

Sociology of Gender

Westfield State College

Spring 2009

Instructor: Karen Straight, Ph.D.

Phone: 307-735-4177

Office Hours: By appointment.

Texts:

Renzetti, Claire and Daniel Curran. 2003. *Women, Men, and Society (fifth edition)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Disch, Estelle. 2006. *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology (Fourth Edition)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Course Description:

In this course we will explore some of the central theories, debates, and controversies which have emerged in the field of gender studies. We will begin our exploration of the sociology of gender through a conceptual and comparative approach. That is, we will define gender and consider the significance of gender cross-culturally in various sex/gender systems. With a special focus on education and the family, we will examine gender and socialization taking into account debates within the scientific community around the competing role of environment and biology. We will study various perspectives on the origins of inequality between men and women and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each at both the theoretical and political levels. This will lead to a discussion on the current status of the women's movement and growing interest in the men's movement. We will venture into the private realm to see how gender roles are negotiated, challenged, rejected, or maintained through an analysis of power dynamics within the family and through interpersonal communications. On a more controversial level, we will debate the influence of media such as television, movies, ads, and pornography on gender roles and relations. Ultimately, we will analyze the relationship between homophobia and the sex/gender system within which we live.

Course Assignments and Expectations

The following are my expectations as well as the requirements of this class toward your semester grade.

1. You are expected to participate regularly. Students need to keep up with the readings and review all lecture materials posted under Course Documents/Course Topics. Follow the due dates outlined in this document closely.
2. You will be allowed to take exams over a set number of days. Exams will not be provided outside of these dates.
3. Late papers (excluding discussion assignments) will be penalized by five points per day late. All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. Papers submitted more than three days late will not be accepted.
4. Students will not be allowed to make-up discussions. This would defeat the purpose of a discussion.
5. Your grade will be determined in the following manner:

Four Tests (100 points each).....	400
Paper.....	100

Participation in Discussion.....100

Evaluation of Assignments:

I will look for definite qualities in evaluating your work. Some expectations include the following:

1. The development of independent thinking.
2. Utilization and specific references to course materials.
3. A willingness to play with new ideas — yours and others.
4. The development of competence at learning from others and integrating those ideas which challenge, support or simply stimulate your thinking into your work.

5. The writing of a well-formulated paper. Be deliberate and reflective in your use of language.
6. The exploration of complicated ideas, even if you find you cannot come to a neat and easy conclusion.
7. The development of competence in writing that summarizes, analyzes and argues.

Please Note: All assignments must be submitted into the course system. Click on "Assignments," select the assignment, complete the assignment, and upload your response by attaching the document. Assignments will not be accepted via email. All assignments must be uploaded in this manner for record keeping purposes.

Exams:

Four exams will be administered throughout the course. The exams will **not** be cumulative. The exams will be available for one week. However, once you launch the exam, you must complete it in one 1.5 hour session.

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Discussions:

We will have ten discussions during the term. I have noted the discussions in the schedule of topics, assignments and readings below. Here are my expectations:

- 1) Complete your response to the discussion assignment and post your reply by **Wednesday** of the week we are having the discussion (except for the first and last weeks of class). In addition, reply to two peers postings or to me by **Friday** of that week.
- 2) You will be graded on the quality, quantity, and frequency of your responses. Comments such as "I agree" or "great point!" will not count. Your comments must add to the discussion through example, linkage to course materials, sharing of new perspectives, and more.
- 3) The discussion will run through **Friday**.
- 4) **Late contributions to discussion will not be accepted as such contributions would defeat the purpose of having a discussion.**
- 5) Each discussion is worth 10 points.

My Schedule:

For your convenience, you will note that many of the due dates allow you to take advantage of the weekend (particularly when it comes to discussion). I have set it up this way because I know that you all lead busy lives, and many are juggling school, family and work. Please note, however, that I generally reserve the weekends as time with my family. I will log into the class regularly Monday through Friday, but I will generally not log in on the weekends.

Students with Learning Disabilities:

If you have a learning disability, I encourage you to contact me within the first two weeks of class. In addition, campus resources are available to assist you.

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Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments:

Topic and Date	Reading	Assignments
Sex and Gender 1/20 – 2/1	Chapters 1 – 3 in R & C Readings 11, 12, and 14 in Disch	Introduce yourself in Discussion (not graded) by 1/23 Social Construction of Gender Discussion - Post your response to the discussion assignment by 1/28 and reply to two peers by 1/30).
Socialization 2/2 -2/8	Chapter 4 in R & C	Socialization Discussion -Post your response to the discussion assignment by 2/4 and reply to two peers by 2/6). Test One - Available from 2/2 – 2/8. You must complete the exam in one 1.5 hour sitting. This test will cover chapters 1-4 (R&C), readings 11, 12, 14 (Disch) and materials within the course learning units related to those chapters.
Schools and Gender 2/9 – 2/15	Chapter 5 in R & C Readings 43, 44, 45 in Disch	Education Discussion - Post your response to the assignment by 2/11 and reply to two peers by 2/13).
Language and Media 2/17 – 3/1	Chapter 6 in R & C Readings 26, 29, 31 in Disch	Language Discussion - Post your response to the assignment by 2/18 and reply to two peers by 2/20). Media Discussion - Post your response to the assignment by 2/25 and reply to two peers by 2/27). Test Two – The exam will be available from 2/23 – 3/1. You must complete it in one 1.5 hour session. This exam will cover chapters 5 and 6 (R&C), readings 26, 29, 31, 43, 44, 45 (Disch), and materials within the course learning units related to those

		chapters.
Gender and Intimate Relationships 3/2 – 3/15	Chapter 7 in R & C Readings 32, 34, 37, 39 in Disch	Marriage Discussion - Post your response to the discussion assignment by 3/4 and reply to two peers by 3/6).
Gender Employment and the Economy Spring Break 3/16 – 3/22 3/23- 3/29	Chapter 8 in R & C Readings 47, 48 and 50 in Disch	Gender and Employment Discussion – Post your response to the discussion assignment by 3/25 and reply to two peers by 3/27.
Gender, Crime, and Justice 3/30 – 4/5	Chapter 9 in R & C Readings 54,55, 58, and 59 in Disch	Test Three (3/30 – 4/5). You must complete this exam in one 1.5 hour session. This exam will cover intimate relationships, the economy and crime. Review the associated chapters from R&C, readings from Disch, and online course materials.
Gender, Politics, and the Military 4/6 – 4/12	Chapter 10 in R & C Reading 60 in Disch	Gender and the Military discussion - Post your response to the discussion assignment by 4/8 and reply to two peers by 4/10.
Gender and Health 4/13 – 4/26	Chapter 12 in R&C Readings 62, 63, 64, 66, 67 in Disch	Gender and Health Discussion - Post your reply to the assignment by 4/15 and reply to two peers by 4/17. Term paper due 4/24
Bringing it all together 4/27 – 5/4		Final Discussion – Post your response to the assignment by 4/29 and reply to two peers by 5/1.
Final Exam – Available from 5/3 – 5/7. You must complete it in one 1.5 hour session.		Test Four will be available from 5/3 – 5/7. You must complete it in one 1.5 hour session. This exam will cover politics and the military and health. Read the assigned R&C chapters, readings from Disch, and online course materials.