

SOCIOLOGY 6280*Seminar in Sociology of Gender****COURSE OUTLINE AND SYLLABUS, Fall Semester 2000***

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Office Hours: 3:30-5:30 Tuesdays, and by appointment

Meets Tuesday evenings
Baldwin Hall room G-16

Course Focus and Objectives: This course is a graduate, introductory level course in Sociology of Gender. Rather than concentrate on particular substantive areas in sociology where gender has been influential in research, we instead will concentrate on this course in reading and evaluating classical and contemporary works by sociologists and scholars in related statements that represent distinctive methodological and theoretical approaches central to this field of study. We will cover approaches that have been identified as feminist as well as those that have not.

Although the majority of work we will read will have a central focus on women's experience (consistent with the scholarly literature to date), we will also cover writings from the newer men's studies tradition. You should come away from the course with a basic understanding of the theoretical frames by which sociologists have approached the study of gender, along with an understanding of overlaps with and differences from other important sociological theoretical literatures. The materials we cover sometimes focus primarily on gender and sometimes consider the relationship of gender to other important lines of differentiation in society, including race/ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation.

Students in sociology should find the class to be helpful preparation for qualifying examinations, particularly exams in the area of inequality. Many of the required and recommended books in the seminar are also a part of the reading list for that area examination.

You will be asked to undertake an original research paper, drawing upon materials beyond class assignments, that advances knowledge of gender in a particular domain of social life and/or applies and elaborates one or more theoretical frames. If you wish, you are encouraged to use this course as a precursor for a thesis or other research paper. (Or, alternatively, you may pursue a topic wholly unrelated to your thesis or dissertation that has always intrigued you.) This project will result in a written

paper of approximately 15-20 pp., inclusive of references, and an oral report given in the last three weeks of the course. The paper, and the accompanying oral report, will be the primary basis for your grade in the course. Although the primary emphasis in the works assigned to read in this course is on US society and the works of US and other Western scholars, you are welcome to develop a paper focused on other societal and cultural contexts. I will meet with each of you individually early in the semester to discuss your paper. Note that the latter sessions of class are devoted to presentation of oral reports based on your research.

Students will be asked to take substantial responsibility for class sessions. As we progress through the term, each of you will be asked to serve in the role of discussion leader for the week. This does not mean that you need to be an expert on the materials, but rather that you serve as the organizer for discussion. Some of the reading materials are challenging, and we can make the most of them by working through them collectively. We will set a schedule for discussion leading early in the term. Each of you will be asked to submit questions to me and to the discussion leader, probably via email, no later than noon on Sunday before each class session. The discussion leader will refine and organize questions, and possibly add some of her or his own. Your contribution of questions will figure into your grade (see below).

Like most seminars, the quality and effectiveness of the course will depend much on your input as a careful reader of assigned materials, participant and leader of discussions, and contributor of original research.

This course is a core course for the Women's Studies Graduate Certificate Program, although the majority of students who are in the course are not certificate candidates. If you would like to learn more about this program, you can Women's Studies in the Benson Building on South campus (on South Lumpkin, across from the Ga. Center for Continuing Education). If you are interested, I encourage you to explore this option, which usually can be accomplished with only minimal additions to the program of study you follow for your graduate program.

Since most of our classes will be devoted to discussions. Please do not be concerned that taking a perspective different from my own will in any way imperil your grade in the course. I hope that we can develop a climate in which students feel free to speak, but we also function as respectful listeners. I learn a great deal in this class each time I teach it, and I often learn the most from people whose perspective is very different from my own.

Evaluation: As noted above, the major portion of your final grade (60%) will be based on your original research paper and accompanying oral report. In addition, you will be asked to write two short "comment and response" papers, no longer than 6 pp., on assigned materials. You should select for these assignments readings OTHER than those for which you are the primary discussion leader. Each of these papers counts 15% of your final grade. The final 10% of your grade will be based on your performance as a discussion leader, plus your contributions to discussions and to questions for discussions. There will be no tests or exams, and your final paper will substitute for a final exam.

Deadlines for papers are given on the syllabus below. Papers may be turned in ahead of the due date, **but late papers will not be accepted.** Please note also that I rarely give grades of incomplete in the class, and only under extraordinary circumstances that you have discussed with me in advance.

Materials: I have ordered three books for this class, both required and recommended. We will cover in full all of the “required” books. I urge that you purchase them, although all are held by the library (though not on reserve). You may be able to find copies of some of these titles in the local used book stores. All are paperbacks.

You should plan to purchase these books:

Judith Lorber. *Paradoxes of Gender*. Yale University Press, 1994.

Robert Connell. *Gender and Power*. Stanford University Press, 1987.

Kristen A. Myers, Cynthia D. Anderson, and Barbara Risman, eds. *Feminist Foundations: Toward Transforming Sociology*. Sage, 1998.

Finally, some materials are available on informal reserve in room 114. We could not put these materials into a course packet without incurring (sometimes quite steep) royalty fees. However, it is perfectly legitimate for students to make personal copies for their own use.

You will find a sign-up sheet in the box in front of these materials. As a courtesy to classmates, please sign out materials (for a maximum of 2 hours) and indicate the time you expect them to be returned.

If you have not had much previous experience in Sociology of Gender, you may want to read a recent undergraduate text that is sort of a “Cliff’s Notes” to sociological theory on gender.

Judith Lorber, *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*. Roxbury.

This book, and Lorber’s more extensive *Paradoxes of Gender*, which we are reading, provide good, updated bibliographies of materials in many substantive fields that you might find valuable in your original research project.

Most major journals in sociology nowadays include materials relevant to courses in Sociology of Gender, but these journals are especially helpful:

Gender & Society, published by the ASA section on sex and gender and Sociologists for Women in Society.

Race, Class, and Gender, a relatively new journal affiliated with the ASA section of the same name.

SIGNS, an interdisciplinary journal

Social Problems, a pioneer journal in publishing research and theory on gender

Attendance:

Attendance is critical in a seminar. There is no way to make up for missed classes, and your absence impairs the quality of discussion for all students. I especially frown on absences during student reports. It is unfair for students to work hard on an oral presentation, then be deprived of feedback and comment on works in progress from all seminar participants. Persistent nonattendance will be grounds for an instructor-initiated drop at any point in the course, *regardless of your class average*.

Academic Honesty: I place strong emphasis on academic honesty and find that the vast majority of students at UGA do the same. Please read carefully the UGA code of honesty and raise any questions or concerns that you may have about it. I expect students to do their own work, and I expect that work presented bearing a student's name is work that has been prepared fully by her or him, or in the case of group projects, by group members alone. Reference assistance, typing, or proofreading by others is acceptable.

Other Policies: Please feel free to ask questions, in or out of class, if something confuses you. Often the issue that is troublesome for you is also troublesome for many classmates. Asking frequently helps a lot of people.

If my office hours are inconvenient for you, please make an appointment to see me at another time. You will find that I am often around even when formal office hours are not scheduled, especially in the afternoons.

I do not mind phone calls at home at reasonable hours (548-2669), and I try to check email several times a day.

SYLLABUS

Materials on the syllabus should be read prior to each class session.

R=Materials on reserve, room 114

Refer to pages above for fuller citations for books.

Week One: Aug. 22

Introduction; Explanation of course format and requirements

Week Two: Aug. 29: Conceptualizing the “problem” of gender; origins of gender

Read Lorber, part one (chapters 1-5)

Acker, “Women and Social Stratification: A Case of Intellectual Sexism” in
Myers et al.

Week Three: Sept. 5: Biology and Gender

This week’s readings are in the reserve box

Read Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*, chapter 2: Biological Essentialism

Carol Tavris, *The Mismeasure of Women*, chapter 3: The 70-Kilogram Man and the Pregnant
Person

Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance....”

Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender*, chapter 3: Of Genes and Gender

Video: The Remarkable Story of John/Joan

Week Four: Sept. 12

Social- psychological and psychoanalytical perspectives on gender

Read Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Chapters 4 and 5

Janet Lever, “Sex Differences in the Games Children Play,” in Myers et al.

West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender” in Myers et al.

Week Five: Sept. 19

Socially constructed gender practices: Conceptual frames

Read Lorber, chapters 6

Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, Part I: The Making of the Self-Made Man in America (R)

R.W. Connell, "A Very Straight Gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience, and the Dynamics of Gender," in Myers et al.

Barrie Thorne and Judith Stacey, "The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology" in Myers et al.

Janet Chafetz, "From Sex/Gender Roles to Gender Stratification..." in Myers et al.

Week Six: Sept. 26

Gender in the context of other identities and statuses

Read Collins, "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought," in Myers et al.

Collins, "On Race, Gender, and Science: Black Women as Objects and Agents of Sociological Knowledge"

Baca-Zinn, "Mexican-American Women in the Social Sciences" in Myers et al.

Jacquelyn Johnson, "Finding Myself among the Long-Haired Women....." Myers et al.

Nancy Whittier, "Reflections on Transformations in Feminist Sociology....and Myself" in Myers et al.

Kenneth Clatterbaugh, "African American Men: The Challenge of Racism" (R)

Week Seven: Oct. 3

First short paper due no later than this evening.

Gender in families and other intimate domains

Read Lorber, chapters 7 and 8

Marjorie deVault, Excerpts from *Feeding the Family*

Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Our Mother's Grief: Racial-Ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families." (R)

Week Eight: Oct. 10

Families and the state

Read Excerpts from Coontz, *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families*, chapters 1 and 7 (R)

Valerie Polakow, "The Shredded Net: The End of Welfare as We Know It" (R)

Week Nine: Oct. 17

Issues of workplace and family

Read Nancy Folbre, *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structure of Constraint*, Part I:
Concepts of Social Reproduction
Rosenfeld, "Race and Sex Differences in Career Dynamics," in Myers et al.
Reskin, "Bringing the Men Back In" in Myers et al.
Lorber, chapter 9

Week Ten: Oct. 24

The gendered workforce

Read Reskin and Roos, Excerpts from *Job Queues, Gender Queues*, Part I (R)
Kathryn Ward, *Women Workers and Global Restructuring*, chapter 1: Introduction
and Overview
Barbara Reskin, "Realities of Affirmative Action in Employment" (R)

Week Eleven: Oct. 31

Gender and power in the public arena: Cultural approaches

Read Connell book

Week Twelve: Nov. 7

Second short paper is due no later than this evening

Working toward change

Read Lorber, Part III: chapters 10-12

Collins, *Fighting Words*, chapter 6: Some Group Matters

Taylor and Rupp, "Women's Culture and Lesbian Feminist Activism" in Myers et al.

Week Thirteen, Nov. 14, through Week Fifteen, Dec. 5, are reserved for students' oral reports.

Final paper is due in on Friday, Dec. 8, by 5 p.m.