

Women and Men in Contemporary Society
SOC 223/WMST 223, Section 01 – Spring 2011
MWF– 10am-10:50am – Quigley 208

Instructor: Kate Niman

Office Hours: Monday 8:30-9:45am and 11am-1:15pm, Wednesday 8:30-9:45am, Friday 8:30-9:45am, and by appt.

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Subject Matter: This course serves as an introduction to the sociology of gender. We examine gender as a major organizing principle of contemporary social life and explore the ways that gender intersects with other important lines of social differentiation, such as race, ethnicity, social class, sexuality, and nationality. We explore diverse theories that address issues of gender differentiation and gender inequality, and we explore the ways in which gender influences social life and social organization within major social institutions such as media, family, the workplace, schools, religion, politics, and popular culture. Although the primary emphasis will be on contemporary American society, we will be attentive to ways in which contemporary gender relations in the US are similar to, and different from, those in other locales and eras.

More generally, the purpose of this course is to provide students with a social science course that will contribute to the university goals of a liberal arts education. This course is aimed at students who are interested in learning more about gender in contemporary society. The goal is to examine gender as a social, cultural, and institutional construction. The course will provide students with a theoretical framework for understanding gender in contemporary society, and meaningful learning experiences through which the framework can be applied.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to: 1) Demonstrate an understanding of such sociological concepts as gender, discrimination, feminism and patriarchy, 2) Display basic knowledge of gender's significance in U.S. history, culture, and social structure, 3) Demonstrate critical thinking about the dialogue emerging from different theories and perspectives pertaining to gender, sexuality, race and class, and 4) Apply sociological concepts from personal and/or family experience to analyze gender as a form of human mutuality that must be understood to enhance the common good.

Course Goals:

1. Deconstruct popular definitions of gender and develop a perspective of gender as socially constructed.
2. Compare and contrast doing gender, sex essentialism, and gender as a system theories.
3. Apply gender theories to explain gendered behaviors.
4. Identify and evaluate an argument based on its thesis, assumptions and supporting evidence.
5. Use evidence to construct arguments about gender.
6. Use a sociological lens to make sense of the gendered world, your gendered identity and actions.
7. Improve critical reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Teaching Strategies: The course will use a variety of formats, including lectures, discussions, in-class group work, film/videos, response papers, presentations, and exams. Previous careful reading of assigned texts will be vital to active participation and comprehension, so have assigned readings done prior to class.

Student Etiquette: Students are asked to follow some guidelines to help maintain a constructive learning environment. Throughout the semester, we will discuss a variety of difficult social issues and your fellow class members may hold diverse opinions about some of the topics we cover. As such, we need to ensure a safe classroom and a positive learning environment. Class discussions should take place within the context of academic inquiry and in the spirit of understanding diverse perspectives and experiences. It is essential that everyone treat each other with respect during class discussions.

Disrespectful treatment of others will significantly lower your class participation grade. Do not engage in private conversations, interrupt another student who has the floor, express negative comments about the opinions of your fellow students, walk into class late or leave early (without prior notice), keep cell phones on, text message your friends, read the newspaper, or show general signs of disrespect for the course, instructor, or other students.

Classroom Ground Rules: In this class, we will discuss both abstract theoretical ideas and concrete, practical information about different social groups and mainstream behaviour in society. I hope that these materials will challenge you intellectually and personally. Because this class may touch on controversial social issues, however, you may occasionally and initially feel more threatened than challenged. To limit these difficulties, I propose the following ground rules, to which I would like you all to agree and assume while in this classroom:

1. Acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination based on race, class, sex, sexual orientation, and physical differences exist.
2. Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about our own social group and about members of other groups, whether we belong to a majority or minority group.
3. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past, but accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. Assume that people--both those we study and those in this class--do the best they can.
5. Never demean, devalue, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences, backgrounds, or statements. This does not mean that you can't disagree, only that you must do so respectfully.
6. Because of the particular nature of this class, we will be reading and discussing a range of social problems. Difficult films may be shown. Our goal is to examine these issues from a variety of viewpoints.

Academic Ethics Policies: Academic honesty is very important. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. The university and I expect that *all* work presented will represent original effort by the student. Any violations will be dealt with in the appropriate manner—*minimum* consequence is a zero for an assignment, *maximum* consequence is an F in the course. For more information, see http://www.siu.edu/gradschl/catalog/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf

Other Policies: The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act, also known as the Buckley Amendment, is a federal law designed to protect student privacy. This means that only *you* have legal access to your grades, not your parents, friends, or significant others. You have the option to sign a waiver to these rights, but if you have not signed said waiver, federal law prohibits me from sharing your grades with anyone but you.

Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Statement: To meet the expectations of this course, persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations are encouraged to bring this to my attention as soon as possible. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted during the first week of the semester along with a request for special accommodations. Contact the SIU Disability Support Services (DSS) to facilitate requests: Woody Hall B-150, Mail Code: 4705. DSSsiu@siu.edu, Ph: (618) 453-5738 Fax: (618) 453-5700 TTY: (618) 453-2293

Emergency Procedures: SIUC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT'S website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency. I will provide guidance and direction in the event of an emergency. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with me during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

Assignments: Grades will be comprised of the following components:

Participation	10% (<i>active</i> participation; demonstrated preparation for class)
Response Papers (3 total, 15% each)	45%
Exams (2 total, 15% each)	30%
Presentations/Short Paper	15%
TOTAL	100%

Note: There is no extra credit offered in this course.

Grading Scale:

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Attendance and Class Participation 10%:

-Attendance: You are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. If special circumstances prohibit you from arriving to class on time on a regular basis, please let me know as soon as possible. If you are involved in university-sponsored or sanctioned events (i.e., athletic events, academic conferences and/or competitions), and will need to miss class due to such events, you will need to present me with a paper or email copy of said event, and the dates you will be absent from class, etc. Such documentation is usually provided by appropriate coaches or sponsors. Additionally, should you have a serious illness or death in the family that requires you to miss class, you will need to provide me with paper or email documentation of said event (e.g., funeral program with your name listed clearly and legibly on the document). Only through complete documentation will I excuse such absences.

Attendance will be taken by sign-in sheet. Anyone signing in for someone else is guilty of academic dishonesty and will be dealt with accordingly. It is your responsibility to be sure your presence in class is recorded on any given day. If you missed the sign-in sheet, be sure to see me immediately after class to sign it. You will not be able to prove your presence in class on a specific day if your signature is missing from that day's sign-in sheet.

Absences will influence your FINAL grade as follows:

- 0-3 absences: no penalty
- 4-6 absences: 5% penalty
- 6-9 absences: 10% penalty
- 10+ absences: **Automatic Failure** of the course

If you have ANY questions regarding this policy, please bring such questions to my attention immediately.

I expect you to be responsible for your own learning. There is a positive relationship between class attendance and final grades: if you attend class on a regular basis, you are more likely to do well in the class. You are responsible for all notes and assignments missed as a result of class absences. My notes are off limits. Being absent from class does not excuse you from adhering to deadlines for homework, projects, in-class activities or quizzes.

-Participation: Come to class prepared, having read the materials with a few questions or comments to share with the class for discussion. Your participation grade will not be based simply upon your appearance in class or on your frequency of comments but also upon the *quality* of your comments and your active participation in class. For example, bringing up a point from the reading that was unclear or critiquing an argument in the reading is more involved (and of more quality) than merely reciting descriptive information from the text. Additionally, quality listening skills are important to the class--I value the ability to build discussion with other class members, value others' opinions, and exhibit respect for one another in the classroom.

Response Papers 45%: For **three** of the weeks during the semester, you will turn in a response paper. This is a short paper (3-4 pages) where you respond to the week's readings. Individually, each paper is worth 15% of your final grade. Combined, they are worth 45% of your grade. **You are in charge of picking which three weeks you complete a response paper on, and they are due on MONDAYS at the beginning of class.** These papers can cover any of the readings covered for the **upcoming** week. Because there are no readings during the last three weeks of class, you will not be able to turn in response papers at the end, so procrastination is strongly discouraged.

Guidelines for response papers:

You get to decide how you would like to write your response papers. You can write up a detailed summary of the readings, write about what the readings evoked for you, or some variation of this. Regardless of the writing style of the paper, you **MUST CITE** course materials. Each essay must have **at least** 3 citations. This will help you focus, as it is important that you directly think about the course materials. You can choose what format you would like to cite with (ASA, APA, MLA, etc), but I suggest using the citation format that is most prevalent within your major field of study. Failure to cite course materials in response papers will result in a failing grade for that essay.

Papers must be completed on Mondays and handed in at the beginning of class. I do not accept papers sent via email. Papers must be double-spaced, typed in 11- or 12-point Times New Roman font, have 1 inch margins, be spell checked, grammar checked, proofread, have numbered pages, and be stapled in the left-hand corner. Papers not following these guidelines cannot receive full credit. Additionally, **late submissions will not be accepted.** Since you get to choose which weeks you want to write a response paper, I expect you to be able to plan your schedules accordingly.

If you are unsatisfied with your grade, you can revise and resubmit ONE of your three essays. (More information to follow).

Improving one's writing is an important part of the college experience, and spelling and grammar will be a part of your grade in this course on all written work. If you need additional assistance, I encourage you to contact the SIUC Writing Center. They are located in Room 236 of the Morris Library, and their phone number is (618)453-1231.

Exams 30% (15% each): Exams for this course will consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. These questions draw on your understanding of reading assignments, lectures, class discussions, films, and on issues surrounding the various perspectives and concepts.

Make-up Information: Make-up exams create potentially unfair situations among students, so you are only allowed to make-up an exam in the event of an unavoidable, extreme, *documented* circumstance (such as serious illness or family emergency). If you must miss an exam, please let me know *in advance* as soon as possible. Any make-up request made after the test has been administered will *not* be considered. All make-up exams will be essay format and will be given at a mutually convenient time, no longer than one week after the initial exam is given.

Presentations/Short Paper (15%): During the last three weeks of the semester, students will each do a short presentation and turn in a short paper regarding the presentation. More information to follow.

Class Materials: The following book is required. Please purchase the text and bring relevant course materials to class each day.

Kramer, Laura. 2011. *The Sociology of Gender: A Brief Introduction, 3rd edition*. New York: Oxford. (SOG in syllabus)

Spade, Joan Z. and Catherine G. Valentine. 2011. *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities, 3rd edition*. Los Angeles: Sage. (KOG in syllabus)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE: As the semester progresses, I reserve the right to alter the syllabus as I see necessary. I will keep you informed should the syllabus need alteration.

Week One

1/19: introduction to the class, review syllabus, introductions

1/21: SOG – Chapter 1

Week Two

1/24: SOG – Chapter 2

1/26: KOG – Reading 7

1/28: KOG – Reading 2

Week Three

1/31: KOG – Reading 26

2/2: SOG – Chapter 3

2/4: KOG – Reading 15

Week Four

2/7: KOG – Reading 18

2/9: KOG – Reading 19

2/11: KOG – Reading 20

Week Five

2/14: SOG – Chapter 4

2/16: KOG – Reading 40

2/18: KOG – Reading 41

Week Six

2/21: KOG – Reading 38

2/23: **Review for Midterm**

2/25: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week Seven

2/28: SOG – Chapter 5

3/2: KOG – Reading 21 and Reading 8

3/4: Film

Week Eight

3/7: Film continued

3/9: KOG – Reading 25

3/11: KOG – Reading 28

SPRING BREAK

Week Nine

3/21: SOG – Chapter 6

3/23: KOG – Reading 6

3/25: KOG – Reading 36

Week Ten

3/28: SOG – Chapter 7

3/30: KOG – Reading 5

4/1: KOG – Reading 31

Week Eleven

4/4: SOG – Chapter 8

4/6: KOG – Reading 33

4/8: KOG – Reading 48

Week Twelve

4/11: KOG – Reading 49

4/13: Presentations

4/15: Presentations

Week Thirteen

4/18: Presentations

4/20: Presentations

4/22: Presentations

Week Fourteen

4/25: Presentations

4/27: Presentations

4/29: Presentations

Week Fifteen

5/2: Presentations

5/4: Presentations

5/6: Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM

The final exam is scheduled for **Friday, May 13: 07:50-09:50am.**