Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

Sex and Power

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Course description:

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary scholarship of Gender, Sexuality and Women's studies. As a survey course, this class is designed to give students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines a basic understanding of debates and perspectives discussed in the field. We will use gender as a critical lens to examine some of the social, cultural, economic, scientific, and political practices that organize our lives. We will explore a multitude of feminist perspectives on the intersections of sex, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, religion, and other categories of identity. In this course, we will interrogate these categories as socially constructed while acknowledging that these constructions have real effects in subordinating groups, marking bodies, and creating structural, intersectional inequalities.

Note:
Some topics may be controversial and/or incite spirited debate. ALWAYS be respectful. Some students may find some of the themes of the course uncomfortable (e.g., sex and sexual violence, religion, politics etc.). Be prepared, be sensitive, and think how your remarks might affect those around you. If you feel some topics might adversely affect you and trigger strong emotional response, please let me know and we can make alternative arrangements.

Learning Goals:
1. To understand that femininity, masculinity, and gender are social and cultural constructs that intersect powerfully with issues of race, class, religion, and sexual orientation (among others)
2. To experience how societal institutions affect individual lives, and to be able to think critically about patterns of privilege and discrimination
3. To improve analytical and critical writing and speaking skills, gain new insights, and empower self and others

Course Requirements and Grading:
In-person meetings (if any take place)

While this course meets primarily on-line, on those occasions when/if we meet in-person as a group or in individual one-on-one meetings with the instructor, please wear a mask and keep the CDC recommended social distance.

Online classroom etiquette
Tardiness: As always, be on time, even in virtual space.

Microphone: keep the microphone muted when not speaking, please.

Cameras: Given our current learning situation and the need for this class to be online, is it important to create a sense of a community in any way we can. One way to achieve that is by turning your cameras on during class discussions - a simple way to make us all feel like we are part of the group. I do not want, however, to require this as a policy for a number of reasons (slow internet, your unease about sharing your private space, mental health issues, etc.). I will simply ask you to keep your camera on when possible. If you need to turn it off occasionally or keep it off permanently, please let me know.

I will not be recording the class and ask you to please not to record anything without the explicit permissions of all students.

Setting: Just a reminder that finding the best setting for your class meetings (e.g., quiet, private, preferably NOT in your bed, etc.) will help you stay focused and engaged. Once again, I encourage you to give some thinking to where you want to be and identify the best available options, BUT, this said, I understand and fully accept the limitations MANY of you/us will be facing (in my household, for example, dogs might be barking frequently). If you need to discuss this issue with me, feel free to contact me.

Please note: we will be discussing sensitive topics at times. If your environment is not private, please consider investing into a set of headphones so that our conversations remain confined to our class participants who need to feel safe and protected.

Participation:
This course is a seminar where we create knowledge collectively, through class discussions and written assignments that feed off our weekly readings. For you to learn, you need to participate in class discussions and stay current on readings. Class attendance, therefore, is mandatory to your best capacity.

This said, I recognize that we live in an unpredictable world right now - and you (or I) might need to miss one or more classes (for mental or physical health reasons, caregiving demands, etc.). Let me know if you need to miss a class so that we could make alternative arrangements for you to keep up with the class material.

And while I usually prefer and have better success with free-flowing discussions, last semester showed that such format does not lend itself well to Zoom conversations. Therefore, use the “raised hand” symbol to indicate you would like to talk.

Assignments:

1. Reflection papers (6 total, approximately 500 - 700 words, 5 % each, 30 % total)
   On any given day, you will have a number of related readings. Your task is to identify common themes and questions that these readings raise; choose one of these themes or questions and explore it more in depth (start by providing a summary of the issue and then compare how it is treated in different readings, agree/disagree/offer alternative perspectives, etc.)

   Be sure to state clearly which readings you are addressing.
Bring with you two thoughts that you want to raise in class for discussion.

**2. Formal papers 1 and 2 (6 - 7 pages in length, 50% total)**

These papers are your opportunity to think critically and more in depth about what you have learned in class. The papers should reflect your own interests while being primarily focused on the concerns of the course.

*For the first formal paper,* you are free to choose your own topics (but should consult with the instructor beforehand) and develop a thesis-based argument that address an issue of your choice.  
*For the second formal paper,* you are asked to analyze a primary media source (or sources), that can include printed ads, TV commercials, films, cartoon, etc., and develop a thesis-based argument. Both papers should be based on primary sources and use at least 4 secondary scholarly sources to support and contextualize your argument.

**3. Cultural artifacts (5 %) - in groups of 2**

I would like you to be cultural anthropologists and begin to notice gendered images and messages all around you. Once during the semester you will be asked to share your observations with the rest of your classmates and to bring cultural artifacts that display these images/messages to class. These artifacts might include: newspapers articles, photographs of something you feel is relative, ads, TV commercials, movie clips, cartoons, videos of sport event, news, actual material objects, etc. We will start each class with two or three of you presenting your artifacts. Each presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes and *should include your explanation of how your artifact illustrates something that we have discussed in class and/or how it represents and aids in the construction of our gendered environment.*

**4. Discussion co-moderators (in groups of 2) (5 %)**

For this assignment, you will be asked to prepare specific questions/ideas to help me moderate class discussion.

**On writing:**

*Writing Assignments:* are due on the due date! Assignments are to be submitted on Blackboard in 12-point typeface, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, formatted in Times New Roman. The first page should include your name, the date and course number. **Always number your pages.** You will be graded not only on your ideas, but on how you convey your ideas. Content counts, but so does structure, grammar, and spelling. If you require help with your papers, one-on-one tutorial assistance is available all semester at the Writing, Speaking and Argument Center in Rush Rhees Library. To schedule a tutorial, please go to their website [http://writing.rochester.edu](http://writing.rochester.edu).

Please note that this is not a proofreading service; it is a venue for learning the art of writing for an academic audience. Make appointments in advance of your paper’s due date. Writing tutors can help you at any stage in the writing process: brainstorming ideas, mapping out an argument, polishing your prose. Please refer to the University of Rochester's online guide to writing and citing: [http://www.library.rochester.edu/reference/writing](http://www.library.rochester.edu/reference/writing).

*Citation Style:* All writing assignments shall conform to the Chicago Manual of Style (Documentary Note Style, NOT the Author-Date System) or the MLA style.
Important notes and policies

Learning Styles:
If you have special learning needs and you would like to request that appropriate accommodations be considered, please indicate that as soon as possible at the start of the semester. This communication should be made through here [http://rochester.edu/college/disability/](http://rochester.edu/college/disability/)

Plagiarism: All work in this course falls under University of Rochester’s [Academic Honesty Policy](http://www.rochester.edu/College/CCAS/AdviserHandbook/AcadHonesty.html). If you have any questions about whether your usage of sources is acceptable, please contact me. Please note that all suspected cases of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Honesty Review Board to be adjudicated according to University policies and regulations. This includes the replication of visual imagery without proper citation.

Plagiarized papers will automatically fail. Repeated plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. This also holds true for any other type of work (visual, etc.).

“As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. A common form of academic dishonesty is plagiarism. This is the use, whether deliberate or unintentional, of an idea or phrase from a source without proper acknowledgment of that source. The risk of plagiarism can be avoided in written work by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper itself, the source of any major or unique idea or wording that you did not arrive at on your own. Sources must be given regardless of whether the material is quoted directly or paraphrased. Another form of plagiarism is copying or obtaining information from another student. Submission of written work, such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent, also is plagiarism.”

[http://www.rochester.edu/College/CCAS/AdviserHandbook/AcadHonesty.html](http://www.rochester.edu/College/CCAS/AdviserHandbook/AcadHonesty.html)

To receive full credit, you are expected to complete these requirements:
1. Complete all weekly readings, attend, and participate in class discussions (10 points)
2. Compete the required number of response papers. (6 papers, 5 points each, total 30 points)
3. Write two formal papers (25 points each, 50 points total)
4. Present one cultural artifact (in groups of 3, 5 points)
5. Co-moderate a discussion (in groups of 3, 5 points)

Tentative schedule

August 31
*Introduction: syllabus, course design*
*What are gender studies? Why study gender?*
Readings:
- Michel Tracy Berger and Cheryl Radeloff, “Claiming an Education: Your Inheritance as a Student of Women’s and Gender Studies.”
- bell hooks, “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand?”
- Allan Johnson, “Patriarchy, The System: an It, not a He, a Them, or an Us.”
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
- Audre Lorde, “There is no Hierarchy of Oppressions.”

September 14
What is gender?
Readings:
- Michael Kimmel, “Spanning the World: Culture Constructs Gender Differences,” and “So, that Explains it: Psychoanalytic and Developmental Perspectives on Gender.”
- A. Ijeoma, “Because You Are a Girl”
- Martha McCaughhey, “Caveman Masculinity: Finding Manhood in Evolutionary Science”
- Rosalind Barnett and Caryl Rivers, “Men and Women are from Earth”
- May Ling Halim et al., “Pink Frilly Dresses and the Avoidance of all Things "Girly": Children's Appearance Rigidity and Cognitive Theories of Gender Development.”
- Judith Butler, on gender and sex

In class:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyvstdO1dORBOZ9MkEoL9cyYghC2qe_CP.

Reflection paper I

September 21
Gendered Spaces
Readings:
- Caroline Criado Perez, Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men (the book is available as an e-book from the University of Rochester library), Introduction, Part I and Part III.
- Fouad Khan, “Your City Has a Gender and It’s Male”
- Beth Daley, “Sexism and the city: how urban planning has failed women”
- Laura Shillington, “Cities of Difference: Gender is Important in Understanding Nature in Cities”
- Mary Ward, “Cycling Gender Gap: Women Less Likely to Choose Unsafe Commute”
- “What is Feminist City?”
- Excerpts from Leslie Kern, Feminist City
- Kangjae Jerry Lee, “Public Space, Park Space, and Racialized Space”

Screening (in class): The Codes of Gender
And Feminist City

September 28
Gendered Family
Readings:

- Michael Kimmel, “The Gendered Family”
- Explore National Center for Transgender Equality website’s resources on families (for transgender parents and parents raising trans children)
- Rebecca Barrett-Fox, “Constrains and Freedoms in Conservative Christian Women’s Lives”
- Monisha Das Gupta, “Broken Hearts, Broken Families: the Political Use of Families in the Fights against Deportation”
- Beyond Same-Sex Marriage: A New Strategic Vision for All Our Families & Relationships
- Judith Syfers, “I Want a Wife”
- Darrick Hamilton and Trevon Logan, “Opinion: Here’s why black families have struggled for decades to gain wealth”
- Jeffrey Hayward, “How zoning laws exclude Black families from areas of economic opportunity”

Screening (in class): Shame About Single Mothers (BBC)

Reflection paper 2

October 5
Gendered Workspace and Classroom
Readings:

- Michael Kimmel, "The Gendered Classroom" and "Separate and Unequal: The Gendered World of Work"
- Caroline Criado Perez, Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men (the book is available as an e-book from the University of Rochester library), “Part II: the Workplace”
- Diane Reay, “‘Spice Girls,’ ‘Nice Girls,’ ‘Girlies,’ and ‘Tomboys’: Gender Discourses, Girls' Cultures and Femininities in the Primary Classroom”
- Adia Harvey Wingfield, “The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled”
- Robin J. Ely and Debra Meyerson, “Unmasking Manly Men”
- Marlene Kim, “Policies to End the Gender Wage Gap in the United States”
- Shawn Arango Ricks, “Falling through the cracks: Black Girls and education”
- https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/06/working-parents-impossible/613429/?fbclid=IwAR3TaX5KmhDm7EQ_py--K0Ughu_3P_fz9igqztR2t4W2O_vTTnPU2PRJY
October 12
*Religion*
Readings:
- Michael Kimmel, “Gender and Religion”
- Stephanie Sequino, “Help or Hindrance? Religion’s Impact on Gender Inequality in Attitudes and Outcomes”
- John P. Bartkowski and Jen'nan Ghazal Read, “Veiled Submission: Gender, Power, and Identity among Evangelical and Muslim Women in the United States”
- Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really need Saving?“
- Esra Ozcan, “Who is a Muslim Woman?: Questioning Knowledge production on ‘Muslin Woman.’”
- Phyllis Trible, “Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread”
- Jane Schaberg, “How Mary Magdalene Became a Whore”

October 19
*Food and gender*
Readings:
- Wesley Buerkle, “Metrosexuality Can Stuff it: Beef Consumption as (Heteromasculine) Fortification”
- Letisha Engracia Cardoso Brown, “Eat to Live, Don’t Live to Eat: Black Men, Masculinity, Faith and Food”
- “How the Meat Industry Exploits Toxic Masculinity”
- Carol Adams, “How Vice President Pence Is Exposing the Sexual Politics of Meat”
- Michael Messner, “The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor ads in Mega Sports Media events,” in *Out of Play: Critical Essays on Gender and Sport*
- [https://faunalytics.org/meat-and-new-masculinity/?fbclid=IwAR1mId_Jn7aMUabpZzRbICR1EX2LsDtylNZyuj4QRh--QEF5nRYkmws-a8](https://faunalytics.org/meat-and-new-masculinity/?fbclid=IwAR1mId_Jn7aMUabpZzRbICR1EX2LsDtylNZyuj4QRh--QEF5nRYkmws-a8)

October 26
*Masculinity*
Readings:
- Michael Kimmel, “Introduction: Toward a History of Manhood in America,” from *Manhood In America*
- Angela Stroud, “Good Guys with Guns: Hegemonic Masculinity and Concealed Handguns”

G. Daddis, “Fear of the "Pussification" of America: A Short Cultural History”

Susan Bordo, “Beauty (Re)discovers the Male Body”

German Gray, “Black Masculinity and Visual Culture”

Don Sabbo, “Doing Time, Doing Masculinity”

Transmasculinity


https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/trump-s-coronavirus-mask-standoff-reveals-dangerous-ripples-fragile-masculinity-ncna1205441?fbclid=IwAR0H7rLueEQSQRQ54rOtehm5vaRcdYrn8HqZiyXooiPwk4rBZPBWyWWhpg

“Black Boys Viewed as Older, Less Innocent Than Whites, Research Finds”

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-53446827?SThisFB&fbclid=IwAR3k9fSB6BenazM7aoQ0Av1EDmUaA9XBXB7p7x0zb7Ji_8OF4PLCOx-f7rU

Reflection paper 4

November 2

Gendered Politics and Public Lives

Readings:

Michael Kimmel, "The Gender of Politics and the Politics of Gender"

Caroline Criado Perez, Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men (the book is available as an e-book from the University of Rochester library), “Part V: Public Life”


Victoria Brescol, “Who takes the Floor and Why: Gender, Power, and Volubility in Organizations”

McGinley, “Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and Michelle Obama: Performing Gender, Race, and Class”

https://time.com/4206660/hillary-clinton-sexism-shrill-yelling/

“The Hysterical Woman: Anti-Suffrage cartoons”*

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/aoc-ted-yoho-bitch-speech_n_5f19d838c5b6296fbf3f7b6d?utm_source=women_fb&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=hp_fb_pages&ncid=fcbklnkushpmg00000046&fbclid=IwAR2mx1gDgWtYhkqgR3l3s3yfegxOpL3vJhql58gFgJ7qTFxJeq52f-k4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3XjvO3Qrte&fbclid=IwAR2a_n9TYefSGj45_nNHkRmXyYsDFUovSmboCr8gzcZGfQtlpqlKfpOxQE

Contemporary texts: TBA

November 9
TRIGGER WARNING

Gender and Violence

Readings:

- Michael Kimmel, "The Gender of Violence"
- Nicholas Kristof, “When the Rapist Doesn't See It as Rape”
- Gloria Steinem, “Supremacy Crimes”
- Boswell and Spade, “Fraternities and Collegiate Rape Culture: Why are Some Fraternities More Dangerous Places for Women?”
- Beth Richie, “Black Feminist Reflection on the Antiviolence Movement”
- Jameta Barlow, “Black women, the forgotten survivors of sexual assault”
- Isis Nusait, “Making Feminist sense of Torture at Abu-Ghraib”
- “Two Recent Murders of Black Trans Women in Texas Reveal a Nationwide Crisis, Advocates Say”
- “Violence Against the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Community in 2020”
- https://msmagazine.com/2020/06/17/george-floyd-bad-cops-and-bystanders-how-male-dominated-cultures-keep-men-silent/?fbclid=IwAR11C5ixygN0lsccx2Ce0kJRcXbFoZab7r0V3_0jCQ18mQMr91hn11Tg56o

Screening (in class): It's a Girl

Reflection paper 5

November 16

Reproductive Rights and Body

Readings:

- Michael Kimmel, "The Gendered Body"
- Caroline Criado Perez, Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men (the book is available as an e-book from the University of Rochester library), “Part IV: Going to the Doctor”
- Gloria Steinem, “If Men Could Menstruate”
- “Health Care System Fails Many Transgender Americans”
- Naomi Jackson, “A Litany for Survival: Giving Birth as a black woman in America”
- Cynthia Prather et al., “Racism, African American Women, and Their Sexual and Reproductive Health: A Review of Historical and Contemporary Evidence and Implications for Health Equity”

OR

- Charlotte Rutherford, “Reproductive Freedoms and African American Women”

Select what appeals to you from the list of articles below. Read at least 2
- Katherine Mason, “The Unequal Weight of Discrimination: Gender, Body Size, and Income Inequality”;
- Alexandra DeValle, “From the Roots of Latina Feminism to the Future of the Reproductive Justice Movement”
- Kathy Ferguson, “Birth Control”
- France Winddance Twine, “The Industrial Womb”
- Dominique C. Hill, “(My) Lesbianism is not a Fixed Point”
- Eunjung Kim, “How Much Sex is Healthy? The Pleasure of Asexuality.”
- Jason Whitesel, “Gay Men’s Use of Online Pictures in Fat-Affirming Groups”
- Brenda Jo Brueggeman, et al., “What Her Body Taught (or, Teaching About and With a Disability): a Conversation”

**Reflection paper 6**

**November 23**

*Gendered Media*

**Readings:**
- Michael Kimmel, "The Gendered Media"
- Alicia Summers and Monica K. Miller, “From Damsels in Distress to Sexy Superheroes: How the Portrayal of Sexism in Video Game Magazines Has Changed in the Last Twenty Years”;
- Alexander K. Davis, Laura E. Rogers, and Bethany Bryson, “Own It! Constructions of Masculinity and Heterosexuality on Reality Makeover Television”;
- Meda Chesney-Lind, “Mean Girls, Bad Girls, or Just Girls: Corporate Media Hype and the Policing of Girlhood”
- “Victims or Villains: Examining Ten Years of Transgender Images on Television”
- M.M. Cammage, “Representations of black women in the media: The damnation of black womanhood”
- Sarah Fryett, “Laudable Laughter: Feminism and Female Comedians”

**Screening (in class): Killing Us Softly**

**November 30**

*Gendered Intimacies*

**Readings:**
- Michael Kimmel, "Gendered Intimacies: Friendship and Love"
- Beth A. Quinn, “Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of ‘Girl Watching’”;
- M. Paz Galupo, L. Andrew Bauerband, Kirsten A. Gonzalez, D. Brienne Hagen, Shandelle D. Hether, and Tiana E. Krum, “Transgender Friendship Experiences: Benefits and Barriers of Friendships Across Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation”;
- Diane Felmlee, et als., “Gender Rules: Same- and Cross-Gender Friendship Norms”
- Anne Koedt, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm”
- Naomi Wolf, “Radical Heterosexuality”
● Jessica Valenti, “The Cult of Virginity”
● “What is Slut Shaming?” -Finally, A Feminist 101 Blog
● Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power”

**Screening (in class): The Purity Myth**

*Formal paper 2 due*

**December 7**

*Gendered Science and Environment*

**Readings:**

- Caroline Criado Perez, *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (the book is available as an e-book from the University of Rochester library), “Part VI: When it Goes Wrong”
- Sandra Harding, “Feminism Confronts the Sciences: Reform and Transformation”
- Liam Lair, “Sexology, Eugenics, and Hirscheld’s Transvestites”
- Beenash Jafri, “Not your Indian Eco-Princess: Indigenous Women’s Resistance to Environmental Degradation”
- Joni Seager, “Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer: the Coming of Age if Feminist Environmentalism”
- Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles”