

## SOCIOLOGY 6280

### *Seminar in Sociology of Gender*

#### *COURSE OUTLINE AND SYLLABUS, Fall Semester 2008*

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**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. Among the approaches that we will cover in this class are rational choice theory, psychoanalytical theory, critical theory, neo-Marxist and socialist feminist theory, radical feminist theory, and postmodernism. 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 and articles in the seminar are also a part of the reading list for that area examination.

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, see Cecilia Herles, Ph.D., associate director of the Women's Studies Program, Benson Building (across S. Lumpkin from the Georgia 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.

**Materials:** We will use the following texts in the course (both paperback).

Joey Sprague. *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging the Differences*. AltaMira Press, 2005. (paperbound).

Michael Kimmel. 2006. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

We will have a number of other readings, which will be either on library reserve and/or informal reserve in the mailroom, as class members prefer. We will discuss this during the first class meeting. I have put as much material as I possibly can on reserve in the main library's E-RESERVES (password=fall2008), case sensitive. A few longer pieces cannot be put on reserve without violating copyright laws and therefore are on informal reserve in the Sociology mail room. You are free to make copies of these materials for your own use. The closest public-access copy machines are in the main library just across from Baldwin.

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. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. (a fourth edition is in the works, but probably will not be available by the time the course begins).

**Evaluation:** This class will not use traditional examinations. Instead, you will be evaluated on your written work and on your contributions to class discussions and discussion leadership. I anticipate that each class member will take responsibility for discussion leadership for at least two class sessions during the term, in addition to an oral presentation on your independent research project (described more fully below).

In addition, you will be asked to submit three written assignments.

*Short Papers:* You may choose any two readings assigned in the class for which you are NOT a discussion leader to use as a basis for "comment and response" short papers. I encourage you in these short essays to link the readings you select to respond to your own intellectual interests and personal research projects. Essay book reviews, of the sort that are published in the initial pages of journals such as *Contemporary Sociology*, are a good model for these papers. They may address the reading as a whole, or some component of the reading (for example, a theoretical or methodological concern). The first is due no later than Sept. 29 and the second no later than Nov. 3 (see below), but you may submit your short papers at any point up to and including the deadline date. Papers should be typed, double spaced. Any references beyond materials assigned

in class should be formally cited, in ASA style or a recognized style (APA, MLA, etc.) recognized within your discipline.

*Major Research Project:* Each person in the class will be asked to write an original research paper that may take one of two foci:

- (1) A summation and critique of the works of a classical or contemporary theorist who has made important contributions to the area of gender. The theorist can be a man or a woman. While I anticipate that most students in the class will be sociologists and will choose a theorist whose contributions have been important within this field, I am open to suggestions of theorists from other areas who might be a better fit for your interests if their work is of sociological relevance. (I am better prepared, however, to suggest possibilities within the field of sociology. If you are in another field, you may want to consult with advisers and mentors in that field for suggestions). You will be required to read and digest a good sampling of the work of the theorist you choose to analyze. Your research should culminate in an oral presentation (of 15-20 minutes) in class plus a written paper of approximately 20 pages, including full and complete references to the sources you have consulted. We will talk more about this assignment, and I will have an additional handout, once enrollment in the class has stabilized.
- (2) An application of one or more theoretical perspectives on gender to an area of interest of yours, a theoretical framing, if you will, of an actual or potential research project that you will or might undertake. It is perfectly fine to link your paper to work you are doing for a thesis or dissertation, if you so desire.

Generally, the first option might be preferable for students just beginning their work in sociology of gender, while the latter might be more suitable for persons farther along in their graduate career who are designing theses or dissertations, but this is not absolutely the case.

This research will result in an in-class presentation during the latter weeks of the class, plus a written paper of approximately 15-20 pp. (references included). We will talk more about this assignment as the semester proceeds, but I would like to begin a conversation with each of you about possibilities for your original research project in weeks two and three of the course.

The paper will be due at noon on December 12, 2008. **LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

*Discussion Leadership:* You will be asked to serve one or more sessions as discussion leader/coordinator (how many turns depends on the size of the class). All students should read all materials and submit questions, no later than Thursday evening of the preceding week, to the discussion leader for that week. Using WebCT for this course, students should send questions to that week's discussion leader(s) and copy them to me. It is helpful if the discussion leader(s) plan to consult with me about upcoming sessions. The discussion leader's job is to organize, edit, and select a series of questions to guide discussion. These should be checked out with me and posted on WebCT no later than Sunday evening at 5, so that students have an opportunity to ponder the questions before coming to class.

You will be graded for this portion of the class on both your performance in the role of discussion leader and the timeliness and quality of questions that you submit throughout the term.

Assignments will be weighted as follows:

Short papers: 20% each

Class participation (including performance as a discussion leader): 10%

Oral report on final project: 10%

Final project written paper: 40%

### **Other Policies**

I rarely give incompletes, and only under rare circumstances where we have discussed this in advance. Work submitted to resolve an incomplete is not eligible for a grade of "A." An A- is the highest possible grade. The rationale: students granted incompletes have had more time to prepare materials in comparison with others in the class.

If you have a *documented disability*, please speak to me during the first week of class so that we can make the necessary arrangements to allow you to perform your best.

I typically prohibit *laptop use* in class unless you have a documented disability requiring the regular use of a laptop. I have found that laptops tend to discourage class discussion and some students find their use to be distracting to their own attention to class.

I do not mind phone calls at home at reasonable hours: 706-548-2669. However, email (address is given above) is often the most efficient way to reach me when I am out of the office.

I do not mind small children in class in an emergency situation. However, as a courtesy to all students, please do not plan to bring small children to class on a regular basis.

I have set up a WebCT account for students in this course to facilitate communication. Please look to WebCT for updates and announcements, too. I check my regular UGA email account more frequently than the WebCT email, though, so if you need to reach me in a hurry, try the [lgrant@uga.edu](mailto:lgrant@uga.edu) account. We will use WebCT to submit questions to discussion leaders and to me prior to class sessions and to distribute lists of final questions, as well as for class announcements and the like. *Students should be aware that WebCT materials are considered "privileged" and therefore should be shared only with other class members. You should not copy or forward materials from WebCT to others outside the class.*

Materials on the syllabus below should be read before coming to class each day. The syllabus is a tentative plan for assignments for the class and may be altered by the instructor as the course proceeds. Other than the two texts that I recommend, all materials are on electronic reserve in the library, unless listed as "SR," which means they will be on reserve in the Sociology mailroom.

***Week One: Aug. 18***

Introduction, explanation of course requirements

***Week Two: Aug. 25***

Exploring the meanings of sex, gender, and sexuality in contemporary culture

Read: Lorber & Moore, "Ambiguous Bodies" from their *Gendered Bodies: Feminist Perspectives*.

Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes" and "Sexing the Body: How Biologists Construct Human Sexuality"

Preves, "Sexing the Intersexed"

Lorber, "Believing is Seeing" from her *Paradoxes of Gender*

Sapolsky, "The Trouble with Testosterone"

Tavris, "The Mismeasure of Women"

Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm"

Burke, "Appearance," from her *Gender Shock*

Yoder, "The Intersections of Sex, Gender, and Sexuality"

***Week Three: NO CLASS on Labor Day, September 1***

***Week Four: Sept. 8***

Feminist Theoretical Perspectives on Gender; Psychological and Social Psychological Approaches

Read: Farganis, "Contemporary Feminist Theories" from her *Situating Feminisms*.

Howard and Amillia, "Gender and Identity"

Ridgeway, "Interaction and the Conservation of Gender Inequality"

Gilligan, "Gilligan, "Theorizing Difference"

***Week Five: Sept. 15***

Psychoanalytic-Informed theories; Gender Lenses

Read: Chodorow, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality"

Connell, "Labor, Power, and Cathexis" from his *Gender and Power*

Bem, "Gender Polarization" from her *Lenses of Gender*

Smith, "A Peculiar Eclipsing...." From her *The Everyday World as*

*Problematic*

Hill-Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within"

**Week Six: Sept. 22**

Gender in the Context of Other Statuses and Identities

Read: Mullings, chapters 6-8 from her *On Our Own Terms*  
Keung, "Gay Fraternities"  
Martin, "Class and Resistance" from *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*  
Jane Ward, "Not All Differences are Created Equal: Multiple Jeopardy in a Gendered Organization"

**Week Seven: Sept. 29**

Social Constructivist and Cultural Approaches

Read West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender"  
Blair-Loy, "Cultural Constructions of Family Schemas"  
Cragin and Simonds, "The Study of Gender in Culture"  
Kimmel, "Saving the Males"  
Milkie, "Contested Images of Femininity"  
Danuta-Walters, "Making Sense of Feminist Cultural Theory"  
Messner, "Masculinities and Athletic Careers"

***First short paper is due no later than today.***

**Week Eight: Oct. 6**

Problematizing Masculinity

Read Reskin, "Bringing the Men Back In"  
Kimmel, *Mahood in America*  
Connell, "Men of Reason" from his *Masculinities*

**Week Nine: Oct. 13**

Structural Theories of Gender

Read, Folbre, excerpts from *Who Pays for the Kids?*  
Risman, "Gender as Structure"  
Britton, "The Epistemology of Gendered Organizations"

**Week Ten: Oct. 20**

Marxist, Neo-Marxist Perspectives, Socialist Feminist and Standpoint Perspectives

Read: Eisenstein, "Developing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism"  
Polakow, "The Shredded Net: The End of Welfare as We Know It"

Harding, "Feminist Standpoints"

***Week Eleven: Oct. 27***

Radical Feminist Perspectives

Read, MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance" from her *Feminism Unmodified*,  
(SR)

Enloe, "On the Beach: Sexism and Tourism" and "Base Women" from her  
*Bananas, Beaches and Bases*

Goodwin, "The Ultimate Growth Industry: Trafficking in Women and Girls"

Daniels, "Men at War: Vietnam and Agent Orange"

Dworkin and Messner, "Just Do What? Sports, Bodies, and Gender"

***Week Twelve: Nov. 3***

Feminism, Research, and the Academy

Read Stacey, "Disloyal to the Discipline"

Leahy, "Gender Differences in Productivity: Research Specialization as a  
Missing Link"

Hochschild, "Inside the 'Clockwork' of Male Careers"

Valian, "Women in Academia"

***Second short paper is due no later than today.***

***Week Thirteen: Nov. 10:***

Read Sprague, *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging the  
Differences*.

***Week Fourteen: Nov. 17: CLASS PRESENTATIONS***

***THANKSGIVING BREAK: Nov. 24-28: NO CLASS THIS WEEK***

***Week Fifteen: Dec. 1: CLASS PRESENTATIONS***

*Dec. 3: Deadline for feedback critiques on presentations to classmates*

***Final Paper is due Monday, Dec. 8, by regular class time.***

