

Gender and the Life Course SESP 317

Winter M-W, 1:00 – 2:20 PM

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. or by appointment

Course description

In this course, we will consider how gender influences the major stages of the life course. First, we will discuss the several meanings of gender and sex to set the context. Then, we will focus on the psychosocial effects of gender on children, adolescents, and young, midlife, and old adults. In addition, we will investigate how gender influences major societal institutions and selected social policy issues.

Readings

Reader available at Quartet. There may be a few additional articles to download from Blackboard later in the quarter.

Course objectives

1. to understand the several meanings of gender and sex
2. to understand how gender influences the major stages of the life course
3. to understand how gender influences major societal institutions
4. to understand how gender influences selected social policy issues

Teaching Method and Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is based on the application of theory to real life. Although I will give weekly lectures, my teaching method is based primarily on discussion. You will do one observation, and conduct surveys or interviews outside of class. We will have specialists present guest lectures and view videos, sometimes in class, sometimes streaming on Blackboard. Outside data collection, guest lectures, and media presentations, in addition to the weekly reading assignments, are the basis for class discussion. In order for you to succeed, you must come to class and you must be prepared. I expect you to read/view what is assigned for every class **in advance of the class** for which the readings and/or other homework are assigned.

Evaluations and Grading

There are three short papers and a take home final exam of several short essays. Papers must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. Unexcused late papers will be graded down one half grade per day late. **However, an unexcused absence on a day a paper is due will result in your paper being graded down one full grade.** You may have ONE excused late paper, that is, you may turn in ONE of the three papers (NOT THE FINAL EXAM) **forty-eight (48) hours** after the due date and not be graded down. The only acceptable excuse for late papers or absence on the day a paper is due is illness.

I reserve the right to ask for medical verification. As mentioned above, attendance and active participation are required and will make a **difference in your final grade.**

Papers: 60% -- 3 short (6 page MAXIMUM) papers (20% each paper)

The papers require empirical data collection. See separate handout for rubric.

Due dates and topic areas:

Paper 1: see syllabus for due date. Topic: learning gender roles in childhood. You will conduct an observation of pre-school or elementary school children.

Paper 2: see syllabus for due date. Topic: adolescence and gender identity. You will analyze media (magazines, movies, video games, t.v., other) aimed for adolescents.

Paper 3: see syllabus for due date. Topic: adulthood and family/work balance. You will interview a married couple (or a couple in a committed relationship) with children.

Class participation: 20%

Attend class, ask cogent questions, engage in discussions. Participate in a meaningful way. This means you will have to do the reading for each class prior to that class. Regular attendance, punctual arrival, and active participation in the course will result in the most successful outcomes. Attendance will be taken at each class. If you expect to miss a class, please communicate with me and explain the situation. Also, you will be collecting media clippings on issues related to gender and college students for discussion in class.

Participation assessment guidelines:

Outstanding Contributor: Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are substantive, provide major insights, and help direct the discussion. Student is eager to volunteer, interacts and negotiates with other students, always goes beyond what is expected, and is always well-prepared.

Good Contributor: Contributions reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights, and sometimes direction for the class. Student is attentive, responsive, and goes beyond what is required, if not always successfully. Is almost always well-prepared.

Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation, but waits to be called upon.

Non-Participant: This person says little or nothing in class and contributes minimally. There is little effort to participate; the responses are generally incorrect and reflect little preparation.

Unsatisfactory Contributor: Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation, erratic oral and written performance. Contributes nothing to the class as a whole.

Final exam: 20%

Exam questions distributed Weds., March 11; exam due Weds., March 18. This is a take home comprehensive final exam, consisting of four questions. Exams must be typed. More information will be given later in the quarter.

Academic Integrity Statement

Students in this course are expected to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be sent as email attachments as well as delivered in printed form. Your written work may be electronically tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern, visit: <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>. If you need a copy of the brochure visit the SESP Student Affairs Office.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

UNIT 1: OVERVIEW

Class #1 **Introduction**
M 1/5

Class #2 **Beliefs About Gender**
W 1/7

- Wharton, A. (2005). "The Gendered person"
- Barash, D. (2005). "Evolution, males, and violence"
- Kessler, S. (2005). "Ambiguous genitalia and the construction of gender"
- Eagly, A. (2005). "The Science and politics of comparing men and women"
- view *Middle Sexes* (first half) in class

Class #3 **Gender: Nature**
M 1/12

- Lippa, R. (2005). "The Case for nature"
- Kimura, D. (2002). "Sex differences in the brain"
- Cahill, L. (2005). "His brain, her brain"
- view *Middle Sexes* (second half) in class

Class #4 **Gender: Nurture**
W 1/14

- Lippa, R. (2005). "The Case for nurture"
- Lippa, R. (2005). "Cross-examinations"
- prepare for in-class debate: Sex and Gender: Nature v. Nurture

NOTE: NO CLASS ON MONDAY, JANUARY 19: CELEBRATE MLK DAY!

UNIT 2: GENDER AND CHILDHOOD

- Class #5
W 1/21 **Gender, Childhood, & Family**
- Wharton, A. (2005). "Gender, childhood, and family life," pp. 123-133
 - Bem, S. (2005). "Raising gender-aschematic children," pp. 151-157
 - Bem, S. (1998). "*Feminist child-rearing revisited*" **RECOMMENDED**
- Class #6
M 1/26 **Gender, Childhood, & Family – con't**
- Adams, M. & Coltrane, S. (2005). "Boys and men in families: The Domestic production of gender, power, and privilege"
 - view *Tough Guise* streaming on Blackboard
- Class #7
W 1/28 **Gender, Childhood, & Education**
- **Observation completed by today**
 - Basow, S. (2004). "The Hidden curriculum: Gender in the classroom"
 - AAUW (1992). "How schools shortchange girls: Executive summary"
 - Sommers, C. (2000). "The War against boys"
- Class #8
M 2/2 **Gender, Childhood, & Education – con't**
- Letters on Gilligan – Sommers controversy (2000)
 - view *How Schools Shortchange Girls* streaming on BB
 - view *War Against Boys* streaming on BB
 - Mead, S. (2006). "*The Truth about boys and girls*" on BB. **RECOMMENDED**
 - **Paper #1 due**

UNIT 3: GENDER AND ADOLESCENCE

- Class #9
W 2/4 **Gender, Adolescence & Identity** (articles on BB)
- Botta, "For your health? The Relationship between magazine reading and adolescents' body image and eating disturbances" AND/OR
 - Harrison, "The Body electric: Thin-Ideal media and eating disorders in adolescents"
 - Jhally, "Advertising, gender, and sex: What's wrong with a little objectification?"
 - view *Killing Us Softly* in class
- Class #10
M 2/9 **Gender, Adolescence & Identity – con't**
- Gilligan, C. (1988). "Adolescent development reconsidered"
 - Cosse, J. (1992). "Who's who and what's what? The Effects of gender on development in adolescence"

- Berndt, T. (1994). “Intimacy and competition in the friendships of adolescent boys and girls”

Class #11
W 2/11

Gender, Adolescence & Identity – con’t

- *Guest speaker: Al Ross, Therapist, specializing in adolescents*
- **Research for paper #2 completed by today**

UNIT 4: GENDER AND EMERGING ADULthood

Class #12
M 2/16

Gender & College Students

- Bring-a-guy-to-class day
- Abbey, A. (2002). “Alcohol-Related sexual assault: A Common problem among college students”
- Young et al. (2005). “Drinking like a guy”
- view *Spin the Bottle: Sex, Lies & Alcohol* in class

Class #13
W 2/18

Gender and College Students – con’t

- *bring in media clippings on gender and college student issues*

UNIT 5: GENDER AND YOUNG/MIDDLE ADULthood

Class #14
M 2/23

Gender, Adulthood, Work & Family

- Wharton, A. (2005). “Gender, childhood, and family life,” pp. 133-151
 - Wharton, A. (2005). “Gendered jobs and gendered workers”
 - Hochschild, A. (2005). “Women as emotional managers”
 - Williams, C. (2005). “Hegemonic masculinity in female occupations”
 - Hoffnung, M. (2004). “Wanting it all: Career, marriage, and motherhood during college-educated women’s 20s”
 - Stone & Lovejoy, “Fast-track women and the ‘choice’ to stay home”
 - Coltrane, S. (2004). “*Elite careers and family commitment: It’s (still) about gender*”
- RECOMMENDED**
- view *Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* streaming on BB
 - look at <http://www.contemporaryfamilies.org/>
 - prepare questions for panel
 - **Paper #2 due**

Class #15
W 2/25

Gender, Adulthood, Work, & Family – con’t

- *Guest Panel: Balancing Work and Family*
- Gerson, K. & Jacobs, J. (2001). “Changing the structure and culture of work: Work and family conflict, work flexibility, and gender equity in the modern workplace”
- Collinson, D. & Hearn, J. (2005). “Men and masculinities in work, organizations, and management”

- Brescoll, V. & Uhlmann, E. (2005). “Attitudes toward traditional and nontraditional parents”
- look at <http://www.athomedad.org/>

Class #16 **Gender, Adulthood, Work, & Family – con’t**
 M 3/2 • *Interviews for paper #3 completed by today*

UNIT 6: GENDER AND OLD AGE

Class #17 **Gender and Aging**
 W 3/4 • *Paper #3 due*
 • Hagestad, G. (1994). “The Social meanings of age for men and women”
 • Calasanti, T. & Slevin, K. (2001). “Gender and the study of old age”
 • Holstein, M. (2006). “On being an aging woman”
 • Saucier, M. (2004). Midlife and beyond: Issues of aging for women.
 • view *Still Doing It* in class

Class #18 **Gender and Aging – con’t**
 M 3/9 • *Guest panel: Gender and Aging: Health, Retirement, & Caregiving*
 • Rieker, P. & Bird, C. (2005). “Rethinking gender differences in health: Why we need to integrate social and biological perspectives”
 • Umberson, D. & Williams, K. (2005). “Marital quality, health, and aging: Gender equity?”
 • Nydegger, R. (2004). “Gender and mental health: Incidence and treatment issues”
 • Calasanti, T. & Slevin, K. (2001). “Gender, care work, and family in old age”
 • look at <http://www.healthy-together.org/projects/programs/prime-time-sister-circles.html>

Class #19 **Gender and Aging – con’t**
 W 3/11 • Calasanti, T. & Slevin, K. (2001). “Gender, social inequalities, and retirement income”
 • Calasanti, T. & Slevin, K. (2001). “Retirement experiences: The Continuity of work”
 • Wrap up/Summary
 • *Take home final exam distributed*

W 3/18 *Take home final due by noon in my mailbox or bring to my office, Annenberg 216*

Recap of due dates & grade weights:

Preschool observation Weds., 1/28 part of paper #1

Paper # 1	Mon., 2/2	20%
Media research	Weds., 2/11	part of paper #2
Media clippings	Weds., 2/18	part of participation grade
Paper #2	Mon., 2/23	20%
Interview working couple	Mon., 3/2	part of paper #3
Paper #3	Weds., 3/4	20%
Final exam	Weds., 3/18	20%
Participation		20%