**SYLLABUS**

Fall 2014

Gender and Society

SYD 4800- 002/ 95737

3 Credit hours

Tuesday, 7:10pm -10:00pm

Davie West, 103

* SYD 4800 is an upper division class elective for the sociology major.

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Farshad Araghi

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

"*We find comfort among those who agree with us -- growth among those who don't"*

-- F. A. Clark

Gender and Society examines the social construction of masculinity and femininity, relationships between men and women, structure of gender stratification. We will read and discuss texts and novels to explore masculine and feminine identities in diverse cultures. Exploring gender relations between men and women, the course content is organized around the following questions**:** What is gender? How does gender influence the organization of families, economies, and states? In what ways is gender related to power and violence? How does gender impact identity, intimacy, and friendship? What is the relationship between gender and globalization (e.g., McDonaldization and **“**fast food women,**”** global sex trade, global media, etc.). Overall, the course has two major goals**:** (1) to understand the sociological theories and the social dimension of contemporary gender relations, and (2) to increase awareness of our personal values, assumptions, and point of views. Along the way, we will explore topics such as the plurality of identities, media and pornography, power, knowledge and consciousness. The course is organized this course around the concepts of hegemony and consciousness. Working within a social constructionist framework and taking a neo-Foucauldian approach, we will try to bring out the relation among power, knowledge, and consciousness. This enables us to think of gender as a **process**, that is, as a social category with a history and a future. We will critique the one-sided perspectives that conceptualize gender as an event and, as a result, see only "socialization," but ignore transformation. This is a *positive* critique, for it allows us to substitute the philosophy and discourse of determinism and despair with the philosophy of possibility and hope.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

* Examine the sociological perspectives on gender and identify the core theoretical concepts of the sociology of gender
* Develop a deeper understanding of gender relations in society and how personal life chances and social status are affected by the prevailing gender norms and values.
* Cultivate a comparative understanding of gender relations by taking a global approach to appreciate the diverse aspects of gender across time and location.
* Learn to distinguish between gender realities and gender ideologies Become familiar with the sociological ways of “investigating social reality” to uncover gendered assumptions underlying systems of representation and social institutions.

**Students as Intellectuals:**

The philosophical perspective that guides my teaching practice emphasizes democracy, engagement, and empowerment. The classroom, in this course, is not where you passively listen and take notes; it is, on the contrary, where you display an active voice and presence. I think teaching means **facilitating discovery through interconnecting.** For me, this requires that I conceive of students as intellectuals and not as objects. For you, it implies that learning is not about "receiving" knowledge; it is about active and critical appropriation of knowledge. Discussion and critique are therefore essential in this course. Learning for critical consciousness is certainly more challenging than learning for memorization. But it is also more rewarding because it involves nurturing our curiosity, inquisitive spirit, and creativity.

**EVALUATION:**

I will evaluate you in terms of several criteria, including performance on the written examination and consistency of classroom preparation. I will decide your final grades based on:

(1) Class Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism (30points)-

"Invisibility is not a natural state for anyone."

-- Mitsuye Yamada

I need your cooperation in developing an atmosphere conducive to learning. I would like to learn all of your names and your academic and/or professional background and interests. Please bring a small photo (or a clear copy of one), which you can attach to your class participation form. The class participation form must be turned in; otherwise, you might end up not getting credit for class participation. Please, if possible, sit in about the same place for several classes in a row.

Class Attendance: Attendance is required and will be recorded; if illness and other serious event would make absence unavoidable, please make sure that you will let me know in advance. Please arrive on time, and do not leave early. Unexplained tardiness and/or absenteeism not only keep you from knowing what is going on, but may be interpreted as evidence of apathy or discourtesy. If you miss any part of any class, you are responsible for getting notes, assignments, and handouts from another member of the class, before the next class meeting.

Professionalism: Please do not talk with other students, as this would be disruptive for the class. If you have a question about the material we are covering, ask me, rather than asking another student. (I really do not mind answering questions, clarifying a statement, repeating myself, etc.). Lack of professionalism inside the classroom (e.g., holding a private conversation with another student, reading material related or unrelated to this course, exchanging written comments) may lead to a failing grade.

Participation: I expect that you read all required books and articles and demonstrate your preparedness by active participation in class. This includes any or all of the following: sharing insights into the reading material, raising critical questions, responding to questions raised, and advancing the discussion to higher levels.

* Ten short written assignments (typewritten; 3 points each, 30points total)-

Each assignment will consist of two parts: (a) a short summary of the main ideas (b) two questions about the readings. For part (a): what were the main ideas in the reading assigned from the assigned readings. List at least three (about 100 words). You should demonstrate that you have carefully read and thought about the readings. For part (b), formulate at least two sociological questions on the readings. As someone who believes that there are no “dumb” questions, I will be my pleasure to read, and reflect upon, all questions; to get credit, however, please formulate a sociological question that is specific and relevant to at least one of the assigned readings. Please give specific reference to the readings with author’s name and the page number. In other words, avoid general and/or hypothetical questions such as: “why did the author become a social theorist? “ “Why haven’t people paid more attention to this theory?” “Why does this author use so many words to make a simple point?”

Here are some useful tips, some of which are from [“How to Write a Summary.”](http://www.enotes.com/topics/how-write-summary)

* Write in the present tense
* Make sure to include the author and title of the work.
* If you must use the words of the author, cite them.
* It is O.K. to quote a few words from the readings to illustrate your point.
* Don't put your own opinions, ideas, or interpretations into the summary. The purpose of writing a summary is to accurately represent what the author wanted to say, not to provide a critique. Only after you have covered the readings you can offer your personal opinion.

Format requirement: Example:

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**Last name (BOLD face),** First name

Assignment #1

Gender and Society, Fall 2014

Author(s), Title(s) of the reading(s)

Part A: Short summery of the main ideas: (indicate word count for this part)

*What were the main ideas in the assigned readings for the week? List at least three (about 100 words). Demonstrate that you have carefully read and thought about the readings. Giving specific reference with page numbers)*

Part B: Sociological Questions

Formulate two sociological questions. Avoid general and/or hypothetical questions. To get credit formulate your questions should be specific with direct reference (including page number) to the assigned readings for the week.

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* Three examinations:

Exam 1 (100 points, to be given on **September 30**

Exam 2 (100 points to be given on **October 28**

Final exam (cumulative, 100 points, to be given **on November 25**

* Take-home assignment 1 (10 points), Due on **September 16**
* Take home assignment 2 (30 points), Due on **November 2**

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| --- | --- |
| **Course Requirement** | **Points** |
| Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism | 30 |
| Writing Assignments | 30 |
| Exam 1 | 100 |
| Exam 2 | 100 |
| Final Exam | 100 |
| Take home assignments | 40 |
| Total Possible Points | **400** |

Grading Scale:

**A 93%+ 372-400**

**A- 90-92% 360-371**

**B+ 87-89% 348-359**

**B 83-86% 332-347**

**B- 80-82% 320-331**

**C+ 77-79% 308-319**

**C 73-79% 292-307**

**C- 70-72% 280-291**

**D 60-69% 240-279**

**F < 60% 239-**

**REQUIRED BOOKS:**

Robyn Ryle, *Questioning Gender: A Sociological Exploration*, SAGE Publications, 2012.

Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time,* Ballantine books (any edition).

**TOPICAL OUTLINE**

**August 19**

***What is Gender and Why Should We Care About it?***

**September 2**

***What’s the “Sociology” in the Sociology of Gender?***

We’ll question what exactly gender is and how it impacts our everyday lives. Taking a look at theoretical perspectives will show us how many different questions can be asked about gender.

*Read Chapters 1 and 2*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #1by 2:00 p.m. Post a copy on SafeAssignment on Backboard and bring a copy to class. Follow the same for all writing assignments.*

**September 9**

**How Do Disciplines Outside of Sociology Study Gender?**

During this week, we will take a look outside of Sociology to approaches found in Psychology and Anthropology, as well as other fields of critical inquiry. This chapter will expand the theoretical perspectives presented and give students an array of takes on gender.

*Read Chapter 3*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #2*

**September 16**

**How Do We Learn Gender?**

Socialization becomes an important part of how we learn gender. By looking at socialization based theories and taking into account the question of how exactly do we learn gender, this week will be spent investigating how we gender changes from the time we are young till we are older.

*Read Chapter 4*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #3*

**September 23**

**How Does Gender Matter for Who We Want and Desire?**

Does sexuality have a gender? We’ll discover how sexual scripts work for masculinity and femininity as well as the pervasiveness of heteronormativity in society.

*Read Chapter 5*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #4*

**September 30**

First Examination

**October 7**

**How Does Gender Impact the People You Spend Your Time With?**

Do you think that men or women make better friends? During this week, we’ll explore how gender can impact relationships and where we draw the line between just friends and so much more.

*Read Chapter 6*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #5*

**October 14**

**How Does Gender Matter for How We Think About Our Bodies?**

Men have higher rates of mortality, but women are more likely to have eating disorders (though the number of men is rising). What does the naked body represent and does it matter if it’s a man’s body versus a woman’s? We’ll explore how gender is expressed through the body.

*Read Chapter 7*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #6*

**October 21**

**How Does Gender Impact the People We Live Our Lives With?**

Do we get married for love? Or is it more of a political alliance? We’ll discuss the history behind marriage and family and the gendered implications of how it has changed over the course of time.

*Read Chapter 8*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment #7*

**October 28**

**Second examination**

**November 4**

**How Does Gender Affect the Type of Work We Do and Rewards We Receive for Our Work?**

Sex segregation in the work place continues to be pervasive. What causes that segregation? Does it happen at the individual or institutional level? These are all areas to explore in the realms of gender and work.

*Read Chapter 9*

*Blackboard readings*

*Complete writing assignment#8*

**November 18**

**How Does Gender Help Determine Who Has Power and Who Doesn’t?**

Women infrequently hold political positions in many societies, but why is this so? What happens when women are in positions of power? Power can be distributed in many ways, and among gender lines is one possibility.

*Read Chapter 11*

*Blackboard readings*

*Writing assignment #10*

**November 25**

Final Examination

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act*

*(ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability*

*to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with*

*Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA*

*240 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 117 (772-873-3441) – and follow all OSD procedures*

**STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC IRREGULARITIES**

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to

maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a

serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the

university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student

enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also

destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of

mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual

responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For

more information, see University Regulation 4.001 at <http://www.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf>

**Code of academic integrity & honor code**

The honor code states: *“Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the University mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the University community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty.”*