



Sociology of Gender

Sociology 435

Autumn 2009

All the decent people, male and female, are feminists. The only people who are not feminists are those who believe that women are inherently inferior or undeserving of the respect and opportunity afforded men. Either you are a feminist or you are a sexist/misogynist. There is no box marked 'other'." Ani DiFranco

Lecture: Monday and Wednesday 11:30 – 1:18 am
140 Jennings Hall

Course Web Page: www.carmen.osu.edu

Professor: Dr. Liana Sayer
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Lecture Number: 21736

Course Objectives:

This course focuses on gender as a system of social stratification. A primary goal of sociology is to encourage students to question taken-for-granted assumptions that limit understanding of human experience. Accordingly, we will examine theories and research about the processes that differentiate women and men in our society. We will learn about how gender permeates major institutions, such as education, employment, family, and the State. We will explore the social forces that shape our perceptions of sex, gender, and sexuality and examine how these affect intimate relationships. Throughout the course, we will examine the commonalities and variations of women's experiences across racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic status. By the end of the class, you should have an informed understanding of the ways in which gender shapes women's and men's everyday lives.

Required Readings:

1. Claire M. Renzetti and Daniel J. Curran. 2003. *Women, Men, and Society*, 5th edition, Boston: Allyn and Bacon (RC on class schedule). On reserve in main library.
2. Journal articles are also required reading for most classes. These are available online through the course Carmen website.

Disabilities:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office For Disability Services (ODS) for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so. Contact information for the ODS is: 614.292.6207 (Voice), 614.688.8605 (TTY), 614.688.3665 (Fax), [E-mail: ada-osu@osu.edu](mailto:ada-osu@osu.edu)

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend class, participate in class discussions and activities, complete 3 assignments, and take a midterm and a final exam. Participation accounts for 10% of your grade and will be assessed based on in-class quizzes and active involvement in class discussions. Receiving the full 10 points for participation requires active engagement in each.

You are expected to attend class each class period. Course materials will be explained more fully in lecture and some material will be presented only in lecture. Class time will consist of lectures, discussions, and some small group activities. Your active participation and attendance are important to the success of the course for both you and your classmates. You are responsible for being present when assignments are distributed and for obtaining any information, assignments or schedule changes that you may have missed. I do not post lecture notes or provide summaries of lectures or discussion. During class, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that is respectful to your classmates and myself at all times.

Midterm and Final Exams: The midterm and final exam will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. Both exams will be based on readings and material covered in-class. Both exams will be based on readings and materials covered in lectures, discussions, activities, and films. Lectures will sometimes cover material not in readings, and much material in readings will not be covered in lectures. You are nonetheless responsible for material from both lectures and readings on exams. Exams will not highlight memorization of exact numbers or dates, but will focus on generalizations from research, the arguments made by various authors, and the evidence and reasoning they provide in favor of their arguments. The midterm exam is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21. The final exam will take place at the scheduled final exam time, Thursday, DECEMBER 10, from 11:30 to 1:18, in our regular classroom 140 Jennings Hall.

Course Assignments

3 assignments are required.

1. Gender Observation. This assignment consists of field observation and writing a 2-3 page description and analysis of gender at a party or other social gathering.
2. Online student survey. The survey consists of closed-ended questions about your own experiences and attitudes about dating and relationships and can be completed in about one hour. Participation in the survey is voluntary. Students who prefer not to answer the survey questions may instead complete a 2 page reaction paper on class readings for October 28.
3. Empirical Data Analysis. This assignment consists of a 3-4 page description and interpretation of tabular data on gender differences in work and family.

Handouts for each assignment will be provided in class. All written work should be typed and double spaced. Assignments are due in class on the date listed in the syllabus. Without PRIOR approval from me, no late work will be accepted and no assignments will be accepted outside of the classroom. Late work and work turned in outside of class will be accepted only in unusual circumstances and, depending on the circumstances, may have 10 points deducted.

Assignments are due in class on the following days:

Assignment 1: October 12

Assignment 2: October 28

Assignment 3: November 18

Assignments will be graded on both content and form. Content refers to the degree to which you complete the requirements, the extent to which you demonstrate clear understanding of course material (lectures and reading assignments), and the level of analysis applied. Form refers to the clarity of the work you present in terms of

grammar, spelling, punctuation and writing style.

Course Grading

Class Participation	10%
Assignment 1	15%
Assignment 2	5%
Assignment 3	20%
Midterm	25%
Final exam	25%

Grading Scale:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 or below = Fail

GEC Fulfillment:

Sociology 435 fulfills the Social Diversity in the United States GEC. This course provides course work to develop students' sociological understanding of processes and institutions that differentiate women from men in U.S. society.

GEC Learning Objectives:

Students synthesize and explain, using a sociological perspective, how institutions and processes produce gendered, raced, and classed variation in women's and men's experiences.

Students explore and understand how social forces shape our perceptions of gender, and how these perceptions are affected by race-ethnicity, social class, and sexuality.

Students apply their knowledge of commonalities and variations in women's and men's lives across race-ethnicity, social class, and sexuality in research and writing projects on the sociology of gender.

The GEC learning objectives will be met through an exploration of several important issues in the sociology of gender including conceptual approaches to studying gender, gender socialization in families and educational institutions, marriage and family, paid employment, health, and poverty.

In order to meet the GEC goals and objectives, students are required to read the assigned texts, attend class, and participate in class discussions and learning exercises. Students are also responsible for completing three writing assignments.

Classroom Conduct:

Each of you has something significant to contribute to our understanding of women and men in society. A respectful, tolerant, and actively questioning attitude is crucial to a successful discussion. All students are expected to contribute meaningfully and productively to the class. Please turn off all electronic devices (phones, ipods, pagers, etc...) during class.

Academic Misconduct:

University rule 3335-31-02 requires that “each instructor shall report to the committee on academic misconduct all instances of what he or she believes may be academic misconduct.” Academic Misconduct is defined by the Ohio State University’s Code of Student Conduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating on tests, misrepresenting yourself or your work, including passing off other’s work as your own or copying papers off the Internet, and plagiarism. If you are uncertain whether something constitutes academic misconduct, please ask! I will report all forms of academic misconduct.

Unpaid Fees:

Faculty rules specify that students are to have their fees paid by the first day of enrollment for the quarter (Faculty Rule 3335-9-12). If you have not paid your fees, you will not be allowed to continue attending class until:

your fees are paid, OR

you have a signed letter from Financial Aid stating that you are working with them to get your fees paid.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Schedule of lecture and discussion section topics, when readings should be done, test and assignment dates (Note that the schedule is subject to change depending on class dynamics and flow):

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

What do we mean by gender and what does it mean to study it sociologically?

W 9-23 No assigned reading

Week 2 Social Construction of Gender

What makes gender a “social construction?” Is there a biological link between sex (being male and female) and gender (being feminine or masculine)? How do race and ethnicity, social class, and sexuality inform our experiences of gender?

M 9-28 RC: Chapters 1 & 2

Frye, Marilyn, 2004. “Oppression,” reprinted in *Feminist Frontiers*, 6th edition, edited by Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor, and Nancy Whittier, McGraw Hill: New York

W 9-30 RC: Chapter 3

Kessler, Suzanne. 2004. “The Medical Construction of Gender” reprinted in *Feminist Frontiers*, 6th edition, edited by Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor, and Nancy Whittier, McGraw Hill: New York

Lorber, Judith. 2004. “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender” reprinted in *Feminist Frontiers*, 6th edition, edited by Laurel Richardson, Verta Taylor, and Nancy Whittier, McGraw Hill: New York

Week 3 Socialization

How do girls and boys become gendered beings?

- M 10-5 RC: Chapter 4
- Weitzman, Eifler, Hokada, and Ross. 1972. "Sex-Role Socialization in Picture Books for Preschool Children," *American Journal of Sociology* 77(6):1125-1150
- W 10-7 Risman and Myers. 1997. "As the Twig is Bent: Children Reared in Feminist Households." *Qualitative Sociology* 20(5):229-252
- McGuffey and Rich. 1999. "Playing in the Gender Transgression Zone," *Gender & Society* 13(5):608-627.
- Week 4 Educational System**
Is there a hidden curriculum in schools that emphasizes and reproduces gender differences? Is access to educational opportunities equal for women and men? Are women's educational achievements crowding out men's educational chances?
- M 10-12 RC: Chapter 5
- Thorne, "Girls and Boys Together...But Mostly Apart: Gender Arrangements in Elementary Schools"
- ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE IN CLASS
- W 10-14 England and Su. 2006. "Desegregation Stalled: The Changing Gender Composition of College Majors, 1971-2002." *Gender & Society* 20(5):657-677
- Weil, Elizabeth. 2008. "Should Boys and Girls be Taught Separately? The Gender Wars Go to School." *Sunday Magazine, New York Times*.
- Week 5 Gender, Language and Media & Midterm**
Are women and men portrayed differently in the media? Do we receive gendered messages from the media? How does our language influence beliefs about women and men in our society?
- M 10-19 RC: Chapter 6
- Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. "Controlling Images and Black Women's Oppression" excerpt from *Black Feminist Thought*, Unwin Hyman: Boston.
- Kuperberg & Stone. 2008. "The Media Depiction of Women Who Opt Out." *Gender & Society* 22(4):497-517.
- W 10-21 MIDTERM
- Week 6 Gender, Families, and Work**
What is the doctrine of separate spheres? How are historical patterns of employment and caregiving linked with women's and men's styles of intimacy? How are they linked with changes in women's and men's living arrangements?
- M 10-26 FILM: ROSIE the RIVETER
- RC: Chapter 8 (pages 212-216)

- W 10-28 RC: Chapter 7
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE
- Week 7** **Gender & Employment**
What do we mean when we say workplaces and jobs are gendered? What is the wage gap and why does it exist?
- M 11-2 RC: Chapter 8 (pages 216-223)
Dana M. Britton, 1997. "Gendered Organizational Logic: Policy and Practice in Men's and Women's Prisons." *Gender & Society* 11(6):796-818
- W 11-4 RC: Chapter 8 (pages 223-251)
Reskin, 1988. "Bringing the Men Back in: Sex Differentiation and the Devaluation of Women's Work," *Gender & Society* 2(1):58-81.
Glauber, Rebecca. 2008. "Race and Gender in Families and at Work: The Fatherhood Wage Premium." *Gender & Society* 22(1):8-30.
- Week 8** **Intersections of Work & Family**
Why do women continue to do more housework and child care than men? Why do men continue to devote more time to employment than women? What implications does the gendered division of labor have for women's and men's lives?
- M 11-9 RC: Review pages 182-187 from Chapter 7 (pages 182-187)
Mainardi, Pat. 1970. "The Politics of Housework." Pages 447-454 in *Sisterhood is Powerful*, edited by Robin Morgan. New York: Random House.
Sayer, Liana C. 2005. "Gender, Time, and Inequality: Trends in Women's and Men's Paid Work, Unpaid Work, and Free Time." *Social Forces* 84(1): 285-303.
Walker, Alexis J., 1996. "Couples Watching Television: Gender, Power, and the Remote Control." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 58(4):813-823.
- W 11-11 No class in observance of Veteran's Day.
- Week 9** **Gender, Politics, and Government**
Do women and men participate differently in political processes and government? How do politics and policies affect women's lives differently from men's lives?
- M 11-16 RC: Chapter 10
Misra, Moller, and Budig. 2007. "Work—Family Policies and Poverty for Partnered and Single Women in Europe and North America." *Gender & Society* 21(6):805-827.
- W 11-18 Review materials for 11-16
ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE IN CLASS

Week 10 Gender, Politics, and Government (continued)

M 11-23 Tester, Griff. 2008. "An Intersectional Analysis of Sexual Harassment in Housing." *Gender & Society* 22(3):349-366.

W 11-25 No Class, Happy Thanksgiving

Week 11 Gender & Health

How do standards of attractiveness and ability influence women's relationships with their bodies?

M 11-30 RC: Chapter 12

W 12-2 Thompson, Becky. 1992. "A Way Outa No Way": Eating Problems among African-American, Latina, and White Women. *Gender & Society* 6(4):564-561.

WEEK 12 Finals

TUESDAY DECEMBER 9 9:30 – 11:18 140 Jennings Hall