

# **GENDER AND CULTURE**

SOC 351

## **INSTRUCTOR**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the concept of gender as dealing with both conscious and unconscious social, cultural, and psychological constructions of 'femaleness' and 'maleness', observes their relationship to sex as a biological category, as well as their manifestations within world cultures. Course examines women's relationship to culture and social construction of gender. The course attempts to locate and explore womanhood in relation to cultures in different aspects, when culture refers to practices and products of human civilization. Culture as such comprehends various myths, symbols, meanings, arts, religions, language, ideas, belief systems, living traditions and identities. Cultures reflect on common experience, yet transforming. The main focus is on gender as an epistemological conceptual tool processing critical reflections of the existing paradigms mediated through West and World feminist and men's movements, influencing public discourse, social sciences, and arts. Comparisons with the situation in the Czech Republic, where gender has been applied only since the 90s, while grass root movements has remained practically non-existent, are provided. Classic gender related texts and case studies will be used for the critical analysis of the origins and reproduction of the gender myths and asymmetries between men's and women's worlds.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are required to keep up with class reading. In-class debates require students to come to class prepared. Students need to read the works with a critical eye. Students are expected to reflect on assigned readings, participate in discussions and critique the selected texts. Discussion will encourage exploration of connections between the readings, myths and realities.

All major assignments and supporting assignments are due on dates specified by your lecturer.

In-Class Work. You will be expected to participate in collaborative activities and class discussions.

'One-Page Reaction Papers': Due at the beginning of each topic (=session). The point of a reaction paper is not only to prove the comprehension of the readings, but also to react, i.e. evaluate, criticize, validate, or merely raise questions about the assigned texts. Alternatively, students can use the paper to draw connections to other readings. Unless otherwise specified written assignments should be typed (letter-quality printing required), 1,5 spaced on bond paper, according to MLA. MLA guidelines can be found in any MLA Style Manual or MLA website. Together with students' participation in class discussions (including one turn as discussion

co-leader) they constitute 25% of the final grade.

Oral Presentation: Students will sign up for 5 min. oral presentation to introduce either session's topic, context, text's feature, author, organization or any issue related. 15%

Midterm Test: Summarizes key terms and concepts of gender studies. It is to be written in **week 8**, before the midterm break. 20%.

Final Paper/Project: An individual or group research paper of 10-12 pages on any topic covered in the course using gender analysis should be presented in MLA format. A 10-minute presentation of the project week 13 is considered an integral part of the final project. 40%.

### **GRADES AND EVALUATION**

In-class debates participation, Response Papers 25%

Mid-Term Test 20%

Oral Presentation 15%

Final Project 40%

### **POLICIES OF AAU**

Attendance. It is your responsibility to attend the section in which you are officially registered.

Authorized Absences. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. You are responsible for providing evidence to substantiate "authorized absences." If you know in advance that you will miss a class, you are responsible for informing me. Excessive unexcused absences (more than three) will result in the final course grade being lowered one letter grade.

You are expected to meet class according to the times published in the fall/spring schedule of classes.

Late Papers/assignments. You are required to submit assignments on due dates. Late submission of writing assignments will result in affecting your grade. You are responsible for presenting appropriate documentation to excuse late work. If you do not submit appropriate written documentation, you will have points deducted for late submission.

Grades. Grades are not negotiable. Your final course grade will be based on your work in the course. If you are concerned about a grade, see me during office hours.

Final Exam. I reserve the option of asking the class to meet at the final exam time for a short in-class writing assignment, quiz, or other course-related activities. The final test will be based on the range of topics discussed in the lectures.

E-mail. I will not discuss grades on e-mail. Unless otherwise specified I will not accept assignments attached to e-mail messages.

### **The Academic Honour and Academic Integrity**

Students are not to perform any kind of scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism. During the semester, you will be expected not to give or receive any unauthorized aid on an academic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty and to avoid it at all costs. Anything (homework, quizzes, daily work, papers, and exams) that appears to be a violation and academic dishonesty will be penalised.

You are not allowed to submit papers written for other classes, which is considered multiple submissions, thus an act of Academic Misconduct.

**Additional Resources:**

Additional materials can be obtained from Library of the Center for Gender Studies, Gorazdova 20, Prague 2, email: [gender@ecn.cz](mailto:gender@ecn.cz), tel. 2491-5666/3350.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1**

Introductory session. Goals and structure of the course. Basic concepts: gender and sex, gender roles, sexism and feminism as part of modern history, introduction to sex-gender, and nature-culture debates.

**Week 2**

Brief history of women's and feminist movements. Causes and conditions of women's oppression. Women's exclusions from history. The development and main objectives of women's studies.

Wollstencraft, Mary. From Vindication on the Right of Woman. (1792)  
Woolf, Virginia. "A Room of One's Own". Feminisms. A Reader. Ed. Maggie Humm. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992.  
Woolf, Virginia. "Three Guineas". Feminisms. A Reader.  
Friedan, Betty. "The Feminine Mystique". (1963) Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983.  
Millet, Kate. "Sexual Politics" (1968). London: Virago, 1977.  
Davis, Angela. Women, Race and Class. London: The Women's Press, 1982.  
Steinem, Gloria. "Foreword". The Vagina Monologues. Virago Press, 2003. ix-xix.  
Enslar, Eve. "The Vagina Monologues". The Vagina Monologues. Virago Press, 2003. 3-11.

**Week 3**

Cultural construction of gender. Social institutions defining womanhood and gender roles. Exploration of status of girls and women across cultures. Dominant cultural images and stereotypes of women. Focus on sexuality and power. Lesbian experience. Bisexuality. Queer studies.

Foucault, Michel. "We Other Victorians." The History of Sexuality. Vintage Books, 1980. 3-13.  
Nicholson, Linda. "Gender." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A.M. Jaggar and I. M. Young. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998. 289-298.  
Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." M. Humm: Feminisms. A Reader. New York 1992. 176-180.  
Winterson, Jeanette: "The Poetics of Sex". The World and Other Places. Vintage International, 1998. 33-46.  
Chaudhary, Kamini. "Some Thoughts on Bisexuality". A Lotus of Another Color. An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience. Ed. Rakesh

Ratti. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1993. 54-58.  
Bannerji, Kaushalya. "No Apologies". A Lotus of Another Color. 59-64.

complementary reading:

Hoagland, S.L. 1998: "Lesbian Ethics". A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998. 402-411.  
Maher, Frances A. "Coming Out". Women and Social Class. International Feminist Perspectives. Ed. Christine Zmroczek and Pat Mahony. Routledge, 1999. 115-131.

#### **Week 4**

Cultural institutions defining womanhood. Focus on female body, health, power and cultural control.

Steinem, Gloria. "If Men Could Menstruate". Race, Class, and Gender. An Anthology. Ed. Anderson, Margaret and Patricia Hill Collins. Thomson, 1995. 392-394  
Acharya, N., R. Shrestha, L. Rawal. "Treating Menstruation as Something Despicable". "The Freedom to Stay Indoors". Mother, Sister, Daughter. Nepal's Press on Women. Sancharika Samuha, 2002. 67-79.  
Sherwin, Susan. "Abortion through a Feminist Ethics Lens". Women in Culture. A Women's Studies Anthology. Ed. Lucinda J. Peach. Blackwell, 1998. 261-271.  
Enslar, Eve. "I was twelve. My mother slapped me". The Vagina Monologues. Virago Press, 2003. 35-40.  
Byatt, A.S. The Chinese Lobster.

complementary reading:

Paglia, Camille. "Rape and Sex War." Sex, Art, and American Culture. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. 49-54.

#### **Week 5**

Origination and reproduction of gender stereotypes. Motherhood, and procreation. Comparative analysing of gender socialization regarding motherhood in sociological research, psychological theories and in world-cultures perspective.

Chodorow, Nancy. The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender. "Family Structure and Feminine Personality". Berkeley: UC Press, 1978. 29-31.  
Shanner, Laura. "Procreation." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A. M. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998. 429-438.  
Rich, Adrienne. Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution. London, Virago, 1977.  
Gilligan, Carol. In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's

Development, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993. 32-33.  
Devi, Mahasveta. "The Wet Nurse". Truth Tales. Contemporary Stories by Women Writers of India. New York: Feminist Press, 1990.

## **Week 6**

Gender and diversity. Commonalities and differences based on classifications of religion, race, class, ethnicity. Shifting the center: Exploring diverse histories and experiences. Historical links to exclusionary and exploitative treatment of various groups. Interconnections between female experiences worldwide. Cultural sensitivity and agendas of world feminisms.

Collins, Patricia Hill. The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought. Feminist Frontiers. Ed. Richardson Laurel, Verta Taylor. McGraw-Hill, 1993. 20-27.  
Tayyab, Basharat. "Islam". A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A.M. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Ltd., 1998. 236-244.  
Walker, Alice. "Child Who Favored Daughter". 1967.  
Khadka, Rajkumar. "A Day in the Life of a Village Girl". Mother, Sister, Daughter. Nepal's Press on Women. Sancharika Samuha, 2002. p. 41-49.  
Chughtai, Ismat. The Scent of the Body. The Quilt and Other Stories. New York: The Sheep Meadow Press, 1994. 124-146.

complementary reading:

Adler, Rachel. Judaism. A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., pp. 245-252.  
Cisneros, Sandra. "Never Marry a Mexican". Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories. 1991.

## **Week 7**

Contemporary topics of postmodern feminisms, ecofeminism, postgenderism, masculism, androgyny, metrosexuality/technosexuality and transgenderism.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. "Body politics." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A.M. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998. 321-329.  
Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire." Gender Trouble. Feminism and Subversion of Identity. York: Routledge, 1999. 3-22.  
M. Daly 1995: "New Intergalactic Introduction" Gyn/Ecology. The Metaethics of Radical Feminism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990. xi-xxxiii.  
Lorde, Audre. "An Open Letter to Mary Daly", Sister Outsider" in: M. Humm: Feminisms. A Reader. New York, 1992. 164.  
Adams, Carol J. "Ecofeminism: Anima, Animus, Animal". Feminist Frontiers. Ed. Richardson Laurel, Verta Taylor. McGraw-Hill, 1993. 522-524.

complementary reading:

Chanter, Tina. "Postmodern Subjectivity." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A.M. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1998. 245-252.

### **Week 8**

Women and Beauty. Beauty as cultural fable. In the western perspective does beauty myth represent a modern phenomenon that replaces the older myth of domesticity? Beauty and development of technologies; beauty prompted by fashion, advertising, and mass media. Beauty and middle-class. Beauty and disruption of traditional cults of domesticity versus counteract to new freedoms.

Wolf, Naomi. "The Beauty Myth". Women in Culture. A Women's Studies Anthology. Ed. Lucinda J. Peach. Blackwell Publishers, 1999. 179-187.

Film Screening. Erika Hníková. Beauty Exchange. 2005.

### **Mid-term Test**

### **Week 9**

MID-TERM BREAK

### **Week 10**

Gender treatment in contemporary western literature. French connection: From de Beauvoir to Lacan to *l'Écriture Féminine*.

Beauvoir, Simone de. "Introduction". The Second Sex. (1952). New York: Vintage Books, 1974. xv-xxxiv.

Cixous, Helene. 1975: "The Laugh of the Medusa", Feminisms. A Reader. Ed. Maggie Humm. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992. pp. 196-202.

Irigaray, Luce. "The Sex Which Is Not One". (1977). The Sex Which Is Not One. Cornell University Press, 1985. 23-33.

Irigaray, Luce. "When Our Lips Speak Together." The Sex Which Is Not One. Cornell University Press, 1985. 205-218.

Kristeva, Julia. "Desire in Language". "Women's Time". Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

### **Week 11**

Gender and Language. Theorizing patriarchy. Focus on language and mass communication.

Showalter, Elaine. "Towards a Feminist Poetics". Women Writing and Writing about Women. London: Croom Helm, 1979.

Tirrel, Lynne. "Language and power." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. Jaggar and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998. 139-152.

Adams, Karen, Norma C. Ware. "Sexism and the English Language: The Linguistic Implications of Being a Woman". Women. A Feminist

Perspective. Fourth Ed. Jo Freeman. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989. 470-484

complementary reading:

Meehan, Johanna. "Communicative Ethics." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. Jaggard and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998. 411-419.

### **Week 12**

Rebirth of Czech feminism in the 1990s. Academics, underground heroes, activists. Reasons for the lack of gender and feminist consciousness.

Documentary film showing: Z. Justman 1993: Czech Women: Now We Are Free. How did Czech women perceive the change in their situation three years after 1989?

Heitlinger, Alena. The role of migrants in national feminist movements: The case study of the Czech Republic in the 1990s.

Duhaček, Dáša. "Eastern Europe." A Companion to Feminist Philosophy. Ed. A.M. Jaggard and I. M. Young, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998. 128-136.

### **Week 13**

Women in music, arts, literature, and film.

Film showing: TBA.

### **Week 14**

Presentations of final papers (10 minutes).