

Sex and Gender
SOCI 530, Fall 2011

Wednesday 8:35am – 10:25 am

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Office: Leacock 835

Office Hours: Monday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Course Description:

What is sex and gender? How do we define it? What leads to gendered patterns, and how have individuals attempted to explain these patterns? These are just some of the questions we will explore in this course. After briefly discussing the social construction of sex and gender, we will begin to read theoretical explanations of gender and gender relations. These theoretical perspectives provide a multitude of views to explain gendered patterns, they often juxtapose each other or question the validity of various perspectives, and, ultimately, they should provide insightful debates (not full fledged screaming arguments – but debates) for this course. The analyses of gendered theory will help us to formulate our own understanding and beliefs about gendered expectations, and will also provide us with a foundation to understand and debate the sex and gendered topics we will explore. The topics will be formulated around the recommendations made by you. As we discuss the topics and challenge perspectives, we will bring in the theoretical frameworks that we analyzed during the first half of the semester. Through this process, we will learn how the social construction of sex and gender leads to many complexities that aren't easily explainable or understood.

The readings for this course include:

Course Requirements:

Participation (inclusive of comment questions)	30%
Class Presentation	25%
(Essay 1 AND	20%
Essay 2)	25%
OR (Research Paper)	45%
OR (Activist Paper)	45%

1. Participation

Because this is a small seminar, active participation is expected during each class period. This classroom is based on an open environment, and you must be respectful of everyone's opinions and comments, even if you disagree with an opinion. The topic of gender can be a volatile topic at times. Try and keep things in perspective, and remember to maintain your dignity and be respectful. If you are uncomfortable participating during the class discussion, you may e-mail comments about the readings and the discussion to me. You may also come to my office hours to discuss any topics or concerns.

Comment Questions: As part of your participation grade, you will have to turn in one comment question for each reading of that week. For the comment questions, you would make a statement from the article, and then ask a question. The question must indicate that you understand the reading, and that you are engaging the argument. **You must post these on WebCT by Tuesday at noon.** This will allow me to incorporate them into the class.

2. Class Presentations

Toward the end of the semester, you will prepare a 15 minute (not longer!) presentation based on sex and gender. For the presentation, you will begin with a sociological question (dealing with sex and/or gender) that you want to explore. You will explain why the topic is important, the previous research done on it, and place it within a theoretical context (using at least one theory discussed in class). After discussing the research done in this area, you will provide possible outcomes for the sociological question you asked, and you will attempt to provide a solution to the problem. At the very end of the presentation (after you are finished), I want you to pose a question to the class that relates to your presentation and also challenges one of the theoretical concepts we have discussed in class. This will allow for discussion in relation to your topic. This presentation should be done on PowerPoint and should help you become more familiar with PowerPoint, help you with presentation styles, and help you organize your academic arguments.

3. Essays

You will have two 5-10 page essays due October 12 and November 16. In the first essay, you need to engage one or two theoretical perspectives. You may juxtapose two theoretical perspectives, arguing for one point of view, or you may thoughtfully critique one theoretical perspective. In the essay, you must be certain that your arguments and theoretical debates relate directly to sex and/or gender, and that you directly analyze the texts. For the second essay, you should explore one of the substantive topics listed for class and explore it through one or two theoretical perspectives. Be certain that you have an argument clearly laid out in the paper – i.e. for or against the theoretical perspective, or taking a stance regarding the substantive topic.

OR . . .

4. Research Paper

Alternatively, you could write a 20-25 page research paper due December 3. For the research paper, you would need to choose a substantive topic that relates to sex and/or gender, do additional external research, and explore the patterns/arguments of the substantive topic using one or two theoretical perspectives discussed in class (it should contribute to the framing of your paper).

OR . . .

5. Activist Paper

This paper is the most challenging, but also more rewarding (also 20-25 pages and due December 3). From the beginning of the semester, you would need to volunteer for a “gendered” organization. During the period that you are involved with the organization, you must actively work to change dynamics or structures (whether to the organization or in relation to the issues that are being addressed by the organization – and also in a non-confrontational manner) that you believe would allow for a better understanding of sex and gender as we have discussed in class. Alternatively, you could volunteer for a “non-gendered” organization, and attempt to bring gendered issues to that organization (again in a non-confrontational manner). The paper would have two components. In the first segment, you would discuss your volunteer experience and reflect upon the gendered dynamics you engaged. In the second segment, you would theoretically analyze your experience (using the readings from this course – and additional readings, if you would like). How would a gendered theorist analyze/explain your experience or outcomes?

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Introduction

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: September 7 – Some Foundations/Defining Woman

Cooper, Anna Julia. 1998. *A Voice from the South*. In Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Gillian Niebrugge, eds., *The Women Founders*, pp. 184-189. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

De Beauvoir, Simone. 1952. *The Second Sex*. Vintage Paperback Edition, 1989. New York: Knopf. [Introduction, pp. Xix-xxxvi] (Classical)

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge. [Chapter 1, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire,"]

Week 3: September 14 – Masculinity/Defining Man

Connell, R. W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Chapter 3, "The Social Organization of Masculinity," pp. 67-86]

Saint-Aubin, Arthur F. 2005. "A Grammar of Black Masculinity: A body of Science." In Lahoucine Ouzagane and Robert Morrell, eds., *African Masculinities*, pp. 23-42. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Robinson, Christine M., and Susan Spivey. 2007. "The Politics of Masculinity and the Ex-Gay Movement." *Gender and Society* 21(5): 650-675.

Week 4: September 21 – Identity/Contestation/Multicultural Feminism

Moraga, Cherrie. 1983. "From a Long Line of Vendidas: Feminism and Chicanas." In *Loving in the War Years*, pp. 90-103. Boston: South End Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge.

Springer, Kimberly. 2002. "Third Wave Black Feminism." *Signs* 27(4): 1059-1082.

Week 5: September 28 – Identity/Contestation/Post Colonial Feminism

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1996. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In Padmini Mongia, ed., *Contemporary Post Colonial Theory: A Reader*, pp. 172-197. London: Arnold.

Oyewùmí, Oyèrónké. 1997. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Narayan, Uma. 1997. "Contesting Cultures." In Linda Nicholson, ed., *The Second Wave*, pp. 396-412. New York: Routledge.

Week 6: October 5 – Gender and Sociology

- Alway, Joan. 1995. "The Trouble with Gender: Tales of the Still-Missing Revolution in Sociological Theory." *Sociological Theory* 13(3): 209-228.
- West, Candace and Sarah Fenstermaker. 1995. "Doing Difference." *Gender and Society* 9(1):8-37.
- Risman, Barbara. 1998. "Gender as Structure." Pp. 13-44 in *Gender Vertigo: American Families in Transition* by Barbara Risman. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Baca Zinn, Maxine and Bonnie Thornton-Dill. 1996. Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism. *Feminist Studies* 22(2):321-331.

Week 7: October 12 – Gender?

- Hird, Myra J. and Jenz Germon. "The Intersexual Body and the Medical Regulation of Gender."
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2002. "The Five Sexes: Revisited." *The Sciences* 40 (4) : 18-23.
- Webster, Fiona. 2000. "The Politics of Sex and Gender." *Hypatia* 15(1): 1-22.
- Heyes, Cressida J. 2003. "Feminist solidarity after queer theory: The case of transgender." *Signs* 28 (4): 1093 – 1119.

Weeks 8-10 – October 19, 26, and November 2

Choosing Topics:

What topics would you like us to address for the second half of the semester? Are there any articles or book chapters that you think would be beneficial for the class? This is your chance to help shape the last half of this course. Please e-mail me some ideas that you have. We will also discuss this during the second class meeting. Some topic ideas include:

4 Weeks

Transgender issues
Sexuality
Sex Work
Sex Trade
Medicine and Gender
State and Nationalism
Social Change
Terrorism
Globalization

Weeks 12-14 – November 9, 16, 23, and 30

Presentations