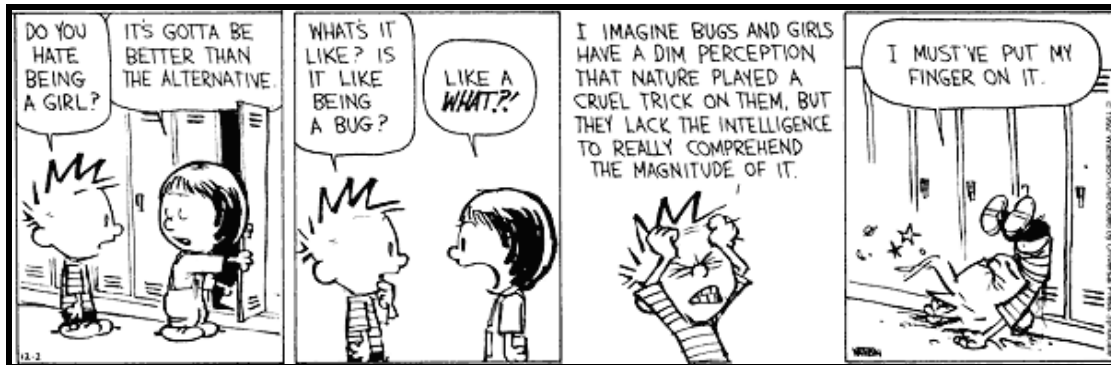


Gender and Society
Sociology 2320
New Cabell 129: MW 9-9:50am



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Course Overview

Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water. Gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning its taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions is like thinking about whether the sun will come up.

--Judith Lorber

The “sociological imagination” extends our view beyond personal, day-to-day experiences, revealing the broader patterns of our social lives. In this class, we will employ the sociological imagination to better understand one of the most omnipresent features of everyday life: gender. An intimate part of daily life, our ideas about gender become ‘normalized’ and ‘naturalized’ to an extent to which the influence of those ideas becomes almost invisible. This course will provide the tools to bring shared understandings and beliefs about sex, gender and sexuality to the forefront and to critically examine how those assumptions shape—and are shaped by—our social arrangements.

This course is divided into five parts. We will begin by looking at the body, which is a central site for gender debate in academia and in the public sphere. We will then dive into sociological explanations of gender, looking at how gender is constructed (and challenged) through dynamic social processes. In the third section, we will look at how social categories are related to inequality, asking who benefits from the dominant arrangements and investigating the ways gender, sex and sexuality ‘intersect’ with other social categories to produce advantage and disadvantage. In the fourth section, we will move from gender to sexuality, examining creative, empowering and destructive sexual expressions. Throughout the semester, we will read work that engages us intellectually, while also discussing how these ideas play out in our everyday lives and around the world. In the final section, we will explicitly investigate how gender and sexuality become political issues and examine what prompts and obstructs political mobilization around these issues.

Course Objectives

We will work toward the following four goals in this course:

- **You will learn to recognize and think critically about taken-for-granted social categories.** Using a sociological lens, you will be able to see how such categories are constructed and how they shape everyday life. While noting the durability of social categories and patterns, you will have the tools to think creatively—both intellectually and in your own life—about the ways in which social life is and can be organized.
- **You will appreciate the multiplicity and contextual nature of truth and knowledge.** You will transcend black-and-white thinking to reach a point where you can appreciate two opposing ideas and the truth of each. Like a jigsaw puzzle, you will be able to put pieces of truth together in creative, yet logical ways to develop a perspective of your own.
- **You will be able to summarize academic texts and locate them within a broader scholarly conversation.** You will learn how to pull out the key points of a particular text, how to synthesize a group of related readings and how to situate one reading within the context of other readings.
- **You will reflect on your own learning process and develop the skills to critique and improve upon your own work.** You will be able to more clearly identify areas of confidence with the material, as well as gaps in your understanding. You will be able to evaluate academic writing, both your own and others, in a productive way. You will develop a repertoire of techniques for improving upon your work. Most importantly, you will be able to discern what materials from the course are important to you and why.

Course Components

Attendance & Participation (10%)

The study of gender is itself a social experience, making your active engagement in class critical to the overall success of the course. Class sessions will include interactive discussions and learning activities, and we will sometimes break into smaller groups in order to further explore and expand on important ideas. Do not shortchange yourself or your peers by not doing the reading before each class or by not interacting with others over the course material. *Note: I understand that life happens. Therefore, you are allowed to miss two classes, no questions asked. All further absences are unexcused, no matter the reason.*

Weekly Blog Posts (10%)

Over the course of this class, you will produce a record of your reflections on the class material and your personal reactions to that material. Given the collective spirit of gender scholars, these reflections will take the form of a weekly blog post. **Each Friday (by noon)**, you are required to post 200-400 words discussing (1) what you found most interesting about the course material that week; (2) how the material relates either to (a) your own developing understanding of sex, gender or sexuality, (b) to your everyday life or (c) to a broader social phenomenon (i.e. news story, recent trend, etc); and (3) any areas of confusion. This post is meant to help you to synthesize what you have learned and why it is relevant to you, identify gaps in your understanding so that you may bring these up in class and share your experiences and thoughts with others in the class. In addition to sharing an original post each week, you are required to **comment on at least three others' posts** at some point throughout the semester (your response must be at least 3-4 sentences).

Quizzes (2 @ 5% each)

Two quizzes will be given during the semester (dates outlined below) to test your knowledge of the material. These quizzes will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions.

Observation/Interview Assignment (20%)

You will participate in a fieldwork assignment that will allow you to see the ways in which gender operates in everyday life. You will be given the choice between one of two options: (1) a one-hour observation of gender in action (2) two 20-30 minute interviews with one male and one female regarding their work and family expectations. For the observation, you will be required to turn in at least one page of field notes; for the interviews, you will be required to turn in your interview questions. In both cases, you will turn in a short (2-4 page, double-space) response paper discussing your findings and how they relate to course materials. A separate assignment sheet will be provided outlining additional details for each option.

Reading Responses (3 @ 5% each)

At three points within the semester, you will be required to bring in a response to that week's readings to be turned in for credit. You will be allowed to sign-up for specific weeks on the first day of class. Responses should be 2-3 pages (double-spaced) and should (1) briefly synthesize the main points from that week's readings; (2) discuss how the readings fit with the broader framework of the course and/or previous readings; (3) evaluate the evidence and/or logic on which the authors rely in making their claims.

A grading rubric is posted on the class website. Using this rubric, I will grade the first response and provide you with comments. One of your peers will evaluate your second response, and you will be required to turn in both the response and your peer evaluator's written comments one week after the reading response was due. For the third response, you will be required to turn in the response on the week it is due. You will then evaluate your own response and turn in your written comments the following week. The purpose of these varied evaluation formats is to facilitate your ability to critique academic work (both your own and others) and to develop techniques for effectively improving your own work.

Mock Trial (15%)

The class will hold a mock trial of based on a current gender-related event on XXXX. The class will be divided into groups of (a) lawyers on behalf of the plaintiff, (b) lawyers on behalf of the defendant, (c) jurors and (d) journalists. Lawyers will prepare notes to argue their cases (and to participate in rebuttals), jurors will draft opinions based on the presented evidence and journalists will draft newspaper or magazine stories. Each group must turn in their final written materials in class on XXXX. A separate assignment sheet will be provided outlining additional details for each group.

Learning Portfolio (20%)

At the end of the course, you will be asked to create a learning portfolio in which you will reflect upon how your thinking about sex, gender and sexuality has evolved. This portfolio will contain your weekly blog posts (and any associated comments from others), your reading responses (with written evaluations and feedback), your fieldwork reflections and your mock trial materials. You are also encouraged to include at least two (but no more than five) excerpts from the readings or lecture that impacted you in some way. These materials should be organized to reflect your intellectual journey in a meaningful way, and you are free to use whatever format you desire.

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In addition, your portfolio must include a 5-page (double-spaced) introduction/executive summary. This should be a cohesive and thoughtful essay about your experiences within this course that addresses (a) your initial motivations and/or expectations for this course; (b) what you have learned about sex, gender and sexuality; (c) how this course has helped you develop or hone particular skills; (d) the most impactful moment in the course; (e) the hardest aspect of the course; and (f) whether and how you think the material from this course will matter to you in five years and in ten years.

Course Outline and Reading Schedule

(readings will be posted on the class collaboration site)

Week 1: Introduction

- *Reading:*
 - Adrienne Rich. 1979. "Claiming an Education." Pp. 231-35 in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. New York: W. W. Norton.

I. The Body

Week 2: A Closer Look at Biology

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Lorber, Judith. 1993. "Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology." *Gender and Society* 7 (4): 568-581
 - Martin, Emily. 1991. "The egg and the sperm: How science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles." *Signs* 16 (3): 485-501

Week 2: Constructing and Policing Bodies

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Bordo, Susan. 1993. "Whose Body Is This? Feminism, Medicine, and the Conceptualization of Eating Disorders" (pp. 45-69) in *Unbearable Weight*.
 - Wolf, Naomi. 2011. "The Beauty Myth" in Amy Kesselman, Lily D. McNair, Nancy Schriedewind, eds. *Women: Images and Realities, A Multicultural Anthology*. 4th ed.
 - Thompson, Becky Wangsgaard. 1992. "'A Way Outta No Way': Eating Problems among African- American, Latina, and White Women" *Gender and Society* 6 (4): 546-561

Week3: Body Politics

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Davis, Angela Y. 1993. "Outcast Mothers and Surrogates: Racism and Reproductive Politics in the Nineties." *American Feminist Thought at Century's End: A Reader*. Ed. Linda S. Kauffman. Cambridge: Blackwell.
 - Taylor, Verta and Rupp, Leila J. 2004. Chicks with Dicks, Men in Dresses: What It Means to Be a Drag Queen. *Journal of Homosexuality* 46(3-4): 113-33.
 - Maxcy Myhre, Jennifer Reid. 1995. "One Bad Hair Day Too Many, or the Hairstory of an Androgynous Young Feminist" (132-37). In *Listen up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*, edited by B. Findlen. Seal Press.

II. Gender Beyond the Body

Week 4: The Social Construction of Gender

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Lorber, Judith. 2010. "Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender," Pp 54-65 in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States* edited by P. Rothenberg. New York: Worth Publishers.

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- Kimmel, Michael. 1994. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity." Pp. 119-141 in *Theorizing Masculinities*, edited by Harry Broad and Michael Kaufman. London: Sage.

Week 5: Gender as Process

- *Required by Monday:*
 - West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125-151.
 - Messner, Michael. 2000. "Barbie Girls versus Sea Monsters: Children Constructing Gender." *Gender & Society* 14(6): 765-784.

Week 6: Reinforcing and Challenging Gender Structures

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Kusalik, Telyn. 2010. "Identity, Schmidentity." Pp 54-60 in *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation*, edited by Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman. Berkeley, CA: Seal.
 - Silva, Jennifer. 2008. "A New Generation of Women'? How Female ROTC Cadets Negotiate the Tension between Masculine Military Culture and Traditional Femininity." *Social Forces*. 87(2): 937-960

III. Gender Inequality

Week 7: Gender Hierarchies/Inequality Regimes

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Johnson, Allan G. 1997. "Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, a Them, or an Us" In *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*.
 - McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"
 - Pascoe, C. J. 2003. "Multiple Masculinities? Teenage Boys Talk about Jocks and Gender." *American Behavioral Scientist* 46(10):1423-38.

Week 8: Intersectionality: Intersecting Inequalities

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Truth, Sojourner. 1851. "Ain't I Woman? Speech at Akron Convention." Pp. 426-29 in *The Feminist Papers*.
 - hooks, bell. 2000. "Race and Gender." Pp. 55-60 *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. London: Pluto Books.
 - Hill Collins, Patricia. 1990. "Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination", Pp. 221-238 in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* Boston: Unwin Hyman.
 - Acosta, Katie. 2006. *Lesbianas in the Borderlands: Shifting Identities and Imagined Communities*. *Gender & Society* 22(5): 639-659.

Week 9: Inequality at Home and in Schools

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Hochschild, Arlie. 1989. "Marriage in the Stalled Revolution" In *The Second Shift*.
 - Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2001. "Naughty By Nature." Pp. 77-99 in *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
 - Bettie, Julie. 2003. "How Working-Class Chicas Get Working-Class Lives" Pp 57-94 in *Women Without Class: Girls, Race and Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 10: Inequality at Work

- *Required by Monday*
 - Cohen, Philip N. 2013. "The Persistence of Workplace Gender Segregation in the US." *Sociology Compass*. 7(11): 889-99.

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- Heilman, Madeline E. 2001. "Description and Prescription: How Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder." *Journal of Social Issues* 57 (4): 657-674.
- Williams, Christine. 1992. "The glass escalator: Hidden advantages for men in the 'female' professions." *Social Problems* 39:253-67.
- Schilt, Kristen. 2006. "Just one of the guys? How transmen make gender visible at work." *Gender & Society*, 20(4): 465-490.

Week 11: Inequality in the State

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Davis, Angela Y. "Race, Gender, and Prison History: From the Convict Lease System to the Supermax Prison." Pp. 35-45 in *Prison Masculinities*, eds. Don Sabo, Terry A. Kupers, and Willie London. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
 - Saguy, Abigail C. 2003. "Introduction: The Making of a Concept." Pp 1-18 in *What is Sexual Harassment?: From Capitol Hill to the Sorbonne*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

IV. Sexuality

Week 12: Debates on Sexuality

- *Required by Monday:*
 - MacKinnon, Catherine . 1989. "Sexuality" in J. Geer and W. O'Donoghue, *Theories of Human Sexuality*.
 - Rich, Adrienne. 1994. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*. Norton

Week 13: Desire, Intimacy and Assault

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Armstrong, Elizabeth A., Laura Hamilton, and Brian Sweeney. "Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multi-level, Integrative Approach to Party Rape." *Social Problems*. 53:483-499.
 - Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2001. "The Meaning of the Purchase: Desire, Demand and the Commerce of Sex." *Ethnography* 2, No.3: 389-420.

Week 14: Heteronormativity and Sexual Fluidity

- *Required by Monday:*
 - C.J Pascoe: "Compulsive Heterosexuality: Masculinity and Dominance" from *Dude, You're a Fag!: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*
 - Moore, Mignon. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities." *Signs* 32 (1):113-139

V. The Personal is Political: Social Movements and Revolutions

Week 15: Missing and Stalled Revolutions

- *Required by Monday:*
 - Stacey, Judith and Barrie Thorne. 1985. "The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology." *Social Problems* 32(4): 301-316.
 - Williams, Christine. 2006. "Still Missing? Comments on the Twentieth Anniversary of 'The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology.'" *Social Problems* 53(4): 454-458.
 - Ray, Raka. 2006. "Is the Revolution Missing or Are We Looking in the Wrong Places?" *Social Problems* 53(4): 459-465.

Week 16: Identity Politics

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- *Required by Monday*
 - Gamson, Joshua. 1995. "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma." *Social Problems* 42(3):390–407.
 - Elizabeth Armstrong: "Exclusions: Gender, Race, and Class in the Gay Identity Movement, 1981-1994" from *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*