

SOCY 1016: Sex, Gender, and Society

Course information

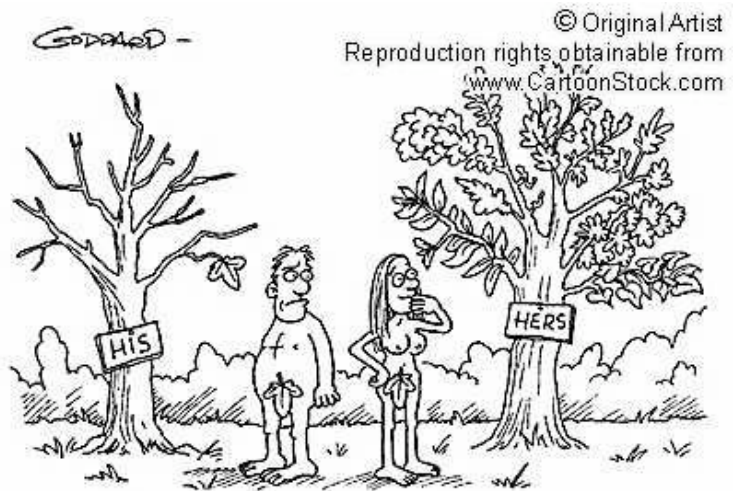
Time: Mon-Fri, 11:00 am-12:35 pm
 Location: 206 GUGG
 Course materials available on CULearn

Instructor information

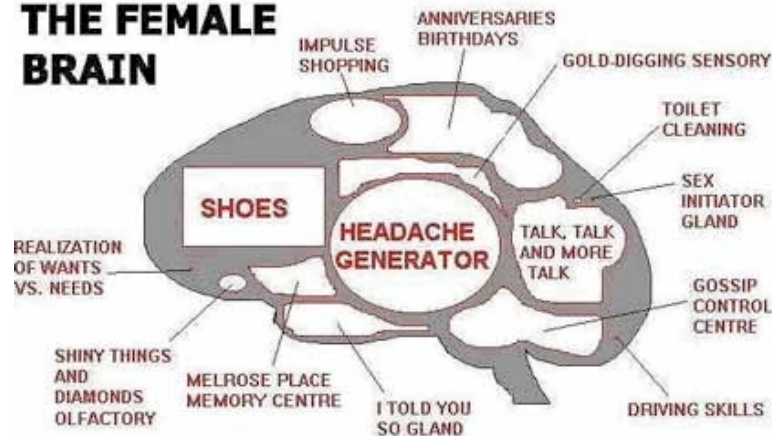
Adam Morenberg, M.A.
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 Email: adam.morenberg@colorado.edu
 Office hours: Mondays 9-10 am,
 Wednesdays 1:00-2:30, and by appointment.



"This would be a lot more fun if you didn't throw like a girl."



THE FEMALE BRAIN



FOOTNOTE: The "Put Oil into the Car" and "Be Quite During the Game" glands are active only when the "SHINY THINGS AND DIAMONDS" OLfactory has been satisfied or when there is a shoe sale.

Course overview

This course is designed to provide you with an introduction to the sociological study of sex and gender in American society. In contemporary society, both sex and gender are seen as products of “nature”, or biology. Our culture views men and women as categorically different kinds of people who have (*and ought to have*) different emotional temperaments, interactional styles, personal habits, relationship needs, etc. We explain those gender differences as products of genetics, hormones, or with other biological explanations. Historically, these seemingly “natural” gender differences have been used to explain and justify numerous forms of gender inequality.

Our main theoretical tool will be social constructionism, a perspective that sees social life as the product of ongoing human social activity—the things you and I do and say. Social constructionism thus views gender differences as the result of social forces. A primary assumption of the perspective is that discourse, or the language we use to talk about something, creates our social reality. In this course I will consciously use language that challenges and questions our implicit understandings of gender.

A main goal of this course is to investigate gender inequality. We will investigate institutionalized gender inequality in schools, families, popular culture, and the economy. Additionally, we will examine how race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, age, and other social positions intersect with gender in social life.

This class will involve a great deal of reading and discussion. It is important that students come to class both prepared and willing to engage with the material. You may find some of the topics we cover are controversial. Feel free to disagree, but be sure your disagreements are handled in a respectful manner.

Please note that this course is on an accelerated summer schedule. The University of Colorado officially states that “an undergraduate student should expect to spend approximately 3 hours per week outside of class for each credit hour earned.” In a summer course, this translates to over five hours a day.

Course goals

In this course, you will...

- Gain an understanding of the social forces that influence your understanding and experience of gender in everyday life.
- Enhance your sociological imagination, a way of seeing your personal life as the product of social forces
- Question taken-for-granted assumptions about what “everybody knows” about gender, men, women, inequality, and other social arrangements.
- Develop tools for critically assessing information about gender in our personal lives and our social worlds.

Attendance

I do not require attendance and do not give points for attendance. I recognize that people have genuine emergencies, but I strongly advise you to attend every class

meeting that you are able to. Much of the material you will be expected to know for the exams and quizzes will *only* be presented in class, so you should plan to attend every class.

If you miss a class, it is up to you to find out what we covered by checking for an updated syllabi on CULearn.

Also, I strongly suggest you exchange contact information with another student and agree to provide each other with notes and other relevant materials if one of you is absent. I've provided space to collect 3 students' contact information below.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

What is expected of students

Students are expected to read each day's assigned readings before the beginning of class. I expect participation in discussions to be respectful to others. This means raising your hand, refraining from talking over others, etc. Because topics relating to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and social class are often controversial, remember that we critique *ideas*, not people.

In addition:

- Please arrive on time to lecture.
- Do not leave class early. If you **MUST** do so, please notify me before class begins and sit next to the door.
- Bring your books and readings to class.
- Bring paper and a writing utensil with which to take notes. Notes will **NOT** be posted online.
- You are responsible for all class material, so if you miss a lecture, get notes from a fellow student.
- You are not allowed to use laptops during class (except for your final project).
- All cell phones must be turned off before class.
- Refrain from side conversations when someone else has the floor, as they are rude and disruptive.
- Please keep all graded work until the end of class, including homework assignments, quizzes, and exams.

Important dates, assignments and points

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Points</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| July 16 | Homework 1 | 10 |
| July 28 | Homework 2 | 10 |
| Aug. 1 | Homework 3 | 10 |
| | Quiz 1 | 5 |
| | Quiz 2 | 5 |
| | Quiz 3 | 5 |
| July 21 | Exam 1 | 25 |
| Aug. 4-7 | Final project | 40 |
| Aug. 8 | Final exam (cumulative) | 40 |
| | Total | 160 points |

Homework assignments: These are meant to help you applying course ideas to your own life by developing your sociological imagination. C. Wright Mills described the sociological imagination as being able to make connections between “biography” (our personal lives) and “history” (social context). Your homework assignments are designed to help you make these connections. Homework assignments are located on CULearn.

Exams: There are two exams made up of 40 questions each. Each exam will have about 30 multiple-choice questions and 10 other questions consisting of fill in the blank and short answer format. Multiple choice questions will have five answer choices. The final exam will be cumulative and include questions about material from final projects.

Quizzes: There are three unscheduled quizzes of approximately 10 questions each, in the same format as the exams.

Final project: This will be a group research project that asks you to research a social institution or social setting and the ways that it is gendered. For example, some groups research “gender and children’s movies” or “gender and health care”. In addition in critically analyzing the ways your institution is gendered, a critical element of the final project will be generating your own ideas about how to “de-gender” your institution. The end of the class will be devoted to presentations of your final projects. You will receive a written assignment detailing the requirements shortly.

Late homework, missed quizzes, and missed exams: I do not accept late homework or give makeup quizzes/exams without an excused absence. Excused absences include emergencies, religious holidays, and student athletics.

If you are worried about your grade: If you are worried about your grade at any time, I STRONGLY encourage you to meet with me. Do not wait until the last week of class to discuss your grade, as it will be too late to work on improving your grade.

Honor code: All students are expected to adhere to the University of Colorado’s Honor Code, and cheating will not be tolerated. If caught, you will receive a 0% in the class and be reported to the Honor Code Council. The Honor Code can be found at:

www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/pledge.htm

Special accommodations

Sickness: If you become ill and cannot attend class, you will need to get a doctor's note that explains your absence. Please provide the note on your first day back.

Religious observances: If class falls on a religious holiday, you will not be penalized for missing class. The University of Colorado at Boulder has legal and moral obligations to accommodate all students who must be absent from classes or miss scheduled exams in order to observe religious holidays. If you will be absent from class for a religious observance, please notify me of any scheduling conflicts by the end of the first week.

Disabilities: If you have physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please provide me with a letter from Disability Services by the end of the first week of class. Disability Services is located in Willard 322, and information is available at www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices.

Student athletics: If you are on an athletic team and will be missing classes, please provide me with a letter from the athletic department by the end of the first week. It is your responsibility to look ahead on the syllabus and deal with any conflicts (e.g., scheduled assignments) prior to the conflicting event.

Tentative course schedule¹

Week One

- T 7/8 **Introduction to course**
No readings due
- W 7/9 **Core sociological concepts**
Kimmel, chapter 1
- R 7/10 **Core sociological concepts**
No reading due
- F 7/11 **Assumptions of biological essentialism**
Kimmel, chapter 2

Week Two

- M 7/14 **Assumptions of social constructionism**
- T 7/15 **Dirty words day**
No readings due
- W 7/16 **Watch *Paradise Bent***
Kimmel, chapter 3
- R 7/17 **Gender inequality and difference**
Kimmel, chapter 5
- F 7/18 **Cultural constructions of gender difference**
"Doing gender". Candace West and Don Zimmerman
Homework 1 is due

Week Three

- M 7/21 **Exam 1**
- T 7/22 **Watch *Ma Vie En Rose***
No readings due
- W 7/23 **Review Exam 1**
No readings due
- R 7/24 **Gender in the workplace 1**
Kimmel, chapter 8
- F 7/25 **Gender in the workplace 2**
Christine Williams, "The glass escalator"

¹I reserve the right to change the course schedule. However, if I do, I will announce the changes in class and post a revised syllabus on CULearn.

Week Four

- M 7/28** **Historical constructions of gender difference**
Homework 2 is due
- T 7/29** **Gender and family life**
Kimmel, chapter 6
- W 7/30** **Watch *Chore Wars***
Scott Coltrane, "Household labor and the routine production of gender"
- R 7/31** **Gender and science**
Emily Martin, "The egg and the sperm"
- F 8/1** **Gender and social change**
Homework 3 is due
Kimmel, "Epilogue"

Week Five

- M 8/4** **Final projects** (groups 1, 2, and 3)
- T 8/5** **Final projects** (groups 4, 5, and 6)
- W 8/6** **Final projects** (groups 7, 8, and 9)
- R 8/7** **Final projects** (groups 10, 11, and 12)
- F 8/8** **Final exam**

