

Gender and Society
SOC 2600
Summer 1, 2013
Mon-Thurs, 9:55-11:40am,

Tom Buechele
tbuechele@gc.cuny.edu
office hours by appt., M-Th until 12:30pm

Description:

Is gender “natural”? Are people born male or female, or do they become gendered? What does it mean to have just these two categories? What does the concept of gender accomplish? How have “gender roles” changed through history? These are some of the questions we will be discussing in this class. We will also be looking at the ways gender, race, class, age, and sexuality intersect, relate, or diverge. What do categories of identity mean? What is their purpose? What are the social relations that produce gendered categories, and what sorts of relations do the categories produce?

Here’s what you should get from this class:

- Leave this course thinking about the world differently.
- Learn to explore ideas and arguments and put them into conversation with each other.
- Read closely. Read to learn.
- Understand the “work” our concepts or beliefs do for us. (e.g. what does sexism accomplish and for whom? Or, what does the term “community” really mean, and for whom?)
- Think about the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of the world and why.
- Understand scale: individual, group, and systemic social relations.

If you take this class seriously, and spend time thinking about the issues and ideas we discuss, you will take away important critical skills and insight that will be with you for the rest of your academic career (as well as other important areas of your life). Additionally (and this may be of importance to some of you) if you do not take this class seriously, do the readings, think critically, and participate, you may not pass. I do not want to fail anyone, but I will not hesitate to do so if necessary.

Requirements:

Attendance and participation: 25% of grade. Each missed class will result in a point reduction in your final grade.

In class writing assignments: 25% of grade. You must bring the reading assigned to class with you (either hard copy or on a computer, e-reader, etc). You cannot do the assignment without the reading.

Presentation: 25% of grade. Give a 10-minute presentation on one reading explaining the author’s key points, giving examples from the text, and raise at least one question for the class.

Final paper: 25% of grade. A two to four page paper (no less, no more – references and citations are in addition to the 3-4 pages) based on your in class writing assignments. Analyze, assess, and connect the themes, readings, issues, conflicts, etc from the course. Trace the evolution of your thinking through the writing assignments and discuss any ideas that changed (or not). Address the key concepts, terms, and ideas from the course.

Print all readings at the START of the course (Email/internet issues are not a legitimate excuse for missing a reading).

ABSOLUTELY NO cell phones, online chatting, etc during class. If I see you doing these things, I will consider it an absence and deduct points from your grade accordingly. Also, come to class on time. More than 15 minutes after the start of class will also be considered an absence.

Incompletes policy: No incompletes will be given except in the case of family or medical emergencies.

Plagiarism policy: Any student committing plagiarism will automatically fail the course. This is not negotiable. This applies to written work and oral presentations. Do not present, for example, a Wikipedia summary as your own words. Any act of plagiarism will result in academic and disciplinary sanctions through the Committee on Academic Integrity and the CUNY Faculty-Student Disciplinary Procedure. If you have ANY QUESTIONS about what plagiarism is, ASK ME.

Brooklyn College's official policy: "Any deliberate borrowing of the ideas, terms, statements or knowledge of others without clear and specific acknowledgment of the source is plagiarism. It is, in face, intellectual theft... **plagiarism will result in disciplinary proceedings.**"

Schedule of readings

Mon 6/3

Introduction – What is gender and why are we talking about it?

Tues 6/4 – Bob Nowlan, "Critical theory and gender"

Categories, socialization, performativity

Wed 6/5 – West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender"

Thurs 6/6 – Michael Messner, "Boyhood, organized sports, and the construction of masculinity"

Mon 6/10 – Judith Butler, "Performative acts and gender constitution"

Tues 6/11 – Melinda S. Miceli, "Schools and the social control of sexuality" (Film – "Tough Guise")

Bodies and identity

Wed 6/12 – Daniel Santore, "Gender and the organization of heterosexual intimacy" and Kristin G. Esterberg, "The bisexual menace revisited"

Thurs 6/13 – Seidman, Pennington, and Sojka, "The revolt against sexual identity" (Film – "You don't know Dick")

Mon 6/17 – Bob Connell, "Hegemonic masculinity", Michael Messner "Becoming 100 Percent Straight", and Thomas Gerschick and Adam Stephen Miller "Coming to Terms: Masculinity and Physical Disability"

Gender and stratification

Tues 6/18 – Silvia Federici, "The Means of Reproduction" bell hooks

Wed 6/19 – bell hooks and Linda McDowell, "The trouble with men?"

Thurs 6/20 – Audre Lorde, "Age, race, class and sex: women redefining difference" (MOVIE)

Mon 6/24 – Angela Davis, "Standards for a new womanhood"

Globalization

Tues 6/25 – Maria Mies, "Colonization and housewifization"

Wed 6/26 – Grace Chang, "Globalization in living color" (MOVIE)

Thurs 6/27 – Steven Gregory, "Men in paradise"

Mon 7/1 – Cherrie Moraga, "La guerra" (MOVIE)

Nature, Technology, and publics: rethinking relations of bodies, gender, and sex

Tues 7/2 – , Shulamith Firestone, introduction to “Dialectic of Sex”

Thurs 7/3 – TBA

Mon 7/8 – TBA

****Wed 7/10** Final paper due!