

Soc. 355 – Sociology of Women
Office Hrs: Mon. 12:00-1:45
Wed. 8:30-9:45 & 12:00-1:30
By apt. (M & W 3:30-4:00)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: One of the first questions friends, relatives and neighbors ask a new parent is "Is it a boy or is it a girl?" What if the parents refused to answer? What if they said "It's an X!," as Lois Gould did in her tale of "X - A Fabulous Child's Story?" The pervasiveness of this question indicates the importance of sex and gender in society. Our lives take very distinct courses once we are categorized as female or male. In this class we will discover how the biological fact of sex is transformed into a system of sex and gender differentiation and stratification. We will explore how sex and gender relationships affect our everyday experiences in family, work, and school. We will discuss the importance of viewing social life from the "women's" perspective rather than from what customarily has been called a "gender-neutral" viewpoint. We will examine how social, economic and ideological factors shape the sex/gender system in contemporary America and cross-culturally. We will discuss and critique theories on the origins of gender stratification and predict how the sex/gender system will change.

WRITTEN RESOURCES:

IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL YOU READ THE ASSIGNMENTS BY THE DATE ASSIGNED. THIS SUCCESS OF THIS COURSE WILL DEPEND ON EACH STUDENT CONTRIBUTING TO CLASS DISCUSSION

The Gendered Society (3rd ed.), Michael Kimmel, 2008, New York: Oxford University Press. Michael Kimmel, a well-know writer and researcher, writes, "...the two tasks of any study of gender...are to explain both difference and dominance...Both difference and dominance are produced and reproduced in our social interactions, in the institutions in which we live and work. I will explore the ways in which gender inequality provides the foundation for assumption of gender difference. And finally, I will endeavor to show the impact of gender on our lives –how we become gendered people living gendered lives in a gendered society." Pp. 2, 16

Taking Sides in Controversial Issues: Gender (4 ed.), 2009, Jacquelyn White, McGraw-Hill. White writes, "Taking Sides...is a tool for stimulating critical thought about males and females, maleness and femaleness and beyond." "This book contains 20 issues...that are being hotly debated in contemporary scholarly and public discourse." "Your challenge is to probe your personal gender ideology (and intersecting ideologies such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class) so that you can open your mind to other perspectives and information and develop a more informed gender ideology." Pp. v, vi.

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO CLASS ASSIGNMENTS/HANDOUTS

I will post all assignments and announcements on Blackboard CourseInfo at UO. This software allows you access to course materials 24 hours a day. If you misplace an assignment, logon and download the handout. If you have questions for classmates and want to discuss the course readings logon the discussion group under COMMUNICATIONS.

When you enrolled in the class, an account was automatically set up for you. Please check BlackBoard twice a week for announcements. Also check your university e-mail for messages from me.

If you are unfamiliar with BlackBoard or have trouble accessing our class website on BB, please see me.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: The Student Conduct Code of the University of Oregon states that no student shall engage in behaviors that interfere with the ability of other students to learn. Please note: If anyone engages in disruptive behavior, including chatting with neighbor or talk that is not directed to the class as a whole, I will give that student(s) one verbal warning. After a second violation, I will ask the student to leave the classroom for that day. A third violation will result in a report to the Student Conduct Office. The Conduct Office will then decide on the appropriate response to the problem. The same policy holds for electronic devices – laptops, cell phones – that are used in such a way that the create disruption in the classroom.

COURSE ACTIVITIES: Your grade will be based primarily on four activities – midterm exam, final exam, group discussions, paper or journal.

EXAMS – You will have two exams during the term-see assignment schedule. Our schedule may change depending on how quickly we cover course material. I will provide general guidelines and questions to use for reviewing for the midterm and final. The format of the exams likely will be short answer/essay as well as objective questions. In your answers, you will need to summarize, synthesize and evaluate readings, lectures and guest presentations. You are allowed to bring a limited number of pages of notes to the exam, so you benefit by preparing written answers to the review questions.

CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITIES

Critical thinking involves effective reading, writing and dialogue with other critical thinkers about questions that ask: What are the fundamental issues raised? What is the relevant evidence required for resolving these issues? Is the source of authority credible? Are the reasons given adequate? Are there contradictions in the logic and evidence presented? Are the conclusions based on appropriate assumptions and premises? Are there other points of view that can be considered? (taken from The Lizard, Winter, 1995, Teaching Effectiveness Program, UO). Several types of assignments will focus on critical thinking skills and give you the opportunity to interact with other students. You will complete several short in-class writing/discussion assignments and complete a short paper or journal.

IN-CLASS WRITING AND DISCUSSIONS

Four to six times during the term I will ask you to complete an exercise in class or to participate in a formal group discussion. Credit will be given only for those written exercises completed on time. Only under emergency circumstances will make-ups for these assignments will be given. Some in-class activities will be announced in advance and require out-of-class preparation, while others will be announced and completed in the same class period. More detailed instructions for the formal discussions will be distributed later.

RESEARCH PAPER OR JOURNAL If you decide to complete a journal you will analyze and discuss 10 concepts, perspectives, or ideas presented in the class. If you select the research paper option, you will select an assigned topic from the Taking Sides reader to study. You will read and analyze all sections (2 articles, introduction, postscript) included in the Taking Sides reader, the appropriate sections from the Kimmel text, and an additional 3 scholarly articles or portions of books for your paper. The project (paper or journal) will be described in more detail in another handout. If you opt for the paper, you need to turn in a paragraph describing your topic on Monday of week 3.

GRADES Each activity will contribute the following amount to your final grade.

Midterm	35%
Final Exam	35%
Group Discussions	15%
Paper or Journal	15%

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (Assignment dates may be changed depending on how quickly the material is covered. I will do my best to hold the group discussions and exams on the dates listed in the schedule.) Kimmel – chapters in *The Gendered Society*, TS – Taking sides

Week 1

Monday Introduction, informal discussion
 Wed. C.W. Mills – *The Sociological Imagination* – posted on BlackBoard under “Course Documents” Also available at:
<http://www.lclark.edu/~goldman/socimagination.html>
 Kimmel – Ch. 1 – Introduction & pp. xxi-xxv; TS – Introduction (recommended)

Week 2

Monday Kimmel – Ch. 2 – Biology constructs the sexes,
 TS 2 – Gender Identity, TS 1 – Is Anatomy Destiny?
 Wed. No new reading, Informal Discussion - Psychology Today article (BB)

Week 3

Monday Kimmel – Ch. 3 – Cross-Cultural Constructions, TS 18 – Female Circumcision (FGM)
 Wed. Kimmel – Ch. 4 – Psychological Constructions,

Week 4

Monday Turn in paragraph describing paper topic
 Wed. Kimmel – Ch. 5 Inequality, TS 13 – Fetal Sex Selection

Week 5

Monday No new reading, **Formal Discussion - #1** – Bring two copies of your notes
 Wed. **Mid-term Exam** – Bring a #2 pencil and your notes

Week 6

Monday Kimmel – Ch. 6 – Gendered Family, TS 12 Role of Fathers, TS 11 Gay Parents
 Wed. No new reading

Week 7

Monday Kimmel – Ch. 8 – Gendered Workplace, TS 3 – Sex Differences in Math, TS 1 Gender Wage Gap (TS -14 Mommy Track- for discussion)
 Wed. **Formal Discussion #2** – Bring 2 copies of your notes

Week 8

Monday Kimmel – Ch. 10 – Gendered Body, TS 20 Sexual Constraints, TS 19 Abstinence only
 Wed. No new reading

Week 9

Monday Kimmel – Ch. 11 – Gendered Violence, TS 7 & 8 – Differences in Aggression,
 Wed. No new reading

Week 10

Monday PAPER OR JOURNAL DUE IN CLASS –
 Late projects receive a substantial reduction in grade
 Kimmel – Epilogue
 Wed. **Formal Discussion #3** – Bring 2 copies of your notes

FINAL EXAM TIME: Monday, Dec. 8 3:15 p.m. – Bring a #2 pencil and your notes

