Sociology of Gender

Socl 225, Spring 2013
MW: 10:00-11:15
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Office Hours: M/W 8:00-8:20; 1:00-2:00
or by appt

Objectives:

This course explores the social construction of the "normal" self and the "pathological" other as the site of intersection of multiple identities, among them gender. Reading across disciplines and eras, intergenerational colonial and anti-colonial dialogues addressing twenty-first century globalization, fundamentalism, and social inequality, and cultural, scientific, political, and technological hegemonies emerge. Employing key sociological concepts of structure and agency, subjectivity and difference, location, identity, and practice, and modernity, students will examine history and evolution of concepts of gender identity. Literature, scholarship, and political activism starting in everyday experience will serve as points of access between identity and the social relations of ruling, "the complex practices that coordinate people's actions across separations of time and space" (Smith 2005).

Goals:

The major goals of the course:
1) To develop a general understanding of gender as socially constructed phenomena, employing concepts of culture, social change, socialization, stratification, institutions, identities, and self
2) To develop an understanding of debates about knowledge production in the social sciences
3) To understand the gender experiences of individuals
4) To understand how socially constructed identities affect these experiences

Outcomes and Assessment:

These goals are related to several outcomes for courses that were adopted by the Department of Sociology:
1) An appreciation for the discipline of sociology and its role in contributing to our understanding of social reality.
2) An understanding of the basic concepts in sociology and their fundamental theoretical interrelations
3) An in-depth understanding of this sociological area
4) Ability to apply the sociological imagination and sociological concepts and principles to everyday life
5) Ability to employ a theory by describing and illustrating its role in building sociological knowledge
6) Demonstration of understanding of the role of evidence (qualitative/quantitative methods) by undertaking a research project
7) Ability to think critically
8) Ability to write effectively

Assessment:

1. **Students lead class discussion of assigned readings (33% of grade)**

Student-led discussion Assessment

Introduction to discussion
Identification of key issues/links to concepts addressed previously in class
Supportive/illustrative materials
Engagement of class in exploration of ideas
Reference to Sociological Theory
Reference to Sociological research methodologies and methods
Wrap-up
GRADE
C: Presentation includes all of the above-outlined sections
B: Theory and methodology sections are strong
A: Findings are integrated with previous class discussions of readings and theory

BRING YOUR TEXTBOOK TO CLASS

2. **Student research project and presentation (33% of grade)**

TBA

3. **Student self-evaluation (33% of grade)**

Each student submits 2-page summary of work done for the semester, including:
Readings, class discussion, class presentation, and contribution to final project--class
Student identifies strengths and weaknesses affecting performance on both projects.
Student recommends grade for course work.

Grading:

Students are expected to attend class regularly, complete all reading assignments by the date listed on the syllabus, contribute to a group presentation, and complete a research paper.
To receive a passing grade for the course, all assignments must be completed.

Required Texts:

Benjamin, Jessica. 1988. *The Bonds of Love*. Pantheon Books: New York.

Brown, Harriet. 2012. *Brave Girl Eating: A Familys Struggle with Anorexia*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Rothman, Sheila & David Rothman. 2003. *The Pursuit of Perfection: The Promise and Perils of Medical Enhancement*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Valenti, Jessica. 2010. *The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

Course Outline

Subject to Change with Adequate Notice

I. The Social Construction of Gender

Week 1 W: Introduction to the study of gender
January 23
Week 2 M: Group Assignments, bring laptops
January 28, 30 F: Group assignments, bring laptops

II. Sexuality

Purity Myth
Week 3 M & W: Chapters 1-2, Group 1 leads discussion
Jan 30, February 1
Week 4
February 11, 13 M & W: Chapters 4-6, Group 2 leads discussion
Week 5
February 18, 20 M & W: Chapters 7-10, Group 3 leads discussion

III. Health

Brave Girl Eating
Week 6 M & W: opening texts through chapter 2, Group 4 leads discussion
February 25, 27
Week 7 M & W: chapters 3-6, Group 5 leads discussion
March 4, 6
Week 8 M & W: chapters 7-epilogue, Group 6 leads discussion
March 11, 12

SPRING BREAK

III. Body

Pursuit of Perfection
Week 9 M & W: introduction through chapter 2, Group 7 leads discussion
March 25, 27
Week 10 M & W: chapters 3-5, Group 8 leads discussion
April 1, 3
Week 11 M & W: chapters 6 – end, Group 9 leads discussion
April 8, 10

IV. Power Relations

The Bonds of Love
Week 12 M & W: introduction through chapter 2, Group 10 leads discussion
April 15, 17

Week 13 M & W: chapters 3-4, Group 11 leads discussion
April 22, 24
Week 14 M & W: chapters 5-6, Group 12 leads discussion
April 29, May 1

V. Conclusion

Week 15 M: course wrap up
May 6

Final Examination

Wednesday, May 15, 8 to 11 a.m.