

SOCIOLOGY 258: GENDER AND SOCIETY

Fall 2006

MW 2:30-3:50

202 Maxey

Professor: Michelle Janning

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Course Description:

Why do men and women act as they do? Two common answers are that they are biologically different, and that they have a masculine or feminine personality as a result of early childhood experience. This course looks at a third possibility: Women and men occupy different positions in society and conform to different role expectations. Gender differences are socially constructed. Individuals become *carriers of a gendered culture* through socialization. This course invites you to become more conscious of your society's gender assumptions. Inevitably, this involves questioning your own gender assumptions, most of which you share with other carriers of your culture. The purpose of this is not to stop you from making gender distinctions altogether, but to discourage you from making them simplistically and unreflectively. This course is designed to examine how and why gender roles come to be so powerful in our lives as social beings, and how other status dimensions such as race, class, nationality, and sexuality are intertwined with gender to make us complex and interesting people. By addressing these issues both intellectually and personally, we will gain a better understanding of and appreciation for diversity in our own and others' lives.

Goals of Course:

The broad goals of this course include:

1. Defining how sociologists examine gender socialization and social interaction, both theoretically and methodologically, and how this differs from other academic disciplines.
2. Examining gender as it relates to societal institutions, such as work, family, politics, and the media.
3. Understanding how gender, race, sexuality, and class intersect.
4. Dissecting feminism as a social movement, and looking at recent men's movements.
5. Interpreting and recognizing strengths and limitations associated with current gender research.

Structure and Style of Course:

Gender and Society is a 200-level course open to both sociology majors and non-majors. There are no prerequisites. For this reason, introductory sociology material will be reviewed at the beginning of the course, recognizing that a more complete exposure to sociological concepts in general is best gained by taking Sociology 117: *Principles of Sociology*. Readings are taken primarily from sociological literature, although there are a few interdisciplinary pieces. Course assignments are designed so that majors and non-majors will have plenty of comfortable options in terms of content and format.

There is no large textbook for this course, so some background material will be presented in lecture format.

There are many students in this course. This means that, while in-class discussion will be a vital component to the course, students are expected to keep comments succinct, insightful, and always intellectually connected to readings or previous discussions. In addition to large class discussions, teaching methods will include lectures, group work, and media presentations. It is possible that, at times, assigned reading will not be covered directly during class.

Required books (available at bookstore):

- Baca Zinn, Maxine, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, & Michael Messner, editors. 2005. *Gender through the Prism of Difference*, 3rd edition. Oxford.
- Harris, Anita. 2004. *Future Girl: Young Women in the Twenty-First Century*. 2004. Routledge.
- Messner, Michael A. 1997. *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wharton, Amy S. 2005. *The Sociology of Gender: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

You will also read one of the following two books – do not purchase until you have been assigned one of these books:

- Sharon Hays. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nicholas W. Townsend. 2002. *The Package Deal: Marriage, Work and Fatherhood in Men's Lives*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Student-Instructor Communication:

I enjoy talking with students, especially if it helps answer questions about the course readings or assignments. Always feel free to e-mail or call me about anything concerning the course. Please visit me during office hours or make an appointment to see me at a different time. I am on campus every day during the week, except for some Fridays. You should feel comfortable calling me at home, but only do so if you need to speak with me before the next day. Also, please call only between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Thanks.

Student Evaluation:

Evaluation of students will come from the course requirements listed below. Late work will not be accepted unless there are college-approved reasons for the delay. Students must talk with the professor before the due date of an assignment to have a college-approved extension considered. For all other late work, 2% of the assignment grade will be taken off each day the paper is late, beginning just after the due date and time. Students will be notified by mid-semester if they are receiving a D or F, but any student at any time can come and see me to discuss progress.

Course Requirements:

Participation (150 points)
Discussion Leading (100 points)
Paper 1 (100 points)
Midterm Exam (100 points)
In-class Book Review and Presentation (150 points)
Project (250 points)
Final Exam (150 points)
Total points = 1,000 points

A = 930-1000	C+ = 780-799
A- = 900-929	C = 730-779
B+ = 880-899	C- = 700-729
B = 830-879	D = 600-699
B- = 800-829	F = 599 or below

Brief Description of Course Requirements:

Participation (150 points): I value very highly the different experiences and perspectives of each of you. I expect that you will keep up with the readings and that you will find opportunities to contribute to most every class, even if it comes in the form of e-mail responses to class discussion (for those of you who prefer a less public venue for participation). Small group work will sometimes take place during class time, and brief out-of-class assignments will sometimes be given for use in our daily discussions. All members of the class are responsible for completing these brief assignments *before class* and for actively contributing to the small group work and to the larger class discussions. I will evaluate how involved you were in daily discussions, including the small group work and related brief assignments. Although I do not take attendance in this course, attending class is a prerequisite for meaningful participation. Most of your learning will come from discussions in class, so you cannot make up a missed class by simply copying notes from a classmate. If you must miss a class, please first obtain information about the missed class from your classmates. After you have gleaned what you can from your classmates, I will be happy to talk to you in more detail about the class you missed. Also, please come to class on time.

Student Discussion-Leading (100 points): Ten classes this semester will be partially led by 3 student discussion leaders. Student discussion leaders are responsible for 45 minutes of class discussion on those days, and creative strategies for sparking productive discussion are encouraged. Student groups must submit an outline of their class plan on the day they present. Possibilities can include in-class writing, role playing, small group questions, music or video clips, and inclusion of student experiences that are related to the class readings. Evaluation of these student-led discussions will include the following criteria:

1. Was the division of labor between the presenters fair and equitable?
2. Was an appropriate amount of content covered (there's a lot of content in every set of readings – be choosy with what you present; it is always better to focus on fewer topics with more depth, rather than to jump

around to lots of disconnected topics) and were all readings discussed adequately?

3. Were effective and sophisticated discussion questions and/or topics raised?
4. Did presenters do a good job being discussion *facilitators*, without dominating or lecturing – i.e., ensuring many students' participation, making connections between comments, preventing tangents or lengthy personal stories, and paying close attention to the flow of discussion?

If all of these criteria are met exceptionally well, student pairs will receive an A for their discussion leading. Less-than-stellar performance in any single category will result in a lower grade. For example, receiving a B range grade means that presenters were either very strong in three criteria and only sufficient in the fourth, or mostly good in all four (with slight problems in 3-4 categories). A C range grade means that presenters were good in two criteria and weak in the other two, or only sufficient in all four (no major catastrophes, but a more productive class discussion needed to happen). A D or F means that class discussion was unproductive and student leaders were not successful in facilitating according to most criteria listed above.

Paper 1 (100 points)/3-4 pages: “How Gender is Present in my Everyday Life.” More details will follow.

Midterm Exam (100 points): This quiz is mostly meant to help you see my testing style, so that you'll be better prepared for the final exam at the end of the semester. The format will be mostly objective questions on required readings and class lectures, with some short essays.

2-3 page Book summary/critique and In-class conversation (150 points): You will be reading one of two books under the section “Gender, Work, and Family” below. Once you have read your assigned book, you will be partnered with someone who has read the same book. With this partner, you will meet, plan, discuss, and then “teach” your book to 2 people who have read the *other* book. Then, the other pair will “teach” you and your partner *their* book. This will occur over two class periods. More details will follow. This in-class conversation will be relatively casual, but students are expected to each read their assigned books thoroughly and come prepared to “teach” their book to the other members of their group during the assigned class periods (about 80 minutes per group).

My Big Fat Gender Project. 250 points. You will be required to utilize and cite at least 5 academic sources outside of course readings for this project. The written part of the project should be about 10-12 pages (you may have illustrations, references, audio/visual appendices, etc. in addition to this minimum requirement). More detailed descriptions of the paper topics and formats will be given to you in a later handout. In the meantime, general format and topic choices include, but are not limited to (in other words, you can propose a project if you want):

- *Gendered Geography*: how is gender manifest in the physical landscape, from neighborhood design to the design of interior residential spaces (and everywhere in between)? For this project you will not only analyze the topic in terms of some social “space,” you will design a space that is consistent with principles found either in one or more “branch” of feminism, or in one or more men’s movements.
- *Gender in the Media*: what are the messages present about gender in books, magazines, movies, or advertisements? For this project you will conduct a content analysis of some element of gender depicted in some genre of media. Visual examples must be included in the analysis.
- *Gendered Objects and Meanings*: what do our physical possessions and physical objects tell us about gender in society? From fashion to buildings to household objects, gender is present in non-human form, too. For this project you will conduct an in-depth analysis of the gendered qualities of one or more symbolic object, and how that object functions in gendered human social interaction. The analysis can be on the object itself, the production of this object, or the uses of the object in everyday life (or all of these).
- *Cross-Cultural Gender Analysis*: how is how is gender manifest in two or more countries? Whether you analyze the whole society, experiences within institutions, ideological or social movement frameworks, or processes such as socialization, gender experiences for men and women in different countries depend on their social experiences in their respective cultures. For this project you will conduct a comparative analysis of some element of gender experience in two or more countries.
- *Gender in a Short Story*: can fiction represent real life in terms of gender? Of course! This format is a little tricky, but if you’re the literary type, it may be just right for you. For this project you will write a short story that illustrates some set of gender-related concepts brought up in class or in outside readings. The trickiest part will be incorporating the required outside sources.
- *Gender Photo Essay*: a picture is worth a thousand words. Well, in this case, your group of photos will be accompanied by several thousand words. Open topic here, except that the topic must be logistically accessible enough for you to take pictures that represent what you’re talking about.
- *Some Other Project*: again, you can propose a project to me if you want.

In any case, your specific topic and format need to be decided by October 16th. And, in every case, your paper must be sociological even if the format is more happily housed in the humanities. Students will present their final project synapses during the last 2 class days.

Final Exam (150 points). The final exam is scheduled for 2-4 p.m., Wednesday, December 13th. It will be *cumulative*, and will have both objective and essay questions.

Topic and Reading Schedule – Gender and Society – Fall 2006

Assignments are listed after the bullet points below the dates they are due. If authors are listed without a title, their articles can be found in *Gender through the Prism of Difference* (article # in parentheses)

W 8/30 Introduction to the class

What is the Sociology of Gender?

M 9/4

Wharton. *The Sociology of Gender*. Chs. 1-3;
Introduction in *Prism* book

W 9/6

Fausto-Sterling (1); Connell (4); E-Reserve reading
by Lindsey “The Sociology of Gender: Theoretical
Perspectives and Feminist Frameworks” [password
= gender]

M 9/11

Ehrenreich & Hochschild (5); Lucal (12); Lorde
(24); Pyke & Johnson (27)

Gendered Bodies, Identities, and Sexualities

W 9/13 *student discussion leading #1*

Zones (7); Read & Bartkowski (10); Sayeed (26)

M 9/18

Martin (17); Davidson (20); Schippers (48);
Kendall (49)

- **ASSIGNMENT: PAPER 1 DUE**

W 9/20 *student discussion leading #2*

Altman (21); Messner (22); Tzedek (25); Yeung &
Stomblor (50)

Gender, Work, and Family

M 9/25

Wharton. *The Sociology of Gender*. Chs. 4-6

- **ASSIGNMENT: BEGIN OR CONTINUE READING
YOUR ASSIGNED BOOK (SEE BELOW) – YOU
MUST HAVE THE ENTIRE BOOK READ IN TIME TO
PRESENT IT IN A WEEK!**

W 9/27 *student discussion leading #3*

Collins (29); Kelly (34); Levin (37); Giuffre &
Williams (38)

M 10/2

½ the class reads and presents: Sharon Hays.
1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*.

½ the class reads and presents: Nicholas W.
Townsend. 2002. *The Package Deal: Marriage,
Work and Fatherhood in Men's Lives*.

- **ASSIGNMENT: BOOK SUMMARIES/CRITIQUES
DUE AT CLASSTIME ON 10/2 FOR BOTH BOOKS**

W 10/4

Presentations, continued

M 10/9 NO CLASS

Gender and Politics

W 10/11 *student discussion leading #4*

Baca Zinn & Dill (2); Kandiyoti (3); On-line
reading by Hogeland “Fear of Feminism: Why
Young Women Get the Willies” available at
www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/volunteer/fearoffem.html

M 10/16

- **EMAIL PROFESSOR JANNING TODAY – WHAT
WILL YOUR FINAL PROJECT GENERAL TOPIC AND
FORMAT BE?**

W 10/18

- **MIDTERM EXAM**

M 10/23 *student discussion leading #5*

Udel (30); Lopez (43)

W 10/25 *student discussion leading #6*

Kimmel (16); Messner. *Politics of Masculinities:
Men in Movements*. Ch. 1

M 10/30

Messner. *Politics of Masculinities: Men in
Movements*. One chapter from chapters 2-5 (TBA)

W 11/1 *student discussion leading #7*

Messner. *Politics of Masculinities: Men in
Movements*. Ch. 6

Late Modernity and the Future of Gender

M 11/6

Anita Harris. 2004. *Future Girl*. Introduction and
Ch. 1.

W 11/8 *student discussion leading #8*
Bettie (42); Anita Harris. 2004. *Future Girl*. Ch. 2

M 11/13
Anita Harris. 2004. *Future Girl*. Chs. 3-4

W 11/15 *student discussion leading #9*
Anita Harris. 2004. *Future Girl*. Ch. 5

M 11/27
Anita Harris. 2004. *Future Girl*. Ch. 6 & Conclusion

W 11/29 *student discussion leading #10*
Wharton. *The Sociology of Gender*. Ch. 7

Student Project Presentations

M 12/4
• **FINAL PROJECTS DUE**

W 12/6
FINAL EXAM: 2-4 P.M. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13TH