

**Instructor:** Kathryn Levit

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Office: 1029 DK (enter through DK 1021)

Office Hours: Thursday 9:30—10:30

Tuesday 1:30—2:30

Or by appointment

Phone: (703) 993-4050

**Course Objectives:** Although the study of gender differences has generated controversy throughout the history of psychology, the study of the unique psychological experiences of women is relatively new. This course will focus on theories and research related to the psychology of women as they apply to the construction of identity and personality development, interpersonal relationships, work and professional achievement, and the effects of gender on physical and psychological health and well-being. We will also examine social attitudes about what it means to be a woman and the effects of social attitudes and stereotypes on women's development across the lifespan. The course will also include a focus on cultural differences in attitudes and experiences in order to make this course more inclusive. It is expected that an important part of this course will entail and examination of our own beliefs and stereotypes about gender and the way that it interacts with race/ethnicity, social class and sexuality. Despite the focus on women, this is not a course for women only.

**Textbooks:**

Matlin, M. (2004). *The psychology of women (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)*, New York: Thomson Wadsworth.

Lantz, F. (2005). *The day Joanie Frankenhauser became a boy*. New York: Dutton Children's Books.

**Additional Required Readings:**

Barnett, R. & Sibley-Hyde, J.(2001). Women, men, work and family:: An expansionist view. *American Psychologist*, 56, 781-796.

Bem, S. (1997). Gender schema theory and its implications for child development: Raising gender-aschematic children in a gender-schematic world. In Tomi-Ann Roberts (Ed), *The Lanahan Readings in the Psychology of Women (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed)*. Baltimore: Lanahan.

Cahill, L. (2005). His brain, her brain. *Scientific American*, May, 40-47.

Hoffnung: M. (2004). Wanting it all: Career, marriage and motherhood during college-educated women's 20s. *Sex Roles*, 50, 711-723.

Maccoby, E. (1990). Gender and relationships: A developmental account. *American Psychologist*, 45, 513-519.

Smith, J., & Baltes, M. (1998). The role of gender in very old age: Profiles of functioning and everyday life patterns. *Psychology and Aging*, 13, 676-675.

Spelke, E. (2005). Sex differences in intrinsic capacity for mathematics and science? A critical review. *American Psychologist*, 60, 950-958.

Stewart, A., & Ostrove, J. (1998). Women's personality in Middle Age: Gender, history and midcourse corrections. *American Psychologist*, 53, 1185-1194.

Summers, L. (2005). Remarks at NBER Conference on Diversifying the Science and Engineering Workforce.

Yoder, J. and Kahn, A. (1993). Working toward an inclusive psychology of women. *American Psychologist*, 48, 846-850.

Additional short readings may be assigned and will be provided via email.

**Course Requirements and Grading:** Your final grade will be based on the total number of points you have earned over the semester. Points will be assigned for in-class participation and assignments, exams, and the written assignments described below. The following grading scale will be used:

90+ %	A- to A
80—89%	B- to B+
70—79%	C- to C+
65—69%	D
< 65%	F

**Class Participation:** Class participation is an essential part of this course. To earn full points for participation, students are expected to come to class having read the assigned material and prepared to discuss it. We will have around 5 days devoted to class discussion or in-class assignments. In addition, each student is responsible for preparing questions for discussion for one class period (Details to be described in class). Participation will be worth 10% of your total grade. Students who do not come to class or prepare for assignments will not earn full participation points.

**Exams:** There will be a midterm and final exam in this course, each worth 20% of the total grade. The midterm will consist of one essay question assigned before the test date and due at the test, and around 50 multiple choice questions covering material from the first half of the course. The final exam will use a similar format. I will assign the essay portion during the last week of class, and students will take a multiple choice exam during finals week that will cover material from the second half of the course. All essay questions must be turned in to me on the scheduled exam day. NO email submissions will be accepted.

**Written Assignments:** There are 3 written assignments describe below. All assignments are due at the start of class on the day assigned unless prior arrangements are made. I will not be able to accept email assignments.

Response to Summers Paper: We will be discussing Lawrence Summers' recent speech on women in science. Following our discussion, students will write a 2—3 page paper, using class material about sex differences between men and women to respond to his ideas. This paper will be worth 20% of the total grade.

Multicultural Interview Paper: Interview a woman of about your own age who is from a different cultural, ethnic or religious background, or of a different sexual orientation. As

part of your interview, ask this woman to describe how her membership in this cultural/religious/ethnic group has influenced her socialization and the opportunities open to her as a woman. Also ask about her ideas on gender differences, gender stereotypes and prejudice toward women. In your write-up, summarize the information from your interview, then examine the similarities and differences between your own attitudes and assumptions about women and those of your subject. Page limit: 3 pages. This paper will be worth 20% of your final grade.

Movie Review: Students will watch a movie from a list provided by the instructor that highlights an important issue in the psychology of women and write a brief summary (2-3 pages) of the movie with a focus on the issues related to course material. More information will be provided later in the semester. This will be worth 10% of your grade

**Honor Policy:** Students in this course are expected to comply with the GMU Honor Code. Students should refer to the information listed on the University Home Page (<http://www.gmu.edu/departments?unilife/honorcode.html>) for definitions of behaviors such as lying, cheating, and plagiarism that are considered honor code violations. Honor code violations will not be tolerated.

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

**Technology:** All students must have activated their GMU email account by the first week of class. I will use this account to contact you periodically during the course of the semester, so you are encouraged to check this account regularly or have you mail forwarded to an account that you do use. WEBCT will not be used for this course.

**ADD/ Drop Deadlines:** The University has tightened its policy on adding and dropping courses. Please note the following dates:

**Last Day to Add:** 2/7/2006

**Last Day to Drop:** 2/24/2006

## Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change as Needed)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
	<u>Introduction to the Psychology of Women</u>	
1/ 24	Introduction to the course	
1/ 26	Terminology, Attitudes toward Women, etc.	Matlin, Ch. 1
1/ 31	Historical Perspectives	
2/ 2	Gender Stereotypes, Biases, etc.	Ch. 2
	<u>Sex Differences between Women and Men</u>	
2/ 7	Brain differences	Cahill
2/ 9	Differences in cognition	Ch. 5, Spelke
2/14	Differences in motivation/social domains	Ch. 6
2/16	Discussion: Summers	Summers
	<u>Gender Development: Infancy, Childhood and Adolescence</u>	
2/21	Theories of Gender Development	Bem, 568-576
	<b>Response Paper due</b>	
2/23	Infancy and Childhood	Ch. 3
2/28	Childhood and Adolescence	Maccoby
3/ 2	In-class: Lantz, Bem	Lantz, Bem
3/ 7	Adolescence continued	Ch. 4
3/ 9	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
3/ 14—16	Spring Break	
	<u>Gender and Adult Development</u>	
3/21	Romantic Relationships and Friendships	Ch. 8
3/23	Motherhood	Ch. 10
3/28	Women and Work	Ch. 7
3/30	Work/Family Conflicts in Young Adulthood	Hoffnung
4/ 4	Women and Aging: Issues	Ch. 14
4/ 6	Women in Midlife	Stewart
4/11	Work/ Family conflicts revisited	Barnett.
	<b>Movie Review due</b>	
4/13	Women in Old Age	Smith/ Baltes
4/18	Discussion	
	<u>Women and Mental Health</u>	
4/20	Health and mental health issues	Ch. 12
4/25	Models of Psychopathology and women	TBD
	<u>Inclusive Psychology of Women</u>	
4/27	Issues and concerns	Yoder
5/ 2	TBD	
5/ 4	Discussion: Future Directions	Ch. 15
	<b>Multicultural Paper due</b>	
5/ 11	<b>Final Exam 10:30 am</b>	