



The Sociology of Gender

SOC 138

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Spring Semester 2025

Lecture schedule: 11am-12:15pm, T/Th

Lecture location: Sewell Social Sciences Building, Room 5208

Section schedule: Thursday afternoons

Section location:

- 150 Russell Laboratories (1:20pm section)
- 490 Van Hise Hall (2:25pm section)
- 486 Van Hise Hall (3:30pm and 4:35pm sections)

Professor: Chloe Hart (she/her)

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Office: 8115 Sewell Social Sciences

Student hours: Thursdays, 2-3pm (schedule [here](#)) or by appointment

TA: Clarice Handoko (she/her)

Email: chandoko@wisc.edu

Office: 4315 Sewell Social Sciences

Student hours: Fridays, 3-4pm (Zoom)

Course Overview

“Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of a fish talking about water.”

Judith Lorber, 1994

People have many ideas about gender. These ideas organize our social lives in important ways and often in ways that we do not even notice. They are often so taken for granted that we simply assume they are part of the “normal” or natural way that life works.

Together in this course, we will investigate the taken-for-granted assumptions surrounding sex, gender, and sexuality to reveal how gender is built into our institutions and everyday lives. This course requires critical self-reflection examining our motives, behaviors, and reactions, and how they challenge or reinforce gender norms. Furthermore, this requires connecting our experiences and those of others to broader trends in the social environment in which we live.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify in the distinction between terms like gender, sex, and sexual orientation, and explain how the concepts relate to one another.
2. Explain what it means that gender is manifested at individual, interactional and institutional levels, and provide examples of how gender operates each level.
3. Identify norms, policies, and structures in your own lives that are shaped by gender.
4. Write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.

5. Evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
6. Create your own viewpoint on gender issues, with the capability to support your arguments with research evidence.

How to Succeed in This Course

- Do the required reading each day before you attend class.
- Plan in advance for deadlines: e.g., complete readings before your reading reflections in discussion each week, and study in advance of exams.
- Regularly attend and participate in group discussion and activities in lecture.
- Respect each other in class discussion, activities, and group work.
- Tell us *when* a problem arises, not when grades are due.

Reading materials

Readings for the course are posted on Canvas under Files. There is no required textbook.

Evaluation and grading

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|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A | AB | B | BC | C | D | F |
| 93-100 | 88-92.99 | 83-87.99 | 78-82.99 | 70-77.99 | 60-69.99 | Below 60 |

I do not grade on a curve. Students will be graded according to the following scheme:

| Task | Percent of grade |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Reading reflections | 20% |
| Discussion section participation | 10% |
| Media posts | 10% |
| Media presentation | 9% |
| Exams | 51% |



Reading reflections – 20% of your final grade

In your discussion sections, you will be given a reflection question about the week's reading(s). You will complete the reflection on paper without using your phone, laptop, or other devices. These reactions can be short (3-5 sentences) and will give you an opportunity to share your thoughts about the prior week's readings. Each reading reaction is worth 1.67% of your grade. You must complete 12 of the 14 reading reflections. We will not accept more than 12 reading reflection submissions; you may choose which two weeks to skip.



Discussion section participation – 10% of your final grade

We expect that students will actively engage with the material in this course and come to class and discussion section prepared to participate and ask questions. Students are expected to attend all discussion sections; if you have cannot attend class for an excused reason (e.g., a medical reason or family emergency), you need to contact your TA **before** your discussion section for the absence to be excused.



Media posts – 10% of your final grade

You will post some form of media – a picture, video, gif, meme, etc. – of something out in the world that is relevant to our course content **two** times this semester, using the discussion board on Canvas. Each post is worth 5% of your grade. The first media post is due at the end of the 9th week of the semester, and the second post is due on the final day of the semester.



Media presentation – 9% of your final grade

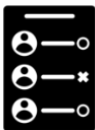
In your discussion section, you will give a presentation about some form of media that is relevant to our course content. The media you select should be relevant to a topic discussed in the prior week of class. The media you select for your presentation must be **different** from the two forms of media that you choose to feature in your media posts.



Midterms and final exam – 51% of your final grade

We will have three multiple choice exams – two midterms and a final – that assess your comprehension of the course. The midterms will be held in class, and the final will be held at the end of the semester on December 19th. Exams are not cumulative. They may include questions about aspects of the readings that are not discussed in class, or questions about class discussions and activities that were not directly related to the readings. You may not use books or notes, or consult with other students during the exams. Each exam is worth 17% of your grade.

If you are feeling unwell and cannot take the exam in person, you may take the exam remotely using the online proctoring service Honorlock.



Lecture attendance – 1 point extra credit

At the end of every lecture, you will have an opportunity to write a very brief lecture reflection. You must attend the entire lecture to complete the lecture reflection.

If you complete at least 80% of lecture reflections for this course, you will receive 1 point of extra credit on your grade (e.g., if you end the class with an 88, the extra credit would bump your grade up to an 89). If you complete fewer than 80% of lecture reflections, you will receive no extra credit.

Course policies

Contesting Graded Work

If you feel that your work in this course has been graded incorrectly by the TA, you may request that I regrade your work. If you do so, I will regrade your work from scratch. This means that you may receive a grade that is either higher, lower, or the same as the grade you originally received.

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Privacy of Student Records & the Use of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for this course are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Statement

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Challenging Content

If you suspect that specific material will be emotionally challenging for you, your TA and I would be happy to discuss any concerns beforehand. If any assignment or lecture topic makes you uncomfortable, please talk to me about an alternative at least 48 hours in advance.

Mandatory reporting

As your instructors, one of the responsibilities of me and the TA is to help create a safe learning environment. We want you to feel comfortable in this class and to feel like you can share information related to your life experiences in your written work and in our one-on-one meetings. We will keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, we also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to our roles as faculty and teaching assistants. That means that we are required to share information regarding child abuse or neglect and sexual assaults that our students have experienced or witnessed with the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Title IX office. If you would like to speak to *someone who can maintain confidentiality* on those issues, you can receive free, confidential victim advocacy and survivor support, including information about your options and emotionally supportive counseling, at 608-265-5600.

General course information

Credit hours

This is a 4-credit class that meets for two lecture periods and one section period each week over the semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc) for about 3 hours for every class period. See elsewhere in the syllabus for more information about expectations for student work.

Regular and Substantive Student-Instructor Interaction

This course meets the regular and substantive student-instructor interaction requirement by providing learning and assessment through direct instruction, providing feedback on student work, providing information about course content, and facilitating discussion of course content.

Available Support Resources: Where can you go to find support?

To be a successful student it is important to seek support from others when you need it. Our university has many services that can help you improve your ability to meet your goals. You also are welcome to contact me about any of these issues.

| Need Support? | Check out these resources: |
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| Need assistance with enrollment or transcripts? | Office of the Registrar |
| Want help writing course papers? | The Writing Center |
| Looking for books, videos, media for outside research? | Library Research Support |
| Need accessibility support in the classroom? | Accessibility at UW-Madison |
| In need of financial support for basic needs? | Office of Student Financial Aid |
| Searching for support with mental health and well-being? | University Health Services – Mental Health |
| Feeling sick or unwell? | University Health Services – Medical Services |
| Struggling to decide on a major? | Undergraduate Advising |
| Seeking support as an international student? | International Student Services |
| Is there an incident of hate and bias you would like to report? | Dean of Students Office |

Course schedule (subject to change)

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| Week 1 | Jan 21 | <i>Introduction to the course</i> |
| | Jan 23 Read before class: | <i>Terms, concepts, and methods</i> Ainsworth, "Sex Redefined" |
| Week 2 | Jan 28 Read before class (2): | <i>How do ideas about gender vary across cultures?</i> Bearak, "Why terms like 'transgender' don't work for India's 'third-gender' communities" Higgins, "With More Freedom, Young Women in Albania Shun Tradition of 'Sworn Virgins'" |
| | Jan 30 Read before class: | <i>How have ideas about gender varied over time?</i> Bailey, "From Calling Cards to Money" |
| Week 3 | Feb 4 Read before class: | <i>To what extent are women and men different?</i> Migdon, "New Research Shows Men Are Just as Emotional as Women" |
| | Feb 6 Read before class: | <i>How is gender taught and learned?</i> Lee and McCabe, "Who Speaks and Who Listens," abstract and pages 38-55 |
| Week 4 | Feb 11 Watch before class: | <i>How is gender performed?</i> "How Do We and The Sims Perform Gender?" (until 8:38) |
| | Feb 13 Read before class: | <i>How is gender policed?</i> Barbee and Schrock, "Un/gendering Social Selves," abstract and pages 576-591 |
| Week 5 | Feb 18 Read before class: | <i>In-class midterm 1</i> None |
| | Feb 20 Read before class: | <i>What are the levels on which gender operates?</i> Risman, "Gender as Structure" |
| Week 6 | Feb 25 Listen before class: | <i>How does gender bias play out?</i> The Experiment Podcast: Justice, Interrupted |
| | Feb 27 Read before class: | <i>How do institutions shape ideas about gender, and how does gender shape institutions?</i> Belkin, "A Generation of American Men Give Up on College" |

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| Week 7 | March 4 Read before class: | <i>How does gender shape health outcomes?</i> shuster, “Doctors treating trans youth grapple with uncertainty, lack of training” |
| | March 6 Read before class: | <i>How do other identities work together with gender to shape people’s experiences?</i> Taussig, <i>Sitting Pretty</i> , Chapter 6: Feminist Pool Party, pages 137-152 |
| Week 8 | March 11 Read before class: | <i>How do intersectional stereotypes affect Black women in the workplace?</i> Wingfield, “About Those 79 Cents” |
| | March 13 Read before class: | <i>How do perceptions of identities like gender, race, and social class shape one another?</i> Onishi, Switched at Birth |
| Week 9 | March 18 Read before class: | <i>How do ideas about gender shape how sexual orientation is perceived?</i> Paris and Miller, “What It’s Like to Be a Queer Teenager in America Today” |
| | March 20 Read before class: | <i>How does gender shape perceptions of sexual behavior?</i> Miller, “How You Bully a Girl,” abstract and pages 726-741 |
| | March 25 & 27 | Spring break |
| Week 10 | April 1 Read before class: | Guest lecture: Clarice Handoko TBD |
| | April 3 Read before class: | <i>In-class midterm 2</i> None |
| Week 11 | April 8 Read before class: | <i>How are our cultural ideas about beauty gendered?</i> Mears, <i>Very Important People</i> . Prologue (skim for context) and Chapter 1 |
| | April 10 Read before class: | <i>How does gender shape the division of housework and childcare in families?</i> Fielding-Singh, <i>How the Other Half Eats</i> , Preface pages xi-xviii and Chapter 11: Mom’s Job |
| Week 12 | April 15 Read before class: | <i>How do institutions influence families’ experiences?</i> Collins, <i>Making Motherhood Work</i> , Chapter 4: Western Germany |

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| | April 17 | <i>What is occupational gender segregation, and why does it matter?</i> Miller, “As Women Take Over a Male-Dominated Field, the Pay Drops” |
| Week 13 | April 22 | <i>How do gender biases play out in the workplace?</i> Schilt, <i>Just One of the Guys</i> , Chapter 3: Becoming Men at Work |
| | April 24 | <i>TBD</i> |
| Week 14 | April 29 | <i>How is anticipating sexual harassment gendered, and how does it impact people’s career trajectories?</i> |
| | Read before class: | None |
| | May 1 | <i>Gender, politics, and social movements: MeToo as a case study</i> |
| | Read before class: | Burke, <i>Unbound</i> , prologue |
| Final | May 7 12:25pm-2:25pm | <i>Final exam</i> |