

SOCIOLOGY 3010
SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER
(Winter 2007-8)
Grande Prairie Regional College

Instructor: Alan Segal

Office: C410, 539-2011 or asegal@gprc.ab.ca

Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays: 14.30- 15
Or By Appointment

Course Description:

An inquiry into contemporary and historical concepts, assumptions, and expressions of gender, and their political, personal, cultural, and social implications.

Course Prerequisite: SO1000

Required Reading:

Dreams of Trespass - Fatima Mernissi

Men Speak Out - Edited by Shira Tarrant

The Gendered Society, 3rd Edition - Michael Kimmel

Assignments:

All written work must be submitted by email, as a regular message. Do not send as an attachment. Send assignments to gprcassignments@gmail.com There is a lateness penalty of one letter grade per day, including weekends, for all late papers. The 'received date' indicated in my College mailbox will count as the final statement of submission. All late assignments will receive a 1-grade reduction per calendar day of lateness. Journal marks will be reduced by one letter for every 2 days beyond the due date.

Essay or Project Outline: Due the third class of February: A full outline is expected, not a few generalities. Section headings and subheadings, listing appropriately the details you consider useful to that point, must be included. Grades will be applied as follows: A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. **I will not accept any final assignments if I haven't previously read an outline from you.**

Essay or Project: Due the Last Class of the semester: The objective of this assignment is to bring you beyond your assumptions about gender and related issues. Gender is assumed by some sociologists to be a master status. Therefore it merits a deeper analytical consideration. When contemplating your essay or project, you should not aim for a summary or description. Instead, a critical analysis of the concepts you think are relevant to the analysis, must be examined. You may use first person words like 'I', but the paper is not to be a large opinion piece. You will select your own topics and the expected minimum length is 2500 words. If you opt for a different kind of major assignment, for example a fine arts project, critical thinking still must be evident. Consult with me about how this might be done. In these types of assignment, a 1700 word paper explaining the sociological significance of what you hand in must also be provided.

You must use as research at least 8 sources, not including the assigned books for the course. At least 5 must be academic, such as might be located in books or journals, or original documents. The others can be informal sources such as interviews, conversations, popular media of any kind, internet websites, etc. **You must reference more than quotations. Other authors' interpretations, analyses, perceptions, or ideas, deserve credit in your papers. Mentioning them does not disqualify your view of their analyses.**

All research must be presented in MLA style, both in the text itself and the 'Works Cited' section at the end of the paper. All work must clearly stipulate your name, and course and section numbers. Omitting any of these requirements will result in a lateness penalty equivalent to that of one day. Grammar and general coherence are reasonable expectations of university-level written work, and will be included in the evaluation of your assignments

Two Journals: (F, C or C+)

Journals are due February 16th and March 16th.

Anything pertaining to the sociology of gender, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life relevant to our examination of sociology, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is necessary or expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor. Grammar and general writing clarity are expected in all written assignments in university courses. While recognizing that we speak and write informally when communicating our personal observations, the journals should be coherent and reasonably articulate. Evaluations will reflect this expectation.

Discussion Bonus:

Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to the webCT discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. If you are absent for more than 3 classes, you will not receive a bonus grade.

The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark.

Tabulation of marks

Your final mark will be formulated by adding the grade point value for each letter grade you receive, and dividing by the total GPA score achievable for the course (14).

NOTE: (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on Blackboard. You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing

me that a mark has not appeared for which you deserve credit.

Grade Equivalency:

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%
B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

NOTE: On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the assignments that will be evaluated on a full grading grid, I will use D- as a non-failing mark.

Discussion Sequence

1. *Introduction to Course*
2. *Dreams of Trespass: Chapters 1-12*

Class Discussion:

Describe the harem that Mernissi experienced. How many kinds of harem were there? What were the harem's limits, frontiers, and possibilities? How did the harem as an idea and a practise, influence women's and men's lives? Do we have harems in Canadian society? Women in Mernissi's harem symbolize various ideas and assumptions about life and social order, and therefore gender. Prepare to discuss these currents.

What was the cultural and gender significance of World War 2 to the people in Mernissi's life? Why were Asmah and the story of Scheherazade important to the women of the harem?

All societies distinguish between commonplace and special occurrences. What distinctions are mentioned in the book?

3. *Dreams of Trespass: Chapters 13-22*

Class Discussion:

What boundaries between the permissible and the forbidden does Mernissi discuss? Forbidden experience prevails in all societies, as actual practise and stigmatization. Does the idea of forbidding something, and the specific enforcement of that standard, have social value? Is prohibiting behaviour the same thing as forbidding it? If not, what implications are there, for the establishment of harems of all kinds?

What is the gender significance to Mernissi of puberty and school? Why mention "skin" and "politics" in the same title?

4. *Gendered Society..... Preface, Chapter 1*

Class Discussion:

Kimmel sets out in chapter 1 the framework of his approach to the book and his understanding of gender. What can you say about his perspective and the questions he believes relevant to analyzing gender? How does social experience minimize, nullify, or facilitate our understanding of gender identity generally, and our own, particularly?

5. *Gendered Society..... Chapters 2 & 3*

Class Discussion:

List the criteria of gender that are revealed in these chapters. Do some seem more intellectually and analytically credible than others? Can sociologists say confidently that any social behavior is ordained by some force? If so, does this eliminate the idea of social influence?

What logic appoints nature or culture as the animator of gendered life? How

might you explain to another person the idea that nature ordains gender? Under this understanding, does nature ordain anything else? What is nature? After reading the author's discussion of science and social assumptions about women, are you disillusioned about the 'fate' of women in our society? Has Kimmel persuaded you so far, or has he generated doubt in your mind about your prior understanding of gender?

6. *Men..... Essays 3, 4, 7; All of Part 2*

Class Discussion:

In your sense of gendered life, are manhood and masculinity identical? Are womanhood and femininity identical to each other? Of the numerous images of males in the society, which do you feel to be most culturally pressing?

7. *Gendered Society..... Chapters 4 & 5*

Class Discussion:

What value to sociologists can there be in discussing gender from psychoanalytic and psychological perspectives? Why has Sex Role Theory generally been discredited in gender analyses? What is an institution and does gender qualify as one?

8. *Gendered Society..... Chapter 6*

Class Discussion:

How do you 'do' gender? Does your family do it? Are all families at the heart of gender? Was Mernissi's extended, harem family the same as North America's nuclear family in this regard? If people indeed 'do' gender, why refer to gendered marriage? Does it add to our comprehension of gender? At this point, are you (still) skeptical about whether gender actually exists?

Kimmel mocks the problematization of society. What phenomena are presented by him to exemplify the exaggeration of social problems, and how are these connected to our awareness of gender?

9. *Gendered Society..... Chapters 7 & 8*

Class Discussion:

Indicate the various manifestations of gender in classrooms across North America (at least). Is Kimmel's treatment of education and how it socializes us into gender, a sufficiently reasoned analysis? What do children 'see'? Who or what are the gender police?

What does 'gendered patterns of work' allude to? How profoundly influential is it to the formation of gender norms or identity? Is a separate status - truly - almost always unequal?

10. *Men..... All of Part 2; Essays 15 - 18, 20 & 21*

11. *Gendered Society..... Chapter 9; Men..... Essays 23, 25-27, 29-31*

Class Discussion:

We often blame the media for our tribulations. How reasonable are our accusations with respect to gender? Do you think Kimmel exaggerates the effect of the different media outlets for men and women? What place does racism have in gender socialization?

12. *Gendered Society..... Chapters 10 & 11*

Class Discussion:

Of all the areas which groups of students might converse about as they contemplate the influence of gender in their lives, intimacy, interpersonal relations, are the frequently invoked. After reading chapter 10, has your perspective changed at all? What intimacies does Kimmel mention? What ties them to the idea of a gendered body? How can bodies be gendered, other than in the manner assumed when children are born?

12. *Gendered Society..... Chapters 12 and Epilogue*

Class Discussion:

Relating violence to gender has been a project of feminists for many years. Explain how Kimmel makes a case for this alignment. How is gendered violence an institutional problem? What does he mean by gender symmetry? Could we de-

gender society? Could you?

13. *Men..... Essays 32, 35 - 39*