

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
Department of Sociology  
Sociology 303: SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER RELATIONS  
Spring session 2009

**Instructor: Dr. Stephanie Knaak**

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2:00-3:00 p.m.; Thursday 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Lecture Hours

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:00-13:50, EDC 384 (May 14-June 25, 2009)

Enrollment information

Prerequisite: Sociology 201 or permission of the department

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to key ideas in the sociological study of gender and gender relations. Gender is one of the central organizing principles of social life. As such, it is of the main axes around which societies are organized, and through which we understand our own experiences and identities. In this course, we will examine the various social processes that influence the way gender is shaped, experienced and institutionalized.

This course takes a social constructionist approach to the study of gender. According to this way of thinking, gender is revealed to be a system of categorizing people according to historically and culturally-situated belief systems, behaviours, social relations, and institutional structures. Thus, while the term “sex” refers to the biological markers of difference, the term “gender” refers to the *meanings* attached to those differences within a culture, including what it means to be “masculine” or “feminine.”

**OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

By the end of the course, you should understand gender to be much more than a simple dichotomy. You should be able to see gender everywhere in the world around you. As well, you should have a well-developed sociological lens through which to interpret what you see. It is a lens that emphasizes what and how social forces shape the gender classifications and gender relations that exist in our everyday worlds. More specifically, by the end of this course you should be able to understand and explain:

- key concepts and theories in the sociology of gender relations,
- the variability of gender across cultures, as well as between and *among* men and women within cultures,
- how the institutions of the family, education and the workplace express gender difference and reproduce relations of inequality between men and women,
- how gender is implicated in our intimate relations and interactions.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There are two required texts for this class. They are:

- Connell, Raewin (2009). *Gender, 2nd Edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kimmel, Michael, Amy Aronson and Amy Kaler, Eds. (2008). *The Gendered Society Reader, Canadian Edition*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Both texts are available at the bookstore. They will also be made available on reserve at the library.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. Preparation and Participation: 10%

Readings are assigned for each day of class. ***Make sure you come to class having read the material well enough that you feel prepared to discuss it.*** The best way for students to ensure they are prepared for class is to: 1) make brief notes on/about the key points of each of the assigned reading; 2) write down *at least one* comment/question/discussion point about each assigned reading. This portion of your grade will be based on the extent to which you engage in class discussion accordingly (i.e. by *answering* questions and/or by *asking* questions and/or by *raising* discussion points about the assigned readings).

NB. I am well aware that speaking out in class is easier for some people than for others. Be assured that this component of your grade is not based primarily on the *quantity* of your comments, questions, and discussion points, but on their quality.

### B. Midterm exam: 40%

The midterm exam will cover all material up until the exam date. Material for the exam will be drawn from assigned readings, lectures, and films. The exam will be written in-class and will contain a combination of multiple choice, short- and long-answer questions. The midterm exam is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 9.**

### C. In-Class Debate: 20%

Each student will participate in an in-class debate on a contemporary gender-related issue. A list of debate topics will be provided in class, and students will be assigned both to a topic, as well as to a “side.” It is expected that approximately six students will be assigned to each topic, meaning students will work in groups (of approximately three) to prepare and present the side of the argument for their assigned issue. Students will be given class time to prepare. More details about the expectations for, and format of, the debates will be provided in class. These debates will take place on **Tuesday, June 16** and **Thursday, June 18.**

### D. Final Exam: 30%

The final exam for this course will be a take-home exam. The exam will consist of 3-6 questions to be answered in an essay-based format. Final exam questions will be handed out in class on Tuesday, June 23, and will be due on **Thursday, June 25** during the scheduled class time.

## GRADING

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation & preparation	10%
Midterm exam	40%
Class Debate	20%
Final take home exam	30%
Total	100%

***NB: The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.***

The following scale converts percentage grades to letter grades for this class.

A+ = 95-100	A = 90-94	A- = 85-89
B+ = 80-84	B = 75-79	B- = 70-74
C+ = 67-69	C = 64-66	C- = 60-63
D+ = 55-59	D = 50-54	F = below 49

The following description of letter grades comes from the U of Calgary Calendar:

- A indicates superior performance, excellent mastery of the material.
- B indicates above average performance, good mastery of the material.
- C indicates satisfactory performance, a basic understanding of the material.
- D indicates marginal performance, minimal understanding of the material.
- F indicates unsatisfactory performance.

## COURSE STANDARDS

**Deferrals:** You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or exam. All requests for deferral due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams and tests may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original test as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred test. Deferred tests will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Deferral requests for *final examinations* go through the Dean’s office and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U. of C. Calendar. If you wish to make such a request you should go to the Faculty of Social Sciences Office (SS209) where you can get the appropriate paperwork for completion. The Dean then needs to approve your request. The instructor is not involved in this decision.

**Ethics Research:** Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

**Academic Misconduct:** cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

**The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)** legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

**Safewalk:** The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

**Academic Accommodation:** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. *It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.*

**Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers and Release of Final Grades:**

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

## READING SCHEDULE:

This schedule is subject to revisions and will be updated in class if there are changes.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Thursday May 14	Introduction to course		
Tuesday May 19	Intro to gender / conceptualizing gender	<i>Connell</i> : Chaps 1, 2, 7	Film: <i>Gender Tango</i>
Thursday May 21	Conceptualizing gender cont.	<i>Connell</i> : Chap 3 <i>Reader</i> : Chaps. 2, 3, 4, 31	
Tuesday May 26	The social construction of gender relations	<i>Connell</i> : Chap 4 <i>Reader</i> : Chaps. 5, 8, 9, 10	
Thursday May 28	Gender in personal life	<i>Connell</i> : Chap 5 <i>Reader</i> : Chaps. 11, 15, 17, 25, 35	
Tuesday June 2	Gender on the large scale/gender as institution	<i>Connell</i> : Chaps 6, 8 <i>Reader</i> : Chaps 7, 12, 21, 27, 29, 41	
Thursday June 4	“Catch up” class / midterm prep		
Tuesday June 9	Midterm Exam		Midterm exam, in- class
Thursday June 11	Prep time for in-class debates		
Tuesday June 16	In-class debates		Issue #1, #2, #3
Thursday June 18	In-class debates		Issue #4, #5, #6 (as applicable)
Tuesday June 23	course debrief; hand out final exam questions		Hand out final exam questions
Thursday June 25	Take-home exam due		final exam due