

SYLLABUS
SOCL 4233
GENDER IN SOCIETY
Spring 2025
12:30-1:50

Tues/Thurs
PY 100

PROFESSOR: Dr. Beverly L. Stiles
OFFICE: O'Donohoe 124

OFFICE HOURS:

Mon. 10:30-12:00
Tues. 10:00-11:00
Wed. 10:30-12:00
Thurs. 10:00-12:00
Friday: By appointment

While I hold regular office hours, I am available to you outside of these times. However, it is best if you make an appointment to see me so that I am free when you stop by. If you do not have an appointment and I am free, I am more than willing to make some time to see you. However, if you just stop by, there will be times when I am unavailable or may be with another student. Do not take this personally.

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- Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture, 13 Edition
Natalie Fixmer-Oraiz and Julia T. Wood
- Readings Provided

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is a survey course in the sociology of gender. As such, the main objective of this course is to investigate the social organization of gender, especially interactional, cultural, and institutional arrangements that underlie gender inequality in American society. In the process, we will continually return to a central question: how does gender appear in and affect the experiences and “life chances” of individuals in different social locations at different points in time? To address this question, we will move beyond examining gender in merely descriptive terms and toward developing analytical and theoretical understandings of gender.

PERSONAL NOTE

I wish to provide an open learning environment. I also wish to foster social and intellectual maturity through individual struggle with unfamiliar ideas. We must recognize that our views and convictions may be challenged, but we should expect this challenge to take place in a climate of tolerance and mutual respect.

COURSE CONTENT

We will focus on diverse empirical domains, from the bedroom to the boardroom. Since no single conceptual perspective or theoretical position can adequately account for the complexity of the social organization of gender, we will focus on both classical and contemporary theoretical approaches to the study of gender in light of empirical research, case studies, and current events. The course is divided into six major sections:

Section 1: We will begin by establishing some common background on various ways to conceptualize gender. We will ask: What is gender? How do we know it when we see it? What is the role of biology, physiology, and anatomy in the social construction of gender? And finally, can we think of gender in something other than dichotomous terms? We begin with these types of questions in order to set the stage for talking about gender as a uniquely social phenomena, one central to social organization and amenable to systematic empirical inquiry.

Section II: Once this conceptual work is accomplished, we will examine how gender operates at the interactional level. In particular, we will focus on gender socialization, identity acquisition, and face-to-face interaction in a variety of types of relationships and settings.

Section III: Our discussions of gender at the interactional level of analysis will lead us into cultural analyses of gender. We will analyze select features of social life, such as language, sexuality, and the media in an effort to understand the origins and consequences of meanings attached to gender in “real life” and public discourse. At this point, we will ask: how do societies construct maleness and femaleness, masculinity and femininity, etc.? And with what consequences(s)?

Section IV: We will draw on our understanding of the ways in which culture and gender interface to examine if and how societal institutions are “gendered.” By focusing on the family and household labor, work and occupations, and education in particular, we will investigate the degree to which institutions constrain and facilitate the experiences of girls and boys and men and women in different and consequential ways.

Section V: Courses that focus on gender, such as this one, have a tendency to reveal systematic gender inequality and thus assert either implicitly or explicitly that girls and women are victims and only victims. But as Andersen and Hill-Collins (1994:xv) point out, “people are not just victims; they are creative and visionary. As a result, people organize to resist oppression and to make liberating social changes. In fact, oppression generates resistance.” With this in mind, in the second to the last section of the course we will draw on what we’ve learned to look at “Social change and the Politics of Empowerment,” especially that generated by social movements, community activism, and electoral politics.

Section VI: The final section of the course will be devoted to critiques and reconsideration. To conclude the course, we’ll ask: where have we been, what have we learned, what remains to be known and explained, and where do we go from here?

ATTENDANCE:

You’ll find a high correlation between attendance and class grade! In-class exercises and pop quizzes are part of your grade. Therefore, good attendance is a necessity.

IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN THREE (3) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THIS CLASS WITH AN F. An excused absence is an illness with positive proof of being ill (a

doctor's written excuse specifying exactly which days you were unable to attend), or the illness of a minor child for which you have a doctor's note, or written proof of other emergency such as an official university excuse.

EXAMS AND GRADING

QUIZZES /ASSIGNMENTS: I will give quizzes (or written assignments) throughout the semester worth 10 points each. I'll most likely give 11 or 12 and will drop the lowest one (or two if I've given 12). This will result in another grade worth 100 points.

There will be 3 exams. (each worth 100 points). These exams will be comprised of both multiple choice and essay.

You will not be permitted to make-up missed quizzes. This is why I will give "at least" one extra quiz (and maybe two) so that you can miss at least one without being penalized. The quizzes not only help to prepare you for the exams, but they also serve as an enticement to come to class.

The following is the basis for your grade:

quiz grades	100 points
Exams (3)	300 points
TOTAL	400 (divide by 4 for grade)

Grades will be determined by the following scale:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = below 60

EXAMS	GRADING/POINTS	Dates
Exam 1	100 points	Feb. 4th
Exam 2	100 points	Mar. 18th
Exam 3	100 points	May 15th, 10:30
Quizzes	100 points	Pop/random

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that

FINAL SUGGESTIONS: Although it is not required, I encourage you to:

Get acquainted with one another. Exchange phone numbers. Form study groups. Engage in collaborative learning.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS: The following outline indicates what we will be doing this semester and when. Due dates and lecture topics are not chiseled in stone; all topics and dates are tentative and subject to change. If changes have to be made, they will be announced in class in advance.

Exam 1 material I. Thinking About Sex, Gender, and the Sex/Gender System	Readings/Videos/Etc.
Jan 21st	<p>A. Introduction to the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the entire syllabus and skim through the text. • Introduction to Gendered Lives Communication, Gender and Culture by Wood and Wood and Fixmer (“introduction: Opening the Conversation”). (Text: Pg. 1-11).
Jan 23	<p>B. Distinguishing Between Sex, Gender, and Genders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Study of Communication, Gender; and Culture” Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture by Wood and Fixmer (Text: Pg. 15-33). • Transgender and Beyond by Matt Kailey in Gender and Sexuality: Perspectives on LGBT History and Current Issues in a Changing World (2015).
Jan 28 and 30	<p>C. Gender Bending...But Not Breaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Night to His Day”: The Social Construction of Gender,” in Paradoxes of Gender by Judith Lorber: New Haven: Yale University Press. (1994). • X: A Fabuous Child’s Story, by Gould L. (1972). IN K. Ackley (Ed.). Perspectives on Contemporary Issues, 3rd Ed. <p>VIDEO: intersexed video</p>
Feb. 4th	Exam I

Exam 2 material II. Interactional Processes: Socialization, Identity, and Face-to-Face Interaction	Readings/Videos/Etc.
Feb. 6 and Feb 11: Mostly short readings	<p>A. Socialization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Becoming Gendered. (Text: Pg. 134-153) • “Theoretical Approaches to Gender Development” (Text: Pg. 34-52) • “The Act-Like-A_Man Box” by Paul Kival. • .”No Way My Boys Are Going to Be Like That: Parents’ Responses to Children’s Gender Nonconformity,” by Kane, E.W., in <i>Gender and Society</i>, 20(2), Pg. 149-176 (2006).
Feb 13 and Feb. 18	<p>B. Male Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men, Masculinity, and Manhood Acts by Douglas Schrock and Michael Schwalbe. Chap. 3 in <i>Unmasking Masculinities: Men and Society</i> (2018). • “Just Walk on By” by Brent Staples: Men: A New Brand of Body Issues and Body Image Problems (7/9/2007) • “Masculinity as Homophobia” by Michael S. Kimmel • “If Men Could Menstruate” Pg. 110 (Ms. Magazine), by Gloria Steinem <p>Video one of these days: Maybe BRO CODE or Tough Guise.</p>
Feb. 20 and Feb. 25	<p>C. Face-to-Face Interaction and Intimate Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gendered Nonverbal Communication” (Text: Pg. 116-132). • “Gendered Close Relationships (Text Pg. 173-192) • Friendship, Sex, and Masculinity in Michael Kimmel (Ed). <i>The Sexual Self: The Construction of Sexual Scripts</i>. Vanderbilt University Press (2006)

<p>Exam 2 material II. Interactional Processes: Socialization, Identity, and Face-to-Face Interaction</p>	<p>Readings/Videos/Etc.</p>
<p>III. Cultural Analysis</p>	<p>”</p>
<p>Feb. 27</p>	<p>A. Language “Gendered Verbal Communication • (Text: Pg. 96-114) “Marked Women” by Deborah Tannen</p>
<p>Mar. 4 and Mar. 6</p>	<p>B. Sexuality and Gendered Violence • “Gendered Power and Violence” (Text: Pg. 237-259) • Homophobia Among Men • Beyond “Homophobia”: Thinking More Clearly About Stigma, Prejudice, and Sexual Orientation. 2015 by Gregory M Herek • “College Men, Hypermasculinity, and Sexual Violence by Richard Mora and Mary Christianakis. Chap. 35 in Unmasking Masculinities: Men and Society (2018) Video one of these days, along with some Ted talks on sexuality.</p>
<p>March 18th</p>	<p>Midterm Exam</p>

Exam 3 Material III. Cultural Analysis Continued	
Mar. 20 and 25	C. Media and Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gendered Media, The Influence of Media on Views of Gender” (Text: Pg. 217-237) • “Sex, Lies, and Advertising” Pg. 18-26 (Ms. Magazine), by Gloria Steinem • “Post-Princess Models of Gender: The New Man in Disney/Pixar” in <i>Unmasking Masculinities</i>. 2018. • “Cowboy Up!: Non-Hegemonic Representations of Masculinity in Children’s Television Programming” in <i>Unmasking Masculinities</i>. 2018. • Size 6: The Western Women’s Harem” by Fatema Mernissi (2002) Video one of these days
IV Structural /Institutional Analyses	
Mar. 27 and April 1st	A. Families, Households, and Unpaid Labor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions (Chap. 8) in <i>Gender: Ideas, Interactions, Institutions</i>. Lisa Wade & Myra Marx Ferree (2018). • Families (Chap. 11) in <i>Gender: Ideas, Interactions, Institutions</i>. Lisa Wade & Myra Marx Ferree (2018).
April 3 and 8	B. Gender at Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gendered Organization Communication” (Text: Pg. 194-217). • “Work (Chap. 12) in <i>Gender: Ideas, Interactions, Institutions</i>. Lisa Wade & Myra Marx Ferree (2018). • “Salary, Gender and the Social Cost of Hagging” by Shankar Vedantam (2007) • SNL and The Double Bind for Women in Politics:
April 10	C. Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Gendered Education: Communication in School Settings” (Text: Pg. 155-171) • “How not to talk about Gender and Education – Is the “Boys Crisis’ in Education a Reality?” by Gerke (Sept. 2013)

Exam 3 Material Continued V. Social Change and the Politics of Empowerment	
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April 15, 22, 24, 29	<p>A. Social Movements, Community Activism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron Jawed Angels Video (April 12 and 17) • The Rhetorical Shaping of Gender: The Competing Images of Women (Text Pg. 54-74). • The Rhetorical Shaping of Gender: Competing Images of Men (Text Pg. 76-94) • It's Raining Patriarchy in Hood Feminism by Mikki Kendall, 2020. • Gloria Steinem Explains Why Feminism Reached a Critical Turning Point in 2015.
VI Critique and Reconsideration	
May 1 and 6	<p>A. Where Have We Been?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Oppression" Pg. 1-16 in The Politics of Reality, by Marilyn Frye. Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press. • "Introduction: Blame it on Feminism," Pg. ix-xxiii in Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women. By Susan Faludi. New York: Crown Publishers. (1991). • Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies," Pg. 18-21 in Ms. By Lisa Maria Hogeland. Language Communications. Nov/Dec. (1994). • "I'm Not a Feminist, But": Popular Myths about Feminism," in Conversations with Feminism: Political Theory and Practice by Penny Weiss. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers (1998).
May	<p>B. Where Do We Go From Here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Getting Off on Feminism," Pg. 444-452 by Jason Schultz • "The Former Lives of Anti-Sexist Men by Max A. Greenberg in Unmasking Masculinities. • "A World Without Gender" and "Epilogue" Pg 151-176 By Lorber in Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change.(2004).
Final Exam	Thursday May 15 th at 10:30