

SOCIAL ISSUES IN GENDER

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Class time: Tuesday – Thursday 2:00 – 3:20 pm
Office hours: Following class, and by appointment.

This class fills Category 6 “Social Issues” of the General Education requirements. The purpose of this class is to analyze social issues of sex, gender and sexuality, especially with the response of social and political institutions to the quest for equal rights by women and sexual minorities. As is clear from contemporary politics in the United States and other nations, issues of gender and sexuality are currently prominent and hotly debated topics. By focusing on the history and current status of issues like women's liberation, sexual liberation, and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender liberation, this class will encourage participants to think about and make conclusions about the realities of controversy and change in society.

This class is affiliated with WRIT 140, which will enhance your comprehension of the content knowledge offered in this class. Because the function of WRIT 140 is to improve your written communication skills, it will be graded according to different criteria. You should not anticipate that the grade you receive in each course will necessarily match.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Lois Banner, Women in Modern America (Harcourt 4th edition).

Barbara Findlen, ed. Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation (Seal).

Elinor Gadon, The Once and Future Goddess (Harper).

Michael Kimmel and Michael Messner, eds., Men's Lives (6th edition Allyn & Bacon).

Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, Raising Cain (Ballantine).

Robin Morgan, Sisterhood Is Forever (Washington Square).

Walter Williams, The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture revised edition (Beacon).

GRADING: Discussion section 15%, Midterm test 25%,
Research paper 30%, Final exam 30%

WEEKLY DISCUSSION SECTION: Because the textbook readings cover different but sometimes parallel topics than the lectures, the focus of the discussion section is to discuss assigned readings and the implications for one's own life and for the future of

society. Participation in Discussion sections is required; more than one absence from discussion section will result in a reduced grade.

POTENTIAL EXTRA CREDIT PROJECTS (doing one of these will raise your final grade one mark higher, ie: from C+ to B-; from B to B+):

Joint Educational Project (JEP): a teaching assignment on gender issues to be presented at a nearby school, or mentoring a student, or doing community service work at an approved organization (ex. ONE Gay & Lesbian Archives), organized by the JEP office.

Ethnic Presentation: to present a well-prepared oral presentation in class during the last week of the semester, on gender and sexuality issues in one's own ethnic/racial/national background. This option is designed for international and ethnic students, so that the class may be enriched by presenting diverse perspectives on gender and sexuality issues from different cultural backgrounds. Also, anyone who has lived in another country, for at least one year, may do a presentation on gender/sexuality issues in that country.

SWMS 210 WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS (dates are approximate, and may change due to guest speakers)

PART I: CHANGING GENDER ROLES FOR WOMEN AND MEN

August 24-26 INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS:

Introduction to the professor and Teaching Assistants,
go over syllabus, discuss term paper topics.

*** Assignment due next week: turn in one or two paragraphs explaining the topic on which you want to do your term paper, and include at least four sources (more if possible).

Read this week: Once and Future Goddess pp. xi-xv and 3-107.

August 31 - September 2 GENDER ROLES AMONG PRIMATES

Read: Once and Future Goddess pp. 108-224 [total 116 pages].

Sept. 7-9 CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER ROLES

Assignment deadline by Tuesday Sept. 7: Turn in term paper proposal (see above, and at end of syllabus).

Read: Sisterhood Is Forever p.3 Biologically, p.43 Traffic, p.85 Parenting, p.94 Sisterhood, p.103 Media, p.131 GenX, p.138 Stealth, p.145 Notes, p.152 Politics [total 103 pages]

Sept. 14-16 CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER ROLES

Read: Sisterhood Is Forever p.269 Our Bodies, p.296 Nature, p.325 Transforming, p.342 Just, p.358 Pink, p.387 Up the Down, p.393 Women in Science, p.409 Redefining, p.447 Women and Law, p.456 Owning, p.464 Combating, p.474 Dancing [total 111 pages].

Sept. 21-23 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER ROLES

Read: Women in Modern America Chapters 1 – 3 [total 99 pp.].

Sept. 28-30 THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Read: Women in Modern America Chapters 4-7 [total 124 pp.].

Oct. 5-7 ECONOMIC ISSUES AND GENDER

REPRODUCTION, CHILDCARE, FAMILY ISSUES AND GENDER

Read: Men's Lives Introduction, Articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 14, 17, 18, 31, 35, 50, 51 [total 112 pages].

Oct. 12-14 CONTEMPORARY GENDER ISSUES

Read: Men's Lives Articles 19, 20, 22, 23, 43, 44, 45 [total 99 pp.].

Oct. 19-21 VIOLENCE & GENDER (RAPE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)

Read: Listen Up Introduction, p.67 Beyond Bean, p.209 Bringing Feminism, p.223 Tight Jeans, p.239 Better, p.281 This Place, p.19 Lusting, p.33 Don't Call, p.126 Why I Fight [total 51 pages]

Read: Listen Up p.272 One Resilient, p.3 Your Life, p.25 Ruminations, p.59 Two Jews, p.84 One Bad, p.112 Abortion, p.247 Selling Out, p.253 Some Things [total 51 pp.]

***Thurs. Oct. 21: MIDTERM TEST due on readings and lectures.

PART II: SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND GENDER VARIANCE

Oct. 26-28 CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Read: The Spirit and the Flesh (Introduction, Chs. 1-6 and 11).

November 2-4 CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Read: The Spirit and the Flesh (Chapters 7-10 & 12)

Nov. 9-11 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: FROM SEXUAL VARIANCE
TO GAY AND LESBIAN IDENTITY

Read: Raising Cain, pp.vii – 141.

Nov. 16-18 TRANSGENDER ISSUES

Read: Raising Cain, pp.142-258 and 290-298.

Nov. 23-25 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

(no class or discussion sections this week)

Nov. 30 - December 2 ETHNIC PRESENTATIONS AND CONCLUSION

LAST date to turn in Research paper: Tuesday Nov. 30

(turn in research paper before this date if possible).

Read: Once and Future Goddess pp. 341-377.

Sisterhood pp. 526-540, 571-576.

Men's Lives Articles 36, 37, 46, 48, 52, 53 [total 108 pages].

EXAM: Thursday December 9 before 1pm. Last date to turn in take-home final exam, which covers only the readings and lectures since the midterm test. Turn in this exam before this date if possible.

SWMS 210 RESEARCH PAPER:

The term research paper (doublespaced typed 12-15 pages in Times New Roman 12 point, with one inch margins) should be carefully analyzed data gathered through research, and well written in style and professional citation form.

Choose a research topic related to the class subjects, and intensively investigate it using at least six sources (use at least three of the following kinds of sources: books, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, unpublished manuscripts, film/video, oral interviews).

Plagiarism of a paper is grounds for failing the course. If it is suspected that a paper has been copied or bought, the instructor may ask the student to undergo an oral examination on the sources cited, as well as other requirements. The purpose of the term paper is to improve the student's writing and thinking processes, not just to turn in a completed work. Plagiarism will be treated as a VERY serious violation of the university's ethics rules, and may also result in expulsion from the university.

Turn in a written research proposal by the second week of classes, along with a beginning bibliography. The professor and teaching assistants will approve or suggest changes in this topic, and the student will not change that topic unless consulting individually with the professor and turning in a new research proposal with bibliography, in writing, no later than the fifth week of classes.

RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS: First alternative

You may write a paper on ways that American society, or another nation of your choosing, has (in the past, or currently) tried to prevent intimate loving sexual relationships between individuals. Try to look at both sides of these controversial issues, seeing both the justifications offered for the passage of anti-sex laws and the actual impact on individual freedoms. Some examples might include a study of the pre-Civil

War South where slaves were not allowed to legally marry. Other examples might include laws that prohibited “miscegenation” (persons from different races marrying), laws that prohibited “sodomy” (alternative forms of sexual interaction besides penile-vaginal intercourse), “age of consent” laws that have prohibited persons below a certain age from engaging in sexual behavior, anti-prostitution laws, anti-polygamy laws, laws to prevent the viewing of pornography and legal regulations of adult bookstores.

RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS: Second alternative

Choose a particular topic, group, or discipline, and do research to find effective strategies to reduce either sexism or heterosexism in this particular area. Base your paper on a combination of library research and also interviewing of human subjects, not just your own speculations, to find out which approaches are more effective than others in reducing prejudice. Your paper may focus either on sexist prejudice against women, or on heterosexist prejudice against sexual minorities. Examples of possible research topics include:

- **Which advertising/marketing theories and approaches can be applied most effectively to reduce sexist or heterosexist prejudice in the mass media? Interview professionals in the advertising industry or other media and communication fields.

- **Interview a sample of people who were previously anti-feminist, but who have become pro-feminist. Or, interview a sample of people who were previously homophobic but who have become pro-gay; or those who were transphobic but have become accepting of transgender persons. What were the factors that led them to change their attitudes?

- **Interview men who previously committed rape or violence against women or against sexual minorities but who have renounced their violence. What were the factors that led them to change their attitudes and behavior? If it is not possible to interview such men directly, use published sources and interview social workers or therapists who have effectively influenced violent men.

- **What are the most effective strategies that have been used in particular businesses to overcome discrimination against women or against transgender persons in the workplace? Or, what are the most effective strategies that have been used in particular businesses to gain equity of benefits for the same-sex domestic partners of employees and/or to include sexual orientation in their anti-discrimination procedures?

- **Find and analyze examples from other countries that have been successful in reducing discrimination against women or sexual minorities. How might these lessons be applied to help anti-prejudice efforts in the U.S.A. and internationally?

- **Interview longtime experienced human-rights activists (ex. racial minority/civil rights activists, feminist activists, or lesbian/gay /bisexual/transgender rights activists) to learn which strategies and techniques they feel have been most effective in reducing prejudice and discrimination, and what are the mistakes for the next generation of activists to avoid? What are their recommendations for maximizing future progress?