

PSYC362: PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN
FALL 2006
Course Syllabus

1. Basic Information

Instructor: Eden King

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Office: 3076 David King Hall

Office Hours: Monday 9am-10am and by appointment

Class: Monday, Wednesday, Fridays 11:30am-12:20pm

Classroom: Innovation Hall 134

2. 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.

Because my orientation is that of an experimental psychologist, the class will be taught from an empirical perspective and much of the lecture material will be based on findings obtained in experimental psychological research. Thus, we will identify the studies being conducted and the answers currently being proposed by the research community on longstanding and contemporary issues pertaining to the psychology of gender. In addition, we will cover selected topics that tie in to the study of gender including discrimination, achievement, pornography, and homosexuality.

3. Teaching Philosophy

Central to my philosophy regarding teaching is that students learn and remember more in interactive classes. Students learn not only from the teacher but also from other students. On a daily basis, we will be engaging in discussions and/or debates, and I expect all students to contribute to such discussions and debates. During my lectures, I encourage students to ask questions or relay comments about the material that they have.

Related to this, I believe that students comprehend and remember more if they are engaged in active learning tasks pertaining to the concepts that they are learning. Throughout the term, I will incorporate many hands-on learning demonstrations and involve many of the students in such demonstrations. Many of these activities will take under five minutes but I believe some of them will have lasting impressions on students. While some of these demonstrations will work, others undoubtedly will not. Students should understand that the significance of such

demonstrations are not always whether they work but rather, what principle they are trying to demonstrate or reinforce.

4. Goals

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

5. Required Text

There is only one required text for this class. Additional readings will be distributed in class or will be available online.

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

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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+

96% - 94% = A

93% - 90% = A-

89% - 87% = B+

86% - 84% = B

83% - 80% = B-

79% - 77% = C+

76% - 74% = C

73% - 70% = C-

69% - 67% = D+

66% - 64% = D

63% - 60% = D-

10. 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.

No makeup exams will be given unless I have been contacted in advance of the exam and receive an acceptable 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 teaching assistant'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.

11. 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.

12. Daily Discussion Questions

Each student is required to bring 2-5 written discussion questions regarding the reading, lecture material, or personal observations to class. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. Course Outline (subject to change)

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Monday, August 28	Course Overview	
Wednesday, August 30	Should we study gender?	Autobiography
Friday, September 1	Research Methods (1)	Lips Ch 3
Monday, September 4	LABOR DAY	
Wednesday, September 6	Research Methods (2)	
Friday, September 8	Theoretical Perspectives of Gender (1)	Lips Ch 2, Ch 4
Monday, September 11	Theoretical Perspectives of Gender (2)	*Last day to add course: Sept 12
Wednesday, September 13	Theoretical Perspectives of Gender (3)	
Friday, September 15	Stereotypes	Lips Ch 1 Take the IAT: http://www.tolerance.org
Monday, September 18	Self-Fulfilling Prophecies	Snyder & Haugen (1994)
Wednesday, September 20	Gender & Biology (1)	Lips Ch 5, 8, 9
Friday, September 22	Gender & Biology (2)	
Monday, September 25	Discuss Assignment 1 & Review for Exam	Assignment 1 Due
Wednesday, September 27	<u>Adichie Talk</u>	
Friday, September 29	<u>EXAM 1</u>	*Last day to drop course
Monday, October 2	Gender and Abilities (1)	Lips Ch 6
Wednesday, October 4	Gender and Abilities (2)	Spelke (2005) Spencer, Steele, & Quinn (1999)

Friday, October 6	Gender and Relationships (1)	Lips Ch 7, 10, 11
Monday, October 9	COLUMBUS DAY	Clark & Hatfield (1989)
Tuesday, October 10	(Columbus Day Make-Up) Gender and Relationships (2)	
Wednesday, October 11	Multimedia Presentation	
Friday, October 13	Multimedia Presentation	
Monday, October 16	Discussion of Multimedia Presentation	Davies, Spencer, & Steele (2005)
Wednesday, October 18	Gender and Body Image (1)	Fallon (1985) Fredrickson et al. (1998)
Friday, October 20	Gender and Body Image (2)	
Monday, October 23	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT 2	Assignment 2 Due
Wednesday, October 25	PRESENT ASSIGNMENT 2 & <i>Review for Exam</i>	
Friday, October 27	<u>EXAM 2</u>	
Monday, October 30	Gender & Work (1)	Lips Ch 13
Wednesday, November 1	Gender & Work (2)	
Friday, November 3	Gender & Work (3)	
Monday, November 6	Debate Preparation Day	
Wednesday, November 8	Gender and Power	Lips Ch 12
Friday, November 10	Gender and Communication	Carli (1990)
Monday, November 13	Gender Equity, Justice and Social Change (1)	Lips Ch 14, Epilogue
Wednesday, November 15	Gender Equity, Justice and Social Change (2)	Hyde (2005)
Friday, November 17	Debate #1	

Monday, November 20	Debate #2	
Wednesday, November 22	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Friday, November 24	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Monday, November 27	Debate #3	
Wednesday, November 29	Debate #4	
Friday, December 1	Debate #5	
Monday, December 4	Remaining Debates & Review for Exam	
Wednesday, December 6	<u>EXAM #3</u>	
Friday, December 8	LAST DAY OF CLASS Wrap-Up	
Friday, December 15 10:30 am–1:15 pm	<u>FINAL EXAM</u>	Happy holidays!

16. Assignments

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 "Geeze, 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 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.

Instructor's Comment:

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 23rd.

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.

For instance, say that you are interested in depicting the gender differences that David Buss writes about. You might include:

- a) Summer Lovin' – From the Grease Soundtrack. Shows men's and women's different ideas about love. Olivia Newton-John sings about his car, his manners, his resources, while John Travolta sings about her sexual appeal.
- b) Shook Me All Night Long – Aerosmith. Guy sings about a woman he likes by describing her physical features (e.g., "She was a fast machine...she was the best damn woman that I'd ever seen....knocking me out with those American thighs")
- c) Boy from New York City - ? Woman sings about a guy with resources that she loves (e.g., "he's kinda cute, in his mohair suit, and he keeps his pockets full of spending loot.")
- d) Chapel of Love - ? Woman sings about her incredible excitement about going to the chapel to get married.
- e) Married to a Waitress, I don't even know her name? – Alan Jackson. He sings about his horrific realization in the morning that he got so drunk the previous night that he married an ugly waitress.

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.

Example: Differences in Aggression Between the Genders

- a) Clip from the Maury Povich show revealing men breaking out into a fight.
- b) Clip from Cops show demonstrating male police or criminal physical brutality.
- c) Clip from NHL hockey game where the benches clear and the teams fight.
- d) Soap Opera clip of women verbally aggressing against each other.
- e) Friends episode clip of passive-aggressive display by one of the female characters toward one of the male characters.

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.

Example: Differences in the Presentation of Advertisements Involving Men and Women: Men's Faces and Women's Bodies.

Depict 15 different examples of this from magazine advertisements promoting various products.

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. 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.