

SOC 254: GENDER IN THE SOCIAL WORLD

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Bellevue College

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Office hours: by appointment only (try email - the vast majority of questions can be answered via email)

COURSE INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

Welcome to our class, "Gender in the Social World!" I look forward to working with you this quarter and sharing with you my fascination with gender and sociology! Hopefully, you enter this class with some degree of curiosity about gender and why human beings behave the way we do. If so, you should find sociology intellectually rewarding as well as illuminating and useful in your own life.

- Are there only two sexes?
- What is the difference between "sex" and "gender?"
- Why do women and men seem so different? How are they alike?
- How much of our behavior is learned, and how much is biological? Is it nature or nurture?
- Are women and men equal in American society?
- How are some women advantaged over others?
- How do all men benefit from the extraordinary actions of only a few?

This class is a broad introduction to the Sociology of Gender. In it, we will explore the fundamental ways in which gender organizes social life. We will examine how gender influences our everyday interactions with others and how social institutions depend upon and perpetuate gender differences and inequalities. As we all come to the course with strong ideas about what it means to be a "man" or a "woman" in contemporary society, the subject matter is personally as well as intellectually challenging because it sometimes calls into question what we think is "true" or "real." I think you will find that the Sociology of Gender challenges the taken-for-granted attitudes about gender that we all tend to operate by in our everyday lives. (In fact, a large portion of the content in this class leads us to question the assumptions that we make about sex and gender.) Some of what you will learn in this course may initially seem like "common sense." Sometimes what you will learn might be shocking, surprising, or even make you angry. Hopefully, you will learn from each experience and take these lessons with you on your future endeavors.

"The chief object of education is not to learn things but to unlearn things."

–Gilbert Chesterton

Check out our Program website, which is full of information about sociology courses, majoring in sociology, and advice about how to make the most out of College: <http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/sociology/> (Links to an external site.)

LEARNING ATMOSPHERE

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an *active, interactive* course where you will *learn by doing*. You are expected to observe the world, read, write, discuss, and participate. I think of our class as a “collaborative learning community” where we all teach and learn from each other. Every time you post a comment or ask a question, you are teaching something to the rest of us. In order to do well in this course, you will need to abandon the traditional “passive” student role and instead *take control of your learning and education*. I think you’ll enjoy it and learn a lot in the process!

Regarding Safe Space: This class is a Safe Space for *all* students. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, queer-identified, nonbinary, and transgender students are welcome in this class and are encouraged to speak out and be an integral part of this class. Any questions about what this means should be brought to me immediately. All are welcome!

A note about inclusion: Everyone is welcome in this class and is encouraged to be an equal part of our class culture. However, bigoted comments and attitudes will not be tolerated. This means that insulting, belittling, degrading, or castigating a group of people (such as women, men, people of color, gays and lesbians, poor people, Christians, Jews, Muslims, veterans, and so on) will not be permitted. You are entitled to your beliefs, of course, but you are not entitled to make other people feel attacked, insulted, or victimized. It is also unacceptable in this class to ‘justify’ bigoted attitudes for any reason, including religion. If you are unable to express your beliefs in a non-insulting manner, please keep them to yourself. I think you’ll find, however, that with a little practice, you can express your viewpoint in an open, respectful manner. If you have any doubts, feel free to check with me and I’d be happy to help you express yourself responsibly.

A note about online learning: Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending upon your perspective!), online classes are not for everyone. In general, they demand far more independent initiative and personal discipline than do classes that meet on campus. Additionally, online classes demand stronger reading and writing skills. If you are a student who likes having someone to keep you on your toes, such as reminding you regularly to keep up with your work, then online classes are probably not a good

choice for you (but I realize we don't all have choice right now). That's okay (it's not a failure on your part!)...some students simply thrive more when working on a "strict" daily routine, the kind of routine that on-campus classes provide. Thus, the students who succeed most at online learning tend to be those students who:

- are disciplined enough to check the course website around five-to-seven days per week;
- have enough personal initiative that they will contact their instructor (that is, me!) if they don't understand something;
- have good to excellent written communication skills;
- are good readers (i.e. they can sit down and focus on a reading, highlighting key concepts/ideas, and then study it well);
- are independent; AND
- have a basic understanding of computer culture and technology (navigating a website, uploading/downloading, discussion etiquette)

A note about course content: Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we sometimes discuss provocative material. Please be advised that this course includes mature, adult material. You might think of it as an "R-rated" class at times. However, when we explore adult or controversial topics, they will be framed within an academic context. This means that when we analyze or discuss them, we will do so professionally and with a learning goal in mind. So this means that I expect you to communicate with others in a professional, academic manner. If you have any questions or concerns about course content, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Additionally, since this course is a survey of the theories and research that have come out of Sociology as a discipline, we will use the social categories that have been thoroughly researched. We will often refer to "women" and "men" in our class as well as the research data about "women" and "men." Although these categories are clearly and obviously socially-constructed (and in fact quite limiting and restrictive), they do have very real and significant social meaning in our culture. Make no mistake about that. So because "women" and "men" are socially real categories that have real (and sometimes dire) consequences, and because we are living in a culture in which the gender binary is incredibly deeply embedded (although that's changing!), we will refer to these categories often.

A note about instructor availability: I have noticed that, sometimes, students who enroll in online classes have unreasonable expectations about their Instructor's availability. Please be aware that I am not online 24-hours a day. In general, I am online for this class a couple of hours per day. You will rarely be able to reach me in the evenings or on the weekends. I am, obviously, an active member of this course, but I do my coursework during the week, during daytime business hours. *Thus, please do not send to me late-night or weekend emails expecting an immediate response.* On Mondays-Fridays, I aim to respond to emails within 24-hours. Please adjust your expectations accordingly. Please also know that I try hard to maintain a healthy work/life/family balance (it's taken me many years to figure out how to do this!), and so I

do not read or respond to emails over holiday breaks - I need time away from work too! Thanks!

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the course, students should be able to:

- Illustrate a sociological understanding of gender;
- Analyze the ways in which societies are fundamentally organized by sex/gender systems;
- Describe how power plays a central role in the social construction of sex/gender; and
- Explain how experiences of gender are shaped by class and race.

REQUIRED TEXTS and MISCELLANEOUS

"The Gendered Society" by Michael Kimmel (6th Edition)

You will also need to rent a video - at the cost of about \$2 - later in the quarter, although you may be able to find it for free somewhere else on the web. (If you have a Netflix subscription, for example, it's available on that streaming service.)

To get the course textbook, click on IA Course Materials on the menu on the left-hand side of the page. (If you are prompted to login or register, go ahead and do that.) There! You have it now! (**FYI:** The College Bookstore is running a pilot project that saves students a LOT of money, and so I decided to enroll our course in the trial project. When you registered for our class, you paid an extra \$46 textbook fee, so that's why you have access immediately to an electronic copy of our text - you've already paid for it!)

A note about course readings: In this class, it's very important to be an **active reader**. Have a purpose when you read! As you read, regularly ask yourself, "Am I getting it?" If not, go back and find the place where you last understood the material and re-read from that point forward. Also, you should **take notes as you read**. Try making an outline of the material by organizing the main ideas and supporting details. Or, write a brief summary of the main ideas. Or, make comments in the margins of your book. *You should always highlight or underline the main points as you read.* If you are having trouble concentrating, take a break and come back to the readings later. (It doesn't do any good to "study" while you are not paying attention or focusing – in fact, it's a waste of time!) Please know that I am available to assist you with any of the readings. My goal as an instructor is to help you succeed.

COURSE POLICIES

In order to have a respectful, cooperative learning environment in which we learn as much as possible from one other, we all need to contribute positively to our class dynamics. Although each class is unique and develops its own 'personality,' the following are the basic expectations that serve as the foundation of our class culture.

The following outlines what you may expect of me as your instructor:

A sincere desire to help you learn. Since my ultimate goal is to help you learn, I have invested a significant amount of time into the design of this course site, with the hopes that the materials and assignments will enhance your learning. I think this course is understandable, interesting, and engaging, although it's challenging at times for a variety of reasons. However, if at any time you are unclear or unsure about any aspects of the course - including reading material - feel free to contact me for assistance/clarification.

Fairness. Your grade will be based upon what I detect that you have learned and how I assess your performance. It is your job to clearly communicate to me (in your writing) that you understand the material. I don't negotiate final grades.

Respect and inclusion. This class is a "Safe Space" for all students. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, queer-identified, and transgender students are welcome in this classroom and encouraged to speak out and be an integral part of this class. All are welcome!

The following outlines what I expect of you throughout the quarter:

A sincere effort to learn the course material. I work hard to make this course a success for you, and I expect you to try hard too. When participating in discussions and when writing assignments, your comments should indicate to me that you have read and understand the course material. Some students wrongly assume that they can simply "wing it" in this class and still receive a high grade.

Preparation. You should keep up with the readings and lectures each week, particularly before contributing to seminar and our course discussion board.

Promptness. You should comply with all due dates, as **I do not accept late work. All assignments are due by 11:59pm on the listed due date..NO EXCEPTIONS (that includes computer problems).** You will learn that I am quite a stickler on due dates, so please learn to comply with all deadlines. Plan ahead - you have at least one week to complete the work. I highly recommend that you plan to turn in your work early (with plenty of time to spare before the 11:59pm deadline - you can even turn in your work days early!). Because fairness and equality are extremely important to me, I don't make "late work" exceptions - it would be wrong to accept some students' work late and then not accept others'.

I accept essay assignments **ONLY** in the following formats: pdf and Word. Do **NOT** send to me attachments in other formats (no Google docs). Submitting your work to me in other formats will result in a **ZERO** grade.

You can submit your work to me in the following ways:

- (1) by uploading your work to Canvas (on the assignments pages themselves), or
- (2) IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY ONLY (such as you cannot access Canvas), you can email your work to me at my Bellevue College address. denise.johnson@bellevuecollege.edu

It is your job to get your work in on time.

Every student should have a “back up plan” for what you will do if you have computer problems. **Please note that you are responsible for getting your work in on time REGARDLESS of the state of your computer/browser or your Internet Service Provider (ISP).** If your internet is "out," remember that there are always other places where the internet is working, so you'll need to rely on those other places. You can even use your cell phone in a crunch. All late work will receive a zero grade. Due dates are indicated on the “Calendar” link, so it is extremely important for you to stay on top of the Calendar.

Contribution. Learning about each others' experiences and perspectives is an integral part of the learning process in this course. I believe that you will learn a lot about yourself and your fellow classmates. To work effectively in this course, therefore, you are expected to be an active participant in our learning environment. This is why you are required to contribute to class discussions. Please be advised that your grade will suffer if you do not participate and contribute to the intellectual life of our class.

Respect, courtesy, and tolerance. Since learning about diverse experiences is central to this course, it is of the utmost importance that you respect your classmates' experiences, differences, and opinions. Disrespectful attitudes will not be tolerated.

Honesty. This means no cheating and no plagiarism. If you cheat or plagiarize, you fail. No excuses will be taken into account. Your work must be your own, except when asked to work with other students. Furthermore, you are required to acknowledge in your papers if you have borrowed any ideas, terms, or phrases, even if you have borrowed from a classmate OR from the Kimmel book. Please do not copy and paste material from wikipedia or any other website into your assignments, as this is a severe form of cheating (that is very easy to catch, by the way). **If you cheat/plagiarize on any portion of a quiz, you'll receive a zero grade for the entire quiz.** ***In this class, your assignments should be grounded in the textbook (rather than web resources, which are often wrong). This means that you should NOT do internet research in this class – all you need is in the course textbook and supplementary readings.*** In fact, **if you do outside research in this class, you will lose points.** I dock points for this because: (a) information on the Internet is often misleading and/or inaccurate and (b) I need to make sure that you understand OUR TEXTBOOK (which is, after all, firmly grounded in sociological research!). If you have any hesitation, or if you are in doubt about one of these issues, feel free to ask me.

GRADING

Final course grades are based on the following point breakdown:

Quizzes/Exams (2 @ 200pts each)	400 points
Discussion participation (10 @ 20pts each)	200 points
Essays (5 @ 30pts each)	150 points
Fieldwork Paper	100 points
Lecture Notes	100 points
Chapter Outline/Analysis	50 points
TOTAL	1000 points

EXTRA CREDIT: You will have a few opportunities to earn Extra Credit this quarter. Extra Credit opportunities can be found in the weekly "Modules." I highly recommend that you take every opportunity to earn all the extra credit in this course that you can, as sometimes students struggle on the quizzes/exams or forget to submit an essay. *Extra credit gives you some 'wobble room' to work with!* Even if you're doing very well in the class as you come across an extra credit opportunity, you should still complete it because this "banks" extra points for you that you can use later.

When it is time for me to assign a letter grade to your overall course work, I use the following letter-grade equivalents:

- A = 930-1,000 points
- A- = 900-929 points
- B+ = 870-899 points
- B = 830-869 points
- B- = 800-829 points
- C+ = 770-799 points
- C = 730-769 points
- C- = 700-729 points
- D+ = 670-699 points
- D = 600-669 points
- F = 0-599 points

The following is a description of the course grade components:

(1) **Quizzes/exams:** Two quizzes/exams are given over the course of the quarter, one at roughly the middle of the quarter and one at the end. These may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and/or essay questions. These quizzes are "open book," so you are permitted to refer to the textbook for help. However, these quizzes

are intended to be independent work, so **you are not permitted to work on the quizzes with your classmates**. I am holding you to the Honor Code on this, so if one of your classmates contacts you for help or assistance on a quiz, please politely decline them and then let me know that your classmate is contacting others. Be aware that, once you begin working on a quiz, there will be a ninety-minute time limit to finish it. Please note that **I do not give make-up quizzes**, so if you miss one, you will receive a zero grade. PLEASE DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO COMPLETE YOUR QUIZZES IN THIS CLASS. Please also review the Calendar link to see due dates. Plan ahead! **(NOTE: Checking the calendar link frequently is one of the keys to success in this class – EVERYTHING that is due is posted for you there!)**

(2) **Fieldwork Paper:** You are required to complete **ONE** fieldwork assignment of your choice. Fieldwork assignments require you to observe some aspect of the social world, take very detailed notes on what you observe, and then write a paper linking your observations to the course material. Descriptions of the Fieldwork Papers can be found under the "Modules" link. Please plan ahead, as these projects will likely take at least a week to complete. Specific information about paper format, including citation style, can be found in the Fieldwork Assignments themselves.

(3) **Essays:** You will complete five essays throughout the quarter that require you to reflect on the course material and/or observe the social world. You should do your best to address every essay question thoughtfully, clearly, and completely, as you can earn up to 30 points for each essay. These essays will be graded not only on their completeness (Did you adequately address all the components of the assignment?), but also on their thoughtfulness (Does your essay show that you understand and thought hard about the course material/readings? Do you connect your answer to the course textbook?). PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT THESE ESSAYS WITHOUT FIRST READING THE TEXTBOOK - I will definitely be able to tell if you are "shooting from the hip" rather than relying on what you've read to help you with the assignment. And again, PLEASE DO NOT DO "INTERNET RESEARCH" FOR THESE ESSAYS – you should rely **solely** on the textbook and seminar readings (if you rely on other sources, your grade will suffer as I need to ensure that you understand the Newman book, which is far more reliable than much of the Internet). Essays vary in length - most are roughly 500 words, although some are 750-1000 words. Please note that **I will not accept late essays**, so work that is not handed in on time will receive a zero grade. Remember, the due time for EVERYTHING in this class is **11:59pm**.

(4) **Lecture Notes:** You will watch lectures on Canvas and take notes while you watch. You'll submit these notes for a grade. NOTE: this should be an "easy" way to earn full or close-to-full points so don't skip these assignments! All you need to do is demonstrate to me that you watched and understand the important points from lecture, including all the concepts I discuss as well as important examples. Be thorough in your notetaking, because you can use these notes on the quizzes/exams!

(5) **Chapter Outline/Analysis assignment:** There are four chapters from the book that we are not reading. For this assignment, you'll choose any ONE of those four chapters, and then write a detailed chapter outline and short one-paragraph analysis. This

assignment is due near the end of the quarter, and details about it can be found in the Modules.

(6) **Discussion Participation:** Each week, you will participate in large class discussions. It is your responsibility, as a member of our class, to respond thoughtfully not only to my prompt(s), but also to your classmates' comments. You are required to participate thoroughly in each week's discussion(s), as your grade will be based on the quality of your contributions and your level of involvement. In order to receive high grades on your discussion, you will need to:

(a) make an initial post about the topic in the first couple of days of the week. You will notice that **each discussion has two due dates** - one due date for your initial post (by Wednesday night of each week), and another due date for your follow-up posts/responses - your initial post should rely upon the readings and videos, demonstrating to me that you know the material, and;

(b) respond to AT LEAST 2-4 of your classmates' posts throughout the week (i.e. contribute something intellectually meaningful).

In other words, you will need to make a TOTAL of 3-5 **high-quality posts** each week- one will be your initial post (to my discussion prompt) and then the rest will be your responses to what others have said. I have set up the weekly discussions so that you cannot see what others have posted until you've made your own initial post first. Also **your initial post will be due by 11:59pm on Wednesday of each week, and your follow-up posts/responses will be due by 11:59pm on Sunday.** I recommend that you *check the discussion board almost daily, including the morning the discussion closes*. By checking the discussion board frequently, you will be able to look for opportunities where you can add more to the conversation (thus improving your grade!). This will also improve your learning. The following are guidelines that you should follow in order to contribute to successful class discussions:

Your responses to my discussion questions should be in sentence/paragraph format, and you should avoid what I call "text message" grammar (that means no "u" instead of "you"). While format is always important (since it eases communication), the focus in this class is primarily on content. Therefore, your comments should be meaningful and expand your classmates' understanding of the topic. The goal for our discussions is to deepen our understanding of the course themes.

On each discussion thread, you can earn up to twenty points for your contributions. Your posts must reflect real thought and deepen the conversation. Therefore keep the following in mind:

- Say something that will *contribute* to a *meaningful* discussion--this requires *time and thought!* Thoroughly reflect on and think about the point you are making.
- Fully explain and elaborate your points, using examples, evidence and logic to explain. Rely on evidence whenever possible, as this course is a social science course, and you are learning the social science perspective. Speak with precision regarding your meaning, rather than being vague or general.

- Respond to the topic, not the author. This does not mean you should ignore the person who wrote the original post, but it means you need to focus on the ideas in the post and how to further the conversation on the topic, not tell the author what you think of his or her post.
- Place your reaction in the context of the discussion. Make sure that you clearly connect your response to the week's (or previous weeks') themes.
- Minimize prejudices, biases, unfounded beliefs, and too much reliance on emotional reactions, which can sidetrack good sound judgment and opinions rooted in your learning and in the sociological perspective. It is easy for bias, belief and emotion to dominate a discussion because we have existing emotions around the topic at hand, or because we fall prey to "reductionism" (seeing individuals as causes of their predicaments, which have social roots and solutions).
- Feel free to be personal and interpersonal on the threads, in addition to substantive discussion. This aspect of discussion helps the group bond as a community. Remember, too, that you will apply many of the topics to your own social worlds. Be careful, however, not to go WAY off on a personal tangent--stay focused on the topic. If you want to carry on a more personal discussion, use the "other" forum on the discussion site. The assignment forums are reserved for analyzing the assignment of the week.

Examples of good discussion posts include: clarifying or expanding the relevant concept if important points are missing, vague or incorrect; looking at the issue from another angle or perspective; adding pertinent information; asking a question that forces your classmates to think more in depth on the topic.

I'm looking forward to an engaging and interesting discussion board!

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is a program of support available to you. If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter. The DRC office is located in B 132 or you can call them at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach them by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc (Links to an external site.)