

PSYC362: PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN, FALL 2011

Instructor: Kristen Jones

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3pm and by appointment

Class: Tuesday & Thursdays 9-10:15am

Classroom: Robinson B222

Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of research and theory on gender in psychology. We will examine the myths and stereotypes associated with men and women in our society, the social and psychological gender differences that have been identified in research, and the evidence and theoretical arguments concerning the origin of these differences. We will cover selected topics that tie in to the study of gender including discrimination, achievement, pornography, and homosexuality. As the course instructor, I have several goals for each student to work toward during this term:

- 1) An awareness of the hidden and obvious gender biases in the study of human behavior and an appreciation of the complexity of the research on gender issues
- 2) Clarification of the nature and development of gender differences and gender roles
- 3) Development of critical thinking and skill in evaluating gender research as well as depictions of gender in the media and entertainment industry
- 4) Development of an intellectual tolerance and respect for others' viewpoints
- 5) Development of self-understanding and empowerment, appreciating that we need not be constrained by traditional gender roles and stereotypes

Required Text

Lips, H. (2005). *Sex and Gender: An Introduction*. Mountain View, CA: McGraw-Hill. Sixth Edition.

Class Meetings

Because class discussion and assigned readings will overlap only partially, class attendance is necessary for acquiring the content of this course and will be used in determination of final grades. Not only will part of your grade be based on your attendance, it will also be derived, in part, from the extent to which you participate in class discussions.

Honor Code Statement

Students in this course are expected to comply with the GMU Honor Code. Students should refer to the information listed on the university website (http://www.gmu.edu/departments_unilife/honorcode.html) for definitions of behaviors such as lying, cheating, and plagiarism that are considered honor code violations. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

Learning Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Grading Policy

Final grades in this course will be calculated based on the following components:

40% *In-Class Exams*
 20% *Final Exam*
 10% *Assignment #1: Gender Norms*
 10% *Assignment #2: Gender and Psychology in the Media*
 10% *Assignment #3: Gender in the Classroom*
 5% *Daily Discussion Questions*
5% *Attendance and Participation*
 100%

Final Letter Grades will be distributed as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 100% - 97% = A+ | 86% - 84% = B | 73% - 70% = C- |
| 96% - 94% = A | 83% - 80% = B- | 69% - 67% = D+ |
| 93% - 90% = A- | 79% - 77% = C+ | 66% - 64% = D |
| 89% - 87% = B+ | 76% - 74% = C | 63% - 60% = D- |

Exams

There will be three non-cumulative in-class exams. *The lowest grade that you receive on any of these three exams will be dropped before calculating your final grade.* There will also be a cumulative final exam. The format of the exams will be a combination of essay, short answer, and multiple choice questions that will be drawn from the text, lectures, videos, and class demonstrations covered during the semester. Of course, I will emphasize material that is covered in both the lecture AND the book on the exams; BUT, just to be clear from the beginning, the exams **will** include lecture material that is NOT covered in the book as well as book material that is NOT covered in the lecture. For this reason, both class attendance and completion of reading assignments outside of class are important for attaining high performance on the exams. No makeup exams will be given unless I have been contacted in advance of the exam and receive an acceptable, **documented** excuse. No exceptions will be made to this policy. Makeup exams must be taken within three days of the in class examination and will be scheduled at the instructor's convenience. Students who do not take an exam and do not meet the conditions for taking a makeup will receive 0 points for that exam.

Assignments

Three assignments are required for this class. These assignments are designed to enhance your understanding and memory of course material. Information contained in these assignments is also fair game for test questions. Each of these is discussed in detail at the end of this syllabus. Each assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

Daily Discussion Questions

Each student is required to bring 2-5 written discussion questions regarding the reading, lecture material, or personal observations to class every class meeting. We will use these to guide the material that is presented in class and to facilitate an open and engaging classroom. These questions are worth 5% of the overall course grade.

Attendance Policy

This is a challenging course. You will need to know the material from each of the classes, from the first day to the last, in order to complete the required assignments. Thus, attendance is required and will be monitored. Please note that 5% of your grade depends on your participation and attendance to class sessions. If you know you will be absent for a legitimate reason, please inform me before that class period. If you miss class for a legitimate reason, please inform me as soon as possible. You will be responsible for the material you missed. This includes assignments that were due on the day you were absent. In the case of unexcused absences, assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late, and you will be penalized 5% of the assignment grade for each day it is late.

Extra Credit Opportunities

Students will receive 1% credit for each hour of research participation, up to 5% of students' final grades. This can take the form of participation in experiments or attendance at the alternative research lectures (see <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/psychology/homepage/rschpart.html>). Reaction forms must be turned in to the instructor for credit to be awarded.

Course Outline (subject to change)

| DATE | TOPIC | ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Tuesday, August 29 | Course Overview | |
| Thursday, September 1 | Research Methods (1) | Lips Ch 3 |
| Tuesday, September 6 | Research Methods (2) | *Last day to add course |
| Thursday, September 8 | Theoretical Perspectives of Gender (1) | Lips Ch 2, Ch 4 |
| Tuesday, September 13 | Theoretical Perspectives of Gender (2) | |
| Thursday, September 15 | Stereotypes | Lips Ch 1; Take the IAT https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html |
| Tuesday, September 20 | Gender & Biology (1) | Lips Ch 5, Ch 8, Ch 9 |
| Thursday, September 22 | Gender & Biology (2) | |
| Tuesday, September 27 | Discuss Assignment 1 & Review for Exam | Assignment 1 Due |
| Thursday, September 29 | EXAM 1 | *Last day to drop course; Sept 30 |
| Tuesday, October 4 | Gender & Abilities | Ch 6 |
| Thursday, October 6 | Gender & Relationships (1) | Ch 7, Ch 10, Ch 11 |

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|---|---|----------------------|
| Tuesday, October 11 | **NO CLASS TODAY** | |
| Thursday, October 13 | Gender & Relationships (2) | |
| Tuesday, October 18 | Gender & Body Image | |
| Thursday, October 20 | PRESENT ASSIGNMENT 2 | Assignment 2 Due |
| Tuesday, October 25 | PRESENT ASSIGNMENT 2 & Review for Exam | |
| Thursday, October 27 | <u>EXAM 2</u> | |
| Tuesday, November 1 | Gender & Work (1) | Lips Ch 13 |
| Thursday, November 3 | Gender & Work (2) | |
| Tuesday, November 8 | Debate Preparation Day | |
| Thursday, November 10 | Gender and Power | Lips Ch 12 |
| Tuesday, November 15 | Gender Equity, Justice and Social Change | Lips Ch 14, Epilogue |
| Thursday, November 17 | DEBATES | |
| Tuesday, November 22 | DEBATES | |
| Thursday, November 24 | THANKSGIVING BREAK | |
| Tuesday, November 29 | DEBATES | |
| Thursday, December 1 | Remaining Debates & Review for Exam | |
| Tuesday, December 6 | <u>EXAM 3</u> | |
| Thursday, December 8 | LAST DAY OF CLASS Wrap-Up | |
| Thursday, December 15 7:30am – 10:15am | <u>FINAL EXAM</u> | Happy Holidays! |

Assignment #1: Gender Norms

This assignment is designed to help you become more aware of the gender stereotypes that exist within our society. You are asked to do something you are rarely asked to do, especially for a class assignment. That is, you are asked to behave in a way that is seen as "inappropriate" in terms of the gender stereotypes of your sex. Your assignment is to do something in the social arena that would generally be considered MILDLY inappropriate and against the norms of your sex. You should choose one of the sex-typed faux-pas listed below as your behavior. If you decide you would like to do something different, make sure to "OK" it by discussing it with me first.

Males

- Wear colorful ribbons or barrettes in your hair, paint your fingernails a bright color, or wear lipstick for a full two hours. Monitor people's reactions and comments. Ask people how they like your ribbons, nails, and/or hairdo.
- On three separate occasions, become verbally intimate with individuals you consider strangers or only mere acquaintances. Talk about 1) how you are losing your figure -- obsess constantly about your weight and how others view your appearance (e.g., Geez, I'm really losing my figure these days...what do you think...do you think I'm fat?); 2) discuss the intimate gripes you have about your most recent relationship partner; and 3) react in an overly sensitive, emotional way to neutral comments that your interaction partner makes (e.g., "you really hurt my feelings when you said that").

Females

- Wear a man's necktie for a full two hours. Monitor people's reactions and comments. Ask people how they like your necktie.

• On three separate occasions, interrupt people who are earnestly talking to you. Change the subject to something that appears selfish but is just plain more interesting to you. Dominate the conversations. Furthermore, in one of these three situations, announce to a friend who just wants you to listen that “her problems can easily be solved...stop complaining, take action, and stop talking about it.” In at least one of the other occasions, change the subject to a feigned desire to work on cars, go fishing, or go deer hunting (e.g., “I think I might go digging for nightcrawlers tonight because I want to go fishing this weekend” or “I wonder what size buck I will get this season when I go deerhunting,” or “Geez, I can’t wait until my classes are over because I get to get my hands all greased up and fix my ERG valve and front wheel suspension this afternoon.”).

The Write-Up of this Assignment:

You should write your experience up in a very brief, one-page (double-spaced) paper (please do not exceed one page). In this paper, describe:

- 1) The behavior you chose and explain how it is compatible with the stereotype of the other gender and against the stereotype of your own gender.
- 2) The reactions of those present. Describe both verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- 3) How you felt when engaging in the behavior.

The point of this exercise is to give you an in-depth look at gender stereotypes and behavior. This assignment may make you feel slightly uncomfortable; however, it is NOT intended to make you feel extraordinarily uncomfortable. If you feel that it does make you extremely uncomfortable, we will meet and arrange another assignment.

Assignment #2: Gender and Psychology in the Media

For this assignment, you should choose one of the following three options. You will briefly (and very informally) discuss the focus of your assignment in class on October 20th or 25th.

1) Psychology of Gender in the Music Industry.

For this project, you will choose one finding that you have learned regarding gender issues and you will create an audiotape presentation of no fewer than five songs that provide evidence for the topic that you have chosen. You are allowed (and expected) to bias your selections in favor of providing support for the gender finding that you have chosen. You must include lyrics of all of the songs that you include (either write them down yourself or find a copy of them) and you must also include a one-paragraph description of each of the songs describing how they relate to the gender issue that you have chosen.

2) Psychology of Gender in the Movie/TV/Commercial Industry.

For this project, you will choose one finding that you have learned regarding gender issues and create a videotape presentation of no fewer than five clips from movies, talk shows, sitcoms, etc., that provide evidence for the topic that you have chosen. You must include a one-paragraph description of each of the videoclips describing how they relate to the gender issue that you have chosen.

3) Psychology of Gender in the Written Media.

For this project, you will choose one finding that you have learned regarding gender issues and create a collage of at least 15 different portrayals of the gender issue. These portrayals can consist of newspaper clippings; magazine articles, pictures or ads; and other ads. You must include a clear description of how each portrayal relates to the gender issue that you have chosen.

Assignment #3: Gender Debates

For this assignment, you will sign up for one debate topic and will be responsible for presenting and defending a particular position on the issues surrounding that topic. Each student should present material for approximately 20 minutes and should prepare a handout for students to use in studying for the third exam. Each person will prepare a set of arguments supporting their side of an issue and will present the issue and these arguments to the class. Each person is responsible for identifying the materials to be covered in defense of their position. The best place to begin locating material is a reading available from the instructor (Spalding). A good performance would consist of listing 5 or 6 points supporting the favored position, with each point substantiated by empirical research. Although students do not have to present the details of this research during the debate, they should briefly summarize the results of supporting studies. In addition, you should prepare a handout with all of this information for each member of the class.