San José State University
Department of Sociology—Fall 2014
SOCI 175, Sociology of Masculinity and Femininity

“We are always participating in something larger than ourselves, and if we want to understand social life and what happens to people in it, we have to understand what it is that we’re participating in and how we participate in it.” ~ Allan Johnson

“Gender, this thing we’re all seemingly born with, is a major restraint to self-expression.” ~ Kate Bornstein

Instructor: Dr. Amy Leisenring
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Telephone: 924-5756
Email: Via Canvas: https://sjsu.instructure.com
Office Hours: Tuesday: 1:15-2:45 p.m.
Thursday 11 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00 to 4:15 p.m.
Classroom: DMH 231
Prerequisites: SOCI 1

Course Description

What is sex? What is gender? How do these social processes shape the way we both live and understand our lives? In this course we will explore questions such as these. Despite popular notions that there exist two sexes (male and female) that coincide with two genders (masculine and feminine), the lived experiences of many people suggest these concepts to be much more diverse and complex. We will explore the social, historical and cultural conditions that influence our conceptions of masculinity and femininity. In doing so, we will examine how gender both shapes and is shaped by social institutions, social relationships, and people’s conceptions of their identities. While we will focus primarily on gender processes and relations within the United States, on several occasions we will also consider how gender is constructed in other countries and cultures for the purpose of comparison.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

This course provides you with the opportunity to:
1. Gain a “sociological imagination”—in other words, to develop tools that enable you to critically examine, evaluate and analyze the social world around you.
2. Gain insight into the relationship(s) between sex, gender, and sexuality.
3. Explore sites that contribute both to the construction/maintenance of gender processes and to the resistance of such processes. In doing so, we will examine the ways in which sex and
gender intersect with race, ethnicity, class, nationality, and sexuality to shape people’s experiences.

4. Examine the social and political consequences of gender constructs and gender inequality.

5. Examine processes of social change surrounding notions of sex and gender.

6. Enhance your critical reading, thinking, and writing skills.

**Required Readings**


2. Online Readings via Canvas: (Listed as “Online” in schedule)

**Canvas**

There is a Canvas site for this class and you will be automatically added. You will take all of your responses on the readings via Canvas and turn your assignment here. I will also use Canvas to post important notices and announcements, readings, handouts and assignments, and additional information about assignments and send group email messages should the need arise. Canvas will also be a place for you to ask questions to other students in the class for which everyone might want the answer. I highly recommend that you either check Canvas regularly for important messages and announcements and/or that you link your Canvas email to your regular email.

**Classroom Protocol and Course Organization**

This course is premised on the notion that active learning is the most effective and engaging way to learn. This means that we will go beyond the traditional mode of lecture-based education where I (the “knower”) pass on information for you (the “learner”) to simply memorize and reproduce for a later examination. Instead, I view the classroom as a space where we, together, can explore and grapple with questions and issues surrounding the ways in which gender is constructed and how it is influential to U.S. society. Thus, while I will do some lecturing, the course is also structured upon films, in-class activities, group work, and discussions. It is my hope that students will learn to approach the issue of gender with a more critical eye.

For an active learning model to be successful, it is important for each student to make the commitment to:

1. **Attend class regularly.** During most classes I will spend some time presenting new material that relates to the readings. Further, films, in-class activities and discussions will enhance understanding of course material. If you miss class on a regular basis, not only are you depriving yourself of these learning experiences, but you are depriving the rest of the class of your voice, experiences, and input. If you do miss a class, it is up to you to obtain any notes from someone else in the class, as I do not make my notes available to students.

2. **Complete the readings assigned for each day.** Engaged discussion of the readings cannot happen unless students read. Please bring the readings to class each day as we will often refer to them during class.
3. Participate in class discussions and activities and give full attention to the material. As members of a society where gender is very relevant, everyone has experiences with gender; thus, everyone should have something to add to class discussion. I understand that it is sometimes uncomfortable or even painful for some people to speak publicly. I will do my best to create an environment where people feel comfortable speaking. I expect you to help create a positive classroom atmosphere by refraining from engaging in any rude or disruptive behavior. If you disrupt the class, I will take whatever action that I believe necessary to address your behavior.

4. Respect others in the classroom. Due to the nature of the material we are exploring, there is bound to be some lively discussion and some disagreement. In addition, some people may feel uncomfortable with portions of the course material. This is OK and is even to be expected; we do not all have to agree with one another. However, we need to be able to talk about our differences in a respectful and supportive manner. It is imperative for our classroom to be a space where no one is made to feel embarrassed or ashamed. I will not tolerate disrespectful behavior. This includes rude interruptions, yelling, insults, and personal attacks. A major tenet of active learning is to have an open mind. Please try to think sociologically about all course topics.

5. Keep in touch with me if you are struggling or having problems. If you are having personal or academic problems impacting your success in the class, please let me know as soon as possible. Please don’t wait until the end of the course because at that point it is too late. You cannot disappear for weeks and expect that you will be able to make up everything you have missed. I follow SJSU policy for incomplete grades: I only give incompletes in cases of extreme and documented emergencies.

The best way to reach me is via Canvas, as I check my email there every weekday. I will usually respond to all emails that require a response within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Please note that I do not answer my phone during office hours if I am meeting with another student.

By following these five principles you give yourself the best opportunity to both learn and succeed in this course.

Assignments and Grading Policy

The assignments and activities for this course are designed to enhance understanding of course material. Your final grade in this class will be based on the following:

1. Online Reading Responses: Almost every week there will be one or two questions posted online via Canvas that cover that week’s reading. They will be posted on Canvas one week prior to when they are due. They must be completed by the time class begins (questions will close 5 minutes prior to class starting). You will be given an hour to complete each response. There are 13 reading responses and I will count your 10 highest scores (thus you can drop or miss 3 responses). There will be no make-up questions for ANY reason late responses will be given a grade of 0.

Grading of the reading response questions will be as follows:

3 = Reflects strong effort and understanding of reading(s)
2 = Reflects moderate effort and/or somewhat vague understanding of reading(s)
1 = Reflects weak effort and/or little understanding of readings(s)
0 = Late or not completed
2. **Exams:** There will be two take-home essay exams, including the final.

3. **Gender Research Project:** You will pick a topic from a list that I provide you and conduct your own observational research. You will then write a paper, connecting your findings to course materials.

4. **Class Participation and Activities:** Because this is primarily a non lecture-based course, student participation is vital for the success of the class. I will evaluate your class participation based on the following:
   
a. Participation in course discussions
b. Successful completion of various in-class activities.

   Please note: You cannot make up in-class activities and exercises. However, when I calculate your final participation grade I will allow for a bit of “cushion room” which means if you miss a day of in-class activities it will not adversely impact your grade.

Information and specific details about each assignment will be provided at a later date. (All handouts will always be posted to Canvas, as well).

The breakdown of your final grade looks like this:

- Online Reading Responses: 20%
- Exams (25% Each): 50%
- Gender Research Project: 20%
- Class Participation: 10%

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**Total:** 100%

Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A = 93 – 100%
- A- = 90 – 92%
- B+ = 88 – 89%
- B = 83 – 87%
- B- = 80 – 82%
- C+ = 78 – 79%
- C = 73 – 77%
- C- = 70 – 72%
- D+ = 68 – 69%
- D = 63 – 67%
- D- = 60 – 62%
- F = 59% or less

**University Policies**

**Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops are available at [http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html).

Information about late drop is available at [http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

**Academic Integrity**

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and
Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule, as needed, with fair notice.

Week 1: Introduction
Tuesday, 8/26

Thursday 8/28
Introduction to Sociology

Week 2: What is Gender? Why Should We Care About It?
Tuesday, 9/2
Read: Text: CH 1; Canvas: Orenstein, “Why I Had Hoped for a Boy and What’s Wrong with Cinderella?” (pp. 1-32)
Canvas Reading Response #1

Thursday, 9/4

Week 3: What’s the “Sociology” in the Sociology of Gender?
Tuesday, 9/9
Read: Text: CH 2; Lucal, “What It Means to be a Gendered Me”
Canvas Reading Response #2

Thursday, 9/11

Week 4: How is Gender Complex?
Tuesday, 9/16
Read: Canvas: Lorber, “Men as Women and Women as Men”; Levy, “Either/Or”
Canvas Reading Response #3

Thursday, 9/18

Week 5: How Do We Learn Gender?
Tuesday, 9/23
Read: Text: CH 4; Canvas: Pollack, “Inside the World of Boys”
Canvas Reading Response #4

Thursday, 9/25

Week 6: How Does Gender Matter for How We Think About Our Bodies?
Tuesday, 9/30
Read: Text: CH 7;
Canvas Reading Response #5

Thursday, 10/2

Week 7: How Does Gender Matter for How We Think About Our Bodies?
Tuesday, 10/7
No reading
Thursday, 10/9: EXAM #1
Take Home Exam Due

Week 8: How Does Gender Impact the People you Spend Your Time With?
Tuesday, 10/14
Read: Text: CH 6
Canvas Reading Response #6

Thursday, 10/16

Week 9: How Does Gender Matter for Whom We Want and Desire?
Tuesday, 10/21
Read: Text: CH 5
Canvas Reading Response #7

Thursday, 10/23

Week 10: How Does Gender Impact the People We Live Our Lives With?
Tuesday, 10/28
Read: Text: CH 8
Canvas Reading Response #8

Thursday, 10/30

Week 11: How Does Gender Affect What you Watch, What you Read, and What you Play?
Tuesday, 11/4
Read: Text: CH 10; Canvas: Messner, “The Televised Sports Manhood Formula”
Canvas Reading Response #9

Thursday, 11/6

Week 12: How Does Gender Affect What you Watch, What you Read, and What you Play?
Tuesday, 11/11
Veteran’s Day Holiday—NO CLASS

Thursday, 11/13

Week 13: How Does Gender Affect the Type of Work We Do and the Rewards We Receive?
Tuesday, 11/18
Read: Text: CH 9
Canvas Reading Response #10

Thursday, 11/20
Gender Research Project Due

Week 14: How Does Gender Help Determine Who Has Power and Who Doesn’t?
Tuesday, 11/25
Read: Text: CH 11
Canvas Reading Response #11

Thursday, 11/27
Thanksgiving break—NO CLASS

Week 15: How Is Gendered Power Enforced?
Tuesday, 12/2
**Read:** Canvas: Hvlaka, “Normalizing Sexual Violence”; Wesley and Gaarder, “The gendered ‘nature’ of the urban outdoors”; Anderson and Umberson, “Gendering Violence”

**Canvas Reading Response #12**

Thursday, 12/4

Week 16: How do we Implement Social Change?
Tuesday, 12/9
**Read:** Canvas: Connell, “Men, Masculinities, and Gender Equality in the Global Arena”

**Canvas Reading Response #13**
(Last Day of Office Hours)

FINAL EXAM:
Monday, December 17th at 9:45 a.m.
--Take Home Exam Due
--Informal Presentations of Research Project