

**SOC 3550 / WOME 3550 FA  
GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL LIFE**

Monday & Wednesday 1-2:30  
RB 3024

**Dr. Barbara Parker**

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**Welcome to SOC 3550 / WOME 3550 Gender in Contemporary Social Life.** This course will introduce you to contemporary sociological and social science debates in the field of gender studies through an examination of classical and contemporary theory and research. In particular, our focus will be on the continuities and changes in the social construction of gender in the modern world and how gendered identities and experiences are negotiated in relation to social categories of difference and social location.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Develop a critical understanding of femininity and masculinity as relational, social constructs;
- Understand the importance of gender to wider applications of social theory;
- Examine contemporary debates about gender in childhood, work, food practices, family and aging;
- Employ intersectionality to understand the complexity of social identities (social class, race, ethnicity, age, ability, sexuality), social inequality and power relations;
- Reflect on the meanings of gender present in contemporary everyday life;
- Develop research, analytical, presentation and writing skills.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

1. *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns and Possibilities*, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. (2017), edited by Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine.

The textbook is available for purchase at the Bookstore on campus.

\*\* Additional required readings will be posted on the Desire to Learn (D2L) course website that accompanies this course.

## HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

This course is offered twice a week - Monday and Wednesday from 1-2:30 pm. It is a discussion-based class and therefore *essential* that you come to class with the readings done. Your learning is dependent on your participation! Your participation mark is based on your attendance, your engagement with the course materials and your completion of various in-class activities such as quizzes, activities and group work. Our class time will be comprised of lectures, class discussions, small group work, presentations and film. Please review the Weekly Readings Schedule for details about weekly topics.

If you have questions, at any time during this course, please visit me in my Office Hours (as listed above) or contact me through email at: [barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)

**Please note:** I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account. When emailing me, please put either SOC 3550 or WOME 3550 in the Subject Heading, depending on which section you are registered in. I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

**CLASSROOM ETTIQUETTE:** As a courtesy to your peers and the instructor, please turn off or mute all phones and be advised that laptops are only to be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes.

**LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please visit: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

**PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with what it means to plagiarize the words or ideas of others and your responsibilities as a student at Lakehead University. From the Course Calendar:

<http://navigator.lakeheadu.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=21&chapterid=3506&loaduserredits=False>

Plagiarism shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's

own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

(a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.

(b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

If you have questions, consult the professor.

## COURSE EVALUATION

1) Class Participation .....	10% (ongoing)
2) Seminar Facilitation .....	15%
3) Annotated Bibliography .....	20% (Due: Oct 17)
4) Research Paper Outline.....	10% (Due: Oct 31)
5) Research Paper.....	25% (Due: Nov 30)
6) Final Take-home Exam.....	20% (Due: Dec 12)

\* **Late Penalty** Students are reminded that late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends and holidays, unless PRIOR approval for an extension has been obtained. All written work will be evaluated based on organization, presentation, grammar and clarity as well as content. For your own protection, keep a hard copy of all work submitted for this course.

## EVALUATION INFORMATION

All assignments will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations. Please note that unless otherwise specified, assignments are due in class on the due date.

## **1. Class Participation (10%)**

The class participation mark will be based on your attendance, your engagement in class discussions, and your completion of various in-class activities, quizzes, and group work. You will have an opportunity to self-evaluate on the final day of the class, and your feedback will be taken into consideration for your mark.

**Note:** Everyone (minus the instructor!) is allowed to miss two classes during the term without penalty. If you will be missing more than two classes during the term, please provide appropriate documentation so that your participation mark is not compromised.

## **2. Seminar Facilitation (15%)**

In Weeks 5-12, we will address a variety of themes; choose one where the content particularly interests you and, in groups of 2-3, facilitate a 45-minute session in our class. This assignment provides you with an opportunity to explore an area of interest to you as well as to try out the role of group leader. We will decide in Week 2 how the presentation weeks will be allocated.

For the seminar, group members are expected to:

- 1) Summarize the main ideas, themes, and/or questions raised in the readings of the week, and consider how the ideas are interconnected;
- 2) Provide a critical response to the readings, including insights, arguments, disagreements, questions and further analysis; and
- 3) Develop a minimum of three creative, thought-provoking questions based on the readings.

As a general guideline, the presentation portion (points 1 and 2 above) should be no longer than 20 minutes, leaving the remainder of the time for class discussion.

## **3) Annotated Bibliography for your Research Paper (20%)**

**Due: Oct 17 In-Class**

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief, descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

Before you begin, please review the *Guide to Writing an Annotated Bibliography* hand-out.

Using the Library, conduct a literature search of peer-reviewed sources (journals and books) that inform you about the topic you have chosen for your research paper.

- 1) Choose 8 of the most relevant and important sources and read them critically following the guidelines provided in the *Guide to Critical Appraisal and Analysis* hand-out.
- 2) Using the American Psychological Association (APA) citation style, construct an annotated bibliography of your 8 sources.
- 3) Written annotations should be 150 words, double-spaced, for each source (word count does not include the citation information).
- 4) Your assignment must include a title page, page numbers and be written in 12 font. Please ensure your name and student number is on the title page.

If you have questions, please come and see me in my office hours or visit the Writing Centre located in the library.

#### **4) Research Paper Outline (10%)**

**Due: Oct 31 In-Class**

An outline helps you organize your thoughts and knowledge about a particular topic and can make writing the research paper easier!

This assignment requires you to hand in a 2-3 page, double-spaced, outline for your research paper. Use your annotated bibliography and the critical understanding you have developed about your topic to write your thesis statement and guide the outline of your Research Paper.

Your outline will include:

- 1) Introduction with thesis statement;
- 2) Paragraph outline of your main arguments;
- 3) Outline of the evidence you plan to cite to make your argument;
- 3) A tentative conclusion; and
- 4) A references list, using APA style, of the citations you are using for your research paper.

Your outline requires careful consideration of the literature you reviewed for your annotated bibliography. Your thesis statement will state what you intend to argue in your paper, and be developed to show how you make your argument. In the outline of your main arguments, you will cite evidence using annotations that are properly referenced. Your tentative conclusion will summarize what you have argued. Please ensure your reference list is appropriately formatted for APA referencing style.

If you have questions, please come and see me in my office hours or visit the Writing Centre located in the library.

### **5) Research Paper (25%)**

**Due: Nov 30 In-Class**

This assignment is the culmination of earlier assignments this term (ie. the annotated bibliography and research paper outline). Your research paper will thoroughly address a topic area of interest within the field of gender studies and the sociology of gender.

I recommend that students review the textbook and our assigned readings prior to determining your area of interest. This will help you gain a sense of suitable topics for this assignment. For example, you can choose a particular element of social life (work, family, child rearing, aging, sport, food practices, the media) and examine gender through a transnational lens; or social identity (trans, gender queer, intersex, cisgender) and the experiences of gender through intersectionality; or as a social problem / social issue (marriage rights, access to health care services or education, representation) and consider how gender is essential to the particular social phenomenon identified.

Your research paper must be 8-10 pages, double-spaced in 12 font.

If you have questions, please come and see me in my office hours or visit the Writing Centre located in the library

### **5) Take-home Exam (20%)**

The take-home exam will be handed out in the last class on Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup> and due on **Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.**

More details will follow in class.

**READINGS BY WEEK** \* Please note that all readings are in the textbook or on the D2L website that accompanies this course. \*\* Please note that the Readings may change with notice from the Professor.

#### **Week 1 - Sept 7**

#### **Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Gender in Contemporary Society**

Review Syllabus; discuss course expectations; and talk about how the class will be organized

## **Week 2 - Sept 12 / 14**

### **Mapping the Prism of Gender**

#### Readings:

- 1) “The Prism of Gender”, (p 3-10).
- 2) “Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism”, (p. 10-17).
- 3) “Night to his Day: The Social Construction of Gender” by J. Lorber. (on D2L)
- 4) “What it means to be Gendered Me” (p. 18-28)

\*Sign up for Seminar Facilitation & Discuss Assignment Details

## **Week 3 - Sept 19 / 21**

### **The Question of Intersex**

#### Readings:

- 1) “Reflecting on Intersex: 25 Years of Activism, Mobilization and Change” (p. 30-43)
- 2) “The Five Sexes Revisited” by Ann Fausto-Sterling (on D2L)
- 3) Read article from The Atlantic at:  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/07/should-we-fix-intersex-children/373536/>
- 4) Read:  
<https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/5-things-i-wish-you-knew-about-intersex-people>
- 5) Watch video “What it’s like to be intersex”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cAUDKEI4QKI>
- 6) Watch Tedtalk “Is Anatomy Destiny?”  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/alice\\_dreger\\_is\\_anatomy\\_destiny?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/alice_dreger_is_anatomy_destiny?language=en)

Film: Intersexion  
68 min

## **Week 4 - Sept 26 / 28**

### **The Intersection of Gender and Social Location**

#### Readings:

- 1) “The Interaction of Gender with other Socially Constructed Prisms”, (p. 79-85).
- 2) “Asian American Women and Racialized Femininities: ‘Doing’ gender across cultural worlds’, (p. 99-110).
- 3) “Intersectionality in a Transnational World”, (P. 112-117).

**Library Visit: Conducting a Literature Review**

**Week 5 - Oct 3 / 5**  
**Learning and Doing Gender**

Readings:

- 1) "Learning and Doing Gender", (p. 183-190).
- 2) "The gender binary meets the Gender Variant Child: Parents' negotiations with childhood gender variance", (p. 192-200)
- 3) "Gender in Twentieth-Century Children's books: Patterns of Disparity in Titles and Central Characters", (p. 212-218).
- 4) Visit: The Pink and Blue Project:  
[http://www.jeongmeeyoon.com/aw\\_pinkblue.htm](http://www.jeongmeeyoon.com/aw_pinkblue.htm)

**\*Write a 1 page (double-spaced) reflection on the Pink and Blue Project; bring to class to share in class discussion**

**Week 6 - Oct 10 / 12**

**NO CLASSES FALL READING WEEK**

**Week 7 - Oct 17 / 19**  
**Negotiating Gender in Childhood**

Readings:

- 1) "The Pink Dragon is Female: Halloween costumes and gender markers", (p. 246-253).
- 2) "Athletes in the Pool, Girls and Boys on Deck: the Contextual Construction of Gender in Coed Youth Swimming", (p. 202-210).
- 3) "'Barbie Dolls' on the Pitch: Identity Work, Defensive Othering, and Inequality in Women's Rugby", (p. 226-237)

**\*Annotated Bibliography due in Class Oct 17**

**Week 8 - Oct 24 / Oct 26**

Oct 24 - No Class - Use this class time to work on Research Paper Outline

Oct 26 - Film: TBA

**Week 9 - Oct 31 / Nov 2**  
**Negotiating Gender in Work**

Readings:

- 1) "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class and Race in Organizations", (p. 393-403).
- 2) "Racializing the Glass Ceiling: Reconsidering Men's Experiences with Women's Work" (p. 417-426)
- 3) "Hard drives and Glass Ceilings: gender stratification in high-tech production", (p. 428-437)
- 4) "Preparing for Parenthood: Gender, Aspirations and the Reproduction of Labor Market Inequality" (p. 449-459)

**\*Research Paper Outline due in Class Oct 31**

**Week 10 - Nov 7 / 9**  
**Negotiating Gender & Food**

Readings:

- 1) "Food and Gender Identity" by Guptill, Amy, et. al. (on D2L)
- 2) "Caring about food: Doing Gender in the Foodie Kitchen" by Cairns, K., et. al. (on D2L)
- 3) "Men nurturing through food: Challenging gender dichotomies around domestic cooking" by Michelle Szabo (on D2L)

**Week 11 - Nov 14 / 16**  
**Negotiating Gender in Everyday Life**

- 1) "'We Wear No Pants': Selling the Crisis of Masculinity in the 2010 Super Bowl Commercials", (p. 286-298).
- 2) "When Dad stays home too: paternity leave, gender and parenting", (p. 481-491).
- 3) "Separating the Men from the Moms: The Making of Adult Gender Segregation in Youth Sports", (p. 552-562)

**Week 12 - Nov 21 / 23**  
**Negotiating Gender in Later Life**

Readings:

- 1) "Firming the Floppy Penis: Age, class and gender relations in the lives of old men", (p. 262-272)

- 2) "It's Your Badge of Inclusion: the Red Hat Society as a gendered subculture of aging" by Barrett et. al. (On D2L)
- 3) "Late life widowhood, selfishness and new partnership choices: a gendered perspective" (on D2L)
- 4) "Becoming and being gendered through the body: older women, their mothers and body image", (on D2L)

**Week 13 - Nov 28 / 30**  
**New Directions and Possibilities**

Readings:

- 1) "Nothing Is Forever", (p. 583-589).
- 2) "#FemFuture: Online Revolution" (p. 603-613).
- 3) "Change Among the Gatekeepers: Men, Masculinities and Gender Equality in the Global Arena"

**\*Research Paper due at the beginning of class on Nov 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Week 14 - Dec 5**  
**Wrap Up & Final Thoughts**

Reading:

- 1) "Epilogue: Possibilities" in textbook, pgs. 581-585.

**Take-Home Exam will be handed out today!**