

Sociology of Gender

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Course Outline

This module will explore gender and sexuality as integral to society and culture, elaborating the processes whereby they are socially constituted and regulated, and the consequences of this for contemporary culture, social institutions and everyday life. The cultural and historical specificity of late modern ideas of gender and sexuality will be elucidated in relation to four main themes: inequalities; bodies; culture; practices. These will be explored through major substantive themes in the study of gender.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this module you should be able to:

- Problematised the concepts of 'sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality' and their interrelationship
- Analyse the ways in which gender and sexuality order, and are ordered by, wider social relations.
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the historical and cultural specificity of gender and sexuality
- Articulate a range of sociological theories of gender and sexuality and evaluate their contribution to understanding social life.

Course Organisation

This course will be taught through lectures, seminars and independent study. Each week there will be a lecture and a workshop in which students will discuss set readings. A reading list is provided for each seminar.

Attendance

Attending this class is compulsory. Regular attendance is very important and is a factor in helping students to succeed in the course. Attendance is monitored and you must ensure that your presence has been registered (especially if you arrive late). You may fail the course if you do not attend the class regularly. **See the university attendance policy at the end of this document.**

Evaluation

- **Attendance & Participation** - 10%
 - **Mid Term Exam** 35%
 - **Final Exam** 35%
 - **Group Research Project, Individual Report** - 20%
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Research Project

Choose **one project** from the following three project topic areas:

Project topic 1: Undoing gender project

- In their influential work, *Doing Gender* (1987), West and Zimmerman argue that gender is something we do, rather than we have. We often take our gender performances for granted. We view gender as something that just comes naturally without considering our own role in creating a gendered self. We also are typically unaware of the differing social expectations governing the behavior of men and women; failure to perform according to social expectations can result in being judged negatively.

If you choose this project:

- In this project, you will breach a gender norm and to consider interpersonal consequences. Through these activities, *invisible gender norms* are made visible and we will gain a deeper understanding of our own participation in maintaining gender norms and structures.

- You will explore what happens when we fail to perform according to gender role expectations. How are we perceived by others? How do others treat us? How do we feel about ourselves? What does this experiment tell us about the ways in which we participate in maintaining gender structures and gender norms?
 - After performing your norm breaching experiment (try to perform gender norm violation in multiple contexts to see if you get different reactions), you will present your experiences and findings in a 5 minute presentation.
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Project topic 2: Changing the story project

- Chimamanda Adichie passionately talks about the “danger of a single story” in her 2009 TED Talk. She uses the phrase “single stories” to describe the often simplistic and false perceptions we form about individuals, groups, or countries. In her various novels and short stories, she complicates the single stories many people believe about Nigeria, the country where she is from.
- Single stories can include stereotypes, ideologies and, what sociologists call, cultural hegemony. Stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about a sub-group of peoples, and often constructed by people with power to limit opportunities of a sub-group of people.

If you choose this project:

- In this project, you will select a societal single story, related to sex, gender or sexualities and analyze it.
 - You will explore the story you chose: What is the function of the story? What are its impact on identities of an individuals/groups, on our social relations and institutions? How does the story contribute to the perpetuation of inequality in society? How has it become institutionalized?
 - You may also want to examine the alternative stories, particularly stories told by those marginalized by the single story. What happens to the story if we follow the perspective of those most oppressed by the story/stereotype?
 - You will propose ways to change the story both in our daily life and on a broader scale: How can the story be changed? What can we do in our daily life to change the story? What can be done on a broader scale.
 - You will give a presentation on your project as a way of sharing your research. You should determine how to present your findings to the rest of students in a 5 minute presentation.
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Project topic 3: Action project

- The aim of this project is (1) to learn about various gender/sexuality issues today; (2) to imagine and engage in social change.
- You may find the following topic suggestions useful: Marriage and Divorce; Domestic Violence; Motherhood; Contraception; Abortion; HIV/AIDS; Beauty; Body Image; The Global Sex Trade; Rape; Sexual Harassment; Sexism; Family; Unequal Opportunities at Work Places; Emotional Labour; Women’s Unpaid Work; Migration; Higher Education; Poverty; Homeless Women; Media Images of Women; Women and Ageing; Women’s Health; Disability; Lesbians; Transgender; etc.

If you choose this project:

- You will explore the following questions:
 - What gender-related problem do you seek to address?
 - What evidence do you see that this problem exists in this particular community?
 - How does your project address this problem?
 - You will give a presentation on your project as a way of sharing your research. You should determine how to present your findings to the rest of students in a 5 minute presentation.
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Class Schedule - See Week 1 Introduction PPT Lecture PPT today (will be uploaded to Brightspace)

Policies and Expectations

Please refer to the following link in terms of Policies and Expectations of the students.

<http://www.sunykorea.ac.kr/page/policiesregulations>

Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Faculty members are required to report any suspected

instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary Committee or the Department of Academic Affairs (Campus Building A, Room 201, (032) 626-1121).

Disabilities Act

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Department of Student Affairs, Campus Building A, Room 207, (032) 626-1190. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Critical Incident Management.

SUNY Korea expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Department of Academic Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Course Evaluation

Stony Brook University values student feedback in maintaining the high quality education it provides and is committed to the course evaluation process, which includes a mid-semester assessment as well as an end-of the-semester assessment, giving students a chance to provide information of courses. Please click the following link to access the course evaluation system:

<http://stonybrook.campuslabs.com/courseeval/>

Attendance Policy of Suny Korea

1. All SUNY Korea students are required to attend every class.
2. Unexcused absences will significantly affect the student's final course grade.
3. Students who are absent without a valid excuse (see below) from more than 20% of scheduled class meetings will receive a grade of "F" for the course as follows:
 - (A). For 150-minute classes meeting once a week, the 4th unexcused absence
 - (B). For 75-minute classes meeting twice a week, the 7th unexcused absence
 - (C). For 50-minute classes meeting three times a week, the 10th unexcused absence
 - (D). For Intensive English Center (IEC) Courses, students who miss more than 40 hours during a semester will receive a grade of "F" for the course.
4. Students should report the reason for absences to the instructor in advance, or immediately after the absence.
5. Absences may be classified as "excused" at the instructor's discretion.
6. For an absence to be "excused," the student must provide the instructor with acceptable documentation for the reason for the absence.
7. The course instructor may excuse the absence if the submitted documentation fulfills the conditions below:
 - (A). Extreme emergencies (e.g., death in the family)
 - (B). Major medical reasons with doctor's note (not minor ailments)
 - (C). Very important events (e.g., national conferences, official school events)
8. At the end of semester, the course instructor will submit the class attendance record to the Academic Affairs Office.

Assignment guidelines - General

A Note on Submitting Assignments:

All assignments must be submitted via blackboard

Late Policy:

- Assignments received after the due date will be penalized 10% per day up to three days, and a mark of zero will be awarded thereafter.

- Requests for extensions will ONLY be given in extenuating circumstances - i.e. circumstances beyond a student's control - and will require documentation (e.g. a doctor's note). Extensions will not be granted where good time management skills could have avoided the problem.

Referencing: Assignments must be entirely your own work. If the exact words or phrases of another author are used they must be in quotation marks with an accompanying reference. Material that is paraphrased – that is, an idea from another author but put into your own words – must also be accompanied by a properly formatted citation. Please use appropriate style (either MLA, APA or Chicago) in a consistent manner throughout your assignments.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Presenting an idea, words or an exact phrase of another author as your own work constitutes plagiarism. All students are required to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Class Schedule

Week 1. Introduction to the course

Week 2. Theorising Sex - Intersexuality

- Required
 - Beck, Max. 2001. "My Life as an Intersexual." <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/intersexual-life/>
 - Too fast to be a woman https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-UXOLE_tCg
- Questions
 - Should there be only two sexes?
 - How do people with intersex bodies provide evidence that the gender binary fails to describe reality?
 - What were your initial impressions of the documentary?
 - In your opinion, should sports organizations continue to use gender testing to determine eligibility? Why or why not?
 - How do you think the media and sports officials handled the situation around Caster Semenya's gender, and what could they have done differently?

Week 3. Lecture: Theorising Gender

- Required
 - Richardson, D. 'Conceptualising gender', in D. Richardson and V. Robinson (eds) *Introducing Gender and Women's Studies*, 3rd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008 KT
 - Questions to discuss:
 - What defines the female ideal in the contemporary Korean (or American) society? What defines the male idea in the contemporary Korean (or American) society?
 - Why do most of us do gender, at least a little, in our everyday interactions?
 - If both men and women are constrained by a binary gender system, why is it more women than men find this system unfair?
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Week 4. Sexualities and Sexual Divisions

- Required
 - G. M. Herek. Beyond "homophobia": Thinking about sexual prejudice and stigma in the twenty-first century. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 1(2):6–24, 2004.
- Questions to discuss:
 - How do we Experience Heteronormativity, Privilege & Phobias?
 - Describe how you learned from others that heterosexuality was normal, called heteronormativity (for example: family, friends, role models, here at Suny Korea etc.). How did heteronormativity impacted your attitudes, beliefs, and interactions with the LGBTQ+ communities?
 - Describe an instance or situation where you experienced phobias related to sexualities.
 - Is heterosexual/homosexual binary become less stable in Korean society?

Week 5. Undoing Gender Project Presentation

- Student Presentation

Week 6. Gender Outlaw: Body and Gender

- Required
 - Shilling, C., & Bunsell, T. 2009. The female bodybuilder as a gender outlaw. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 1(2), 141–159
 - S. L. Dworkin. 2001 "Holding Back": Negotiating a glass ceiling on women's muscular strength. *Sociological Perspectives*, 44(3):333–350.
 - *Class Watching* : Supersize She
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Week 7 Gender & embodied practices

- Required
 - K. Davis. Revisiting feminist debates on cosmetic surgery: Some reflections on suffering agency and embodied difference. *Cosmetic surgery: A feminist primer*, pages 35–47, 2009.
 - D. Gimlin. The absent body project: cosmetic surgery as a response to bodily dys-appearance. *Sociology*, 40(4):699–716, 2006.
 - Film: Never Perfect
 - Questions to consider:
 - Is cosmetic surgery a radical action women can take to exert control over their place in society, or is it a symptom of suffering in a male-dominated society?
 - Some feminists, like Naomi Wolf, argue that women are duped 'victims' of 'the beauty myth', pressured against their wills to undergo expensive and dangerous cosmetic surgery procedures in order to look better according to the ideals promoted by the male-dominated fashion industry and its ma##
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Week 8. Midterm Exam

Week 9. Changing the story/stereotype project

- Students presentations
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Week 10 and Week 11 Intersectionality and sexual/gender violence

- Required
 - Crenshaw, K. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, *Stanford law review* , 1241--1299
 - Phipps, A. 2009. Rape and respectability: Ideas about sexual violence and social class. *Sociology* 43(4).
 - Questions
 - What is the main idea of intersectionality?
 - Thinking about your intersectional identities, how do you experience both privilege and oppression?
 - "We should keep an intersectional focus by 'asking the other question' if we are to fully understand and explore issues around gender violence." Do you agree with this view? If so, why?
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Week 12 Pinkwashing and Gay Imperialism

- Required
 - Schulman, Sarah. 2011. "Israel and 'Pinkwashing.'." *New York Times* 22.
 - J. Haritaworn, T. Tauqir, and E. Erdem. Gay imperialism: Gender and sexuality discourse in the 'war on terror'. *Out of place: Interrogating silences in queerness/racality*, pages 71–95, 2008.

- Questions
 - Pinkwashing does not advance queer rights. Discuss.
 - White feminism argues that the hijab oppresses Muslim women and “Muslim women need saving” and liberation. Discuss
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Week 13. Action Project Presentation

- Student Presentation
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Week 14 Conclusion - Feminism and Gender Politics

Week 15. Final Exam