

**Soc 2850 102: Constructions of Gender**  
**Fall 2016**  
**Appalachian State University**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:15 CW 221**

**Instructor:**

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00-12:00, Tuesday 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to current *sociological perspectives on gender* in the U.S. We will investigate how gender is built into and constituted by the structures of social life and how different groups of women and men experience this gendered order. We will examine how gender is significant within different institutional and interactional contexts, such as families, workplaces, schools, and intimate relationships, as well as an identity that people use to make sense of themselves and those around them. Throughout the course we will be attentive to the ways in which gender is intertwined with other axes of inequality and difference such as race/ethnicity, class, and sexuality, and how constructions of gender are historically and culturally contingent. Our discussions will be guided by theoretical and empirical work on gender.

**Course Objectives**

We will:

- Analyze gender from a sociological rather than biological, or essentialist, perspective.
- Examine the construction of gendered individuals and their relationship to the social world.
- Analyze how gender intersects with class, race/ethnicity, and sexuality to create diverse gendered experiences.
- Discuss the relationship between gender and other social institutions.
- Identify how constructions of gender contribute to inequality in society.
- Develop critical writing skills to communicate sociological concepts as they relate to our gendered selves and society.

This course also fulfills the course hour requirements for the *Liberal Studies Experience* within ASU's General Education curriculum through its topics and assignments. The course objectives listed above will meet the goals of the *Liberal Studies Experience* to provide students with a broad and varied curriculum where they can explore many different perspectives on the human experience. In addition, this course meets the requirements of the *Social Science* designator that introduces students to social science theory and research. Below are the objectives addressed by this course concerning this designation:

- The course will examine the behaviors of individuals and/or groups within or between societies.
- The course will explore social/behavioral science concepts and theories.
- The course will examine or utilize the methods of scientific inquiry that guide the social/behavioral sciences.
- The course will include a critical assessment of the nature, scope, and limits of the social/behavioral sciences.

## **Course Requirements**

### ***General:***

#### **Paper Format:**

All papers should be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Papers not following the requested format will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade. I am strict about page requirements. Two and a half pages is NOT three pages and will be graded as an incomplete assignment. Please print and staple your papers yourself. There are nifty mini staplers you can purchase and keep in your bag. Printer problems or App Card problems are your problems alone and you must deal with them. They do not constitute an excuse for not having an assignment in on time.

#### **Late Papers:**

Late papers will result in a lowered grade. Your grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade per “business” day late (M-F), up to a limit of a three full grade reduction. You are free to turn in make-up work for partial credit up to the last day of class before the final exam. Remember that an F on a paper is always better than a zero. You should treat this class as you would a job. This means that I will not track you down and ask for your papers; you are responsible for turning them in on your own. You should also take the workload (both readings and assignments) seriously and decide now if you are willing to do the work necessary to receive a passing grade in the class.

#### **Classroom Behavior:**

Please do not text, check the internet, or whisper to your friends during class. It is disrespectful to your classmates and me and interferes with learning. Yes, I notice!!

Throughout this course, we will be discussing many sensitive and contentious subjects. I encourage everyone to participate in discussions, raise questions, and offer interpretations to the study of the sociology of gender. However, course content, including lectures, readings, videos, and discussions may include graphic descriptions of sexism, racism, homophobia, sexual activity, and sexual assault. In some cases, we will be discussing language that can be uncomfortable or offensive to allow for a discussion concerning the cultural construction of these terms. For students who are apprehensive and/or uncomfortable with the content, please speak to me about your uncertainties or drop the course early on. Although these anxieties are understandable, our job in the classroom is to learn about how inequalities, discrimination, and violence affect our lived experiences and the lived experiences of those around us. You need to immediately read through the syllabus to make sure you are able to

complete the required readings and assignments.

Discussions will often involve personal experiences and beliefs. The college classroom at its best is a space for exploring ideas, from that we know to what we may not understand. This is not the same as a space free from dissent or beliefs that you find distasteful or offensive. Please be respectful of the opinions and experiences of your classmates. I do not appreciate students trying to silence or shame other students for their thoughts on various subjects. These ideas may not be well-developed or well-stated, but may serve as someone's attempt to start thinking critically. You are free to offer a counter-argument through class discussion. Although students will not be asked specifically to relate personal information, it is expected that we keep confidential any information garnered from those who do. Thus, no audio recordings are allowed in the course.

This course often seeks to find humor in the ridiculous stereotypes that are presented in media and the readings. This helps to defuse tension and makes the course more enjoyable. We must also realize that what one person finds funny, another may not. In such cases, I expect the same rules of open-mindedness to apply as outlined above.

### ***Assignments:***

**Readings:** You are expected to come to every class having read all the assigned readings *and* prepared to discuss them. You need to have access to the readings in class, whether printed or on your computer. You may find it helpful to summarize each author's argument in a short paragraph and write down any interesting points or questions raised that you would like to discuss. While you read, please start to think through the following questions:

- What is the author's main argument?
- How does the author support his/her argument?
- What are the implications of the author's findings?
- Do you find the author's argument convincing? Why or why not?
- What other issues might be relevant to the author's argument and findings?
- How does the text reflect or challenge cultural attitudes about gender?
- Did you find your own values and assumptions reflected or challenged in the text?
- How do the ideas in the text relate to your own experience? Why might this be?

**Current Event Paper:** You will write a 5 page current event paper. Choose a media piece from the last 12 months on one of the following topics:

- the gender wage gap
- sexual harassment or assault
- trans rights
- parental leave
- gender in the military
- mass media representations of gender
- division of labor in the home
- gendered workplace inequalities
- reproductive politics and rights
- sexual identity and politics

Then, citing scholarly research, provide an analysis of your current event through one of two frameworks. (1) In Option 1, you will take a historical approach. What are some of the historical changes that have taken place with regards to your current event and how should we make sense of them? (2) In Option 2, you will do an intersectional analysis. How should we understand your current event through the lens of intersectionality, meaning how do other socially constructed categories of difference interact with gender to create variation in experience with regards to your current event?

In your paper, you should briefly summarize the issue and then use scholarly sources (such as course readings, academic journal articles or books, or policy position papers) to analyze the gender issue under discussion. You may not use media pieces that are assigned course readings. Include a reference list at the end of your papers. Papers are due in class on **9/13**.

**Missoula Analysis:** You will write a 5 page analysis of Missoula. Your analysis should include:

- (a) A brief summary of the book's contents and central argument
- (b) A discussion of what the book teaches us on how we handle sexual assault cases in the U.S. In particular,
  - How does the university adjudication process differ from that of the criminal justice system?
  - What are the benefits and shortcomings of each?
  - Why do so few victims of sexual assault come forward and what is the role of victim blaming?
  - What were the effects of the Department of Justice investigation?
- (c) A discussion of how the concepts learned in this course aid in the interpretation of the book's main findings.

The book analysis is due in class on **11/17**.

**Course Paper:** Choose one of the following assignments to complete.

*Gender Autobiography:* In her article, “What It Means To Be Gendered Me,” Besty Lucal analyzes the social construction of gender through her own experiences. In the same vein, you will write a 6-8 page gender autobiography discussing your experiences as a gendered being and reviewing your current understanding of yourself as a gendered being. Detailed guidelines for the paper are posted on AsU Learn and the paper is due in class on **11/29**.

*Gender Ethnography:* According to Ridgeway (2011), the persistence of gender inequality at the present can be traced to the ways in which gender is enacted at the interpersonal level. Using Ridgeway to frame your analysis, you will conduct fieldwork to examine and analyze how women and men perform gender in a particular public space. You will conduct fieldwork at your selected site and write a 6-8 page analysis of your findings. Detailed guidelines for the paper are posted on AsU Learn and the paper is due in class on **11/29**.

**Midterm and Final Exam:** These exams will be taken in class on the days indicated in the syllabus. Each exam consists of one essay question requiring you to synthesize multiple course readings. No make-ups will be given except in the case of a documented emergency. These should be reported to the instructor **prior** to the exam and documentation is required. **Unreported absences from an exam will be recorded as a zero for that exam.** If you need accommodations for the exam, please let me know at least two weeks in advance of the exam date. I will distribute a study guide one week prior to each exam and we will review the guide in class. You are allowed to bring 1 page of notes to the exams.

**Participation:** This course will be run as a seminar, with discussion based on the assigned readings. Participation is critical. This includes attendance and participation in and preparedness for class discussion and in-class activities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. You are allowed three absences over the course of the semester. You will be marked down if you miss more than three classes or repeatedly leave class early or arrive late. Missing class is inadvisable, as it will influence your class participation grade *and* your understanding of the material. Short homework or in-class assignments will be included in your participation grade. If you must miss class, obtain a copy of the notes from another student in class. If you have ongoing medical or personal issues that require frequent absences, please see me as soon as possible to work out accommodations. I require an email from the Dean of Students office verifying the reason for your absences and requesting accommodations. Please use your allotted absences judiciously. This means that if you know you will need to miss a class for a school sponsored or family activity, save an absence for that day. In addition, if you are sensitive to a particular subject, please use one of your allotted absences that day.

**Extra Credit:** I will announce various extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. These will take the form of talks and events you can attend to increase your participation grade. You must turn in a one-page response paper to the event for credit. You are allowed two extra credit opportunities total. Please let me know if you know of an event that might be good for extra credit. I will make announcements of opportunities both in class and through email.

**Grading:**

Current Event Paper	15%	Final Exam	20%
Course Paper	20%	Participation	10%
Book Review	15%		
Midterm Exam	20%		

## Grading Scale:

A+ 99-100	C+ 77-79
A 94-98	C 74-76
A- 90-93	C- 70-73
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 84-86	D 64-66
B- 80-83	D- 60-63
	F 59 and below

**A range**      **Excellent work.** Demonstrates superior ability to creatively and thoughtfully organize and express ideas. Displays excellent comprehension of all course material and provides a well-considered and thorough response to the assignment.

**B range**      **Good work.** Demonstrates good organization and expression of ideas. Displays a good understanding of course material and provides detailed response to the assignment, although there may be some oversights or missing connections.

**C range**      **Fair work.** Demonstrates uneven skills in organization and expression of ideas, and displays a satisfactory understanding of general course concepts, but with significant gaps in understanding of details, applications, or connections.

**D-F range**    **Marginal to Unacceptable work.** Demonstrates little ability to organize and express ideas in an understandable manner, displays little comprehension of course concepts or provides an incomplete assignment.

## Student Policies:

There are important university policies that you should be aware of, such as the add/drop policy, cheating and plagiarism policy, grade appeal procedures, and accommodations for students for university-sponsored activities. Go to this URL to find them:

<http://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources>. I take plagiarism seriously. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an automatic zero for the assignment and your case will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

## Academic Integrity

*As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site:*

[www.studentconduct.appstate.edu](http://www.studentconduct.appstate.edu).

### **Accommodations For Students With Disabilities**

*Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability and may need reasonable accommodations in order to have equal access to the University's courses, programs and activities, please contact the Office of Disability Services (828.262.3056 or [www.ods.appstate.edu](http://www.ods.appstate.edu)). Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.*

If you require accommodations for a documented qualifying disability, you must see me in office hours at the beginning of the semester so that we can make arrangements. It is up to you to schedule this appointment. Students who require an accommodation for alternative coursework for triggering issues must seek eligibility through ODS.

### **Religious Observance**

*All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term "religious observance" to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student's faith that require absence from class.*

### **Required Texts:**

Framed By Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World by  
Cecilia Ridgeway (available for rent at the bookstore)

Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town by Jon  
Krakauer (available for purchase at Amazon.com and on reserve at the  
library)

All other course readings are available on ASU Learn

## Course Schedule

Readings are due the day they are listed, i.e. they must be completed before the class date.

The following course schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and by email.

### **Theorizing Gender**

#### Week 1

8/16 - Introduction to the Course

8/18 - Ridgeway, Cecilia (2011) "The Puzzle of Persistence" Framed By Gender. Pgs. 3-31.

#### Week 2

8/23 - Lucal, Betsy (1999) "What It Means To Be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System" The Kaleidoscope of Gender. Pgs. 18-27.  
Risman, Barbara (2004) "Gender as Social Structure: Theory Wrestling With Activism" The Kaleidoscope of Gender. Pgs. 10-17.

8/25 - Ridgeway, Cecilia (2011) "Cultural Beliefs and The Gendering of Social Relations" Framed By Gender. Pgs. 56-91.

#### Week 3

8/30 - Eliot, Lise (2009) "Introduction" *Pink Brain, Blue Brain: How Small Differences Grow into Troublesome Gaps*. Pgs. 1-18.  
Fitzsimmons, Emma (2014) "A Scourge is Spreading. M.T.A's Cure? Dude, Close Your Legs" *The New York Times*.

9/1 - Collins, Patricia Hill (1994) "Shifting the Center: Race, Class, and Feminist Theorizing about Motherhood" Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families. Pgs. 275-291.

Dill, Bonnie Thornton and Marla Kohlman (2011) "Intersectionality: A Transformative Paradigm in Feminist Theory and Social Justice" The Kaleidoscope of Gender. Pgs. 63-73.

Dow, Dawn (2016) "The Deadly Challenges of Raising African American Boys" [gendersociety.wordpress.com](http://gendersociety.wordpress.com)

## **Doing Gender, Determining Gender: Transgender People**

Week 4

9/6 - Schilt, Kristen and Laurel Westbrook (2009) "'Gender Normals,' Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality" *Gender & Society* 23: 440-464.

9/8 - Westbrook, Laurel and Kristen Schilt (2014) "Doing Gender, Determining Gender: Transgender People, Gender Panics, and the Maintenance of the Sex/Gender/Sexuality System" *Gender & Society* 28: 32-57.

***In-Class Film: Growing Up Trans***

## **Constructing Gender in Childhood**

Week 5

9/13 - Kane, Emily (2006) "'No Way My Boys Are Going to Be Like That!': Parents' Responses to Children's Gender Nonconformity" *Gender & Society* 20: 149-176.

***In-Class Film, cont.: Growing Up Trans***

***Current Event Paper Due***

9/15 - Averett, Kate Henley (2016) "The Gender Buffet: LGBTQ Parents Resisting Heteronormativity" *Gender & Society* 30: 189-212.

Poisson, Jayme (2011) "The 'Genderless Baby' Who Caused a Storm of Controversy in 2011" *The Star*.

Week 6

9/20 - Sadker, David and Karen Zittleman (2009) "The Beginning of the Classroom Compromise: The Elementary School Years" Still Failing at Fairness: How Gender Bias Cheats Girls and Boys in School and What We Can Do About It. Pgs. 63-103.

## **Constructions of Femininity and Masculinity**

9/22 - Adams, Natalie and Pamela Bettis (2003) "Commanding the Room in Short Skirts: Cheering as the Embodiment of Ideal Girlhood" *Gender & Society* 17: 73-91.

Week 7

9/27 - Pascoe, C.J. (2007) "Dude, You're a Fag" Dude, You're a Fag. Pgs. 52-83.

***Exam Study Guide Distributed***

9/29 - Review for Midterm

Week 8

10/4 - Midterm Exam

### **Gendered Sexuality**

10/6 - Hlavka, Heather (2014) "Normalizing Sexual Violence: Young Women Account for Harassment and Abuse" *Gender & Society* 28: 337-358.

Pascoe, C.J. (2007) "Compulsive Heterosexuality" Dude, You're a Fag. Pgs. 84-114.

Week 9

10/11 -Collins, Patricia Hill (2005) "Get Your Freak On: Sex, Babies, and Images of Black Femininity" Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism. Pgs. 119-148.

***Watch at Home: Dreamworlds: Desire/Sex/Power in Rock Videos***

10/13- University Break - No Class

Week 10

10/18 - Hamilton, Laura, and Elizabeth Armstrong (2009) "Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood: Double Binds and Flawed Options" The Kaleidoscope of Gender. Pgs. 468-482.

Orenstein, Peggy (2016) "When Did Porn Become Sex Ed?" *The New York Times*.

***In-Class Video: Understanding Hookup Culture***

### **Gender in the Home**

10/20 - Ridgeway, Cecilia (2011) "Gender at Home" Framed By Gender. Pgs. 127-155.

Week 11

10/25 - Hochschild, Arlie (1989) "Joey's Problem: Nancy and Evan Holt" The Second Shift. Pgs. 34-60.

Lamont, Ellen (2014) "Negotiating Courtship: Reconciling Egalitarian Ideals with Traditional Gender Norms" *Gender & Society* 28: 189-211.

10/27 - Carrington, Christopher (1999) "Feeding Lesbian Gay Families" No Place Like Home. Pgs. 29-65.

Cassino, Dan (2016) "Even the Thought of Earning Less than Their Wives Changes How Men Behave" [Gendersociety.wordpress.com](http://Gendersociety.wordpress.com)

Wade, Lisa (2016) "The Invisible Worry Work of Mothering" *Sociological*

*Images.*

## **Gender in the Workplace**

Week 12

11/1 - Ridgeway, Cecilia (2011) "Gendering at Work" Framed By Gender. Pgs. 92-126.  
Marcotte, Amanda (2014) "Best Way for Professors to Get Good Evaluations? Be Male." Slate.com

Miller, Claire Cain (2016) "As Women Take Over a Male-Dominated Field, the Pay Drops" *The New York Times*.

***In-Class Video: Shelley Correll on "Creating a Level Playing Field"***

11/3 - Pierce, Jennifer (1995) "Women and Men as Litigators: Gender Differences on the Job" Gender Trials. Pgs. 103-142.

Stainback, Kevin, Sibyl Kleiner, and Sheryl Skaggs (2016) "Leaning in or pushing down: Do powerful women in corporate America help or harm the advancement of women subordinates?" Gendersociety.wordpress.com

Week 13

11/8 - SPECIAL ELECTION DAY DISCUSSION - WOMEN IN POLITICS

Swers, Michelle (2013) "Women and the New Senate Club" Women in the Club: Gender and Policy Making in the Senate. Pgs. 1-30.

Terkel, Amanda (2016) "The Man Card: An American Tradition of Presidents Using Their Gender to Get Ahead" *The Huffington Post*.

***Extra Credit for Voting (for anyone!)***

11/10 - Reeves, Richard and Isabel Sawhill (2015) "Men's Lib!" *The New York Times*.

Williams, Christine (2004) "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the 'Female' Professions" The Gendered Society Reader Pgs. 291-307.

Wingfield, Adia Harvey (2009) "Racializing the Glass Escalator: Reconsidering Men's Experiences With Women's Work" The Kaleidoscope of Gender. Pgs. 366-376.

## **Sexual Violence and Institutional Responses**

Week 14

11/15 - ***In-Class Film: The Invisible War***

11/17 - Krakauer, Jon (2015) Missoula. Pgs. 1-349.  
***Missoula Analysis Due***

## **Conclusions**

Week 15

11/22 - Ridgeway, Cecilia (2011) "The Persistence of Inequality" and "Implications for Change" Framed by Gender Pgs. 156-200.

***Exam Study Guide Distributed***

11/24 – Thanksgiving - No Class

Week 16

11/29 - Review for Final Exam

***Course Paper Due***

**Final Exam - Wednesday, December 9th 12:00-2:30 pm**