SOCL 4521
Sociology of Gender
Fall 2009
TR 1:40-3:00

Instructor: Dana Berkowitz, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: TR 12:10-1:30 and by appointment
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Course Location: 214 Coates

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is intended to provide a critical perspective on the gendered structure of society. This course is designed to inform students of the existing academic literature on the sociology of gender. The relationship of gender with racism, classism, and heterosexism will be emphasized throughout the course. We will explore how gender shapes gendered lives in various parts of the world and we will question the effects of the increasingly globalized economy on our gendered realities. The exploration of the institutional dimensions of families, education, the workplace, and the state will offer an understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors that shape our lives as men and women. We will ask how these structural forces and institutions shape the experiences of groups of women and men who are differently placed within them.

As an instructor, I aim to create a learning atmosphere that fosters critical and sociological thinking, writing, and discussion. I want you as students to go beyond merely digesting other people's ideas to engage actively with the material and to assess critically both commonly held assumptions and sociological theories about gender and sexuality. We live in a society where gender is created, defined, redefined, and contested all around us on a daily basis. This course is designed to be a catalyst for moving beyond the roles of participant and passive observer toward active sociological analysis of gender processes.

Students will be responsible for learning what sociologists of gender know and understand about how gender and gender relations influence the daily lives of individuals residing in the United States and abroad.

Required Materials for this Course:

You will be required to purchase the following text from either the LSU bookstore or the Co-op Bookstore on Burbank (in same shopping plaza as Walk-On’s and Hello Sushi).

Press.

There are also supplemental readings that are posted on Moodle.

**Class Policy:**
I do not discuss grades over e-mail. If you would like to speak with me about an exam, assignment, final grade, or any other graded material you must come to my office and speak with me face-to-face.

**Classroom Environment:**

The success of this course depends on the interactions generated between the instructor and the students. I do expect you to participate actively in class, share your ideas and opinions, comment on and assess those of your fellow classmates. However, I do demand that everyone treat each other with respect. Ridicule of any sort will not be tolerated.

**Attendance and Participation:**

Attendance is not mandatory. However, as stated above, your daily participation in the class is essential to the success of the course. You are responsible for all material covered in class and in the readings whether you are present or not. I will not provide notes for anybody who is absent.

**Disabilities:**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

**Academic Honesty**

The attempt to represent the work of another as the product of one’s own thought whether the other’s work is published or unpublished, or simply the work of a fellow student is a violation of academic policy. **Plagiarism** is included, but not limited to, quoting oral or written materials or oral presentation for an academic requirement; submitting a paper which was purchased from a term paper service as your own work; submitting anyone else’s paper as your own work.

**Course Assignments:**

**Exams:**

There will be two in-class exams. Each will be worth 50 points (25%) of your final grade. Each exam will consist of multiple choice questions and/or short answer questions. Exams will cover assigned readings, films shown in class, class lectures, and any other material
given during class time.

The exams will test your understanding of concepts and theories as well as specific data in the readings and/or discussed in class. I expect all students to take the exams during the scheduled class periods. There is no final exam in this course. Although exams are not cumulative, this course is constructed in such a way that many concepts, themes, and ideas are connected and might be reaffirmed or contested in different readings for different weeks.

Make up exams will only be given on the rarest of circumstances. Emergency situations will be handled on an individual basis. You must notify me in advance that there is a very serious problem and I will decide if you are allowed to take a make-up. If you do not take the scheduled exam, you are given a grade of zero for the exam. If I do administer a make-up exam, I reserve the right to give an exam that is different from the exam the class had and to give an essay exam. Students who take make-up exams, regardless of their reason for doing so, will not be eligible for the class curve if there is one. Please do not take this course if you anticipate that you might miss an exam for any reason.

Exam 1: October 15, 2009
Exam 2: December 3, 2009

Participation (10%)
This class is based on your thorough participation and critical engagement with text and exercise materials. I expect you to come to class having completed the readings for that day.

I will be administrating 11 pop quizzes throughout the semester that will amount to your participation grade. I will only count 10 of these 11 so you have one “forgiveness day.” These are in-class quizzes and cannot be made up unless you provide me legal documentation the following class day. If I do not receive any documentation on the following class you will not be able to make-up the assignment. This is worth 10% of your final grade.

Small Projects:
You have the option of choosing 2 small projects out of the following 4 options. Due dates for the projects are listed below in the course schedule and are non-negotiable. If you do not have the specific project handed in on the due date it will be counted as late. I automatically deduct 10 points for each day that it is late. Choose you projects wisely! These are meant to be fun, engaging, and educational.

1. Due September 17, 2009. Bodies. Collect 5 advertisements from women’s magazines such as Glamour, Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Seventeen, etc that advertise feminine hygiene products-pads, tampons, douches, yeast infection medicine. What do these images in the ads suggest? What are common themes? What do the words and visual images tell readers? What messages do these send about
women’s bodies? Collect 5 advertisements from men’s magazines such as GQ, Maxim, Playboy, etc that are selling masculine hygiene products. What do you find? What are the words, visual images? What do these differences (if any) imply about women’s bodies in contrast to men’s? How does this implication reinforce gender difference and subordination? You must attach the ads to your paper! This paper should be between 2-3 double spaced pages.

2. Due September 29, 2009. Heteronormativity. Heterosexism is maintained by the illusion that heterosexuality is the norm and by silencing all other forms and practices of sexuality. This assignment will force you to think about the pervasiveness of heterosexuality. Think about and reflect on the following: go into the card section at your local drug store and peruse the love and anniversary cards, look at advertisements on TV commercials and in magazines, watch sitcoms, soap operas or TV dramas (on primetime), go observe in the quad, at the mall or in a park. How many performances of heterosexuality do you see? What does this mean for individuals who do not identify as heterosexual? This should be a 2-3 page (double spaced) analysis of heteronormativity.

3. Due October 27, 2009. Families/Work. Interview 3 women (preferably of different ages, social classes, ethnicities, racial backgrounds, sexualities) about how they negotiate work/family issues. Prepare an interview guide of 5 questions to ask each woman. Jot down each woman’s answers. Write up your findings using a feminist, intersectional lens. This paper should be a critical analysis of the themes that surface in these three different conversations about gender, work, and family. What were some similarities? Differences? What do you think these differences are due to? This paper should be 2-3 pages double spaced. Attach the interview guides and jotted notes on each interview to your paper.

4. Due November 10, 2009. Politics, the Law, and the State. Prepare a 2-3 page analysis of any current global issue using a gender and intersectional lens. Provide me with a background of the issue and detail how using gender/intersectional analysis can help expand upon and/or complicate the issue. You must use at least 5 sources for this paper. They can be from newspapers, magazines, books, websites, or academic journals. Examples of issues include: Women in Iran, Gender in the Israel/Palestine conflict, the First Family (Obamas), Gender in Pakistan, Women in Sudan, etc. The possibilities are limitless! This assignment is designed to keep you aware that global politics are gender politics.

Final Project: Understanding gender through photovoice (20% of final grade)
DUE NOVEMBER 24, 2009
Photovoice is a type of research methodology that is used to understand social life and action. You will be required to take 10 photographs of either real or symbolic ways that gender effects you in your everyday life. These must be actual photographs and not images that you have taken off the web. Five of these photos must be of ways that you experience or perform gender in your everyday life. For example, you can use a photo of a high heel shoe or a football. Five of these photos should be of how gender shapes your individual identities and experiences. The other five photos must be of ways that gender is experienced or performed in an institutional dimension (i.e. school, work, family). These pictures do not need to be of you. For example, if you want to capture the gendered
experience of parenting, you may use a photograph of a father playing catch with his daughter or if you want to look at work, you can use a photo of a factory worker. **However, all of these photos must relate to you and your gendered life.**

You must cut and paste each of these photos on a power point slide or a piece of construction paper. If you decide to use powerpoint, you must print this out on a colored printer. There should be 10 papers or slides in total. Adjacent to each photo you will be required to write a theoretically informed (i.e. intersectionality, gender as a social construction, doing gender, hegemonic masculinity) brief description of why you chose this photo and what it means with regards to your gendered experience. **You will be required to use theoretical frameworks to guide your descriptions of the photos.** Each description should be approximately 5 sentences.

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**Student Responsibilities and Grading**

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<tr>
<td>Exams (2 @ 25% each)</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project 1</td>
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<td>Project 2</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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**Standard Grading Scale:**

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% – 69%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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**Extra Credit:**
There will be a few times throughout the course when I will allow you to write critical reflections on happenings in the media, on campus, or in Baton Rouge that are associated with the sociology of gender. **These extra credit opportunities are up to my discretion.** Reflections should be approximately two pages long. These reflections are worth 1 point each and you may only do two during the course of the semester. **Therefore, you have the**
opportunity to earn ONLY 2 extra credit points. You may not hand in extra credit reflections after December 1, 2009.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Your final point total, and the letter grade associated with it, are **FINAL.** I will **NOT** simply add a point or two to someone's final point total so he or she can get a passing grade or a score that will enable the student to graduate. Students should not ask for preferential treatment; it's unfair to the other students and challenges the integrity of the grading scale. Students must complete all assignments to pass the course.

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**Course Schedule**

**Please Note:** This course requires a substantial amount of reading. I have spent a great deal of time planning this course. However, it may occasionally become necessary for me to change the dates of planned activities due to circumstances that arise in class, or in local and national conversations about gender.

The readings for each week should be read in the order in which they appear on this syllabus.

**8/25: Introduction to the Course and Syllabus**
- Class Exercise: Baby X

**8/27: Gender in Everyday Life**
- Film: *Real Women Have Curves*

**9/1: Introduction to The Sociology of Gender**
- Chapter 1 (p. 1-15)

**9/3: Introduction to Feminism & Intersectionality**
- “A Day without Feminism” by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (pp. 28-30)

**9/8: Bodies and Genders**
- Chapter 2 (p. 16-47)
9/10: Bodies and Genders

9/15: Bodies and Genders
- Film: Southern Comfort

9/17: Socialization and the Social Construction of Gender
- Chapter 3 (p. 49-73)
Project Option 1 Due

9/22: Socialization and the Social Construction of Gender

9/24: Sexualities
- Chapter 4 (p. 72-106)

9/28: Sexualities
- “Black Sexual Politics” by Patricia Hill Collins (pp. 318-332) in Feminist Frontiers (7th edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

Project Option 2 Due
FALL HOLIDAY! No class October 1, 2009

10/6: Education
- Chapter 5 (p. 107-133)

10/8: Work
• Chapter 6 (p. 134-170)

10/13: Work
• Schilt, Kristen. Just One of the Guys?: How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work. (pp. 221-240) In Men’s Lives.

10/15: EXAM 1

10/20: Families
• Film: Tying the Knot

10/22: Families
• Chapter 7 (p. 171-207)

10/27: Families
• Hamer, Jennifer. 2006. “‘Gotta Protect My Own’: Black Fathers Live the Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender in Rustbelt, USA.” In William Marsiglio, Kevin Roy, and Greer Litton Fox (eds.) Situated Fatherhood: Negotiating Involvement in Physical and Social Contexts. Roman & Littlefield.

Project Option 3 Due

10/27: Violence
• Chapter 8 (p. 208-256)

10/29: Violence

11/3: Health and Illness
• Chapter 9 (p. 257-299)
11/5: Health and Illness
- “Women of Color and Their Struggle for Reproductive Justice” by Jael Sillman, Marlene Gerber Fried, Loretta Ross, and Elena R. Guiterrez (pp. 360-369)

11/10: Politics and Law
- Chapter 10 (p. 300-333)

Project Option 4 Due

11/12: Guest Speaker, Dr. Moyer: Gender Discrimination and the Law

11/17: Film: Beyond Beats & Rhymes: Black Masculinity and Hip-Hop

11/19: Media & Sports
- Chapter 11 (334-370)

11/24: Media & Sports

FINAL PROJECTS DUE

12/1: Religion
- Chapter 12 (371-400)

12/3: EXAM 2