

Sociology of Gender

Summer 2014 (6W2)

Tuesday and Thursday: 10:00am-1:15pm

2200 WW Posvar Hall

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Office hours: by appointment only

Course Description

In this course we will explore how gender shapes our lives and the world around us. The course begins with the distinction between one's sex, which is biologically determined, and one's gender, which is learned, socially constructed, context specific, and malleable. Through class discussions of theory and empirical research, we will explore the social forces that shape our perceptions of sex, gender, and sexuality. We will focus on the gendering of institutions, such as education, media, religion, work, politics, and the family. We will also be attentive to the ways in which gender **intersects** with other social identities, such as race, social class, and sexual orientation. Although the primary context for this course is contemporary American society, issues and examples from other cultures may be introduced.

Learning Goals:

The course is intended to help you develop your analytical and critical thinking skills.

You will be asked to move beyond your own experience and perspectives to sociologically analyze and evaluate over-simplified explanations of contemporary gender issues as they appear in the news and popular media. Learning in this course will occur in a variety of ways: critical reading, investigating empirical evidence, and active class participation.

Required Reading:

All readings will be available on Courseweb.

Course Requirements:

Participation (5 points)

Discussion Questions (10 x 5 points = 50 points)

Short paper (5 points)

Take-home exam 1 (20 points)

Take-home exam 2 (20 points)

Total possible points= 100

Participation:

Your participation in this class is crucial! Participation in this class includes, but is not limited to: **(1) *Coming to class***. At no point will I take formal attendance. You are adults and the decision to participate in this course is yours. However, if you are not here to participate, your grade will suffer. In my experience, students who regularly attend classes have a better experience of the course, get the most out of the experience, and tend to get better grades. Like most things in life, you will get out of this course what you put into it. **(2) *Reading the required texts***. Again, you will get out of this course what you put into it. Because this is a six-week course, the readings for each week may seem daunting – but given the short duration of the term, it would behoove you to not get behind on the reading. **(3) *Regularly contributing to class discussions*** (talking in class). Please note that your ability to contribute to class discussions is directly correlated with your class attendance **and** your complete reading of the assigned texts. Not every comment/question must be brilliant and insightful; questions and “thinking aloud” are important to the learning process. I **cannot** stress enough how important contributing to class discussions will be to you, other students, and me as the instructor. Speak up!

Discussion Questions:

Each class meeting you will be responsible for turning in one insightful discussion question. These may be questions of fact, clarification, context, or analysis, but they may **not** be questions of definition. Take the initiative to look up unfamiliar words on your own. You *must* follow these guidelines in order to get full credit. Your discussion question can be turned in on a notecard at the beginning of the class period.

Tip: The readings, course Tagboard, and current events are all worthwhile places to find material for discussion questions.

Life happens. If you have to miss class (for any reason) you can make up for the points you’ve missed **for one absence** by writing a three-page paper. This paper should use a cultural artifact to discuss gender/sex/sexuality. You should utilize terms we have covered in class for this paper and use in-text citations and a references page when applicable. In order to receive points – this must be turned in at the beginning of the next class meeting.

Exams:

You will have two exams for this course. The exam format will be **take-home** and **short answer/essay**. The final exam will not be cumulative.

There will be no makeup exams.

There will be no extra credit.

I will not accept late assignments or exams¹.

I will not accept written assignments/exams via email.

¹ Please contact me if you experience a personal or family emergency. I am strict about late assignments, but not inflexible.

Tip: if you know that you are going to miss class the day an assignment is due you must find a way to get the assignment to me before the deadline.

Social Media Project:

Gender operates in our everyday lives. In this course we will be utilizing social media to build a greater understanding of how the topics covered in class relate to our everyday lives and vice versa. We will be using the platforms of Twitter and Instagram (or Vine – if we can get it to work). You, as a student in this section, are required to create an Instagram and/or Twitter account (or use an already existing account if you feel comfortable doing so), and are required to make a minimum of **20 posts** to the account(s) over the course of the term. These posts should illustrate how you make a connection between the topics covered in class and your everyday lived experience.

As you make these posts to Twitter and Instagram, they can be tracked using a tagboard at <https://tagboard.com/soc0446/> . In order for your posts to show up to the Tagboard and be graded, please be sure to always use the hashtag #soc0446 on all of your posts and be sure that your account is not private.

Tip: If you are concerned about your performance in the class, the best course of action is to **talk to me immediately** so we can discuss strategies for improvement. Do not wait until the end of the term!

Other Important Information:

Academic Integrity: The University of Pittsburgh enforces expectations for the members of its academic communities; as a student, that includes you! These standards are designed to ensure the integrity of your education and of the evaluation process. The expectations of academic integrity are central to the intellectual liveliness and standards of this academic community. As a student, you have a responsibility to be honest and to respect the ethical standards of the university. You will have violated these standards if you:

- Refer to unauthorized materials.
- Provide unauthorized assistance.
- Receive unauthorized assistance.
- Possess, buy, sell, copy, or use unauthorized materials.
- Act as or use a substitute in an evaluation setting (e.g. write an assignment for someone else, or have someone write an assignment for you).
- Present as your own, for academic evaluation, the ideas or words of another person without proper acknowledgement and citation of sources.

In other words, do not cheat, help others cheat, or plagiarize. Academic integrity is not limited to these points, but these are the most important elements. They will be strictly enforced in this course. ***Do your own work. Figure out what you want to say and say it in your own words. Cite your sources when you quote or paraphrase.***

Reasonable Accommodation: If you have a disability that makes it impossible for you to complete the requirements for this course in the manner specified in the syllabus, please see me with documentation from the Office of Disability Resources and Services (216 William Pitt Union) early in the semester and we will make appropriate arrangements.

Please notify me of any absences for **religious observances** or **official university athletic activities** as soon as possible in order to make appropriate adjustments for assignments you may miss.

Technology in the Classroom:

Because we will utilize social media throughout the duration of this course, the use of technology (laptops, tablets) is encouraged for note-taking, fact-checking, using a search engine to define a word or term you are not yet familiar with, etc. However, using your technology in ways that distract you from the learning process is highly discouraged. Please do not use your technology to instant message, email, use social media outside of the scope of our classwork, online shop, play games, video conference with family/friends, commit intellectual theft, etc. (this is not an exhaustive list – but you get the point). I would greatly appreciate if you refrain from using your cell phone.