

SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER

920:618:01

Rutgers University

Syllabus

Spring 2008

Instructor: Professor Judith Gerson
Office: Department of Sociology, Room A 355, Lucy Stone Hall
Telephone: 732.445.2897
E-mail: gerson@rci.rutgers.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:00 - 4:00 pm and by appointment

Course Overview:

This seminar focuses on the recent developments in the sociology of gender, broadly defined. We begin with an overview of the field, using the framework of sociology of knowledge. We identify major trends in the area and consider the relationship of gender scholarship to the discipline of sociology, the social sciences, and scholarly inquiry more generally. Introductory readings address gendered modes of knowledge production in sociology and related disciplines.

The second section of the course scrutinizes the most common, taken-for-granted approaches in studies of gender and concentrates on alternative and arguably more appropriately complex and sophisticated conceptualizations of gender. While many would agree that gender relations comprise a basic dimension of social life, there is no consensus about what gender actually is or what it represents. Some speak of gender as an individual attribute; some assume sex and/or sexuality are synonymous with gender, while others maintain gender is a basic structural or ideological principle of social life. Still other scholars would argue that gender represents a series of continuous but ever-changing identities. Regardless of the level of analysis, many researchers have assumed gender is a dichotomous and discrete variable, a relatively stable property, one that either occurs naturally, is essential, and/or learned through socialization. Recently some scholars have challenged these long-standing ideas, proposing instead that gender relations are malleable and multidimensional, routinely accomplished practices or performances that occur in every social interaction and are patterned in a wide gamut of structural locations. Other researchers have articulated a macro structural approach that interrogates the meanings of gender as a social system, form of organization or set of institutional practices and patterns.

The third section focuses on several exemplars of empirical research on gender relations and thus provides evidence of how some scholars have analyzed gender. This overview has no pretensions of being comprehensive. Instead my goal is to provide outstanding illustrations of a range of research strategies in the field of gender studies that ought to enable you to begin to think in innovative ways about your own empirical and theoretical projects in this area.

This course is organized as a working seminar. In practical terms this means that every member must come to class weekly, prepared to actively discuss the readings. One or two people will co-facilitate each session with me. Co-facilitators will email a brief analytic overview (2 – 3 pages)

to all class members two days before class. This statement should highlight the core themes and arguments, salient questions, and points of confusion and contradiction in the materials assigned. In addition, there are three writing assignments.

The first project asks you to survey three volumes of a sociological or interdisciplinary social science journal published five years apart to ascertain the current state of gender research as represented in that journal. Approximately what proportion of the articles pertains to gender? Does the rise of journals devoted to gender seem to have an effect on the number of gender-related articles in the journal studied? How do these articles conceptualize gender? Do the investigators go beyond a categorical operationalization of gender as female/male? If so, how do they operationalize gender? What methodological approaches do researchers of gender employ? Is there a relationship between the working definitions of gender and methods used? What are the consequences for knowledge production—both opportunities and constraints invoked by relying on particular definitions of gender? Summarize your journal survey in a brief report, which you will also present in class. This paper is due in class on January 29th. The seminar that day will be devoted to a discussion of your findings, a succinct overview of the history of gender studies within the academy and its organization within sociology in the U.S.

The second writing project is due at the end of the second section of the course. In this paper you should succinctly review the major conceptualizations of gender studied and compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of each. In the conclusion to this essay, develop your own working definition of gender, making clear why your conceptualization is the most effective and/or has relative strengths in comparison to competing definitions. This paper is due in class on March 11th. Whether you include the readings assigned for class that day in your paper is your choice.

The last paper is an analytic review of the gender research literature in one clearly delimited sub-field of sociology. Your writing should consider the following questions: What have been the major gender-related findings in this sub-field? What are the predominant modes of conceptualization and methodological approaches in the research summarized? What has research on gender contributed to this sub-field, and what has this area of inquiry contributed to our knowledge of gender? What are the important research questions yet to be explored? Students more advanced in their careers may opt instead to write a research proposal as the final paper. Regardless of its substantive focus, this proposal must also clearly demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of gender in its conceptual framework. Abstracts for the final projects are due on March 11th. Short in-class presentations of the final projects are scheduled for April 15th, 22nd and 29th. Final papers are due on May 7th.

Except under the most extreme circumstances, I will not give incomplete grades. Instead the work you complete during the term will be the basis of your evaluation. The first paper comprises 10 percent of your final grade, the second and third papers together contribute an additional 70 percent, and the remaining 20 percent is based on your weekly participation in the seminar, your class facilitation, and presentation.

Required Readings:

The books listed immediately below are available for purchase at the Livingston College Bookstore. An asterisk following a citation indicates a required reading. Required articles and chapters may be accessed through the class' Sakai website. All other readings are supplementary and recommended for your future reference.

Connell, R.W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kabeer, Naila. 2002. *The Power to Choose: Bangladeshi Garment Workers in London and Dhaka*. London and New York: Verso.

Kessler, Suzanne J. and Wendy McKenna. [1978] 1985. *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Salzinger, Leslie. 2003. *Genders in Production: Making Workers in Mexico's Global Factories*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Valentine, David. 2007. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. [Recommended]

Žarkov, Dubravka. 2007. *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-Up of Yugoslavia*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Part I: Gender Scholarship: Mainstream and Margins (January 22 - 29)

A. Course Overview (January 22)

B. Epistemology and Knowledge Production (January 29)

Olson, Hope A. 2001. "The Power to Name: Representation in Library Catalogs." *Signs* 26:639-68. *

Grant, Linda, Kathryn B. Ward and Xue Lan Rong. 1987. "Is There an Association Between Gender and Methods in Sociological Research?" *American Sociological Review* 52:956-62. *

Shohat, Ella. 2001. "Area Studies, Transnationalism, and the Feminist Production of Knowledge." *Signs* 26:1269-72.

Epstein, Cynthia Fuchs. 1988. "A Question of Method: The Sociology of the Scientific Analysis of Sex and Gender." Pp. 1-16 in *Deceptive Distinctions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Spain, Daphne and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 1996. *Balancing Act: Motherhood, Marriage and Employment among American Women*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Smith, Dorothy E. 1987. "A Sociology for Women." Pp. 49-104 in *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought." *Social Problems* 33:S14-S32.

Harding, Sandra. 1991. "Strong Objectivity; and Socially Situated Knowledge." Pp. 138-163; "Reinventing Ourselves as Other: More New Agents of History and Knowledge." Pp. 268-95 in *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14:575-99.

Part II: Conceptualizing Gender (February 5 – March 11)

A. The Biological and the Social Nexus (February 5)

Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs* 16:485-501. *

Ameling, Rene. 2007. "Selling Genes, Selling Gender: Egg Agencies, Sperm Banks, and the Medical Market in Genetic Material." *American Sociological Review* 72:319-40.*

Blackless, Melanie et al. 2000. "How Sexually Dimorphic Are We? Review and Synthesis." *American Journal of Human Biology* 12:151-66.*

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2005. "The Bare Bones of Sex: Part 1—Sex and Gender." *Signs* 30:1491-1527.*

Fujimura, Joan H. 2006. "Sex Genes: A Critical Sociomaterial Approach to the Politics and Molecular Genetics of Sex Determination." *Signs* 32: 49-82.*

Udry, J. Richard. 2000. "Biological Limits of Gender Construction." *American Sociological Review* 65:443-57.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2000. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of*

Sexuality. New York: Basic Books.

Blackwood, Evelyn. 1984. "Sexuality and Gender in Certain Native American Tribes: The Case of Cross-Gender Females." *Signs* 10:27-42.

Ruhl, Lealle. 2002. "Dilemmas of the Will: Uncertainty, Reproduction, and the Rhetoric of Control." *Signs* 27:641-63.

Fuss, Diana. 1989. *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. New York: Routledge.

Bleier, Ruth. 1986. "Sex Difference Research: Science or Belief?" Pp. 147-64 in Ruth Bleier (ed.), *Feminist Approaches to Science*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Rosaldo, M.Z. 1980. "The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding." *Signs* 5:389-417.

Ortner, Sherry B. and Harriet Whitehead. 1981. "Introduction: Accounting for Sexual Meanings." Pp. 1-27 in Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (eds.), *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sex*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sperling, Susan. 1997. "Baboons with Briefcases vs. Langurs with Lipstick," Pp. 249-64 in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader*, edited by R.N. Lancaster and M. Di Leonardo. New York: Routledge.

B. Social Constructions of Gender (February 12 – March 11)

1. Sex and Gender: Groups, Roles, Relations (February 12)

Hacker, Helen Mayer. 1951. "Women as a Minority Group." *Social Forces* 30:60-69. *

Kessler, Suzanne J. and Wendy McKenna. [1978] 1985. *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. *

Lopata, Helena Z. and Barrie Thorne. 1978. "On the Term 'Sex Roles.'" *Signs* 3:718-21. *

Gerson, Judith M. and Kathy Peiss. 1985. "Boundaries, Negotiation, Consciousness: Reconceptualizing Gender Relations." *Social Problems* 32:317-31. *

Chauncey, George Jr. 1990. "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War I Era." Pp. 294-317 and 541-46 in Martin Duberman et al. (eds.) *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*. New York: Meridian/Penguin.

Komarovsky, Mirra. 1992. "The Concept of Social Role Revisited." *Gender & Society* 6:301-13.

Connell, R.W. 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, The Person and Sexual Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ferree, Myra Marx, Judith Lorber and Beth B. Hess, eds. 1998. *Revisioning Gender*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.

Scott, Joan Wallach. 1988. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." Pp. 28-50 and 206-211 in *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hawkesworth, Mary. 1997. "Confounding Gender." *Signs* 22:649-85.

Connell, R.W. 2002. *Gender: A Short Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

2. Structures and Institutions/Inequalities, Differences and Intersectionality (February 19)
N.B. There will be no class on February 26th.

Martin, Patricia Yancey. 2004. "Gender as a Social Institution." *Social Forces* 82:1249-73.*

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. and Shelley J. Correll. 2004. "Unpacking the Gender System: A Theoretical Perspective on Gender Beliefs and Social Relations." *Gender & Society* 18:510-31. *

Acker, Joan. 2006. "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations." *Gender & Society* 20:441-64.*

Moore, Mignon R. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities." *Signs* 32:113-39.*

Andersen, Margaret L. 2005. "Thinking About Women: A Quarter Century's View." *Gender & Society* 19: 437-55. *

Acker, Joan. 1992. "From Sex Roles to Gendered Institutions." *Contemporary Sociology* 21:565-69.

3. Social Processes (March 4)

West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1:125-51. *

West, Candace and Sarah Fenstermaker. 1995. "Doing Difference." *Gender & Society* 9:8-37. *

Cooke, Lynn Prince. 2006. "'Doing' Gender in Context: Household Bargaining and Risk of Divorce in Germany and the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 112:442-72.*

Deutsch, Francine M. 2007. "Undoing Gender." *Gender & Society* 21:106-27.*

Butler, Judith. 2003. "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory and Psychoanalytic Discourse." Pp. 201-11 in Alcoff, Linda Martín and Eduardo Mendieta eds. *Identities: Race, Class, Gender and Nationality*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.*

Harrison, Wendy Cealey and John Hood-Williams. 2002. *Beyond Sex and Gender*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Brah, Avtar. 1996. "Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities." Pp. 178 - 210 in *Cartographies of Diaspora*. London: Taylor & Francis.

4. Gender Numbers, Categories and Continua (March 11)

Roen, Katrina. 2001. "'Either/Or' and 'Both/Neither': Discursive Tensions in Transgender Politics." *Signs* 27:501-22.*

Preves, Sharon E. 2001. "Sexing the Intersexed: An Analysis of Sociocultural Responses to Intersexuality." *Signs* 27:523-56. *

Schilt, Kristen. 2006. "Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work." *Gender & Society* 20:465-90.*

Valocchi, Stephen. 2005. "Not Yet Queer Enough: The Lessons of Queer Theory for the Sociology of Gender and Sexuality." *Gender & Society* 19:750-70.*

Valentine, David. 2007. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham and London: Duke University Press [pages to be assigned]. *

Laqueur, Thomas. 1990. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kirkland, Anna. 2006. "What's at Stake in Transgender Discrimination as Sex Discrimination?" *Signs* 32: 83-111.

Taylor, Verta and Leila J. Rupp. 2005. "When Girls are Men: Negotiating Gender and Sexual Dynamics in a Study of Drag Queens." *Signs* 30:2115-239.

Meyerowitz, Joanne. 2002. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Paisley Currah, Richard M. Juang, and Shannon Price Minter, eds. 2006. *Transgender Rights*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gagne, Patricia, Richard Tewksbury and Deanna McGaughey. 1997. "Coming Out and Crossing Over: Identity Formation and Proclamation in a Transgender Community." *Gender & Society*

11:478-508.

Zita, Jacquelyn N. 1992. "Male Lesbians and the Postmodernist Body." *Hypatia* 7:106-27.

Chase, Cheryl. 2003. "Hermaphrodite with Attitude: Mapping the Emergence of Intersex Political Activism." Pp. 31-45 in Robert J. Corber and Stephen Valocchi, eds. *Queer Studies: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Pringle, Rosemary. 1992. "Absolute Sex? Unpacking the Sexuality/Gender Relationship." Pp. 76-101 in R.W. Connell and G.W. Dowsett, eds. *Rethinking Sex: Social Theory and Sexuality Research*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Bolin, Anne. 1996. "Transversing Gender: Cultural Context and Gender Practices." Pp. 22-51 in Sabrina Petra Ramet, ed. *Gender Reversals and Gender Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*. New York and London: Routledge.

Part III: Empirical Analyses of Gender (March 25 – April 29)

A. Gender Sans Socialization (March 25)

Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. *

Martin, Karin A. 1998. "Becoming a Gendered Body: Practices of Preschools." *American Sociological Review* 63:494-511. *

Messner, Michael A. 2000. "Barbie Girls versus Sea Monsters: Children Constructing Gender." *Gender & Society* 14:765-84.*

Paechter, Carrie. 2006. "Reconceptualizing the Gendered Body: Learning and Constructing Masculinities and Femininities in School." *Gender and Education* 18:121-35.

Bettie, Julie. 2000. "Women without Class: *Chicas, Cholas*, Trash, and the Presence/Absence of Class Identity." *Signs* 26:1-36.

Moore, Valerie Ann. 2003. "Race, Risk and the Emergence of Gender Boundaries: Kids Crossing Boundaries in Summer Camps." *Qualitative Sociology* 26:173-98.

B. Hegemony, Inequality, and Power (April 1)

Connell, R.W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.*

Connell, R.W. and James W. Messerschmidt. 2005. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender & Society* 19:829-59.*

Fine, Michelle, Lois Weis, Judi Addelston, and Julia Marusza. 1997. "(In) Secure times: Constructing White Working-Class Masculinities in the Late 20th Century." *Gender & Society* 11:52-68.

C. Gender and the State (April 8)

Žarkov, Dubravka. 2007. *The Body of War: Media, Ethnicity, and Gender in the Break-Up of Yugoslavia*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.*

Sasson-Levy, Orna and Sarit Amram-Katz. 2007. "Gender Integration in Israeli Officer Training: Degendering and Regendering the Military." *Signs*:105-33.*

Haney, Lynne. 1996. "Homeboys, Babies, Men in Suits: The State and the Reproduction of Male Dominance." *American Sociological Review* 61:759-78.*

Orloff, Ann. 1993. "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship." *American Sociological Review* 58:303-28.

D. Gender at Work, Gender Work, and the Work of Gender (April 15 – April 22)

Salzinger, Leslie. 2003. *Genders in Production: Making Workers in Mexico's Global Factories*. Berkeley: University of California Press. * (4/15)

Kabeer, Naila. 2002. *The Power to Choose: Bangladeshi Garment Workers in London and Dhaka*. London and New York: Verso. * (4/22)

McCall, Leslie. 2001. *Complex Inequality: Gender, Class, and Race in the New Economy*. New York: Routledge.

Feldman, Shelley. 2001. "Exploring Theories of Patriarchy: A Perspective from Contemporary Bangladesh." *Signs* 26: 1097B27.

Freeman, Carla. 2000. *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work and Pink-Collar Identities in the Caribbean*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ray, Raka. 2000. "Masculinity, Femininity, and Servitude: Domestic Workers in Calcutta in the Late 20th Century." *Feminist Studies* 26:691-718.

Ogasawara, Yuko. 1998. *Office Ladies and Salaried Men: Power, Gender, and Work in Japanese Companies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Allison, Anne. 1994. *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure and Corporate Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lee, Ching Kwan. 1998. *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mills, Mary Beth. 2001. *Thai Women in the Global Labor Force: Consuming Desires, Contested Selves*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

E. Protest, Accommodation, and Resistance (April 29)

Kaplan, Temma. 1982. "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918." *Signs* 7:545-66. *

Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1988. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender & Society* 2:274-90.*

Herzog, Hanna and Taghreed Yahia-Younis. 2007. "Men's Bargaining with Patriarchy: The Case of Primaries within Hamulas in Palestinian Arab Communities in Israel." *Gender & Society* 21:579-602. *

Salime, Zakia. 2007. "The War on Terrorism: Appropriation and Subversion by Moroccan Women." *Signs* 33:1-24.*

Miller, Ruth A. 2007. "Rights, Reproduction, Sexuality, and Citizenship in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey." *Signs* 32:347-73.*

Najmabadi, Afsaneh. 2006. "Gender and Secularism of Modernity: How Can a Muslim Woman Be French?" *Feminist Studies* 32:239-55.

MacLeod, Arlene Elowe. 1992. "Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo." *Signs* 17:533-57.

Kibria, Nazli. 1990. "Power, Patriarchy and Gender Conflict in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community." *Gender & Society* 4: 9-24.

Gamson, Joshua. 1995. "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma." *Social Problems* 42:390-407.