SOC 425, 525  WS 425, 525: Sociology of Women
SPRING 2012
INSTRUCTOR: JORDAN DURBIN, Ph.D.

Sections 64542, 64637
Monday, Wed., Friday 12:45 pm to 1:50 pm
Classroom: SRTC 101

Office hours by appointment
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Course Description:

Building upon theory about society, social institutions and the persistent constraints imposed by stratification, social norms, and culture, this course explores the institutionalization of the social construction of gender within macro structures such as family, education, the economy, and politics. Applying the lens of feminist theory, empirical research, and a multi-media approach, we will contrast and compare the intersection between the agency of individuals and social structures foregrounding gender, making it visible.

My Outcome Objectives for the Student:

1. Develop the ability to apply sociological and feminist perspectives and theoretical frames to better understand the structural and cultural context of gender in everyday life and to improve the ability to negotiate across institutional boundaries to actualize your full potential.
2. Refine the ability to identify social inequality and its long term impacts on society and individuals, to understand how gender, race, ethnicity, and economic class intersect, to improve your understanding of the scientific methods sociologists use to investigate social issues such as gender, to strengthen your ability to think critically about social problems and opportunities, and to develop skills for respectful discourse.
3. I believe a reasonable process of discourse that incorporates diverse perspectives creates a deeper understanding of gender that is synergistic. In the learning process, I hope you will gain a deeper understanding of the social construction of gender that will be liberating.

Required Readings:

Questioning Gender: A Sociological Exploration by Robyn Ryle (2012)

Sociology of Women Reader - purchase at PSU bookstore

Reserves
You are required to read peer-reviewed journal articles not in the reader but available online through PSU library. Use the following directions to access the articles indicated with a star:

• Go to the library web site: http://library.pdx.edu
• Click on “Course Reserves” on the left side of library home page
• Click on tab “course pages by instructor”
• Click on “Please select instructor”
• Scroll down, highlight “Durbin” and Click Search
Desire to Learn:
Additional readings and important communication will be posted on Desire to Learn. Please check your D2L account at least twice a week. I will often use the email function on D2L to directly communicate with students. I encourage you to participate in discourse by posting discussion topics on salient topics to open active communication with your colleagues.

My Expectations of Students:
1. I consider the course schedule to be flexible. Assignments and deadlines for submission of papers may be changed in response to institutional, weather, and other circumstances.
2. Participation in class is an important factor in learning the material. Please come to class having read the required readings and be prepared to discuss your perspectives and to address any questions you may have.
3. Discourse based on mutual respect for each other is a necessary building block of the democratic process. I would like your assistance in creating an environment in which disagreements can be discussed in a respectful manner. Be open and actively listen to others. I hope to maintain a high standard of courtesy at all times whether you agree with the expressed viewpoint or not.
4. Students who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact PSU’s Disability Resource Center (DRC) and to notify the instructor at the beginning of the term to make the necessary arrangements. If you require specific accommodations, contact the DRC in 435 Smith, at telephone number: 725-4150. Visit their web site at www.pdx.edu/uasc/drc.
5. You may not text or use your cell phone during class. Please be respectful of your instructor and fellow students and turn your cell phone off during class.

Course Requirements:

Grades:
The final grade will be calculated using the following weighting scheme:
30%  In-class assignments
30%  Mid-Term Paper
40%  Final Paper

In-class assignments (30% of course grade):

For a more effective learning experience, I encourage students to attend class consistently and to contribute to class discussions. To encourage attendance, reading the assigned material each week before class, and participation in group discussions, you will be required to write about the assigned readings each week and to be prepared to discuss in depth. The in-class assignments will focus on the readings assigned for the week and/or material presented in
class. Failed or missed assignments cannot be rewritten or made up at an alternative time. However, three of the assignment grades will be dropped. Note: at the instructor’s discretion, in the case of documented and excused absences, allowances may be made for making up this written assignment.

Mid-Term Paper (30% of course grade):

Undergraduate students will write a music analysis paper in which you conduct a sociological analysis of the themes related to gender and sexuality in the lyrics and/or music videos to two songs. Music analysis papers will be two double-spaced pages. Graduate students will write a book review of a critical analysis of a recent empirical study on gender that is 5 pages in length. Papers must be submitted in hard copy by Friday, May 4 at 12:45 pm, at the beginning of class.

Sources
The data for this analysis will be the lyrics (and music videos, if you choose) of two songs from any genre or time period. Since you will be comparing and contrasting the song’s messages, you should choose songs that are similar in at least one way (e.g. topic of song, artist). State the title of the song, artist, and year of the songs in the text of the paper.

You may draw on course readings or outside sources - however, drawing on outside sources is strongly discouraged. You should only incorporate outside sources if it enhances your analysis. Any sources that you consult should be cited. Any time you use a direct quote, or when you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another writer, you must cite the source. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. You must include a reference section at the end of the paper only if you use sources other than the song lyrics.

Components of the Assignment:
Choose two songs from any genre and time period. There should be some similarity as well as differences between the songs to provide a meaningful comparison. Obtain the full lyrics for each song and copy and paste the lyrics at the end of your paper (format the lyrics in single space and use spell check). I suggest you consider some of the following questions and decide if applying a specific frame would contribute to your analysis in a meaningful way:

★ What are the specific messages about women and femininity? Do the messages challenge or support gender norms and accepted cultural values? What are the messages about men and masculinity implied in this song? Do the messages challenge or support hegemonic masculinity?
★ What are the messages about male sexuality? Female sexuality? Are these messages heteronormative?
★ Do the songs objectify women or women’s bodies? Men or men’s bodies?
★ What are the messages about race and ethnicity? What are the messages about social class? What stereotypes are challenged? What stereotypes are supported? Use an intersectional analysis. How are messages about gender sexualized, racialized, and stratified by social class?
★ Does the song support or challenge patriarchy, male privilege, and/or male oppression of women? Does the song empower women? Does it support or challenge racism, classism, heteronormativity, and/or homophobia?
The purpose of the writing assignment is to provide an original and critical analysis rather than a summary of the song lyrics. The goal is to identify a few themes and use examples from the songs to illustrate these points. In your analysis, you must compare and contrast themes in both songs. Discussing one song and then the other is not a good strategy for this assignment. Use examples and quotes from the lyrics to support the points of your critique. In this two page paper, keep quotes short. Note that your personal experiences or reactions are not appropriate for a sociological analysis. Paper should provide an in-depth analysis and fully explain all ideas. It is best to choose a few salient points and elaborate upon their significance than make superficial comments on many topics.

Assignments should show clear and concise writing and appropriate proofreading: grades will be docked if papers show significant problems with grammar, spelling, awkward sentences, improper word use, typos, and/or improper formatting.

Formatting:

• Size 12 font
• One inch margins on top, bottom, left and right margins. Paragraphs indented ½ an inch
• All double spaces with no extra blank lines. Exception: lyrics and quotes that are 4 or more lines in length
• Page number in bottom right corner
• Minimum of 1 and ½ pages, maximum of 2 pages not including lyrics

Due date:

Music analysis papers are due in hard copy form by May 4 by 12:45 pm at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized five points per day and late papers will not be accepted after 10 days from the deadline. Papers may be turned in during class or put in the instructor’s mailbox (Sociology Department lobby, Cramer Hall 217). Any consideration for handing in the assignment late must be pre-arranged at least 48 hours in advance. Last minute extensions will not be granted.

Final Paper (40% of final grade):

Select a topic that resonates with you. Write a well thought out essay applying sociological and feminist theories and academic research. Cite academic references to support your theoretical argument and provide evidence to support your arguments and your conclusion. Do not hand in your first draft or use a conversational style of writing. Good grammar and well written sentences are required.

The paper should be 4 to 5 pages, typed, double-spaced.

Components of the Assignment:

You may choose from the following approaches:
★ Analyze and discuss a current social issue. You might consider a new law or public policy or a current event related to politics, economics, or culture. Your analysis can be
either description and analysis or you can take a position on the issue and support with academic articles and/or research.

★ A personal reflection that includes sociological analysis of gender and application of feminist theory.

★ A response to one of the academic articles we discussed in class. Some questions you might consider in your response include:

★ What were the strongest points or arguments made? What made them persuasive? What evidence was used? (Be sure you are not simply summarizing points from the reading).
★ What were the weakest points or arguments made? Why were they not persuasive? What was lacking from the evidence provided? What kind of evidence might have been more persuasive? What issues or perspectives related to the topic were not addressed? What would have been gained by including these issues or perspectives?
★ To what degree does this reading incorporate an intersectional perspective? How might the author(s) have more fully examined the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, social class, etc.?
★ What are the policy implications of the article? What might activists learn from this reading and how might that shape their political strategies?
★ Were the research methods appropriate for answering the research question? How might the findings have differed with a different method, sample, or sampling strategy?

Assignments should show clear and concise writing and appropriate proofreading: grades will be docked if papers show significant problems with grammar, spelling, awkward sentences, improper word use, typos, and/or improper formatting.

Formatting:

• Size 12 font
• One inch margins on top, bottom, left and right margins. Paragraphs indented ½ an inch
• All double spaces with no extra blank lines. Exception: lyrics and quotes that are 4 or more lines in length
• Page number in bottom right corner
• Papers should be 4 to 5 pages in length

Due date:
Papers are due at the time of the scheduled final exam for the course, Monday, June 11 at 12:45 pm.

Late papers will be penalized five points per day and late papers will not be accepted after Thursday, June 14 at 5 pm. Papers may be turned in during class or put in the instructor’s mailbox (Sociology Department lobby, Cramer Hall 217). Any consideration for handing in the assignment late must be pre-arranged at least 48 hours in advance. Last minute extensions will not be granted.

Course Schedule:
★ Indicates the journal article is available online PSU Library course reserves

Week 1: April 2 - 6
• Ryle Chapter 1

**Week 2: April 9 - 13**
• Ryle Chapter 2 Theory
• Ryle Chapter 3 Additional Gender Theories

**Week 3: April 16 - 20**
• Ryle Chapter 4 Gender & Socialization

**Week 4: April 23 - 27**
• Ryle Chapter 5 Gender of Sexuality

**Week 5: April 30 - May 4**
• Ryle Chapter 8 Marriage & Family

Mid-term paper due on May 4 at 12:45 pm.

**Week 6: May 7 - 11**

**Week 7: May 14 - 18**
• Ryle Chapter 9 Work

**Week 8: May 21 - 25**
May 28: Holiday - Memorial Day

Week 9: May 30 - June 1
• Ryle Chapter 10 Media & Culture

Week 10: June 4 - 8
• Ryle Chapter 11 Politics & Power

Final Paper Due: June 11th @ 12:45 pm. Papers can be turned in early