

# SOC257: Sex and Gender

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Hunter College Fall 2014  
Tuesdays and Fridays 12:45-2  
Hunter West 224

## Course Description

This course is an introduction to the sociology of sex, gender and sexuality, focusing particularly on issues of power and identity. While this course will focus on sex, gender and sexuality as deeply social phenomena, our approach to these topics and our readings will be interdisciplinary, looking at texts from the natural sciences and humanities as well as the social sciences. We will critically interrogate the idea of gender/sex as a “role” and seek to understand the ways it is much more than that: an everyday doing, a system of unequal power and privilege, an expansive medical and legal classification structure and a embodied and discursive history of relations. Thus gender, sex and sexuality are not self-contained categories, and we will spend significant time looking at intersections with race, class and nationality.

## Learning Objectives

Successful completion of this course will give you:

- + A critical understanding of contemporary sociological and interdisciplinary research and theory about sex, gender and sexuality
- + Writing and public speaking skills through assignments and class participation

## Grades

Class Attendance: 10% of grade

Participation/Discussion: 20%

Writing Assignments: 35%

Final Paper: 35%

Attendance: Will be taken everyday. You do not need to let me know if you are going to be absent, however more than 2 absences will affect your grade. If you do miss class please ask another student, not me, for any notes, materials or assignments you have missed.

Participation: This is a discussion heavy course so participation is crucial. Please come to class having read all the materials, prepared with notes and some questions for discussion. Once per semester you will be required to take a particularly active role in leading class discussion. In-class writing assignments and quizzes will be regularly required if class discussion lags or students fail to demonstrate a serious engagement with the texts.

Assignments: You will be given 8 short reading response assignments throughout the semester that will be shared on Tumblr with your fellow students. These responses will help to spark the class discussion—as such you will be required to read your classmates posts prior to class. Each response must contain a substantial written component, however, incorporating relevant media (pictures, video, sound, etc.) is encouraged. You will be required to do 7 of these assignments. However, doing all 8 will give you the only extra credit offered in this course. No late assignments will be accepted.

Final Paper: Your final research paper of approximately 10 pages will build upon one of the course topics for this semester and will be due the last week of class. You will be given further instructions later in the semester. No late final papers will be accepted.

## Course Policies

Plagiarism: Is a serious offense and will cause you to fail the class- don't do it. All work from sources other than yourself must be properly cited. From the Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity: "Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures."

Written work: Unless otherwise instructed, written work will be submitted electronically via blackboard or Tumblr, not on paper and not over email. Please properly cite all sources. Please note that Wikipedia, though a useful resource, is not an appropriate source for an academic paper. Please don't cite a Wikipedia entry. Assignments and especially the final paper must be turned in on time—no late papers will be accepted.

Accessibility and Disability: All students have different learning styles and classroom abilities and I strive to be accommodating to diverse needs and dis/abilities. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have specific needs or suggestions for me that will help you succeed in my class.

Email: Always identify the name of this course in your correspondence, preferably in the subject of your email. Before you write an email make sure that your question has not already been answered in this syllabus. If I have not responded to your email you cannot assume that I have received it—give me a couple of days and then follow-up with another email or talk to me after class or during office hours.

## Course Schedule

(Please note that this schedule may change and texts may be added throughout the semester)

### Gender as Role, Structure and/or Social Construction

**Friday 8/28:** Introduction and discussion of syllabus

**Tuesday 9/2:** Lecture: What is the Social Construction of Gender and Sex?

**F 9/5:** Discussion: Is Gender a Role? Reading: West and Zimmerman "Doing Gender," Zinn, et al- "Sex and Gender Through the Prism of Difference" and Risman "Gender as Structure"

**T 9/9:** Film: *Ma vie en rose*

**F 9/12:** Discussion: Gender Socialization Reading: Kane "No Way My Boys Are Going to be like That!," Goffman "Gender Advertisements" and Spade "Resisting Medicine, Re/Modeling Gender"

**T 9/16:** Discussion: Feminist Theory Reading: hooks "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression" and Baumgardner and Richards- "A Day Without Feminism" Beauvoir- *The Second Sex* excerpts

**F 9/19:** Discussion: Heterosexuality and Masculinity Reading: Herek- "On Heterosexual Masculinity," Pascoe- "Dude you're a fag" and Kimmel and Mahler- "Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia, and Violence"

### Sexuality and Queer Theory

**T 9/23:** Lecture: The History of Sexuality Reading: Halperin "Is there a History of Sexuality?"

**T 9/30:** Discussion: The History of Sexuality Reading: Foucault- *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, selections

**T 10/7:** Discussion: Queer Theory Reading: Sedgwick "Queer and Now," Sullivan "Queer, A Questions of Being or a Question of Doing?" and Rich "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"

**F 10/10:** Film: *Paris is Burning*

**T 10/14:** Discussion: Performance and Performativity Reading: Sullivan "Performance, Performativity, Parody and Politics" and hooks- "Is Paris Burning?"

### Race and White Supremacy

**F 10/17:** Lecture: Intersectionality and Beyond Reading: Collins- "Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy"

**T 10/21:** Discussion: White Privilege and Male Privilege Reading: McIntosh- "White Privilege and Male Privilege," Tatum "Defining Racism" and Coates "Black Pathology and the Closing of the Progressive Mind" in *The Atlantic*

**F 10/24:** Discussion: Prison and The New Jim Crow Reading: Critical Resistance-Incite! Statement on Gender Violence And the Prison-Industrial Complex and Alexander- *The New Jim Crow* and Davis "How Gender Structures the Prison System"

T 10/28: Discussion: Race and Masculinity Reading: Chen- “Lives at the Center of the Periphery, Lives at the Periphery of the Center” and Ferguson- *Bad Boys* selections

### Families, Marriage and Intimacy

F 10/31: Discussion: Gender, Work and Family Reading: Hochschild- “The Second Shift” and Hartmann- “ The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle”

T 11/4: Discussion: Gay Marriage Reading: Warner- “ Normal and Normaller,” and Chauncey- “ Why Marriage Became a Goal” and articles from *The Nation*

### Militarism, Globalization and Gender

F 11/7: Film: *Life and Debt*

T 11/11: Discussion: Life and Debt Reading: Cagatay and Erturk “Gender and globalization: a macroeconomic perspective” and Cabezas “Between Love and Money: Sex, Tourism, and Citizenship in Cuba and the Dominican Republic”

F 11/14: Discussion: Global Women and the West Reading: Abu-Lughod- “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” and Grewal- “ Transnational America: Race, Gender and Citizenship After 9/11”

### Science and the Body

T 11/18: Lecture: Science, Technology and the Body

F 11/21: Discussion: Gender and the Scientific Body Reading: Jordan-Young and Rumiaty “Hardwired for Sexism? Approaches to Sex/Gender in Neuroscience” and Fugimura “ Sex Genes”

T 11/25: Discussion: The Plastic Body Reading: Pitts-Taylor “The Plastic Brain: Neoliberalism and the Neuronal Self” and Landecker “Food as Exposure: Nutritional Epigenetics and the New Metabolism”

T 12/2: Discussion: Labor, Capital and the Body Reading: Cooper, *Life as Surplus*, selections and Cooper and Waldby, *Clinical Labor*, selections

### Sex and the Technological Imagination

F 12/5: Discussion: Cyborgology Reading: Haraway- “Cyborg Manifesto” and Hayles *How We Became Posthuman*, selections

T 12/9: Discussion: Identity and the Digital Reading: Nyong’o “Queer Africa and the Fantasy of Virtual Participation,” Boesel “Your Feels As Free Labor: Emoticons, Emotional Cultures, and Facebook” and Nakamura & Chow-White “Race and Digital Technology: Code, the Color Line, and the Information Society”

F 12/13: Discussion: Bodies and/of the future Reading: Goodman, *Sonic Warfare*, Chapters 33+34 and TBA

**FINAL PAPERS DUE: Monday December 15 by Midnight**