

Sociology/Women's Studies 1016 – Sex, Gender & Society Spring Semester 2007

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Course Overview

In American culture, and in Western societies in general, men and women are thought to be different kinds of people in numerous and significant ways. In pre-modern times, gender differences were seen as the result of divine design. As science has emerged as a dominant ideology since the enlightenment, these “differences” between men and women have been recast as a product of different biological factors. In other words, the dominant cultural belief is that since men and women have different glands, hormones, brain structure and bodies the appropriate conclusion is that men and women must be different too. Regardless of the underlying justifications once these gender “differences” are socially described, defined, and popularized, we see “evidence” of them all around us. These ideas in turn serve to justify and legitimate gender inequality—a set of interconnected social arrangements which serve to give women less and men more of various social resources including money, prestige, mental health, and self-esteem, among numerous others.

There is still much that is taboo in our culture regarding sex, sexuality, and gender. Related topics are intensely debated and argued in the media, by political figures, in families, among partners and friends. Too often, however, in our culture discussions and conversations related to sexuality and gender do *not* happen because the topics are taboo, difficult, or controversial. A primary function of this class is to provide a forum where sex and everything related to it can be discussed in an honest and forthright manner.

In this course we will analyze our culture's ideas related to gender and the resulting inequalities. I teach this class primarily from a social constructionist perspective. The social constructionist perspective is founded on the principle that the language we use creates our reality and experience of the world; this class is about gender as women and men in their everyday worlds experience it. As a result, I consciously use language to uncover the implicit meanings about gender and how words are used to create our common understanding of our own and others' genders.

Given the importance of language we will be discussing real world use of terms related to gender and sexuality. These terms are often considered offensive and derogatory. If hearing or discussing what is considered profane or explicit language is of concern to you please contact me to discuss if this course is appropriate for you.

Since social constructionist theory is a way of looking at the world that pays special attention to language, culture, and social interaction, we will examine and incorporate data from our everyday lives - books, movies, advertising, and records of mundane social interaction – throughout the course.

I am here to push you academically, intellectually, and personally. Considering or reconsidering personal beliefs can be particularly difficult with regard to such controversial and personal subjects as sex, sexuality, and gender. **I strongly encourage you to realistically consider if you are personally ready and willing to take this course.** If you decide another course would be more appropriate I am happy to discuss alternatives including those that will fulfill the gender and diversity requirement.

Classroom Environment

I believe my primary role as a teacher is to model and encourage the learning process through interactive feedback and discussion – thus your preparation for, and participation in,

each class session are critical to your success as well as the success of everyone else in the classroom. I will not stand at the front of the room and lecture to passive receptors. Having been a student sitting in the same chairs you now sit in, I know how painful and boring lectures can be. I encourage and demand discussion, questions, etc. Printed information is by far a more effective means of communicating basic content than speech. I see the classroom as our very rare opportunity to meet and actively engage, discuss, debate, and challenge, the readings *with each other*. Even if I am presenting information where little discussion is possible, students should be actively listening and engaging with the material. What you get out of this class will be a direct reflection of the work and effort you put into it.

In order to create a comfortable and open environment where all members of the class are willing to share their thoughts and ideas, I require all students to behave in a respectful manner towards one another at all times. While enthusiastic debate and discussion are essential and encouraged, insensitive or rude comments based on race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or beliefs will not be tolerated at any time.

I have no tolerance for anyone interrupting another speaker. Interruption is disrespectful. I know this happens accidentally especially during large group discussions but we need to make a deliberate effort to respect the rights of others to speak and be heard without interruption. Consistently or continuously interrupting other speakers may result in my asking you to leave or no longer attend class. Please be mindful of others' right to speak, *particularly if you disagree*. I will make every effort to allow anyone who is interested in speaking a full opportunity to do so.

Accessing Readings

There is not a required textbook for this course. There is an *optional* textbook, *The Good Vibrations Guide to Sex*, 3rd Edition by Anne Semans and Cathy Winks. You will not be officially responsible for the information in this text. This information will not only supplement course material but will also provide you with accurate honest information about gender and sexuality relevant to your life.

Rather than an assigned textbook we will be reading articles from a variety of sources. These readings are required as a textbook would be. All readings will be available on the course page of CU Learn (<http://culearn.colorado.edu>). I can only guarantee that readings are accessible from campus computers. If you have trouble accessing or printing readings from a campus computer you should first contact the lab supervisor or campus help at 303.735.HELP (4357). If they cannot resolve the problem then you should send me an email explaining the issue so I can take the appropriate steps to insure the reading is available.

Monetary Concerns

If someone other than you is paying for your textbooks I *strongly encourage* you to have her or him deposit money to your Buff One Card for printing in lieu of the cost of a textbook. Based on campus printing prices I expect you will need approximately \$50 to produce paper copies of all of the readings for this class. Funds for printing can be deposited by you or anyone with the necessary information by going here: <http://services.jsatech.com/index.php?cid=59> and following the "Make A Deposit" link on the right-hand side.

I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE YOU TO PRINT PAPER COPIES OF THE READINGS.

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I have repeated this statement intentionally in hopes that more students will take this advice. Printing a paper copy of readings allows you to bring readings to class to reference during discussions. Doing so also allows you to underline, highlight, and take notes directly on the readings. Further it greatly facilitates being able to compare and contrast the articles with one another which you will need to do in order to do well in this class. If you are having trouble in

the course my first piece of advice will be to start printing paper copies of the readings if you have not done so.

There are numerous computer labs on campus where you can access printers. You can send documents to be printed on campus printers from any computer with internet access. The instructions for doing so are available here: <http://www.colorado.edu/cpi/remote/index.htm>. Inkjet printers are expensive and slow. If you are in your first or second year of school I strongly recommend purchasing a very basic laser printer. These can now be obtained for less than \$100 and are ideal for printing high numbers of text documents. If you want advice or specific models and/or ways to find these for sometimes as little as \$50 please ask.

Evaluation Components

The standards for earning a percentage or letter grade on any assignment and overall in the course are as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage Gade	Description
A	90-100	Exceeds all required elements of an assignment, and the quality of the work is considerably greater than what was required. The quality of the work is considerably above the class average and impressive to the evaluator.
B	80-89	Meets all required elements of an assignment, and the quality of the work is better than what is required and demonstrated by the class average.
C	70-79	Meets all required elements of an assignment, no more, no less. Quality of assignment is satisfactory for college level work.
D	60-69	Fails to meet all required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is less than satisfactory. Citations are not included when other materials are referenced.
F	Less than 59	Only meets some of the required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is considerably lower than satisfactory. 50% of points are not guaranteed. At this level points are only given if some elements of the assignment are met. If not, very low percentages are likely.
Zero	0	Fails to meet any of the required elements of an assignment, and/or the quality of the assignment is well below basic standards of writing, comprehension, and/or ability to follow instructions; assignment is late or incomplete; assignment is not turned in at all; assignment shows signs of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty.

These standards are likely higher than you've encountered previously in your educational career. I am available to offer assistance, feedback, coaching, etc., to assist you in meeting these standards and taking away from this course the ability to perform at this level. You must seek me out and request this assistance, but if you do I promise the benefits of this course will increase exponentially. You can still do very well in this course!

I give credit as it is earned based on the content of the work. Each assignment begins as a zero and is awarded points according to the quality of the work. I am happy to discuss how and why I awarded points and how to do better in the future. However, I will not participate in

discussions about grades that rely on the assumption that a paper should have earned full credit and thus why points were “lost” is what needs to be justified. If there is disagreement about a grade it is the burden of the student to justify why and how more points were earned than were given.

Progressive Grading Standards

In general grading standards will get progressively more rigorous as we progress through the semester. For example, on the first essay I will not severely penalize formatting or typographic mistakes unless they are numerous. However, by the fifth essay I expect that you will have received enough feedback from me such that citations will be formatted properly and typographic mistakes will be non-existent or minimal. If such pervasive mistakes do appear on a later essay the penalty to the grade will be significantly greater than it would be at the beginning of the semester.

Syllabus Quiz – 2%

I will give a quiz on the content of this document on Wednesday, January 23rd 2008 at the beginning of class. This quiz will cover the contents of this document in detail. The quiz will consist of short answer, fill-in, and multiple choice questions. This is meant to give additional incentive for students to read and understand the course syllabus. This document is a legal contract and you should be familiar with it before you make a decision about remaining enrolled in this course. I encourage and welcome questions about this document prior to this date either in class or by email.

Please note that while this is only worth 2% of your final grade *a failing grade on this quiz means you will need to see me during office hours during the week of January 21st – 25th or I will administratively drop you from the course.*

Course Agreement Form – Necessary to Remain Enrolled

You will need to print, read, and sign in ink a Course Agreement Form (available on CU Learn) by the end of class on Friday January 25th. Failure to do so means that I will administratively drop you from the course. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy.

Reading Summaries and Responses - 25%

It is essential that you complete all assigned readings before class meets and come ready to discuss what you found useful, informative, confusing, unclear, or problematic.

You can expect to read up to 30 pages for each class meeting. Length and intensity of readings will vary so check the reading schedule frequently and plan accordingly. All readings will be available in electronic form as PDF files on our course page of CU Learn. Any changes to assigned reading I will announce in class and I will post this information on CU Learn.

For all but three (3) readings during the semester you are required to turn in a Reading Summary and Response (RSaR). This means that for each individual reading (*not* each day’s worth of reading) you will turn in a Reading Summary and Response unless otherwise explained in class. Any exceptions to this policy will also be posted on CU Learn.

Reading summaries and responses must adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

- All content, both the summary and reading response, must appear on one side of one sheet of paper.
- The RSaR must be produced by machine with black ink.
- You must use a standard font and double-space your writing.
- In order to receive credit your name, date, and the author’s last name and an indication of the title (an abbreviated title is okay) of the reading must appear on the page.

- Your name, the date, the author's last name, and the title may be placed outside of the 1 inch or 1.25 inch margins in a header if necessary to conserve space. RSaRs that exceed one page will not receive credit.
- RSaRs that do not conform to content or formatting directions will at best earn partial credit and may not earn any credit depending on the number and extent of mistakes

Reading summaries and responses must adhere to the following content guidelines:

The reading summary shall be no less than three sentences and no more than five sentences long. *You may not use quotes in the reading summary.* No sentence in the summary may contain more than twenty-five words.

The reading response shall be a critical evaluation of the content of the reading. You may state what you found interesting, what you agreed with, what you disagreed with, what you didn't understand, and any other thoughts inspired by the reading. *You may use quotes in the reading response but you must comment on why you are including the quote.*

Reading Summaries and Responses will be due *at the beginning of class* the day for which the reading is assigned. The first required reading is the syllabus. You do not need to complete a RSaR for the syllabus because there will be a quiz on this information. Therefore the first Reading Summary and Response is due at the start of lecture on Friday January 18, 2008.

Please note that these are NOT so-called "busy work" assignments. While part of the point of these assignments is to provide incentive for students to keep up with reading it is not the primary function as I consider this something that *all* students should do for every course. The ability to recognize the most significant aspects of any written work is crucial for learning and assessing information in general. The ability to summarize and effectively convey to another audience the fundamentals of a text is a skill that is and will be useful in all kinds of areas of life. Both of these skills take practice and virtually everyone, myself included, has room to improve. These abilities will serve you throughout life, not just during formal education.

In addition, the response portion of these assignments provides you with an opportunity to begin critically evaluating the readings. The response portion also allows me to identify confusing, problematic, and controversial aspects of the readings. This in turn helps me to focus my lectures and to direct and encourage class discussions that are aligned with student interest.

Each of these assignments will be graded on a scale of check-plus (✓+) indicating full credit, an X indicating partial credit, or a zero indicating no credit earned. You are welcome to criticize or disagree with the arguments presented in the readings in your response. The response will be evaluated based on whether or not it is clear that you actually put some effort into thinking about the reading and writing your response not on the specific issues you address.

I expect that a typical RSaR will take you between 8 and 15 minutes to complete. If you are spending more time than this on these please see me for assistance.

Completing any portion of another student's RSaR I consider academic honesty. Evidence that this has been done will result in at minimum a zero (0) for this portion of the course and may result in a zero (0) for the semester course grade at my discretion.

Essays – 30%

Throughout the semester I will assign five essays designed to get students to apply ideas from class either to their own lives or aspects of our culture. These essays will have a length limit of between two and four pages. You are required to complete all of these assignments. I will drop the single (1) lowest grade when determining your grade for this portion of the class. These assignments must adhere to the formatting guidelines for written assignments for this course. Each essay assignment will include details for the content as well as details of the standards of evaluation that I will use to evaluate the essays.

Exams – 32%

There will be three exams. The exams will be a combination of multiple-choice, short-answer, and long answer questions. More specific details will be given during class. The course meeting immediately prior to each exam will be devoted to reviewing course material and addressing exam concerns. The final exam will be cumulative. Specific exam percentages are as follows: Exam 1 – 7%, Exam 2 – 10%, Exam 3 – 15%.

Attendance – 8%

Most, but not necessarily all, course meetings I will either pass around an attendance sheet or ask a student to begin an attendance sheet that you should sign. Signing the form for another student constitutes academic dishonesty. You are allowed to miss two (2) classes without penalty. I do not require excuses, explanations, or other justifications for missing class. If an extraordinary situation is going to prevent you from coming to a significant number of classes let me know as soon as possible so we can discuss your options.

End of Semester Course Evaluation – 3%

In order to attempt to improve my teaching and this course I will solicit extensive feedback from students during the last week of regular class meetings. Completing this assignment will involve completing a survey related to your efforts and experiences in this course. In order to encourage honesty full credit will be given for this assignment if you provide a complete response to each question.

Evaluation Components Summary

Syllabus Quiz – 2%

Reading Responses and Summaries – 25%

Essays – 30%

Exams – 32%

Exam 1 – 7%

Exam 2 – 10%

Exam 3 – 15%

Attendance – 8%

End of Semester Extended Course Evaluation – 3%

Exceptions

I consider sexual assault one of the most pressing social justice issues related to gender that our culture currently faces. **Therefore none of the work related to the sexual assault section of the course is not eligible for exemption or forgiveness.** The readings related to sexual assault are not eligible for the three exemptions from RSaRs. The essay related to sexual assault may not be dropped as your lowest essay score. You may not use Leniency Cards for work related to the sexual assault section of the course.

Extra Credit

All students who have submitted a course agreement, passed the syllabus quiz, and are officially enrolled AND PRESENT in class on Wednesday, January 30th will receive three Leniency Cards. If you are not present in class on January 30th you forfeit eligibility to receive or use these cards. I am giving these out once if you want to receive your cards you must attend class this day. Each card will be numbered and associated with a specific student. Cards may not be exchanged or used by any student not associated with that card. Lost cards will not be replaced so put them somewhere secure and memorable. Any attempt to use a forged card will be considered academic dishonesty. This includes attempts at duplicating a lost card. Attempting to use a forged card will result in severe penalties to your grade potentially including failure of the entire course.

These cards will have specific details of how and when they can be used printed on them. In general you will be able to submit each card for a specific request for leniency. Examples may include a brief extension of a paper deadline, ability to turn in an RSaR that is not printed, leniency for failure to follow directions for formatting, an additional absence without penalty, etc. **If you do not use these cards you will be able to return them to me during the final week of class for extra credit. These cards will not be eligible during the section of the course that covers sexual assault.**

In addition to the three that I give each student on January 30th if you come and meet briefly (approx. 10 – 20 mins.) with me during office hours on or before February 29th, 2008 I will give you one (1) additional Leniency Card. This is to encourage you as students to come to office hours so that we have an opportunity to meet and briefly chat with one another. I hope this will facilitate us getting to know each other and as a result create a better classroom environment. I may also give additional cards during the semester for exemplary effort or performance.

Other Obligations

Every reasonable effort will be made to deal fairly with students who, because of religious obligations, participation in athletics or other structured activities, have just cause to request assistance coping with conflicts with attendance or assignments. *All students to whom this applies must contact me in writing listing specific obligations and dates within the first two weeks of class.* Forgetting to do so is not a valid excuse.

Formatting Rules for Written Assignments

All written assignments for this course must adhere to the following formatting requirements. Failure to do so *will* either result in a lower grade or all or part of the assignment not being accepted for credit.

- Handwritten assignments *will not be accepted for any credit* unless specific arrangements have been made with me at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time.
- Assignments submitted electronically *will not be accepted for any credit* unless specific arrangements have been made with me at least 48 hours prior to the due date and time.
- If you have made arrangements to send me emailed assignments the content must appear in the body of the email. Emails with an attachment I delete without reading.
- Assignments that are more than one page must be stapled or I will only accept the first page for credit, if at all. Do *not* use paper clips, binder clips, fancy folds, tape, glue, or any other method of attaching paper together other than a staple.
- All assignments should have 1" or 1.25" margins on all sides, be printed in black ink in a standard, legible font that is either 11 or 12 point in size.
- Assignment-specific guidelines take precedence over these general guidelines if there is any contradiction.
- Two-sided printing and printing on a clean side of scrap paper is acceptable and encouraged for assignments with length limits longer than one page.

Class Policies

Returned Student Work

Keep ALL of your returned assignments and graded exams until the end of the semester. Students bear the burden of proof for disputes related to grades. In other words, it is your responsibility to provide the original document(s) I have graded, with my comments, for reconsideration or correction of my records.

General Policies

- Arriving to class late, leaving early, sleeping, talking, reading, using your computer other than to take notes, or otherwise being distracted and distracting, are not acceptable

classroom activities. Doing so will result in you losing credit for attendance for that day. Repeated violations may result in your being asked not to attend class.

- *I have no tolerance for cell phones in class. Do NOT set your phone to vibrate; turn them off or completely silence them.* As of the start of class I should neither hear nor see cell phones for any reason. Vibrating phones can still be heard by other students and are therefore still distracting. If I do see or hear a cell phone in class I reserve the right to penalize your grade for each occurrence. In addition, if I hear your phone in class I reserve the right to answer the call or reply to the text message.
- I am prohibiting the use of laptops in the classroom this semester. If you have a documented disability that is alleviated by the use of a laptop you will need to see me during office hours to arrange for an exception to this rule.
- You may not photograph, or use audio or video recording devices of any kind, including cellular phones, during class, without my express prior written permission.
- Please let me know immediately if you have a health problem or disability that necessitates leaving the room during class time, consistently arriving late, or needing to leave early. If other reasons will prevent you from being unable to regularly get to class on time or needing to regularly leave early you should drop this class. Arriving late and leaving early is distracting to me and other students. I reserve the right to penalize students for ALL of their attendance participation points if a particular student is consistently arriving late or leaving early. In addition, I will also ask that you no longer attend class. Clearly this will significantly impact your grade. If an occasion arises where you need to leave early or arrive late please sit in a seat as near to the door as possible and take special care to enter/leave quietly.
- You may not make up in-class work, either in lecture or recitation. If you miss a class, please get notes from a classmate rather than asking me, the instructor, for notes. **You are responsible for all information communicated in class, whether or not you are in attendance.**
- Information on scheduling changes, changes to readings, and assigned work will be posted on CULearn. Please consult CULearn before contacting me with these questions.
- All written assignments must be completed on time and handed in as paper copies at the *beginning* of class on the stated due date. *Work sent electronically will not be accepted.* **Written work should be spell-checked, grammar-checked, and proofread: the quality of your writing will significantly affect your grade. I am happy to read rough drafts or otherwise assist you in improving your writing during office hours.**
- Make-up exams create unfair circumstances for students as well as for me, so only with at least 48 hours *advance* notification and in unavoidable, extreme, and well-documented circumstances will I consider alternative time or format for exams. Check the dates of exams now and plan your schedule, particularly travel, accordingly.
- I will not give incompletes in this course except under extremely unusual, well-documented circumstances.
- I take cheating and dishonesty very seriously. Honor code violations will be reported to the Honor Code Council and will result in a zero (0) for the assignment *at a minimum* and may also result in a zero (0) for your course grade.

Grade Concerns

I want you to do well in this class. Really.

I am here to teach you, improve your academic skills, and encourage your interest and understanding of these subjects. I am happy and willing to offer any help I can within reason. **If you become concerned about your grade, please see/contact me immediately preferably during office hours. Do not wait until the end of the semester when it will be too late to work with you on improving your grade.**

When I return written work to you with a grade, take some time to read my comments. I take the time to correct and comment on papers for a reason. If you cannot read my writing or are not familiar with standard proofreading symbols please ask me about them. If you have concerns, make an appointment with me during office hours and come to the meeting having written down your specific questions and/or comments.

Changes

Although I do not expect to do so, I reserve the right to change any aspect of this course as I deem necessary.

University Policies

Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid that constitutes academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening or intimidating behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council and those students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member involved and non-academic sanctions given by the Honor Code Council (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Please refer to <http://www.colorado.edu/honorcode> to view the specific guidelines. If you have any questions related to this policy, contact the Honor Code Council at honor@colorado.edu.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to disciplinary measures. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion, and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, nationalities, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and gender variance (a major part of this class).

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status

should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you should notify me at least two weeks ahead of time to request special accommodation if you have a conflict. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices>).