

Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
University of South Alabama  
Fall 2006  
Sociology 428, Gender and Society

Instructor: Dr. Nicole T. Flynn  
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Office hours: MWF 8:30-10:00, F 1:00-3:00 or by appointment  
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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Gender is a social construction that is “assigned” according to sex organs. As such, it is inextricably linked to society, social processes, and social institutions. It carries with it advantages for some, inequalities for others. This course will consider the nature of gender- what is it, how it is taught, and how it affects our relationships with others and the workings of social institutions. Gender is neither essentially natural nor inevitable, but is created and recreated, and eventually institutionalized, through the continual actions and reactions of people. However, even institutionalized gender arrangements can change through accumulation of interactions at individual levels. At the micro level, gender can be understood as a characteristic of individuals, produced through interactions. At the macro level, gender is a fundamental principle of social organization.

### **COURSE GOALS**

In this course, you will learn what it means to “do gender” and to “be gendered.” You will also discover how much about gender is institutionalized, taken-for-granted, and accepted as “fact.” After completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Discuss the concept of gender
2. Explain the variation of gender by sex, race, ethnicity, age, and geography
3. Understand the importance of gender in interactions
4. Realize the institutional nature of gender
5. Link the affect of social organizations on individual interactions, and the influences of repeated interactions on social organizations
6. Be cognizant of the restrictions and freedoms that gender roles offer those accepting them, and the burdens the place on people that do not fit easily into the masculine/feminine dichotomy.

### **BOOKS**

Required: Connell, Robert W. 2002. Gender: Short Introductions  
Disch, Estelle. 2005. Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Readings on reserve at the USA Library and in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work

### **READING ASSIGNMENTS**

This is a tentative schedule of assigned readings; I will announce any changes in class.  
Please read the materials once prior to the week they are assigned.

#### ***Introduction to gender***

##### **Week 1 (8/21)**

What is gender?

Connell, Chapter 1  
“The five sexes, revisited”

##### **Week 2 (8/28)**

How does one acquire it?

Disch, Part II  
“Masculinity as homophobia: fear, shame, and silence in the constitution of gender identity”

##### **Weeks 3 -4 (9/4-9/11)**

Differences in bodies

Connell, Chapter 3  
“Biological behavior? Hormones, psychology, and sex”  
Disch, Part III  
“Confessions of a Nice Negro, or Why I Shaved My Head”

**Weeks 5 (9/18)**

Resulting outcomes

Connell, Chapter 2  
Disch, Part I  
“The kid no one noticed”*TEST 1***Week 6 (9/25)**

Historically, where does gender come from? Connell, Chapter 7

*Gender relations***Week 7 (10/2)**

Patterns of gender relations

Connell, Chapter 4

**Week 8 (10/9)**

Gender identities and sexualities

Connell, Chapter 5  
Disch, Part V**Week 9 (10/16)**

Intimate relationships

Disch, Part VI  
“(M)Other love: Culture, scarcity, and maternal thinking”**Week 10 (10/23)**

Communication, interaction, and education

Disch, Part IV  
Disch, Part VII  
“The chilly climate”**Week 11 (10/30)**

Violence

Disch, Part IX  
“Gender, class, and terrorism”  
“Escape from Animal House: frat boy tells all”*TEST 2**Gender and Formal Organizations***Week 12 (11/6)**

Gender on the large scale

Connell, Chapter 6  
“From sex roles to gendered institutions”  
“The epistemology of the gendered organization”**Week 13 (11/13)**

Paid work

Disch, Part VIII  
“Rambo Litigators”  
“Global Woman”**Week 14 (11/20)**

Health care

Disch, Part X  
“Pills and Power Tools”  
“Coming to terms: Masculinity and Physical Disability”  
Thanksgiving holidays (11/22)*The Gendered future***Week 15 (11/27)**

Gender politics

Connell, Chapter 7  
“Antiglobalization pedagogies and feminism”  
“Essentialist retreats: the Mythopoetic men’s movement and the Christian Promise Keepers”**Week 16 (12/4)**

Outcomes for humans

Disch, Part XI  
“Clarence, William, Iron Mike, Tailhook, Senator Packwood, Spur Posse, Magic...and Us”**FINAL EXAM due 12/9 at 10:30**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Examinations. This course includes three examinations. Exams may include a variety of question types, including but not limited to, short answer and essay questions. I may also choose to give take-home examinations. Each is worth 20% of your total course grade. This totals to **60%** of your course grade.

2. Journal writing. Journal writing is an important part of this course. Journals are not diaries, but are reflective, personal writing in which you engage the material under discussion by commenting, questioning, or considering previous discussions or personal experience that seems relevant in some way. Journals also provide a place to digest difficult or controversial material. It is often easier to grapple with such ideas if you can take them apart in writing. Your journals should demonstrate familiarity with the readings. I will take off points if all entries are only based on class discussion (i.e. you have not shown me any evidence of reading). Each entry should be typed, single-spaced, about one page in length. You will turn in one entry every other week, from week 2 to week 16. Please keep your own copies of each entry; I may not hand back each entry and you may want to return to your earlier thoughts later in the semester. This is worth **10%** of your course grade.

3. Reading assignments. I am assigning questions to go with your readings. They are due on Monday the week the reading is assigned. This way, you will have read the material prior to class and our discussions will be more productive. In lieu of reading assignments, I may occasionally give short in-class writing assignments. When those are given, there will be no questions for that week. Beginning with week 2, each week your reading assignments are worth 10 points, for a final potential score of 150 points. This becomes **25%** of your final course grade.

## GRADING SCALE

90-100 = A      80-89 = B      70-79 = C      60-69 = D      59 or below will earn a failing grade

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

You are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. Readings should be completed prior to class; be prepared to contribute. Please feel free to express your point of view. You may not agree with all points made in lecture, discussion, or the text. However, all view points voiced in the classroom will be treated with respect and tolerance.

Attendance is important. It is your responsibility to get any assignments or notes during an absence. Because unforeseen circumstances may require changes in the assigned readings, the course outline, and the examination and assignment due dates, students are responsible not only for the requirements as outlined on the syllabus, but also for announcements made in class. Please notify me of any excused absences immediately. For more details regarding attendance, see the *USA Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin*. Tardy work is unacceptable, except in the case of a verified illness or extenuating circumstances.

Please consult me during the semester about any problems you may encounter with the content of this course. **If you have a disability that will affect your performance in this class, please register with special student services and inform me as soon as possible so that I can plan accordingly.**

*In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations. If you have a specific disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please notify me and provide certification from Disability Services (Office of Special Student Services). The Office of Special Student Services is directed by Ms. Bernita Pulmas and is located in the Student Center, Room 270, 460-7212. (Statement of University policy)*

Exams are taken in class, unless otherwise specified. Missing an exam or failing to turn in an assignment without submitting a university or medical excuse may result in a grade of zero. Excuses must be submitted the first day back after an absence, and the nature of the make-up examination or grade reduction is at my discretion.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic freedom is a fundamental right in any institution of higher learning. Honesty and integrity are necessary preconditions to this freedom. Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals.

Unfortunately students sometimes engage in dishonest practices in order to improve their grades. Never submit written work which is not your own. This means that you should not copy extensive passages of another author's work. If you do quote from someone else, make you indicate this with a *footnote* that tells me where the quote is from. It is

important to let the reader know which ideas are your own and which belong to someone else. *In text citations* are appropriate if you do not quote exactly, but do use an idea that was first described by someone else. If you have any doubts about citing something, **CITE IT!**

Never allow anyone else to write your assignments or complete an examination. While it is reasonable to have someone read a paper for grammatical errors or logical mistakes, do not let such assistance to extend beyond points of clarification or grammatical issues.

Never collaborate with your classmates on exams. While discussion with others often helps refine ideas, exams are taken individually. You will be taking tests outside of class, and if I suspect you have collaborated on your written exams, you will receive a grade of '0' and will have to complete another written examination during our make-up exam period.

Academic dishonesty is a serious matter. If you are uncertain about whether a practice is honest or dishonest, *please ask me first* rather than risk being penalized.

## **SEXIST TERMINOLOGY**

People once used the generic male to refer to both sexes: mailman, the nature of man, a gentleman's agreement, freshman, condition of man in modern society. There no longer exists widespread agreement that the word "man" includes women as well, and because women constitute approximately half the world's population, it is important to include women in our ideas and our language. Thus, as an imprecise term, it is sloppy thinking to use the generic male in writing and speaking. Begin to be aware when writing and talking to use the words "man" and "male" when you are specifically referring to males. The exception is when you are quoting someone's work. Likewise, the appropriate word for adult females is "woman" and for juvenile females is "girls." Traditionally, the words "lady" and "gentleman" implied a value judgment, but I am told this notion is antiquated.