

SOCIOLOGY 3010

SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER

(Fall 2001)

Grande Prairie Regional College

SEP. 07 2001

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays: 15 - 15.45 Tuesdays and Thursdays: 13.30 - 14.15
Or by Appointment

Course Description:

An inquiry into contemporary and historical concepts, assumptions, and expressions of gender, and their political, personal, cultural, and social implications.

Course Prerequisite: SOCIOLOGY 1000

Required Reading:

Gender in Canada - E.D. Nelson & Barrie Robinson

Gendered pasts - Kathryn McPherson, Cecilia Morgan, and Nancy Forestell

Dreams of trespass - Fatima Mernissi

Assignments:

Essay/Project

- Due the last class of November
- All assignments will be marked on a 1-9 scale
- **Late assignments will be penalized 1 stanine per day, including weekends.**
- You may write on any topic that interests you, even one not addressed in class discussions or lectures, providing it is relevant to the course
- If you choose to write an essay, do not write a descriptive report. The essay must be an analytical exploration about the ideas you express.
- Additional research is expected. Five sources must be used. At least three must be academic, such as might be located in books or journals, or original documents. The remaining minimum of two can be informal sources: interviews, conversations, popular media of any kind, internet websites, etcetera. Be precise, reason rather than merely express opinion, and be grammatical. Grammatical mistakes may affect your mark. The required length is 2000 words. Essays that are too brief will be assessed a ½ stanine penalty.
- All papers must include references in the text itself, as well as a "Works Cited" section. Should either reference section be omitted, your assignment will be reduced by 1 stanine per section. Documentation must follow MLA style. If a style other than MLA is used there will be a reduction of ½ stanine.
- Essays must be typed and double-spaced. They must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, and course numbers and sections. Material can be submitted via email if you prefer this method. However, too often my system cannot open an attachment. Cutting from your word processor, and pasting into an email format, appears to work more reliably. If you submit by email, you don't have to double-space the assignment.
- **If you hand in your assignment late, have another faculty member or a regular employee of the College sign and date it. All signatures must be legible and must identify the area in which the person works.**
- If you opt for a different kind of major assignment, for example a fine arts project, critical thinking must still be evident. Consult with me about how this might be done.
- In these types of assignment, a 750 word paper explaining the sociological significance of what you hand in must also be provided.

Literature Search

- Due the last class of October. **A penalty of 1 stanine per calendar day will be assessed for late assignments.**
- The Literature Search will be graded on a 1-5 scale.
- You will outline the sources you are considering for your topic. You will discuss their possible merit for your essay or project. [In the case of the latter, a special arrangement might be required. Please speak with me about this]. This includes stating the basic ideas and assumptions of the works, and contemplating how they could apply to your work.
- You are not obligated to use any of them when your final assignment is handed in, but you must demonstrate investigation that is more than a listing of titles.

Three Journals

- Journals are due the first classes of October, November, and December. Each is worth a maximum of 1.5 stanines. **The benchmark evaluation, however, will be 1.**
- Each journal is usually one typewritten page, double spaced, or two handwritten pages, double-spaced. They can also be submitted through email, in which case you don't have to double-space the submission.
- Anything pertaining to gender, sexuality, identity, ideas introduced in class discussions or lectures, class interaction, etc., is suitable. Observations about, and suggestions for, the course are also suitable. No research is necessary or expected. The journals are an informal type of communication with me.
- Journals must have your name, ID number, and course and section numbers clearly identified.

Discussion Bonus

- Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, you may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the **QUALITY** of your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation.
- You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by doing your reading and completing the required assignments. **Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. If you are absent for more than 5 classes, you will not receive a bonus grade.**
- The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3.
- The course has a webCT discussion forum. I will look in on it periodically, but I will not participate unless requested to do so. Participation in this, as in class discussion, is not

mandatory, but if you do contribute I might gain a better sense of your overall contribution to our discussions. I will treat webCT involvement of this type as I would in-class comments.

Tabulation of Marks

- The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 18.5.
- Your marks will be totaled out of 18.5, a percentage will be obtained, and the percentage will be re-converted to a final stanine grade according to the following table.

Stanine Grade	Percentage Equivalent
9	90 - 100
8	80 - 89
7	72 - 79
6	65 - 71
5	57 - 64
4	50 - 56
3	45 - 49
2	26 - 44
1	0 - 25

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Gender in Canada: Chapter 1

- What is social construction? Are you convinced of its logic? Are the authors justified in applying it to sex, gender, and sexuality?
- Have you imagined yourselves, or could you imagine yourselves, a different gender?
- How do you assess the list of gender stereotypes on page 19?

2. Gender in Canada: Chapter 2

- Explain the differences or similarities of the biological, feminist, psychological, and social psychological perspectives.

3. Gender in Canada: Chapter 3: Gendered pasts: Essays 2 & 3

- Gender is often thought of as a contemporary concept. Does this make unnecessary GIC's third chapter? What does the historical perspective offered by Nelson and Robinson contribute to our consideration of gender?
- What types of feminism are mentioned in chapter 3? Do these theories and perspectives provide an adequate framework for analyzing the two essays in Gendered Pasts?
- Can we learn anything gender from Poutanen's discussion of vagrancy? Is her essay more than a historical window on Montreal's past?
- In her look into gender and law in Montreal in the 19th century, can we draw broader insight into societal life?
- What does the first part of the title of Poutanen's essay suggest about the second part of the title?
- Why link together homeless people, whores, drunkards, and disorderly individuals?
- If you have conclusions as a result of the first essay, do these link up with your assessment of the discussion in the second essay?
- In what ways are these articles in GP indicative of the societies of their times?
- Why refer to leisure, sex, and sin together?

3. Gender in Canada: Chapter 4

- Did your parents monitor your behaviour differently when you children, so that you knew how to behave as males or females?
- How early in your lives were you aware of masculinity and femininity? Can you recall what these words meant to you then?
- Does the title of chapter 4 indicate that development and socialization not only work together, but that they do so harmoniously? Is either ever a complication for the other? Can they interfere with each other? Does socialization ever interfere with positive development? Can development be stopped? If not, why do we require socialization? What costs might arise in our development as a result of how we are socialized?

4. Gender in Canada: Chapter 5; Gendered pasts: Essay 4

- Why call chapter 5 "symbolic representations of gender?" What representations are cited in the chapter? Can you think of representations other than those mentioned?
- Can we reasonably consider masculinity, passion, and sexual danger to be symbolic representations in the manner conceptualized by Nelson and Robinson?
- In the essay in *Gendered Pasts*, how are these intertwined? Do the essay's authors develop a credible intellectual case?

5. Gender in Canada: Chapters 6; Gendered pasts: Essay 10

- In what ways are work and gender joined?
- How would you explain sexual harassment? Does it match the explanation[s] provided in the book? Do you support the idea of a sexual harassment policy?
- What are the core ideas of essay 10, and how well do they fit with what is presented in chapter 6?

6. Gender in Canada: Chapter 7

- The authors suggest males and females experience friendship differently, desire different types of friendship, and have varying expectations of friendship. Do you agree with this assessment? Does it reflect your relations with people?
- In what ways might you agree with, challenge, hope to change, etc., the authors' conclusions about intimacy?
- What prominence, if any, does power have in your relationships with other people?
- Does your language of sexuality operate parallel to, or divergent from, what is described in the book, beginning on page 335?
- What are scripts? Can you say whether scripts assisted you in your own sexual development?

7. Gender in Canada: Chapter 8; Gendered pasts: Essays 6 & 7

- Explain the presence of gender in marriage and parenting. How do Nelson and Robinson suggest marriage and parenting are infiltrated by ideas/assumptions/standards/behaviours of gender?
- In what sense was/is motherhood invented? Can the same be said of fatherhood? Are there concepts of parenthood that remove us from boundaries of motherhood and fatherhood?
- Where, in the ideas articulated in chapter 8, would you place the various manifestations and

assumptions of parenting and mothering discussed in essays 6 and 7?

- What awareness of gender and its many forms of implementation, emerges from your reading of these essays?
- Have our contemporary attitudes taken us far away from what is described in all of the readings discussed in this section?

8. Gender in Canada: Chapter 10; Gendered pasts, Essay 11

- What is a social movement? In what sense can we say that gender is at the centre of some social movements?
- What feminist contributions to social movements are cited in this chapter? There are different 'feminisms' mentioned here. How do they compare to each other? In what ways did they conceptually diverge and converge?
- Chapter 10 stresses equality. In essay 11 there is a strong call for equality, although for male Italian immigrant workers. Given what is presented on men and women in this reading, is it reasonable for me to include it together with chapter 10? Is it closer conceptually to what is expressed in the chapter on work and gender?

9. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 1-6

- Describe the harem that Mernissi experienced. How many kinds of harem were there?
- What were the harem's limits, frontiers, and possibilities?
- How did the harem as an idea and a practise, influence men's lives?
- The harem contained different women with a variety of ideas and opinions. Prepare to offer a continuing overview of these currents as we proceed through the book.
- What was the boundary between adulthood and childhood in the harem? Were there differences between male and female childhood?
- What is an allegory? What was allegorical about the story of Scheherazade?

10. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 7-12

- What was the cultural and gender significance of World War 2 to the people in Mernissi's life?
- Why was Asmahan important to, at least, the women of the harem?

11. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 13- 18

- The visit of Egyptian feminists was an important event for many of the women in the harem. Why?
- All societies distinguish between commonplace and special occurrences. What distinctions are mentioned in these chapters? Does Princess Budur fit into this distinction?
- What is the significance of the cinema and the terrace being forbidden? In any society, we can find forbidden experience. Of what social value, if any, is both the idea and the practise of something being forbidden? Is prohibiting behaviour the same thing as forbidding it?

12. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 19-22

- Why do puberty and attending school acquire significance in Mernissi's life? Why mention "skin" and "politics" in the same title?
- What endows any social or personal experience with significance?