FYSP 163: She Works Hard For the Money: Women, Work and the Persistence of Inequality

Fall 2015
T, Th 11:00-12:15, King 237

Dr. Daphne John
djohn@oberlin.edu

Course Description: Current U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports indicate that women in the U.S. who are employed full-time earn 80.2% of what men who are employed full-time earn. In this course, we will explore the causes and consequences of gender based wage discrepancy. Topics to be covered include: occupational segregation, comparable worth, shift work, “the Mommy Track”, gender based job queuing, career trends, unpaid labor, and globalization. In addition to class reading, each student will choose an occupation and research it throughout the semester. The larger questions to be examined during the course are: Why is gender based inequality, specifically in the labor market, so persistent? What are the causes and consequences of gender based economic inequality? What interventions are needed to ameliorate such inequality?

Course Goals: 1) To introduce liberal arts education from an interdisciplinary focus on a topic. Disciplinary knowledge from sociology, history, political science, anthropology and economics are explored. 2) To introduce college reading and writing expectations including the exploration and practice of different styles of academic writing. 3) To interrogate a social problem using theoretical and empirical sources of information. 4) To develop analytical skills in order to postulate and explore research questions. 5) To develop information literacy skills, particularly regarding the critical assessment of information and sources of information.

Required Texts:

Gatta, Mary. 2014. All I Want is a Job: Unemployed Women Navigating the Public Workforce System. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.


Assignments:

Attendance and Participation 10% (ongoing)
Weekly reading response 15% (ongoing – due on Fridays)
Reading Synthesis #1 20% (draft 5% [9.22 in class], final essay 15% [10.6])
Reading Synthesis #2 20% (draft 5% [10.15 in class], final essay 15% [11.3])
Occupation Presentation 15% (12.3 - 12.10)
Occupation Report 20% (outline 5%, due 11.17 including meeting with Instructor, report 15% due 12.16 by 11:00 am)

Instructor policies:

• Your consistent, on-time attendance and participation are required. Please do not attend to other activities during class (cellphones, knitting, etc.). Come prepared to actively discuss the readings assigned for that day.

• After two absences, additional absences will generally lower your final grade in the course. In case of illness or personal emergency, your absence will be excused. This policy is governed by the honor code; to report an excused absence, please contact me.

• Assignments are due IN CLASS the day they are due. An extension will be automatically applied to all assignments until 4:00 the day they are due. After this grace period, 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. an A would be reduced to an A-) will be deducted for each day of lateness, unless you previously have made arrangements with the instructor because of illness or emergency. Assignments are to be handed in on paper (double sided is fine) - please retain a copy of this work for yourself. Please use 12pt font, double spaced (unless specifically instructed to use another format) and NUMBERED pages. Staple your papers before turning them in. After one week, assignments will not be accepted for credit.

• You must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments in order to potentially receive credit for the course, even if taking the course pass/no pass.

• Office Hours are listed at the top of this syllabus. I am available at those times in my office to meet with students. Upon special request, I will meet with students at times outside of my office hours. Please see me IN PERSON to set up such an appointment.

• I receive up to 30 or more e-mails per day. Please do not expect me to reply immediately to an e-mail question or request. If something is urgent, please CALL ME in my office or signify in the e-mail header that it is urgent.

• Honor Code: This course will follow the policies described in the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please include the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” in all written work. Please contact me if
you have any questions about citation/referencing, or the relationship of the Honor Code to your work in this course. For more information on the Honor Code, see http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html.

- The College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Office of Disability Services located in Peters G-27/G-28 and their instructor of any disability related needs. For more information, see http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/index.dot. Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability is requested to speak with the professor.

- The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the semester, if needed.

**Assignment Descriptions:**

**Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to attend class. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class by sign in. Students are responsible for making sure they sign in each day. Excessive late arrival will affect the attendance and participation score. Participation is measured by student active listening, note taking, asking and answering questions and participation in discussion.

**Reading Responses:** Brief (1-2 paragraph) responses to the weekly reading are due every Friday on Blackboard. Students should choose one of the readings for that week and provide a brief summary and a discussion of the piece. For example, what did they learn from it? What questions does the piece provoke? How is it similar or dissimilar to something else they read? These entries may prove useful when writing the reading syntheses.

**Reading Syntheses:** Students will be given a choice of essay questions, from which they will select one to answer, approximately one week before the due date. The answers should reference as much of the reading as possible to support the answers and be written in such a way as the material is organized thematically or conceptually as a synthesis of the literature. A bibliography should be attached. Each essay should be approximately 4-5 pages and double-spaced.

**Occupation Presentation:**

The in-class presentation (during the last week of class) will consist of highlights from the research. Each presentation will be 10-12 minutes in length. Students may use presentation software (e.g. Powerpoint, Presi, etc. and/or other visual aids and handouts as necessary). Peer evaluation will be part of the presentation process.

**Occupation Report:** Each student will select an occupation (or occupational category) to examine. The research should address the following:

- What is the history of this occupation?
- What is the nature of the work in this occupation?
• Is this occupation considered to be male-dominated, female-dominated or gender balanced?
• Is gender and/or racial segregation present within the occupation by job category?
• What are the requirements for employment in this occupation and how do those requirements vary by job category?
• What sectors of the labor market are the jobs in this occupation in?
• What are the experiences of women in this occupation?
• What are the typical wages and benefits of the jobs in this occupation?
• Is there job growth or decline in this occupational area?
• What are the positive and negative aspects of employment for women in this area?
• What are the experiences of women in this occupation?

(A variety of scholarly resources (eg. books, journal articles, The Occupational Outlook Handbook, The Monthly Labor Review, Statistical Abstract of the United States) should be utilized when gathering information.)

This report should be approximately 8-10 pages in length representing a review of the literature and empirical studies in regard to the questions above. A bibliography must be included with the paper. This assignment serves as the final exam for the course.

**Schedule**

Please complete the readings by the day they are listed. We will discuss these readings in class. Either bring the readings to class or bring your notes

9.1 Welcome, Introduction

9.3 On Blackboard:
Blau, Ferber and Winkler (From The Economics of Women, Men and Work): Ch. 5 The Labor Force: Definitions and Trends
Gotfried (From Gender, Work and Economy): Ch. 2 Theory of Work and Economy

9.8 On Blackboard:
Ede (From The Academic Writer: A Brief Guide): Ch. 5 Making and Supporting Claims, Ch. 6 Doing Research: Joining the Scholarly Conversation, Ch. 7 Writing in the Disciplines—pp. 233-244 (Writing in the Social Sciences)

9.10 Kessler-Harris: Introduction, Ch. 1: The Wage Conceived, Ch. 2: Law and the Living

9.15 Kessler-Harris: Ch. 3: Providers, Ch. 4: The Double Meaning of Equal Pay

9.17 Kessler-Harris: Ch. 5: The Just Price, the Free Market, and the Value of Women, Ch. 6: A Woman’s Wage, Redux
9.22 On Blackboard:
Iversen and Rosenbluth (From Women, Work and Politics): Ch. 1 A Political Economy Approach to Gender Inequality
Blau, Ferber and Winkler (From The Economics of Women, Men and Work): Ch. 7 Evidence on Gender Differences in Labor Market Outcomes

9.24 On Blackboard
Iversen and Rosenbluth (From Women, Work and Politics): Ch. 3 The Gender Division of Labor
Treas and Drobnič (From Dividing the Domestic): Ch. 3: Women’s Employment and Housework

9.29 On Blackboard:
Blau, Ferber and Winkler (From The Economics of Women, Men and Work): Ch. 11 Labor Market Discrimination Theory
Paludi (ed.) (From Women, Work and Family): Ch. 6 Strauss: Implicit Bias and Employment Discrimination, Ch. 10 Comas-Diaz: Acts of Dignity

10.1 On Blackboard:
Bender-Baird (From Transgender Employment Practices): Ch. 3 Making the Numbers Come Alive- Stories of Workplace Discrimination
Duffy, Armenia, and Stacey (eds.) (From Caring on the Clock) Ch. 9 Zelnick: Part of the Job? Workplace Violence and Social Services

10.6 On Blackboard
Duffy, Armenia, and Stacey (eds.) (From Caring on the Clock) Ch. 1 On the Clock, Ch. 13 Ethnic Logics
Willams (ed.) (From Indigenous Women and Work) Ch. 11 Jacobs: Diverted Mothering Among American Indian Domestic Servants, 1920-1940

10.8 On Blackboard:
Willams (ed.) (From Indigenous Women and Work) Ch. 2 Littlefield: Making a Living: Anishinable Women in Michigan’s Changing Economy, Ch. 13 Cahill: “An Indian Teacher Among Indians”: Native Women as Federal Employees

10.13 On Blackboard:
Paludi (ed.) (From Women, Work and Family): Ch. 7 Pulstoka: To Return or Not to Return, Ch. 15 Huffman, King and Goldberg: Valuing Lesbian and Gay Parenting in the Workplace
Fideler (From Women Still at Work): Ch. 6 Where Older Women Work

10.15 On Blackboard
Breants, Jackson and Hausbeck (From The State of Sex: Tourism, Sex and Sin in
the New American Heartland): Ch. 3 The Making of Nevada Prostitution, Ch. 5 Paths to Brothel Work

Fall Break

10.27 On Blackboard
Hennessey (From Work and Family Commitments of Low-Income and Impoverished Women) Ch. 2 Historical Context: From Mothers’ Aid to Personal Responsibility, Ch. 5 Work and Family at the Welfare Office

10.29 Gatta, Introduction, Ch. 1 Navigating the Workforce System, Ch. 2 On the Front Line During a Recession

11.3 Gatta, Ch. 3 Understanding the Backstory of Workforce and Welfare Policy, Ch. 4 Charting a Course Forward

11.5 Frize, SKIM Part I, and Part II

11.10 Frize Part III, Ch. 8-11

11.12 Frize, Part III, Ch. 12-14

11.17 Putting together an academic presentation

11.19 Salzinger: Ch. 1. Ways of Seeing, Ch. 2. Producing Women: Femininity on the Line, Ch. 3 Trope Chasing: Making a Local Labor Market

11.24 Salzinger: Ch. 4: Bringing Fantasies to Life: Panoptimex, Ch. 5: Re-forming the “Traditional Mexican Woman”: Particimex, Ch. 6: Manufacturing “Workers”: Andromex

Thanksgiving Break

12.1 Salzinger: Ch. 7: Gendered Meanings in Contention: Anarchomex, Ch. 8: Why Femininity(ies)?

12.3 Presentations

12.8 Presentations

12.10 Presentations

12.16 Final Occupation Report Due by 11:00 am