

PSY/WGS 506 – Psychology of Gender
Spring 2013, MW 4:30-7:15, 736 Poe Hall
Dr. Mary Wyer
Poe 732b, mbwyer@ncsu.edu, office hours: 3-4 MW, and by appointment

Description

This course is designed to introduce students to theory and research about gender differences and gender relations from a psychological perspective. The course focuses on cultural meanings attached to being a male or a female; how beliefs about the capacities and abilities of self and others shape our lives as we age; how ideas about gender differences influence our choices and opportunities; what the gender-related patterns are (and are not) in educational and employment settings; how social relations in the family are (and are not) shaped by ideas about women and men; and how the media shapes, reinforces, and challenges ideas about women, men, and gender differences. Using a “gender lens” perspective, the course highlights debates within feminist frameworks, including theoretical, methodological, and activist commitments to social change and human well-being. Discussions are designed to provide a space for generative and constructive intellectual conversations.

Learning Outcomes include:

1. Articulating major theoretical debates in the study of gender relations and gender differences.
2. Describing specific areas in which gender relations are key (e.g. work, violence, parenting, media influences) as presented thru text readings and class discussions.
3. Applying critical thinking skills and a psychological perspective that analyzes theory and research about cultural meanings in relation to distinctions between women and men.
4. Demonstrating how a “gender lens” in psychology can contribute to theory and research about contemporary social relations and social change in individuals’ lives.

Participation

This course is offered in seminar format to provide students with the opportunity to engage in conversation and lively debate in a supportive learning environment. Classrooms are small communities and your attendance, participation, and preparation enrich that community. In order to encourage participation and preparation, students are expected to:

- Attend regularly and participate actively as a statement of commitment to the course community
- Come to class prepared to discuss scheduled readings
- Develop and lead discussion about a topic of interest and relevance for one class session
- Be respectful of other students, especially when addressing sensitive/controversial topics
- Develop and improve abilities to communicate knowledge and insight from psychological theory and research about gender

Required Text

Eva Magnusson & Jeanne Marecek (2012). *Gender and Culture in Psychology: Theories and Practices*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. This text provides a conceptual overview for discussion of the articles. Other required readings will be available on the course Moodle site. Quail Ridge Books.

Grading

75 points = 3 papers (25 points each)
25 points – Class Participation and Presentation
100 points – Total

It is anticipated that letter grades for this course will be assigned according to the scale below, although these grade cutoffs may be lowered at the discretion of the instructor. They will not be raised.

A+	≥ 96.7%	C	≥ 73.4% and < 76.7%
A	≥ 93.4% and < 96.7%	C-	≥ 70% and < 73.4%
A-	≥ 90% and < 93.4%	D+	≥ 66.7% and < 70%
B+	≥ 86.7% and < 90%	D	≥ 63.4% and < 66.7%
B	≥ 83.4% and < 86.7%	D-	≥ 60% and < 63.4%
B-	≥ 80% and < 83.4%	F	< 60%
C+	≥ 76.7% and < 80%		

Papers

You will write three papers over the course of the semester. The papers are meant to (1) provide you with practice in distilling and synthesizing key points of course material, (2) encourage you to think critically about the readings and how they relate to each other, (3) provide you with an opportunity to think about both the strengths and weaknesses of an approach/perspective, and (4) thereby help you prepare for, contribute to, and benefit from the course material and graduate study. Dates that the papers are due are: Feb. 13, March 20, and April 17. *The paper assignment includes material to be read for the date due, so plan your time accordingly.* You will have an opportunity to write a fourth paper, and substitute that grade for one of the first three papers, if you choose to do so to improve your grade. The fourth paper will be due on May 1, the date scheduled for the final exam.

Choosing a topic, a team, and leading the discussion

This component of class participation is designed to give you and team members the opportunity to focus on one of the course topics of special interest to you in relation to the course. You and your team will select the topic (from the syllabus) and locate readings for one class session, and then lead the session discussion. On the day of that discussion, you and your team will be responsible for presenting a brief overview of the material as a starting point for the discussion, including necessary background information, the major theories and issues addressed as linked to previous course readings and content. You should end the presentation by posing questions related to previous discussions in this course, and then facilitate the discussion that follows. There will be 2-3 members for each team, depending on interests, for the general topics listed on the syllabus, beginning on Feb. 20.

Policies

Policy on Late Written Assignments. Written assignments will NOT be accepted late, subject to university policies regarding excused absences.

Policy on Absences. Attendance is required in this course. Make-up assignments for absences will be allowed only when supporting documentation is provided as per university policies regarding excused absences. For more information, see:

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.4.php

Policy on Academic Integrity. Students are expected to adhere to the University policy on academic integrity found in the Code of Student Conduct. The University policy on honesty and academic integrity can be found at:

http://www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm

It is my understanding and expectation that the submission of any assignment means that you neither gave nor received unauthorized aid on that assignment. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid may result in an F for this course as well as more severe disciplinary penalties.

Students with Disabilities. This course adheres to the NCSU policy on working with students with disabilities. This policy can be found at:

http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/hat/current/appendix/appen_k.html

and in the NCSU Handbook for Advising and Teaching. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653.

http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/

Schedule of Readings

Jan. 9 – Course overview and expectations for participation and engagement, introductions, discussion of research interests.

Gender in Social and Political Context

Jan. 16 –

Eileen Boris (2012). Generational Divide: Feminist Currents. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33, 101-105.

Stephanie Shields & Elaine Diccico (2011). The Social Psychology of Sex and Gender: From Gender Differences to Doing Gender. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 35, 491-499.

Stewart, Abigail & Dottolo, Andrea (2006). Feminist Psychology. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, 493-509.

Gender in Interaction and Interpersonal Relations, Importance of Interpretation

Jan. 23 –

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 9-51 (Ch. 2-5)

Stephanie Shields (2008). Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective. *Sex Roles* 59, 301-311.

Theorizing Human Diversity in a World Filled with Images of Women and Men

Jan. 30 –

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 70-85 (Ch. 7)

Magnusson, E. (2011). Women, Men, and All the Other Categories: Psychologies for Theorizing Human Diversity. *Nordic Psychology* 63, 88-114.

Identities, Subjectivity, and Intersections

Feb. 6 –

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 159-177 (Ch. 14)

Wetherell, M. (2008). Subjectivity or Psycho-Discursive Practices? Investigating Complex Intersectional Identities. *Subjectivity* 22, 73-81.

The Meanings of Difference – Paper #1 Due at Beginning of Class (to include material Jan. 16-Feb. 13)

Feb. 13 –

West, C., & Zimmerman, D. (2009). Accounting for Doing Gender. *Gender & Society* 23, 112-122.

Risman, B. (2009). From Doing to Undoing: Gender as We Know It. *Gender & Society* 23, 81-84.

Team Presentations Begin Feb. 20

Gender and Development

Feb. 20 – (topics: sexual differentiation, intersexuality, transsexualism, sexual orientation, binary sex system, biological/social diversity)

****One reading to come from MW.

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Feb. 27 – Gendered Identities: Childhood and Adolescence

(topics: theories of gender identity development, early influences and adolescence)

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 86-97 (Ch. 8)

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Mar. 4-8 – Spring Break.

Love, Sex, and Romance

Mar. 13 – (topics: culture and sexuality, teen sex, sexual identity, sexual scripts, sex and sexism)

****One Reading from MW

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Commitments and Close Relationships -- Paper #2 Due at Beginning of Class (to include material Feb. 18-March 20)

Mar. 20 – (topics: marriage, same sex couples, parenting, separation/divorce, equality)

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 98-108 (Ch. 9).

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Our Bodies, Ourselves

Mar. 27 – (topics: cultural meanings of bodies, body size, shape, age)

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 119-130 (Ch. 11)

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Work and Achievement

Apr. 3 – (topics: workforce sex segregation, wage gap, gender at work, sexual harassment, social policy and equity)

****One reading from MW.

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Violence and Oppression

Apr. 10 – (topics: sexual abuse and assault, intimate relationship violence, aging and abuse, education and change)

Magnusson & Marecek (2012), pp. 109-118 (Ch. 10)

****Additional Readings Selected by Team****

Apr. 17 – No class. Paper #3 Due by 7:15 PM (to include material March 27-April 10)

Building a Better Future, Psychology and Social Change

Apr. 24 –

Liebert, R., Leve, M., and Hui, A. (2011). The Politics and Possibilities of Activism in Contemporary Feminist Psychologies. *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 35, 697-704.

****Additional Reading from MW.

May 1 – Paper #4 (Optional) Due by 4 PM.