that can bring the politics of the moral panics over trafficking into focus.

DEFINITIONAL AND TERMINOLOGICAL DEBATES

Finally, it is necessary to discuss the different definitions of trafficking and other relevant terms such as demand, sex work, prostitution, and consent that are used in these discussions. Ask students to pay attention to the differences between definitions in different documents, where terms are conflated, and the implications of these different ways of using language. The definitions of trafficking and all of its component parts are central to the debates over how to address the problem.

RESOURCES

All of the resources listed below should be approached with a critical eye. If you choose to use the overarching framework of competing ideologies to frame the course, it is useful to ask the class to make arguments for where each text might fit within that framework. None of these texts should be regarded as the One True Text on trafficking. Students can draw their own conclusions about the best approach and support their assertions with evidence from the texts. We used a seminar approach for the last weeks of class, so only the first eight weeks are listed here. I really limited the readings in this course so that we could have time to discuss the texts in depth. I chose to use two primary textbooks: *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*, edited by Kamala Kempadoo; and *The Prostitution of Sexuality* by Kathleen Barry. I offered *Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry*, edited by Frederique Delacoste and Priscilla Alexander, as supplemental reading also available in the bookstore. The rest of the readings were

available online, on reserve at the library, or via one of the university-owned databases. Each week also included a lecture, discussion, or activity on the issues to consider listed above.

CONCLUSION

Teaching about trafficking provides multiple challenges and opportunities for feminist teachers to discuss a number of compelling issues and policies. I invite readers to contact me directly for copies of my complete syllabus. There are now so many excellent texts available that one of the most difficult parts of the course will be deciding what to leave out. I alleviate my pedagogical angst about what I cannot include in the course by placing lots of additional readings in a folder in Web CT called “optional readings.” This allows students to have a supply of high-quality articles to choose from as sources for research papers or additional reading if they are especially interested in the course. I hope that these resources will provide others with a starting point for learning and teaching about trafficking, and for planning a successful course on the issue.

My Course Readings

WHERE WE ARE NOW

- Balos, Beverly. “The Wrong Way to Equality: Privileging Consent in the Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation.” *Harvard Women’s Law Journal* 27 (Spring 2004): 137–75.
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CANADIAN CONTEXTS

- Canadian legislation <<http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/fs/ht/q&a.html>>
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- Don’t become a victim <<http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/fs/ht/pub/booklet/english/english.pdf>>
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- Dying to Leave*. Dir. Chris Hilton and Aaron Wolf. DVD. Ronin Films, 2004.
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ONLINE INFORMATION, COMMENTARY, AND RESEARCH

- Annotated Guide to the Complete UN Trafficking Protocol <http://www.globalrights.org/site/DocServer/Annotated_Protocol.pdf?docID=2723>
- Global Rights <www.globalrights.org/trafficking>
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- Human Trafficking: Better Data, Strategy, and Reporting Needed to Enhance U.S. Trafficking Efforts Abroad (GAO Report) <<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/do6825.pdf>>
- Human Trafficking: The Need for Better Data <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=66>>
- National Sex Workers Outreach Project: Talking points Against End Demand Act <<http://www.swop-usa.org/endeddemand.php>>
- Network of Sex Work Projects <<http://www.nswp.org/>>
- Research for Sex Work <<http://www.researchforsexwork.org/>>
- Trafficking Policy Research Project <<http://www.bayswan.org/trafficking/trafficking.html>>

NORTH AMERICAN POLICY

- Canada’s Interdepartmental Working Group on Trafficking in Persons <<http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/fs/ht/index.html>>
- Status of Women Canada (search for trafficking) <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/index_e.html>
- United States Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>>
- The Mann Act <http://www.pbs.org/unforgivableblackness/knockout/mannact_text.html>

INTERNATIONAL LAW

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>>
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child <<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>>
- United Nations Trafficking pages

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html>

- UNIFEM's Trafficking pages <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/node/18>

ORGANIZATIONS

- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women <http://gaatw.net/>
- International Labour Organization Campaign Against Trafficking in Persons <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/migrant/projects/traffick/index.htm>
- International Labour Organization Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/child/trafficking/index.htm>
- International Organization for Migration <http://www.iom.int/>
- Women's Human Rights Net (search for trafficking) <http://www.whrnet.org/>

JOURNALS THAT CARRY HIGH QUALITY ARTICLES ON TRAFFICKING

- *Health and Human Rights: An International Journal*
- *Human Rights Quarterly*
- *International Migration*
- *Research for Sex Work*
- *Violence Against Women*

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