

SOCL 7591: Seminar in Sociology of Gender and Sexualities
Wednesday 1:30-4:30

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide an overview of the classic writings and most recent and cutting edge scholarship in the sociology of gender and sexuality. Through close readings of journal articles and academic monographs, we will examine the various ways sociologists conceptualize, theorize, and observe gender and sexuality.

Because gender and sexuality are organizing principles in society, a sociological examination necessitates that our primary concerns remain inequalities and power relations. That being so, a key focus of this class is on the extent to which gender and sexuality intersect with other systems of inequality, and how gender and sexuality are implicated in and produced through racial, ethnic, economic, and global relations of inequality. We will approach the sociology of gender and sexuality at multiple levels of social organization including the meaning and experience of the body, self, and identity, the social organization of everyday practices, relationships, and the structure of large-scale institutions, cultures, and societies.

In this seminar we will challenge our sociological understandings of sex categories, sexualities and genders. To this end, we will examine ways in which categories of sex, gender, and sexuality have been created, maintained and contested in society. We will attempt to recognize moments where the boundaries between gender, sex, and sexuality have the potential to become blurred and/or unstable.

In addition to ongoing collective seminar discussion about various approaches to gender and sexuality scholarship, individual seminar participants will be expected to work independently to master a specific area of empirical research about gender and sexuality.

As an instructor, I aim to create a learning atmosphere that fosters critical and sociological thinking, writing, and discussion. I want you as students to go beyond merely digesting other people's ideas to engage actively with the material and to assess critically both commonly held assumptions and sociological theories. We live in a society where gender and sexualities are created, defined, redefined, and contested all around us on a daily basis. This course is designed to be a catalyst for moving beyond the roles of participant and passive observer toward becoming active sociological scholars.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Provide an in-depth overview of recent theoretical and empirical gender and sexualities scholarship in sociology.
- Engage the latest theoretical conceptualizations of gender and sexuality in sociology.
- Identify and differentiate the different ways recent scholarship has theorized and conducted research about the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, embodiment, and nation
- Students will be expected to develop a professional proposal appropriate to extend gender and sexualities scholarship or a sociological research paper on some aspect of gender and sexualities studies that is of publishable quality.
- Students will be expected to present their papers in class as they would at a scholarly meeting.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

ACADEMIC ETIQUETTE AND ATTENDANCE: This course is designed to be a seminar, where all participants attend regularly and strive to work together as colleagues to better their understanding of the sociology of gender and sexuality.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The American Sociological Association Code of Ethics (<http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm>) details professional expectations that all participants in this course will be expected to embrace. In addition, members of this course are expected to comply with the Honor Code of Louisiana State University. In this course, plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in failing the course and other disciplinary action. In all instances, you must do your own work. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for submitting another's work, ideas, or wording as your own. This includes submitting my work as your own (yes, this has happened) and submitting the same papers to multiple professors to fulfill different requirements. Ignorance is not an excuse. There is a difference between plagiarism and collaboration. Collaboration, for purposes of this class, is the act of discussing ideas with class colleagues, debating issues, and examining readings from the class together so that each of you arrives at your own independent thought.

MY POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS:

- I never discuss grades over e-mail. If you want to discuss your performance in this course, I am more than happy to set up an in-person meeting or a telephone meeting if you are not able to make it to my office hours.
- I will not tolerate tardiness, multiple absences, or for lack of a better term, slacking off. If I see that you are not keeping up with readings or engaging critically in class discussion your final grade will suffer.
- I am very laid back but have extremely high expectations. I promise that we will have fun in this course if you simply try your absolute best to engage the material and learn from both myself and from your fellow colleagues.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

The following assignments are designed to facilitate your mastery of the sociology of gender and sexuality. Please note, below are only brief descriptions of the expectations for the assignments of the course. Further details will be provided in class. In general all participants in this seminar will be expected to attend class, read all assigned material, participate in and lead discussions, and complete assigned writing assignments and presentations. Specific assignments are as follows:

Student Responsibilities and Grading

In Brief

Discussion Leader	20%
Overall Class Participation	30%
Semester-Long Project	50%

Discussion Leader (20%)

You will be responsible for 2 discussion facilitations during the course of the semester. When it is your turn to be a discussion leader, I expect that you will spend sufficient time organizing your in-class facilitation.

On the days that you facilitate the discussion, you are expected to prepare a 1-2 page (single spaced) comment on the significant issues raised in the book assigned for the week. You should begin each paper with a brief biographical background of the author, tracing their academic career and detailing their research trajectory, paying particular attention to how this particular book both fits with and expands their research agenda.

For the remainder of the paper, you may briefly summarize key points from the readings, but please dedicate the majority of the paper to theoretical analyses such as:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the study's research design? What are the major conclusions? What is the quality of the measures that are used? What new questions does it raise?

How has the text generated new concepts or connections between concepts? How has it strengthened support for previously suggested linkages among theoretical concepts? Has it shown that previously suggested linkages may be inappropriate? Has it strengthened our ability to measure theoretical concepts or provided evidence to suggest that previously used measures may be inappropriate? Does it help explain why the previously established relationships between concepts occur?

Does the text go beyond categorizing and reciting what has already been done to suggest further implications that should be investigated or weaknesses in past research that should be corrected? Does the work provide unique ways of viewing key controversies in the field?

You will be expected to read this paper aloud to the class at the beginning of your facilitation. Such an exercise will encourage you to sharpen your writing and presentation skills.

In addition, you are expected to develop 8-10 thought provoking questions for the class to discuss based on the readings for the week. **You must provide the other students in the class and me these questions via e-mail at last 24 hours prior to class.** Having these questions in advance is **ESSENTIAL** and should improve the quality of the class

discussions as well (Please Plan Ahead!). You should be prepared to share your insights to the questions you develop.

Overall Class Participation (30%)

I expect you to come prepared to all classes including those in which you are not the discussion leader. This means that you should read all of the material and think about the discussion questions that will be distributed prior to each seminar. From my perspective, the quality of your comments and questions is as important or more so than the number of times you speak.

Your overall class participation also includes your class attendance. This course is organized to foster a group-learning environment. For this reason, your absence not only hampers your ability to participate in class discussion but also precludes you from offering other students in the class insightful commentary that you may have offered if you had shown up to class.

To receive an “A” in participation, I do not expect you to demonstrate full understanding of the week’s readings, but I expect you to demonstrate that you have read closely, identified what you do and do not understand, and are able to discuss how the reading for the week relates to other readings we have read class. **In order to insure this, you are expected to come to class every day with a paragraph (approximately 5 sentences) that you may or may not be asked to read aloud in class detailing the main theoretical contributions of the book, your interpretation of the book’s strengths and weaknesses, and any questions you have about the book.** Such an exercise will help guarantee that you are sufficiently prepared for each seminar.

Semester-Long Research Proposal/Paper (50%)

Note: This assignment is a semester-long project. Throughout the semester you will be expected to turn in a proposal, and drafts of sections of the paper (literature review, theoretical framework, research methods).

I am requiring that you develop a term project in close consultation with me on a topic relevant to the sociology of gender and sexuality. This project will involve an original research proposal or a research paper that is of publishable quality. Given the likely diversity of students' disciplinary and methodological backgrounds, I am willing to discuss alternative projects on an individual basis.

Your project will consist of several tasks.

- You will need to identify a compelling question or set of interrelated questions germane to the sociology of gender and/or sexualities
- You will need to review the literature relevant to your specific topic.
- You will need to think about how you could conduct an empirical study on this topic. You are free to choose whatever method(s) you feel will enable you to answer your question(s) most effectively.
- If applicable you will need to present your findings in a theoretically informed manner that moves beyond description.
- You will need to think creatively and make sure that your proposal is theoretically informed.

You should organize your final proposal in the following manner:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction (include statement of the problem and specific questions, rationale for studying these issues, possible hypotheses)

3. Literature review (make sure this review is clearly focused on your specific concerns)
4. Research Design (include statement about data collection, sampling and measurement issues, talk about the strength and weaknesses of your approach)
5. Findings (if applicable) must be theoretically informed and not simply descriptive!
6. Discussion (weaknesses of your study, future directions, implications)
7. Reference List (and Appendix if necessary). You should have **at least 12** references (books, scholarly journal articles).
8. Your text (excluding pages devoted to references and appendices if you have any) should be approximately 15 double spaced pages (I am flexible on this but please make every effort not to exceed 20 text pages). **Use 1" top/bottom and side margins and a 12-inch font.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Though I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus, sometimes it might be necessary to make changes. In the event that changes must be made, I will announce them in class or on the class email list.

Week 1 (January 9): Welcome to the Class

- No Readings
- Introductions, go over syllabus, plan discussion facilitation schedule

Week 2 (January 16): Doing Gender

- West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman 1987. Doing Gender. *Gender & Society, 1*, 125-151.
- 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.
- Dozier, Raine. 2005. Beards, Breasts, and Bodies: Doing Sex in a Gendered World. *Gender & Society, 19*, 297 – 316.
- 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.

Week 3 (January 23): From Doing Difference to Intersectionality

- West, Candace and Sarah Fenstermaker. 1995 Doing Difference. *Gender & Society*, 9, 8-37.
- Collins, Patricia Hill and Lionel A. Maldonado, Dana Y. Takagi, Barrie Thorne, Lynn Weber, and Howard Winant. 1995 “Symposium on West and Fenstermaker's Doing Difference” *Gender & Society*, 9, 491-506.
- Zakiya Luna 2016. “Truly a Women of Color Organization”: Negotiating Sameness and Difference in Pursuit of intersectionality *Gender & Society*, 30, 769–790
- Carlson, Jennifer. 2018. Legally Armed but Presumed Dangerous: An Intersectional Analysis of Gun Carry Licensing as a Racial/Gender Degradation Ceremony *Gender & Society*, 32, 204–227

Week 4 (January 30): Gender as A Social Structure

- Risman, Barbara. 2018. *Where the Millennials Will Take Us: A New Generation Wrestles with the Gender Structure*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Week 5 (February 6): Gender Hegemony

- R. W. Connell, James W. Messerschmidt 2005. Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender & Society* 19, 829-859.
- Shippers, Mimi. 2007. Recovering the Feminine Other: Masculinity, Femininity, and Gender Hegemony. *Theory and Society*, 36, 85–102
- Bridges, Tristan. 2014. A Very Gay Straight? Hybrid Masculinities, Sexual Aesthetics, and the Changing Relationship between Masculinity and Homophobia. *Gender & Society*, 28, 58-82.
- Miller, Sarah. 2016. How You Bully a Girl: Sexual Drama and the Negotiation of Gendered Sexuality in High School. *Gender & Society*, 30, 721–744.
- Currier, Danielle. 2013. Strategic Ambiguity: Protecting Emphasized Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity in Hook-Up Culture. *Gender & Society*, 27, 704-727.

Proposals Due: 1 page (single spaced) detailing your research question, guiding theoretical framework and your proposed methods

Week 6 (February 13): Childhood

- Meadows, Tey. 2018. *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*. University of California Press.

Week 7 (February 20): Adolescence

- Pascoe, C.J. 2011. *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. University of California Press.

Week 8 (February 27): College

- Wade, Lisa. 2017. *American Hookup: The New Culture of Sex on Campus*. Norton.

Week 9 (March 6): NO CLASS (Day After Mardi Gras Obligatory Day of Rest)

- 5 page literature review due via e-mail (must be specific to research question)

Week 10: (March 13): Masculinities and Sexualities

- Ward, Jane. 2015. *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men*. NYU Press.

Week 11 (March 20) Regulating Women's Bodies

- Waggoner, Miranda. 2017. *The Zero Trimester: Pre-Pregnancy Care and the Politics of Reproductive Risk*. University of California Press.

Revised literature review and guiding theoretical framework due

Week 12 (March 27): Families

- Pfeffer, Carla. 2016. *Queering Families: The Postmodern Partnerships of Cisgender Women and Transgender Men*. Oxford University Press.

Week 13 (April 3): (Sex) Work

- Hoang, Kimberly Kay. 2015. *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. University of California Press.

Literature Review, guiding theoretical framework, and methods due

Week 14: (April 10): Open Day: Let's decide as a class what to read

- Switch papers with a peer
- Workshop papers in class

Week 15: (April 17): NO Class Spring Break

Week 16: (April 24) Presentations

- Review of peer's paper due

Final Papers Due May 3, 2019 via Turnitin on Moodle