



The University of Western Ontario

Western  
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

Sociology 3341G - 001:

The Social Construction of Gender UWO, Section 001

In-Person

Winter 2023

**Prof. Tess Hooks**  
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**Class Session:**  
Tuesdays, 1:30 to 4:20 p.m., UC 1105

**Office Hours:**  
Thursdays 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

### **Course Description:**

The course will consider the ways in which our view of gender has changed from one that saw gender as an attribute of individuals to one that sees gender as a social construction that shapes social life. Implications of this change for gender inequality will also be explored.

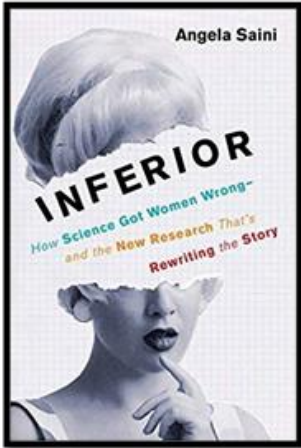
**Prerequisite(s):** Registration in third year or above.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

**When students have successfully completed this course, they should be able to:**

- ✓ **develop an understanding of gender that takes into account structural dimensions as well as individual attributes**
- ✓ **develop an understanding of gender that recognizes the multiplicity and fluidity of gender**
- ✓ **understand what is meant for gender to be socially constructed**
- ✓ **demonstrate an understanding of the socially constructed nature of gender in a well formulated essay**

## Required Text(s):



*Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong—and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story* by Angela Saini. Boston Massachusetts: Beacon Press (2017).

Additional readings also posted on the OWL site for the

## Communication:

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

Please feel free to speak to me after class or during class breaks. If you are not in class, the best way to contact me is to stop by during my office hours. Otherwise, I can be reached by email or by leaving a voice mail message.

## Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Class participation	10%
Reaction/Discussion Paper	15% variable dates
Mid-term Exam	20% February 14
Essay	30% variable dates
Final Exam	25% per exam schedule

## Class Participation (10%)

Participation is an important facet in the learning process. It helps students digest new concepts, apply those concepts to real world situations, and interject their own perspectives on the topic under discussion. For this reason, a significant component of your evaluation is tied to class participation. Participation will be based on a combination of attendance and class participation. Attendance alone, however, is not enough to achieve an above average mark. You will also be evaluated on your level of participation in group and class discussions as well as the relevance and quality of your participation.

On those occasions in which you miss class because of illness or other valid reasons, you may still earn participation credit for those absences by writing a response to an instructor selected discussion question (one double spaced page per hour of class time missed). It is your responsibility to make arrangements with me on the first day you return to class after an absence, or you forfeit the right to make up for your absence. The response will be due within one week of your return. If you miss more than 50% of class sessions without offsetting participation credits, your participation mark will be zero (0).

Because class participation is an important component of your evaluation it is important to create a safe environment for everyone to participate. So, the first rule is: people are sacred, ideas are not. This means that we need to be respectful of each other and give each other space to participate. In line with this, laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

### ***COURSE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:***

**There is an expectation that you will attend each class session, either Zoom classes with your video on or in person classes. With the exception of legitimate medical/personal excuses (documentation required to be submitted) students are expected to attend at least 80% of the class meetings for this course. A passing grade in the course cannot be obtained without meeting this attendance requirement.**

### **Exams (45%)**

The exams for this class will include a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. **The Final Exam is NOT CUMULATIVE.** Computer-marked multiple-choice questions may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **Reaction/Discussion Paper (15%)**

Discussions and activities during class time are designed to enhance learning. Students must positively and actively participate in this process. Each student is expected to come to class fully prepared to participate in discussion of the readings assigned for that date. To improve the quality of preparation and discussion, once during the term, students will prepare a brief reaction/discussion paper for that particular class. The paper must be posted on the OWL course site for this class by 6:00 p.m. on the Monday before the class for which the readings are assigned. Students should read these postings before coming to class.

The format for the reaction/discussion paper should be the following (students can write the paper in this outline format or in a more prose-like form, whichever is preferred):

Your name, the title of the reading(s), and the date.

**Thesis:** What is the author's primary thesis? (A thesis asserts a specific claim or answers a question.) Summarize the author's main thesis (argument) in one to two sentences.

**Significance:** Next state what you think is significant about this argument. For example, how does this fit with what you already knew, how does this fit with other readings, how does this fit what we have already covered in class? How does it contribute a new perspective?

**Evidence:** What evidence does the author use to support this thesis? What evidence could be collected that would explore this thesis?

**Critique:** What is your critique of the author's argument/evidence/conclusions? Make at least two separate points here—positive or negative. Is the argument persuasive? What are the strong points of the reading and why are these strengths? What unstated biases or assumptions does the author incorporate into arguments? What are flaws in reasoning and how do they relate to the argument?

**Personal response:** What is the most interesting thing that you learned from this reading? What questions does this reading raise for you? What did this reading make you think about? How can this reading be applied to something you know?

**Question:** Select a specific passage, quote, or theme from the reading(s) that you would like to explore further in class. Note the page number. Write your question and explain why it is worthwhile to answer.

## **Essay (30%)**

Students are required to write a 2000-to-2500-word (or 8 to 10 page) essay for this course. Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Essays must be submitted by **April 4th at 11:59 p.m.** (See the OWL course site for more information on due dates.) No essays will be accepted after 11:59 p.m. on April 10, 2023. Late submissions will be penalized by 5% if the submission deadline is missed. They will be penalized by an additional 2% for each day of lateness.

## **Student Absences:**

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

### ***Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:***

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. Course professor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test.

### **Absences from Final Examinations:**

Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Academic Counselling will determine eligibility to write a Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

**Note:** missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

## Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

### Important Policies

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work:** Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). The student medical certificate is available at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:** When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

**Accessibility Options:** Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: [www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated_exams.html)

**Scholastic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**A Note on Plagiarism:** Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

**Plagiarism Checking:** All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of

detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

***Mental Health:*** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western ([www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_counselling/).

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html) .To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## General Course Outline

**PLEASE NOTE:** Ideally, reading assignments should be done before you come to class in order to get the most out of lectures. All assigned journal articles are posted on the OWL site for the course.

### **Jan 10**      ***Introduction: What is Gender?***

READING:      No Assigned Readings

### **Jan 17**      ***Biological Determinants of Gender?***

READING:      Saini, Introduction and Chs. 1 and 2:1-48  
Katie Ann Hasson  
2016 “Not a “Real Period? Social and Material Constructions of  
Menstruation.” *Gender & Society* 30(6):958-983.

### **Jan 24**      ***Gendered Institutions***

READING:      Saini, Chs. 3 and 4:49-95  
Judith Lorber  
1993 “Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology.” *Gender & Society* 7(4):568-581.  
Joan Acker  
1990 “Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations.”  
*Gender & Society* 4(2):139-158.

### **Jan 31**      ***Intersex Individuals: Challenging the Concept of Gender***

READING:      Anne Fausto-Sterling  
2000 “The Five Sexes, Revisited.” *The Sciences* July/August: 18-23.  
Suzanne J. Kessler  
1990 “The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersex  
Infants.” *Signs* 16(1):3-26.  
Georgiann Davis, Jodie M. Dewey and Erin L. Murphy  
2016 “Giving Sex: Deconstructing Intersex and Trans Medicalization Practices.”  
*Gender & Society* 30(3):490-514.  
Cheryl Chase  
1998 “Hermaphrodites with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex  
Political Activism.” *GLQ* 4:2:189-211.  
Alice Domurat Dreger  
2006 “Intersex and Human Rights: The Long View.” *Ethics and Intersex* Springer: 73-86.

### **Feb 7**      ***Trans Identities and Doing Gender***

READING:      Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman  
1987 “Doing Gender.” *Gender & Society* 1(2):125-151.  
Bernice L. Hausman  
2000 “Do Boys Have to be Boys? Gender, Narrativity, and the John/Joan Case.”  
*National Women’s Studies Association Journal* 12:114-138.  
Tara Gonsalves  
2020 “Gender Identity, The Sexed Body, and the Medical Making of  
Transgender.” *Gender & Society* 34(6): 1005-1033.  
Valerie Jenness and Sarah Fenstermaker  
2013 “Agnes Goes to Prison: Gender Authenticity, in Prisons for Men, and Pursuit of  
the ‘The Real Deal’.” *Gender & Society* 28(1): 5-31.

Helana Darwin  
2020 "Challenging the Cisgender/Transgender Binary: Nonbinary People and the Transgender Label." *Gender & Society* 34(3): 357-380.

OPTIONAL: Harold Garfinkel  
1967 "Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an Intersexed Person." Chapter 5 in *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.:116-185.

**Feb 14** ***Mid-Term Exam***

**Feb 21** ***Reading Week***

**Feb 28** ***The Social Construction of Gender***

READING: Saini, Ch. 5:96-119  
Judith M. Gerson and Kathy Peiss.  
1985 "Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations." *Social Problems* 32:4(April):317-331.  
Barbara J. Risman  
2004 "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender and Society* 18(4):429-450.  
Cecilia L. Ridgeway and Shelly J. Correll  
2004 "Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations." *Gender and Society* 18(4): 510-531.  
Shauna Pomerantz, Rebecca Raby, and Andrea Stefanik  
2013 "Girls Run the World?: Caught Between Sexism and Postfeminism in School." *Gender and Society* 27(2): 185-207.

**March 7** ***Doing Difference: Intersecting Inequalities***

READING: Candace West and Sarah Fenstermaker  
1995 "Doing Difference." *Gender & Society* 9(1):8-37.  
Symposium on West and Fenstermaker's 'Doing Difference.' *Gender & Society* 9(4):491-513.  
Acker, Joan  
2006 "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class and Race in Organizations." *Gender & Society* 20(4):441-464

**March 14** ***Constructing Bodies***

READING: Kathy Davis  
2002 "'A Dubious Equality': Men, Women and Cosmetic Surgery." *Body & Society* 8(1):49-65.  
Sharyn Roach Anleu  
2006 "Gendered Bodies: Between Conformity and Autonomy." in *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies* edited by Kathy Davis et al. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.: 357-375.  
Susan Bordo  
2015 "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity." in *The Gendered Society Reader* edited by Michael S. Kimmel, Amy Aronson and Amy Kaler Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press: 122-133.



Breanne Fah

2011 "Dreaded 'Otherness': Heteronormative Patrolling in Women's Body Hair Rebellions." *Gender & Society* 25 (4):451-472.

**March 21**     ***Gender, Sexuality and Power***

READING:

Saini, Ch. 6:120-138

Rachael D. Perotti, Milli Lake and Chloé Lewis

2018 "Equality on His Terms: Doing and Undoing Gender Through Men's Discussion Groups." *Gender & Society* 32(4):540-562.

Sarah Thébaud and David S. Pedulla

2016 "Masculinity and the Stalled Revolution: How Gender ideologies and Norms Shape Young Men's Responses to Work—Family Policies." *Gender & Society* 30(4):590-617.

Tristan Bridges

2013 "A Very 'Gay' Straight? Hybrid Masculinities, Sexual Aesthetics, and the Changing Relationship Between Masculinity and Homophobia." *Gender and Society* 28(1):58-82.

Danielle M. Currier

2013 "Strategic Ambiguity: Protecting Emphasized Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Hookup Culture." *Gender and Society* 27(5):704-727.

**March 28**     ***Gender Violence and Power***

READING:

Saini, Ch. 7:139-156

Jessica Winter

2022 "The Johnny Depp-Amber Heard Verdict is Chilling." *The New Yorker*, 2 June.

Stephanie Zacharek, Eliana Dockterman and Haley Sweetland Edwards

2017 "Time Person of the Year, 2017: The Silence Breakers." *Time*, 18 Dec.

C. J. Pascoe and Jocelyn A. Hollander

2015 "Good Guys Don't Rape: Gender, Domination, and Mobilizing Rape." *Gender and Society* 20(10) 1-13.

Heather Hlavka

2014 "Normalizing Sexual Violence: Young Women Account for Harassment and Abuse." *Gender and Society* 28(3)337-358.

**April 4**     ***Sports: The Playing Grounds of Gender***

READING:

Saini, Ch. 8:157-181

Adam Love and Kimberly Kelly

2010 "Equity or Essentialism?: U.S. Courts and the Legitimation of Girls' Teams in High School Sports." *Gender and Society* 25(2)227-249.

Eric Anderson

2002 "Openly Gay Athletes: Contesting Hegemonic Masculinity in a Homophobic Environment." *Gender and Society* 16(6)860-877.

Human Rights Watch

2020 "'They're Chasing Us Away From Sport': Human Rights Violations in Sex Testing of Elite Women Athletes." Human Rights Watch Report, 4 December. Summary pages 1-16.

Michela Musto, Cheryl Cooky and Michael A. Messner

2017 "From Fizzle to Sizzle: Televised Sports News and the Production of Gender Bland Sexism." *Gender and Society* 31(5)573-596.