Course Description

This course examines gender (understood as a hierarchical dichotomy privileging that which is masculinized--ideas, entities, activities--over that which is feminized) and its intersection with politics (understood as differential access to and control over material and symbolic resources). This course does not focus on ‘women and politics’ or electoral, governmental practices. Rather, we take a more comprehensive look at how gender is constructed (‘made’ through historical, socio-cultural and structural processes); how it shapes our identities, ways of thinking, and ways of acting; and how gender hierarchy constitutes a complex system of differential power that intersects especially with ethnicity/race, class, and sexual orientation.

Course Objectives

The objective of the course is to sensitize students to social constructions of gender and their political implications; in other words, to explore the implications of ‘taking gender seriously’ in our examination of ‘politics.’ Politics is understood not narrowly (as electoral or governmental activities) but systemically (as ‘how power operates’ through symbols, language, thinking, identities, behaviors, activities, and institutionalized practices).

By examining power relations--politics--as gendered, the course illuminates 1) how the personal is political; 2) how we participate individually and collectively (and both intentionally and unintentionally) in the production, reproduction, and legitimation of social hierarchies; 3) how social hierarchies (of race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) are interrelated; 4) how reflective, critical analyses are essential for achieving nonhierarchical social relations; and 5) how social transformation occurs, is impeded, and promoted. Because gender identities are so fundamental, course topics have particular relevance and implications for our everyday lives.

Course Processes and Priorities

This is an upper-division course and presumes some prior knowledge/coursework regarding gender and analyses of power. If you lack this familiarity be prepared to undertake additional, remedial reading to ‘catch up.’ (I will happily provide reading suggestions for doing so.) In an upper-division course students are expected not only to be well prepared (as in lower-division courses) but also to show initiative in class participation and in taking up the challenge of critical, intellectual inquiry (as is appropriate for advanced students). I will conduct the course more as a seminar than a lecture, with the expectation of active participation by all members (indeed, participation is part of your grade).

‘Politics’ is notoriously controversial, and ‘gender’ is increasingly so. We can expect, therefore, that the topics addressed in this course may at times elicit feelings of discomfort and perhaps frustration or tension. Learning in this class requires a willingness to examine one’s own assumptions about gender and power. Because so many of our assumptions about gender and power
are simply taken-for-granted (as ‘natural’ rather than ‘made’), we often resist thinking about them critically. ‘Reflectivity’ is very helpful - this involves paying attention to your emotional and intellectual reactions to the material, and noting especially what prompts ‘resistance’ and exploring why this is so. One key objective of the course is to move beyond simplistic ‘either-or’ positions; whatever your political positioning, it is important to appreciate how complex (and often uncomfortable) analyses of power are - especially when they challenge us to rethink familiar assumptions.

Personal experiences and feelings are relevant and welcome in classroom discussions. Personal opinions, however, cannot substitute for thoughtful contributions and evidence of your understanding of the course materials. An important key to lifelong learning and growth is, first, being open to perspectives that may initially seem unusual or uncomfortable; and second, recognizing that growth often requires moving through discomfort to new and deeper understanding. In this course, understanding the material does not mean that you have to agree with it, but it does mean that you must read the material attentively, be aware of its points and argumentation, and be able to discuss it knowledgeably.

Course expectations and evaluation

Your course grade will reflect a combination of: 1) classroom attendance, preparation and participation [10%]; 2) short ‘quizzes’ on assigned readings [20%]; and 3) short writing assignments [30%]; 4) one mid-term essay exam and one final essay exam [20%, 20%]. Extra credit may be earned for attending events relevant to course themes and preparing a short report. Further details and guidelines will be posted on our coursepage and discussed in class. Any new or revised information will be posted on our D2L webpage, so make sure that you are able to access this site and do so frequently. If you are having trouble, ask someone in a computer lab to assist you. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding the course, please share them with me sooner rather than later!

Your attendance is expected and will be recorded. Arrive for class *on time,* and turn off all cell phones and other noise-making devices during class. Students are expected to be present mentally (neither texting, nor using computers/netbooks etc for anything other than taking notes) and to participate in class discussions on the basis of an engaged and critical reading of each session's assignments prior to class. Because this is an upper-division course, lectures will not focus on ‘explaining’ the readings to you; I will expect you to have done the readings; to bring questions you have to class; and to be prepared to discuss the readings from the perspectives of analytically engaged, informed students.

“Active and thoughtful participation” does not mean simply providing “correct answers” to questions; rather, it means any participation in discussion that is a sincere attempt to come to terms with the material and/or advance the class’s consideration of the issue at hand. Such attempts may include raising your own questions about the text, pointing out connections that you see, responding to another student’s comments, and so forth. “Listening respectfully” means taking the texts’ and other students’ ideas seriously, and making an honest effort to understand their basis, even when those ideas are not agreeable to you. Listening respectfully also applies to yourself; it means taking your own ideas seriously, and speaking them when appropriate, while allowing your ideas to develop over time, and while pursuing an understanding of their basis.

All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored. Excused absences (illness with a doctor’s note,
documented family emergency, religious observance, Dean’s approval) will not be counted against you. Unexcused absences will have a negative effect on your course grade. If you are not in class, for whatever reason, it is *your* responsibility to find out what you missed, including any new assignments.

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice. *To remain enrolled you are required to sign the ‘agreement’ on the last page of this syllabus and turn it in to me by Sep 4.*

University of Arizona rules regarding the syllabus require that I include the following: Plagiarism: all work submitted must be the student's own. You are responsible for being familiar with the University’s policies regarding plagiarism and the UA Student Code of Academic Integrity: [http://studpubs.web.arizona.edu/policies/cacaint.htm](http://studpubs.web.arizona.edu/policies/cacaint.htm)

Threatening behavior by students is not permitted at any time; you are responsible for being familiar with the University’s policies in this regard: [http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml](http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml)

Students with special needs who are registered with the S.A.L.T. Center ([http://www.salt.arizona.edu/](http://www.salt.arizona.edu/)) or the Disability Resource Center ([http://drc.arizona.edu/](http://drc.arizona.edu/)) must submit appropriate documentation to the instructor if they are requesting special accommodations.

Confidentiality of Student Records: [http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm](http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm)

**Required texts and reading assignments**


These two books are *required* (available new and used, but make sure that you acquire the *correct edition*). All additional reading assignments are posted on D2L as pdf files or websites. I have selected a number of short essays that appear in the schedule with author’s name, title of essay, and page numbers of the anthology from which they are excerpted [identified as ‘in Shaw and Lee 2012’ etc.]; see the bibliographic file under D2L ‘Course Materials’ for full citation information regarding the anthologies.

**Course Outline and Schedule of Topics/Assignments**

You are expected to have read the assignments prior to, and be ready to discuss them, on the dates as they appear below.

**Aug 21:** Introduction to course; orientation and paperwork.

No reading assignment

**Aug 23:** Gender in General and Socially Constructed


Herbert. 2009. ‘Women at Risk.’ *NYT* 8 August.


AJ Chap 1
Aug 28: Gender and Systems of Oppression
Frye. ‘Oppression.’ [Pp. 194-198 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]
AJ Chap 2

Aug 30: Gender as a Socially Constructed System
AJ Chap 3

Sep 4: Social Constructions of Gender Difference and Hierarchy
Bordo, Susan. ‘Pills and Power Tools.’ [Pp. 149-152 in Ore 2003]
Rosenberg, Debra. ‘(Rethinking) Gender.’ [Pp. 158-162 in Shaw and Lee 2012]

Sep 6: Social Constructions of Gender
Sirota, David. 2011. The legend of the persecuted white guy. Salon
AJ Chap 4

Sep 11: Politics of Denial
AJ Chap 7; AJ Pp. 200-204
In class exam/essay

Sep 13: Symbolic Power: The Politics of Culture and Representations
‘Viewing women through the ages’
‘Miscellaneous cultural and cartoon messages’
‘How to read ads.’ http://www.ltcconline.net/lukas/gender/pages/howto.htm

Sep 18: Symbolic and Disciplinary Power: It’s everywhere and nowhere
Media Literacy Key Concepts
Media politics (additional readings TBA to reflect Fall 2012 campaign politics)

Sep 20: Patriarchal Culture and Embodied Effects
Shaw and Lee. ‘Religion and spirituality...’ [pp. 516-519 in Shaw and Lee 2004]
Sep 25: The Politics of Sexualities

Sep 27: Gendered Bodies and/as Commodities
Eating Disorder Danger Signs [P. 199 in Sapiro 2003]
Cognard-Black cosmetic surgery Ms 2007
Tkarde. ‘Whose Body is This?’ http://www.bodybuilding.com/fun/par34.htm

Oct 2: Gendered Bodies and the Politics of Sports
Nelson. ‘Boys will be boys and girls will not.’ [Pp. 142-147 in Shaw and Lee 2004]
Messner, Michael. ‘Becoming 100% Straight.’ [Pp. 327-331 in Richardson, Taylor and Whittier 2004]
Malveaux, Julianne. 2000. Basketball love and loathing... [Pp. 188-193 in Anderson and Collins 2010]

Oct 4: Gendered Identities and Emotional Investments
Kaufman, Michael. The construction of masculinity and the triad of men’s violence. [Pp. 484-500 in Ore 2003]

Oct 9: Gendered Identities and Emotional Investments

Oct 11: Gendered Identities and Emotional Investments

Oct 16: Gender-based Violence

Oct 18: Midterm Exam/Paper
Oct 23: Introducing Global Gender Issues
GGI Chap 1, pp. 1-35

Oct 25: Gender as a Lens
GGI Chap 2, pp. 37-65

Oct 30: Gender as a Metalens
GGI Chap 2, pp. 65-102

Nov 1: Gender and Global Governance
GGI Chap 3, pp. 103-142

Nov 6: Gender and Politics

Nov 8: Gender and Politics
In class exam/essay

Nov 13: Gender and Global Security
GGI Chap 4, pp. 143-182

Nov 15: Gendered Work and Global Gender Issues
GGI Chap 5, pp. 183-217
Sweat Behind the Shirt (graphic)

Nov 20: Gendered Divisions of Resources and Resistance Politics
GGI Chap 5, pp. 217-230
GGI Chap 6, pp. 231-245

Nov 22: No Class Meeting

Nov 27: Gendered Resistances
GGI Chap 6, pp. 245-262
AJ Pp.128-130 and 207-219

Nov 29: Beyond Denial, Moving On
Rosenblum and Travis. ‘Bridging Differences.’ [Pp. 468-475 in Rosenblum and Travis 2006]


Dec 7: Final Exam/Paper 3:30am - 5:30pm