



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3341F-001
The Social Construction of Gender
Fall 2023
In-Person

Instructor: Tess Hooks

Email: thooks@uwo.ca

This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

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.

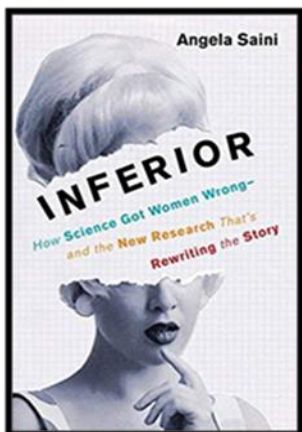
Anti-requisite(s): None

Course Objectives and 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:



Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong—and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story by Angela Saini. Boston Massachusetts: Beacon Press (1917).

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:

Class participation	10%
Reaction/Discussion Paper	15% variable dates
Mid-term Exam	20% October 24
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. 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.

Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam. I may or 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.

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>).

There is some flexibility regarding due dates for the essay assignment. You will be asked to choose your own due date—by midnight (11:59 pm) on the Tuesday of your choosing starting November 7 through December 5. 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. The latest due date for submission is December 5 at 11:59 p.m. No essays will be accepted after 11:59 p.m. on December 7, 2023.

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.

Extensions will be granted in accord with recommendations for accommodation from the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office and new due dates for submission will be set.

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology "[Important Academic Policies](https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf)" document https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright
- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

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.

Oct 17 *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.

Oct 24 *Mid-Term Exam*

Oct 31 *Reading Week*

Nov 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

Nov 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.

Nov 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 and 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.

Nov 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.
- Sarah Polley
2022 “The Woman Who Stayed Silent.” in *Run Towards the Danger*. Hamilton, Ontario: Penguin Canada: 69-101.

Dec 5 *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.

December 10-22

Final Examination Period