

Macalester College

Fall 2016

Psychology of Gender

PSY 264/WGS 264

Days/Time: Tuesday/Thursday 8 – 9:30

Location: Olin Rice 301

“You cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education: you will do much better to think of being here to claim one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb ‘to claim’ is: *to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face of possible contradiction*. ‘To receive’ is *to come into possession of; to act as receptacle or container for; to accept as authoritative or true*. The difference is that between acting and being acted-upon, and for women it can literally mean the difference between life and death”.

-Adrienne Rich, 1977

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Personal gender pronouns: She/her/hers

Welcome to the class! In this course we will explore topics related to gender socialization and ideologies about gender that influence individuals lives and experiences in a variety of different contexts. Gender affects virtually every aspect of our lives, thus this class will be a survey of how gender impacts and/or is impacted by different components of the discipline of psychology. Many of the important empirical and theoretical contributions that have been offered on the topic of gender have been developed by feminist psychologists, therefore this class will be grounded in understanding feminist perspectives on psychological theories and research. On a connected note, throughout the course we will take an *intersectional* perspective as we explore different concepts and topics that affect individuals’ lives. This means that we will consider how different aspects of individuals’ social identities (e.g., race, class, sexuality, citizenship, etc.) intersect with gender to create different conditions of relative power and oppression in society. Throughout the course we will integrate course material on psychological research with our own personal reflections and community engagement. The intention is for us all to develop a critical awareness of the manner through which gender is socially constructed, and in turn, how the construction of gender affects our lives.

The course will be divided up into three broad and overlapping sections. During the first several weeks we will focus on how the concept of gender is socially constructed and how this construction is learned via socialization processes. Next we will focus on the body – how gender manifests in the body, how bodies are gendered and, as a result, how bodies are treated. In the final section of the class we will focus on ways of addressing gender inequity and creating social change.

I very much look forward to exploring these topics with you throughout the semester!

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Describe the manner through which gender is socially constructed and how this relates to beliefs about gender roles.
2. Understand how beliefs about gender impact individuals in a variety of domains including psychological and physical health, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities within societies.
3. Analyze how inequities in society differently affect people of different genders based on factors such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, citizenship etc.

4. Be able to apply examples of psychological research to accurately defend a position as it relates to gender and society.
5. Understand what is meant by the term feminist research methods, and be able to critique research from a feminist perspective.
6. Become more comfortable speaking about controversial topics while showing respect for others who may have different points of view.
7. Have increased comfort comprehending and synthesizing psychological research.
8. Be able to identify (and enact) ways in which knowledge of research on the psychology of gender can support active and informed participation in your communities.

Course Assignments

Expectations: This course will involve various kinds of written work, as well as in-depth class discussions of course material. You are expected to regularly attend class, keep up with readings, hand in assignments on time, and fully participate in class discussions. You are responsible for any material or announcements that you miss if you are absent from class.

- ∅ **Readings:** The required text for this course is: *Transformations: Women, Gender, & Psychology* 2nd Ed. by Mary Crawford. Additional readings for the course include a variety of theoretical and empirical articles, as well as one podcast, all of which will be available to you via the course moodle site. It is important that you complete all of the required readings and/or listen to assigned podcast before each class in order to engage in critical thought and discussion.
- ∅ **Application activities:** Each activity will include a write-up that is between 600 and 800 words. In addition to what is detailed below for each activity, integrate the readings and material from class discussion into the write-ups. Include in your write-up how the constructs we've covered in the readings or in class are related to the issues addressed in the homework assignment. Make sure to spell-check and grammar-check your writing. Make sure you properly cite works and ideas that are not your own.

1. Gender and the Media

The purpose of the media project is to survey the current depiction and representation of different genders in the media. You will be looking for evidence of gender stereotyping, gender equality, gender role socialization, and other related concepts. First watch four episode of television programs: two that are targeted to children/adolescents and two that are targeted to adults. Then, write up an analysis of what you observe addressing the following questions: 1. Briefly describe the main premise of the TV shows. What is the sex distribution of the main and secondary characters? Who tends to get the most attention? Is there a gender difference here? 2. Character Roles: Describe the roles that the female characters are playing. What do they do, enjoy, etc.? Are the roles stereotypic? Do any of the characters (female or male) defy the common gender stereotypes of our culture? Is this represented as positive or negative? 3: Communications and power: What are the relationships between the female and male characters? Is there a gender-related power structure in these relationships (e.g., boss-secretary, teacher-student)? What is the tone of the characters' conversations with each other?

2. Body Image

Find some popular magazines that are targeted towards women (e.g., Vogue, Elle, Glamour, Lucky) and some that are targeted toward men (Esquire, GQ, Maxim, Men's Health). Spend some time looking through the images in the magazine. As you are looking through the magazines take notes. Then, write up an analysis/reflection that addresses the following questions: (1) How do the advertisements in the magazine portray women and men's bodies? Why do you think the advertisement portrays their models in this manner? (2) Are people of color represented in the

magazine? If so how are they represented? (3) What age groups are represented in the magazine? (4) Overall, what messages do you feel readers of the magazines are being sent? (5) How do you think those messages make readers feel about their bodies? How does this make you feel about your own body?

3. Parent/caregiver biography or Global Feminisms Project analysis

You have two options for this assignment. The first option is to conduct an interview with one of your parents or a person close to you who is at least one generation older than you (15 + years). In your interview you should ask questions about what their childhood was like, how they were expected to behave, about their adolescence, teenage years, relationships, transition to parenthood, career expectation etc. After you complete the interview, write up a brief summary of how the interview went, summarizing the questions you asked and the person's answers (about one-two paragraphs). Note: you do not have to write up personal information that was discussed that you do not wish to share! Then describe how the things you discussed relate to themes we have discussed in the class and that you have read about in assigned text. Conclude by describing if and how this activity has impacted your perceptions and/or relationship with this person.

The second option is to read one of the interviews archived in the Global Feminisms Project (GFP) (<http://umich.edu/~gblfem/en/index.html>). Feminist Activism Analysis Assignment. I encourage you to read through the brief biographies on the website, and select an interview to read from a woman whose identity and life experiences (at least at first glance) seem rather different from your own. For example, if you spent most of your life in the United States, I encourage you to select an interview from a woman who does not live in the United States.

Identify two specific topics that she discusses, that relate to topics we discussed in class (for example, gender socialization in childhood, workplace discrimination, sexuality, violence against women, motherhood). Name the topics and briefly describe the woman's experiences with these topics. Then describe how the things you read about in the interview connect to topics/themes we have discussed and read about in the class. Next, describe if and how these topics relate to her activism. All of the interviewees are feminist activists, and they all engage in different types of activism and in different ways. How do the topics you selected influence why she engages in activism, the type of activism she engages in, and/or how she engages in activism? If she happens not to be involved in activism related to those topics, do you think they influenced her involvement in activism anyway? Why or why not? Conclude by describing what were the most interesting or meaningful things you learned from reading and analyzing this interview.

4. Outrageous Acts and Every Day Rebellions

Anyone can do things to combat sexism every day. Throughout the semester I want you to participate in two activities to disrupt sexism and write up a reflection report on the activities. One activity should address sexism at an individual or relational level, and the other should reflect sexism at the community or societal level. We will talk more in class about what it means to distinguish between these levels as well as several examples of things you might do. Write up summaries of the activities you did and include reflection on how you felt participating in the activities, and, if applicable, how people around you reacted. Also include in your reflection a comparison of how your reactions to each activity differed. (Title for assignment is inspired by Gloria Stienem's book of the same name)

Important: All of these papers should be thought-provoking reflections on the topics we discuss in the course, and should incorporate making connections between different theories we discuss, application to real world issues, and your own thoughtful critique. These papers should not simply be reiteration of what is covered in the readings or class discussion. They must demonstrate your own independent thought and analysis.

- ⌘ **Midterm** A midterm exam will be held about halfway through the semester and will be based on assigned readings/podcasts, and class discussion and lecture material. Exam format will include multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answers.
- ⌘ **Final research project:** For your final project for this class you will write a research paper on a topic related to the psychology of gender of your choosing. Before confirming a topic, however, you must consult with me about the topic. And, you must consult with me (ideally during office hours) by **November 18th** at the latest. Your final paper should be written in proper APA style and should be about 10-12 pages. I will provide a handout via Moodle with more information, and discuss this project with you all more in class.

Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on the following rubric:

Four Application Activity write ups 10% each (x's 4) = 40%
 Midterm: 25%
 Final Paper: 25%
 Participation: 10%

Grading System:

A	94-100%	C	73-76.99%
A-	90-93.99%	C-	70-72.99%
B+	87-89.99%	D+	67-69.99%
B	83-86.99%	D	60-66.99%
B-	80-82.99%	F	under 60%
C+	77-79.99%		

Notes on grading written assignments: Score in the 'A' range will be given to assignments that meet the following criteria: thoughtful and thorough analysis of the specific assignment's topic and questions, careful and deep application of course material, and clear writing with only very minor grammatical errors. Scores in the 'B' range will meet the bulk of the same criteria, but may be lacking in depth of analysis, or less clearly written. Scores in the "C" range will meet some of the criteria listed but may include inaccurate application of course material. Scores below a 'C' will be given to papers that do not demonstrate accurate understanding of the course material or thoughtful analysis of the topic and questions. Pluses and minuses occur when the work falls in between these criteria.

Notes on participation: In order to receive full points for class participation I expect you to attend class regularly, arrive on time and staying for the full class meeting. I expect you to thoughtfully demonstrate your engagement with course material by actively participating in class and treating everyone in the classroom with respect. I understand that speaking in class can be challenging, but I encourage you to do so. If this is something that is extremely difficult for you, I encourage you to talk to me during my office hours or contact me via email and we can discuss strategies to overcome this barrier. You can also email with media or community resources that are relevant to the course (e.g., news articles or info about campus/community events) to demonstrate engagement with the course material. If I notice that you on your cellphone or using your laptop for anything not related to the course during class time you will lose points on class participation.

Course Policies

Academic integrity: Standards relating to academic dishonesty/misconduct will be followed in this class. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is a serious offense, and any paper containing plagiarized material will not be accepted for credit in this course. Plagiarism is defined as any use of another author's words or ideas without appropriately providing credit. Exact quotes from another source should be placed within quotation marks with an appropriate citation including page number. Additionally, paraphrasing another author's words may also count as plagiarism if you do not cite the source. **In other words, please respect the work of others' and yourself – don't cheat.** In addition, selling, preparing, or distributing course notes for any commercial purpose is a violation of campus policies. In others words, you can't sell notes.

Here's what I'll do to address these issues:

- 1) I will go over academic honesty & plagiarism and give you detailed guidance when I introduce your paper assignments & make myself available to answer any of your questions throughout the semester.
- 2) If I believe you've engaged in dishonest work I will confront you and request a meeting with you.
- 3) If you've engaged in a violation I will report the incident and recommend the standard academic sanctions. Take this issue very seriously. It's your education.

Accommodations and accessibility: I am committed to creating an class environment in which all students have equal access to academic opportunities, and the support to reach their academic potential. I will provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Within the first two weeks of class please contact the Office of Student Affairs (119 Weyerhaeuser Administration Building; x6220) to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. Additionally, please meet with me during the first two weeks of class to discuss how we will work together to accommodate your needs. For more information, refer to this link: <http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/disabilityservices/>

Late work: I will accept late work, with a five percent penalty per day (including weekends) that the assignment is late. This means that if an assignment is due Wednesday and you turn it in the following Monday the highest possible grade you will receive is a 75%. All assignments are due on the date listed in the course schedule (unless changes to the schedule are made, and in which I will email changes and update the syllabus that is posted on Moodle) at the start of class. If you arrive to class late and turn in the paper after class begins, it will be considered a day late.

Missed exam policy: Students who miss an exam due to a documented illness or an emergency (in which case you will need appropriate documentation from a doctor etc.) can arrange a make-up exam. If you do not let me know that you cannot attend the exam and you are absent, you run the risk of failing the exam.

Religious observance: Please let me know in advance if you will miss class due to a religious holiday or observance so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
1	9/1/16	Intro to the class, each other, and key concepts		
SECTION I: Gender Constructions and Socialization				
2	9/6/16	Why do we study psychology of gender?	Crawford chapter 1 hooks - Talking Back	
2	9/8/16	Gender status & power	Crawford chapter 2	
3	9/13/16	Images of women	Crawford chapter 3	
3	9/15/16	Men & masculinity	Levant, 2011 Hurtado & Sinha, 2011	Media assignment due
4	9/20/16	Meaning & Difference	Crawford chapter 4	
4	9/22/16	Meaning & Difference cont.	Hyde, 2005 Brescoll & LaFrance 2004	
5	9/27/16	Childhood & adolescence	Crawford chapter 6 'X'	
5	9/29/16	Childhood & adolescence cont.	Brown et al. 2011 Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman, 2013	
6	10/4/16	Work & achievement	Crawford chapter 10	
6	10/6/16	Midlife & aging	Crawford chapter 11 Clarke, Bennett & Lui, 2014	
SECTION II: The Body				
7	10/11/16	Sex/Gender/Bodies	Crawford chapter 5	
7	10/13/16	Sex/Gender/Bodies cont.	Turner, 1999 Hill Collins, 2004	
8	10/18/16		MID TERM EXAM	
9	10/25/16	Objectification & self-objectification	Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997 Bucanan et al 2008	
9	10/27/16	Objectification & self-objectification cont.	Grabe, 2013 This American Life Podcast #589	
10	11/1/16	Sexualization of girls	APA report on the Sexualization of Girls	
10	11/3/16	Sex, love, romance	Crawford chapter 7	

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
11	11/8/16	Pornography	Jensen 1998 Sun et al. 2008	
11	11/10/16	Violence	Crawford chapter 12	Body image assignment due
12	11/15/16	Birth & Parenting	Chalmers, 2012 How to bring children up without bringing women down	
12	11/17/16	Gender and wellbeing	Crawford chapter 13	
13	11/22/16	Gender and wellbeing cont.	Mahalingam & Jackson, 2007	
SECTION III: Addressing Gender Inequality & Creating Social Change				
14	11/29/16	Addressing inequality	Lemus et al., 2014	
14	12/1/16	Addressing inequality cont.	Crawford Chapter 14	Biography assignment due
15	12/6/16	Activism & social change	Dutt & Grabe, 2014	
15	12/8/16	Activism cont. & course wrap up.		Outrageous acts assignment due.
Final Exam		Final paper due: Thursday December 12th at 9:00 am.		