“But if gender in these respects is harmful, it is in other respects a source of pleasure, creativity and other things we greatly value...The joys, tensions and complications of gender relations are among the most potent sources of cultural creation.” Raewyn Connell, *Gender*, 2002, p. 143

**Course Description**

In this course we will analyze how gender organizes and shapes our everyday lives. Drawing from classic and contemporary works, we will examine a range of theoretical approaches to studying our gendered world from a sociological perspective. We will focus on answering the following questions: What are the current debates in the sociology of gender? Which methodological approaches do sociologists use to study gender? What explains patterns of gender inequality? How and why are social structures and institutions gendered? To answer these questions we will use the lens of intersectionality to study gender; that is, we will not assume that gender exists in a vacuum, but we will focus on and interrogate its intersections with other social markers of difference, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, citizenship, place and age. Much of this course focuses on patterns of gender relations in the United States, but many readings take a transnational approach to understanding gender. This course is an introduction to the sociology of gender, meaning that it is geared toward those without extensive training in gender theory.

**Course Objectives**

The goals of this course are threefold. At the end of the semester I hope you will have developed the following skills: 1) The ability to critically engage with sociological material and have a rich understanding of what it means to “think like a sociologist”; 2) To understand and debate various theoretical approaches within the sociology of gender; 3) The ability to write about contemporary expressions of gender in an in-depth paper, using sociological tools.

**Course Requirements**

*Attendance*  Coming to class is mandatory. Each student is allowed to **miss 2 days** of class and I will not ask questions about the nature of the absence. These absences are meant to cover illnesses and unforeseen events. Each absence after 2 days results in the removal of points from your total grade. Because you are graded on class participation, it is in your best interest to attend each class. Lateness is strongly discouraged. **After 2 late passes**, points will be deducted from your total grade.
**I have a no phone policy in my class. From the start of class (8:35am) until the end of class (9:50am), please do not engage with your phone in any manner. If this policy is violated, I will ask you to leave for the class period. You may use your laptop in class, provided that it is not used for Facebook, etc.**

**Participation** You will be graded on your effort to verbally engage with the topic of discussion. Of course, to be able to fully engage with the topic, you must read all of the assigned material before coming to class each day. *Whether hard copy or electronic, please bring the assigned readings for the day and your notes to class.* I encourage you to share your viewpoint during class discussions, even, and especially, if it contradicts that of others. Disagreement and class debates can be quite fruitful and thought-provoking. During our class discussions, please show respect to me and other students who may have different perspectives from your own.

**Weekly Memos** Every week you will write a memo, due each Monday at 3pm. Each memo will be very short—one paragraph minimum, two max.—and will pose questions or thought-provoking comments on at least two of the readings assigned for that week. Post your weekly memo on Blackboard. These will be graded as: check +, check, or check – (2 points; 1.7; 1.5).

**“Does it Matter?” (DIM) Papers** Over the course of the semester you will write 3 DIM Papers, each worth 12 points. When we pay attention to discourse about gender in the media, a common perspective is, “Yes, our society is gendered. Why does this matter? Who cares?” I am quite eager to hear your take on the “Does it Matter” question. Each paper should be a minimum of 3 full pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman or Calibri font. Due Saturday at midnight after DIM appears on the schedule. See further instructions at the end of the syllabus.

**Paper and Exam** You will write one long paper and take a final exam. In your paper you will use gender theory to frame and advance claims on the topic of transgender narratives. This paper will be 8-10 pages in length and worth 50 points. The final exam is cumulative and worth 50 points. The exam will cover fundamental concepts and theories from readings and lecture.

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<tr>
<th>Grade Scheme</th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>97-100%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Memos</td>
<td>28 (14x2pts)</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Does it Matter?” (DIM)</td>
<td>36 (3x12pts)</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trans* Narratives Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>200 points</td>
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**Grade Scheme**

*Weekly Memos 28 (14x2pts) 14%  A+ 97-100%*

*“Does it Matter?” (DIM) 36 (3x12pts) 18% A  93-96%*

*Trans* Narratives Paper 50 25% A- 90-92%

*Final Exam 50 25% B+ 87-89%*

*Participation 36 18% B 83-86%*

*-------------

*200 points 100%  C+ 80-82%*

*C 77-79%*

*C+ 73-76%  C- 70-72%*

*D 60-69%  F 59-0%*
**Required Texts**  Please purchase the following books for this course. You can find them at the Oberlin campus bookstore. Copies of these books are also on reserve at Mudd Library. All other required readings will be available on the Blackboard course website.

**Jones, Nikki. 2010.** *Between Good and Ghetto: African American Girls and Inner-City Violence.*


**Students with Disabilities**  Please let me know if you need disability-related accommodations in this course. Contact the Student Academic Services to develop a plan for assistance: Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Disability Services, Room G27 Peters Hall, ext. 55588.

**Academic Honesty**  This course adheres to the policies of the Oberlin College Honor Code and Honor System. Please add the statement “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment” to the top of the first page on all written work. For more information on the Honor Code, see: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html).

**Religious Observance**  Please inform me by the end of Week 2 of the semester if you need to miss a class to observe a religious holiday. We will find a way for you to make up the work.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1: (9/3 & 9/5)—Starting with Gender**

*T: Introduction to the Course (Syllabus Day)*

*R: Laying the Foundation: Historical & Current Approaches to Studying Gender*


*Johnson, A. 2005. “Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, a Them or an Us,” pp. 27-50*

*Messner, M. “Barbie Girls vs. Sea Monsters: Children Constructing Gender,” pp. 87-100*


**Week 2: (9/10 & 9/12)—Our Organizing Approach: Intersectionality**

*T: Theorizing Race, Class, and Gender*

*Crenshaw, K. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex,” pp.139-148, pp.166-7*


*BGG, pp. 1-19*

*R: Theorizing Race, Class, and Gender (continued)*

*BGG, pp. 20-73*

Week 3: (9/17 & 9/19)— Gender, the Law, Criminality, and Violence

T: Framing Women, Aggression & Criminality
* BGG, pp. 74-106

R: Victimization & Violence
* BGG, pp. 107-150
* Valenti, J. “Ending Rape Illiteracy”, The Nation, 10/23/12, blog: http://www.thenation.com/blog/170767/ending-rape-illiteracy#axzz2d6L9sf3X

Week 4: (9/24 & 9/26)— Gender in Place, I: The City and the Country

T: The Metropolis
* BGG, pp. 151-162, plus Appendix (pp. 163-181)

R: “Keep it Rural”: Gender, Race, and Sexuality in the Countryside

(Receive Trans* Narratives Assignment)

Week 5: (10/1 & 10/3)—Trans* and GenderQueer

T: Gender Non-Conformity and Identity
* Biewald, M. ’02. “World’s Youngest.” (From GenderQueer: Voices Beyond...)pp.120-124

R: Trans* Spaces
* DIM: Fantz, A. “Could Bradley Manning Become Chelsea Manning in Civilian Prison?”
Week 6: (10/8 & 10/10)—Masculinities

T: In Theory
- Halberstam, J. *Female Masculinity*. Excerpt.

R: In the Everyday
- Morrell, R. *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920*
- DIM: “Men Want Women to Chip in on Dates, but Are Afraid to Ask,” CNN, 8/14/13: http://newsfeed.time.com/2013/08/14/study-men-want-women-to-chip-in-on-dates-but-are-afraid-to-ask/?hpt=hp_t3

Week 7: (10/15 & 10/17)—Gender at School & Gender at Work

T: Education

R: The Workplace
- PB, read Ch. 1 (pp. 1-26) & Ch. 2 (pp. 27-70)
- “The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap,” 2012, AAUW, pp. 1-10

**DUE: Trans* Narratives Paper: Thursday, October 17, Hard copy in class**

**Homework for Fall Break: Please read PB to the end of Ch.4**
--(10/19-10/27): Fall Break—Enjoy!--
**Week 8: (10/29 & 10/31)— Bodies, Media, Race and Representation**

**T: Gender, Race & the Media**

*PB, Ch.5 (pp.170-208)


**R: Women, Representation & the Worth of Bodies**

*PB, read Ch.6 (pp.209-248) (Optional: Ch.7 [pp.249-262] and Appendix)

*DIM: Nico Lang, “‘Trampire’: Why the Public Slut Shaming of Kristin Stewart Matters for Young Women”

**Week 9: (11/5 & 11/7)— The Gendered Family & The Queer Family**

**T: The Social Construction of the Family**


*DIM: DeParle, J. “Two Classes, Divided by ‘I Do.’” *New York Times*, 7/14/12

**R: Queering the Family?**


*Naples, N. “Queer Parenting in the New Millennium,” pp.679-683


**Week 10: (11/12 & 11/14)— Gender in Place, II: Nation, Culture & Postcolonial Feminism**

**T: Unpacking the Western Gaze**


**R: Gender, Nation & Culture**


*Okin, S.M. “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” pp. 8-24


**Week 11: (11/19 & 11/21)— Gender (& Sexuality) in Place, III: Migration**

**T: Gendered Patterns of Migration**

Week 12: (11/26)—Gender, Poverty & Homelessness

T: **Film: A Story of Five**
   *Kramer, L. 2010. Homelessness and Gender, pp.149-150
   *National Coalition for the Homeless, “Who is Homeless?” Fact Sheet

R: --Thanksgiving Break—Enjoy!

Week 13: (12/3 & 12/5)—Gender and Health

T: Women’s Health & Reproductive Justice
   *DIM: “What if There was No Destiny?”, listen here: http://www.radiolab.org/2012/nov/19/what-if-no-destiny/

R: Masculinity & Health Outcomes
**Week 14: (12/10 & 12/12)—The Future of Gender**

**T: Imagining the Future of Gender**

**R: Wrap-Up**

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**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 17, 7:00-9:00pm**

*Note: Some details of this syllabus may change over the course of the semester.*