

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

Monday / Wednesday 1-2:30
RB 3024

Dr. Barbara Parker

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Office Hours: Monday 9-11am

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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop an understanding about the social construction of gender;
- Employ intersectionality as a theoretical lens through which to understand the complexity of social identities (social class, race, ethnicity, age, ability, sexuality) which shapes social inequality and power differentials;
- Examine contemporary debates about gender in childhood, work, family and aging;
- Articulate an understanding of the importance of gender to social theory;
- Develop university-level research, analytical, presentation and writing skills.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns and Possibilities*, 4th Ed. (2014), edited by Joan Z. Spade and Catherine G. Valentine.

** 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. Each week it is essential that you come to class with the weekly readings completed and be prepared to discuss what you have read. There is a participation mark for this course and you will be

graded not only for your attendance, but your demonstrated willingness to engage with the course materials. Our class time will be comprised of a combination of lectures, small group discussions, presentations and film. See the Weekly Readings Schedule for details.

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

Please note: I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account. Please recognize that I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS: If you have a learning accommodation or special need regarding the format or the due dates for the assignments, you must inform me. The appropriate form can be obtained from the Student Accessibility Services: lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

From the Course Calendar,

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

COURSE EVALUATION

- 1) Response Papers (x2 worth 15% each)..... 30% **(Due: Oct 7; Nov 4)**
- 2) Group Research / Creative Project Presentation with
 2-page Individual Summary (3-4 people) **OR**
 Individual Research Paper **(Due: Dec 2)**..... 20 %
 **** 1 page Topic and Outline Summary** 5% **(Due Oct 19)**
- 3) Participation.....15% **(ongoing)**
- 4) Final Take-home Exam.....30% **(Due: Dec 9 at 1pm)**

* **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. Response Papers (30%)

Due: Oct 7 (1st paper)

Due: Nov 4 (2nd paper)

You are required to hand in two papers, each worth 15% for a total of 30%.

The first Response Paper (due: Oct 7) will be a response to readings covered through Week 1-3) – See the Weekly Reading Schedule for a complete list of the readings you can choose to respond to.

The second Response Paper (due: Nov 7) will be a response to readings covered through Week 4-7 - See the Weekly Reading Schedule for a complete list of the readings you can choose to respond to.

The goal of the Response Paper is to demonstrate you are engaging with the readings and attempting to understand the arguments and points made by the authors. You are required to select a minimum of two readings to use for each paper.

Each response paper will be 5 pages in length (double-spaced). Your paper can include a brief discussion of the main ideas and themes raised by the authors of the readings. I expect that you will demonstrate how the readings compare / contrast with one another, and connect with previous week's readings if links can be made. As well, use self-reflexivity to respond to the authors and critically consider how the ideas presented in the papers do or do not mesh with your own lived experiences.

The response papers are to be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due.

2. Group Research / Creative Project Presentation with 2-page Individual Summary (3-4 people) OR Individual Research Paper (10 pages, Due: Dec 2) (20%)

Topic & Outline Summary Due: Oct 19th (1 page double-spaced) (5%)

For this assignment, you have a choice to work in a small group and develop a class presentation (25-30 min in length) OR you can undertake an individual research paper (10 pages in length), which focuses on some aspect of gender in contemporary society that interests you. I recommend that students review the textbook and our assigned readings prior to determining their area of focus to get a sense of some of the suitable topics for this assignment. For example, you can choose a particular element of social life (work, family, child rearing, aging) and examine gender through a transnational lens; or social identity (trans, gender queer, intersex, cisgender) and the experiences of gender through intersectionality; or a social problem / social issue (marriage rights, access to health care services or education) and consider how gender is essential to the particular social phenomenon identified.

You must hand in a 1 page (double-spaced) Summary of your Topic and an Outline of your Presentation or Research Paper on Oct 19th. I will provide feedback by Oct 26th. Each student is expected to hand in their own individual summary.

Presentations are expected to run 25-30 minutes and we will have two per class beginning on Nov 9th. You are required to hand in an individual summary (2 pages double-spaced) on the date of your presentation.

Research Papers are due in class on Dec 2nd.

Further details will be provided in class.

3. Participant (15%)

Your in-class participation mark will reflect both attendance and your willingness to actively engage with course materials. Active listening is just as important as speaking. A full grade will not be awarded simply for talking a lot. In fact, if you talk so much that others don't have the opportunity to speak, or you silence them by interrupting, using negative body language when they speak, or talking while they're talking, you may well receive a failing grade for participation. Your contribution will be thought-provoking,

respectful of others' life experiences and interpretations of the course materials, contribute to and lead to discussion, and will illustrate a clear grasp of the materials or will ask questions about the materials if you need clarification. Do not hesitate to ask questions – if you have a question about something, chances are, someone else does too!

Please note: If you have trouble speaking up in class and have questions or concerns about your participation mark please come and see me to discuss.

4. Take-home Exam (30%)

The take-home exam will be handed out in the last class and **due on Wednesday December 9th 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 14 / 16

Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Gender In Contemporary Society

Review Syllabus and discuss expectations

Reading:

1) “Introduction” in textbook, pgs.: xiii-xxiv.

Week 2 – Sept 21/23

Mapping the Prism of Gender

Readings:

1) “The Prism of Gender” in textbook, pgs. 3-9.

2) “Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism” in textbook, pgs. 10-17.

3) “Night to his Day: The Social Construction of Gender” by J. Lorber. (on D2L)

Week 3 – Sept 28/30

The Intersection of Gender and Social Location

Readings:

- 1) "The Interaction of Gender with other Socially Constructed Prisms" in textbook, pgs. 57-63.
- 2) "Asian American Women and Racialized Femininities: 'Doing' gender across cultural worlds" in textbook, pgs. 77-89.
- 3) "Intersectionality in a Transnational World" in textbook, pgs. 89-95.
- 4) "Reinventing Honourable Masculinity: Discourses from a Working-class Indian Community" in textbook, pgs. 138-147.

Week 4 – Oct 5/7

Learning and Doing Gender

Readings:

- 1) "Learning and Doing Gender" in textbook, pgs. 157-164.
- 2) "Gender in Twentieth-Century Children's books: Patterns of Disparity in Titles and Central Characters" in textbook, pgs. 180-186.
- 3) "'Barbie Dolls' on the Pitch: Identity Work, Defensive Othering, and Inequality in Women's Rugby" in textbook, pgs. 199-210.

Week 5 – Oct 12/14

Negotiating Gender in Childhood

Oct 12 - Thanksgiving NO Class

Readings:

- 1) "The Pink Dragon is Female: Halloween costumes and gender markers" in textbook, pgs. 217-224.
- 2) "Separating the Men From the Moms: The Making of Adult Gender Segregation in Youth Sports" in textbook, pgs. 483-494.

Week 6 – Oct 19/21

Negotiating Gender in Work and Family

*** 2 Page Topic Summary due in class on Oct 19**

Readings:

- 1) "Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class and Race in Organizations" in textbook, pgs. 342-353.
- 2) "Hard drives and Glass Ceilings: gender stratification in high-tech production" in textbook, pgs. 377-386.
- 3) "Moral Dilemmas, Moral Strategies, and the Transformation of Gender: Lessons from two generations of work and family change" in textbook, pgs. 391-398.

Week 7 – Oct 26/28
Negotiating Gender in Later Life

Readings:

- 1) “Firming the Floppy Penis: Age, class and gender relations in the lives of old men” in textbook, pgs. 233-243.
- 2) “It’s Your Badge of Inclusion: the Red Hat Society as a gendered subculture of aging” by Barrett et. al. (On D2L)

28th – No Class – Please use this time to work on Group Presentations or Final Papers

Week 8 – Nov 2/4
New Directions and Possibilities

Readings:

- 1) “Some Things we need for a Feminist Revolution” in textbook, pgs. 547-554.
- 2) “Change Among the Gatekeepers: Men, Masculinities and Gender Equality in the Global Arena” in textbook, pgs. 563-579.

Film: Intersexion

Week 9 – Nov 9/11
Class Presentations (2 per class)

Week 10 – Nov 16/18
Class Presentations

Week 11 – Nov 23/25
Class Presentations

Week 12 – Nov 30 / Dec 2
Class Presentations / Wrap Up & Final Thoughts

Reading:

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

Take-Home Exam will be handed out in the last class.