

SOCIOLOGY 3010

SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER

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(Winter 1999)

Grande Prairie Regional College

New Course Description:

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

Instructor: Alan Segal, PhD

Office: C410, 539-2011

Office Hours: Mondays through Thursdays: 2:30 - 3:30
By appointment

Course Co-/Prerequisite: SOCIOLOGY 1000

Required Reading:

Gender in Canada - ED Nelson & Barrie Robinson

Masculinity goes to school - Rob and Pam Gilbert

A feminist I: Reflections from academia - Christine Overall

Dreams of trespass - Fatima Mernissi

Joan of Arc: The image of female heroism - Marina Warner

Assignments:

Essay/Project

- Due the last class of the semester.
- 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, at least some of which must be academic. Be precise; reason rather than merely express opinion, and be grammatical. Grammatical mistakes may affect your mark. The required length is 1500 words.
- Too brief or too lengthy essays will be assessed a 1/2 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, for each kind of referencing not in the MLA style there may be a reduction of 1/2 stanine.
- Essays must be typed and double-spaced. They must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, and course numbers and sections.
- 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.

Three Journals

- Journals are due the first classes of February, March, and April. Each is worth a maximum of 2 stanines. **However, all journals will be graded on a standard of 1.**
- Each journal is usually one typewritten page, double spaced, or two handwritten pages, double-spaced.
- 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.
- The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3.

Tabulation of Marks

- The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 15.
- Your marks will be totaled out of 15, 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: Preface and Chapter 1

- Why do the authors ask how many sexualities and how many genders there are?
- What is social construction? Are you convinced of its logic? Are the authors justified in applying it to sex, gender, and sexuality?

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DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

I. Gender in Canada; Preface and Chapter 1

- Why do the authors ask how many sexualities and how many genders there are?
- 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/could you imagine yourselves a different gender?
- What are your thoughts about the list of gender stereotypes on page 19?
- Do the authors write reasonably of the tyranny of gender [page 32]? In what sense might be tyrannical - or not?
- Why do the authors consider language an important dimension of gender, and of sexism?

2. Gender in Canada: Chapters 2 & 3

- Explain the differences or similarities of the biological, feminist, psychological, and social psychological perspectives.
- Why mention psychology and social psychology separately?
- Given the history outlined in chapter 3, can you say if any of the theories mentioned in chapter 2, or any group of them, was a more astute appraisal of gender at certain historical periods, than at others?
- These chapters express a few gender or sexuality metaphors. Can you detect any? What metaphors of your own can you think of?
- Did your parents monitor your behaviour differently when you children, based on you being male or female?
- How early in your lives were you aware of masculinity and femininity? What did these words mean to you then?

3. Gender in Canada: Chapter 5

- Why call a chapter "symbolic representations of gender?"
- What representations are cited in the chapter?
- Can you think of representations other than those mentioned?
- Are all representations symbolic? If not, what makes the representations chosen by the authors symbolic?

4. Gender in Canada: Chapter 4

- We assume social institutions in fact socialize. Is the fullness of that assumption reliable? Might we be more accurate about some aspects of socialization but not others? When it comes to gender, would you say you were socialized similarly to what is discussed in this chapter?
- What is gender ideology?
- What thoughts do you have about segregating school students according to sex?

5. Masculinity goes to school: Chapters 1 & 2

- Why concentrate on boys, masculinity, and school experience?
- What theories of masculinity are discussed?

6. Masculinity goes to school: Chapters 3 - 6

- What social practises make up the contemporary culture perceived by the Gilberts?
- Do you share the authors' analysis that in our society, men's sport embodies masculinity?
- What is the substance of their analysis, such that they can conclude that men's sport is crucial to present forms of masculinity?
- Prepare two positions, one that defends and another that challenges the authors' interpretation of masculinity and schooling.
- When you were students of elementary and high school age, would you have answered the questions stated in the book, comparably to what was said by the boys who were interviewed?
- What is meant by masculinity at the margins?

7. Masculinity goes to school: Chapters 7-9

- What is the significance of naming a chapter "Bad Boys?"
- What relationship is drawn between bad boys and masculinity?
- Do authors persuade you of their analysis of bodily aggression?
- Why mention literacy in a book on masculinity and schooling?
- If you were asked to develop a program of change, would you utilize anything mentioned by Pam and Rob Gilbert?

8. Gender in Canada: Chapters 6 & 10; A feminist I: Chapter 1

- In what ways are work and gender intertwined?
- 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?
- Explain Overall's feminist odyssey.
- What is a social movement?
- Feminism is one of the movements referred to in the book. Prepare to discuss the different branches of feminism and their political idea[1]s.

9. A feminist I: Chapters 2-5

- What are the role muddles Overall has experienced or observed, and how are they related to her feminist critique of academe, and society in general?
- How does Overall define oppression?
- Explain her critique of co-education.
- How has/might teaching become a vehicle for changing gender-biased ideas, attitudes, and behaviour?

10. A feminist I: Chapters 6-8

- Overall identifies varieties of fraudulence. What are they?
- Do you accept that these are particularly linked to gender?
- Is it inevitable that we become frauds? If not, how can we prevent the development? Should we prevent such a state from developing?
- What is authenticity? Does Overall provide some understanding of the contrast between authenticity and fraudulence?
- What is meant by passing as normal? what counts as normalcy?
- Have you ever passed as normal?

11. Gender in Canada: Chapters 7 & 8

- 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 echo your own relations with other 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? How important are they to social learning? Are they more important for some forms of learning than for others? Can you say that scripts assisted you in your own sexual development?
- In light of the details on marital interaction, how would you describe your expectations of marital interaction?
- Considering the feminist debate on reproductive technology, where would you place your own outlook on the matter?

12. Gender in Canada: Chapter 9

- What are sex ratio differentials and morbidity?
- How are aging and gender conceptually connected?
- What is gender depolarization?

13. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 1-7

- What was the harem? How many kinds of harem were there?
- What were the harem's limits, frontiers, and possibilities?
- What was allegorical about the story of Scheherazade?
- What's significant about Yasmina's first co-wife?
- Language has political importance. Draw examples of this from your reading.

- Were there heroes in Fatima's early life? If so, what/who were they?
- How did the harem as an idea and a practise, influence males' lives?
- The harem contained different women with a variety of ideas and opinions. Offer an overview of these currents.

14. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 8-12

- What structure of the harem and of gender is conveyed in these chapters?
- 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?

15. Dreams of trespass: Chapters 13-19

- In all societies, life is marked out by the distinction between commonplace and special occurrences. How is this distinction delineated in these chapters?
- Does Princess Budur fit into this distinction?
- What was the boundary between adulthood and childhood in the harem?
- Were there differences between male and female childhood?

16. Dreams of trespass: chapters 20-22

- Rank the people in the harem according to their importance in Fatima's life. Explain the ranking.
- By the end of the book, do you think Fatima's sense of the harem has evolved beyond what is described in the rest of the volume? If so, in what ways?

17. Joan of Arc: Quote by Nietzsche; Prologue; Chapters 1-4

18. Joan of Arc: Chapters 5-8

19. Joan of Arc: Chapters 9-13