

# INTRODUCTION TO GENDER & SOCIETY

SOCI 207\* | Section 100 **TEXAS A&M** Summer 2020 | Syllabus  
UNIVERSITY.

---

\*Course cross-listed as WGST 207

**Prerequisite:** None

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Required Materials:** There is **no textbook** for this course. Required readings and videos will be available on *eCampus* and *Kanopy*.

---

**Instructor**

Stephanie M. Ortiz

**Email**

Smo07007@tamu.edu

**Office Location**

Google Hangouts

**Office Hours**

By appointment. Please book using this link:

<https://calendly.com/smortiz>

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** • Gender is socially constructed, yet has far-reaching implications for how society is organized, resources are distributed, and social actors relate to one another. We will begin with a review of key sociological concepts and an introduction to major theoretical paradigms in the study of gender. Next, we will focus on specific institutions that shape gender and sexism. We end by examining gender and inequality across different domains. We will pay special attention to how gender relates to other axes of power, such as race, class, and sexuality.

**COURSE GOALS** • Students will gain multiple frameworks with which to analyze how gender informs social, cultural, political and economic issues in society. Students will learn to distinguish between “common sense” explanations of gendered phenomenon and social scientific explanations. The ability to navigate conversations around gender outside of the classroom is also an important goal of the course. In service of this, students will learn to form and evaluate arguments related to gender and society using theory, and will develop writing skills to effectively articulate their positions.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES** • After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Summarize and critique complex arguments related to gender and society
- Describe and evaluate theoretical explanations for gender and gender inequality
- Analyze and interpret empirical data to develop an informed position on societal issues related to gender

## **First, an acknowledgement of these strange and stressful times**

Many of your lives are being unsettled in new ways. You and your loved ones might be unemployed, sick, struggling to make ends meet, disappointed about the inability to partake in or celebrate major milestones, and generally disappointed with—and fearful of—the ways things are and may become.

And yet, here you are. Here we are.

So, how do I teach a sociology class while our worlds are imploding? Well, if we were meeting in person on the first day of class, I would tell you briefly about my own educational background, marked by financial woes, academic struggles and health issues. I grew up working class, suffered the loss of my grandfather the summer before my freshman year of undergrad, and the loneliness and confusion of being a new student at a large school led to my academic probation after just one semester.

I tell you this because I'm not a person who believes that because I "made it," others should have to struggle. I don't believe that there is some character-building magic inherent in suffering; that coming out of the other side of poverty and scarcity, or abandonment and isolation, leaves us better people. I think it leaves us raw and tired. So, I've tried to teach under the assumption that students are battle-worn. Doing so allows me to meet you where you are, not where I wish you were or where others expect you to be.

What this looks like in practice is flexibility. I will set deadlines to help encourage you to stay on task, but will not deduct points for late work. Do keep in mind that there are hard deadlines that I need to abide by, like enrollment verification and final grades. I won't grade on writing style or deduct points for grammatical issues. I won't require a citation style. Writing assignments will not require huge word counts, either – give me the argument and the evidence, and keep it moving. I won't require discussion posts or much interaction between yourself and other students. In fact, I will teach asynchronously, so you can access videos and readings on your own time. I also chose to assign documentaries and short, accessible readings for us to engage with, as opposed to long, dense chapters/articles.

While I do not expect my course to be the most important thing in your life (especially during a pandemic!), I will try to make this experience worth your time, energy, and money. This means, that at the very least, you will learn a new vocabulary to describe the world around you. Beyond that, if I'm allowed to dream here, I hope in this new understanding of society that you come to develop more questions about the world. And I hope the answers you find lead you to realize your power, and push you to enact your agency in your life.

For the time being, though, I'm perfectly fine with the bare minimum: that you learn something.

## Course Requirements

To access prompts and submit papers, click on the category's corresponding tab in eCampus.

### **Reflecting on Gender (RG) Journal – 100 points/20% of course grade**

Almost every substantive course day has a corresponding reflection prompt. These papers are spaces to *ruminate* and *react*. You will choose **five** of these prompts to complete. It is your prerogative which days you choose to reflect on, however, I encourage you to choose the prompts that most resonate with you. These five reflection posts must be completed by **June 26<sup>th</sup>**. Each reflection post should be between 100 and 150 words. You are welcome (but not required) to complete more than 5; I will only count the highest 5 scores when I calculate final grades.

### **Critical Response (CR) Papers – 300 points/60% of course grade**

CR papers are opportunities to more deeply engage with the course topics and apply theories to real-world cases. These papers require you to *critically analyze* course content and *develop arguments*. You only need to choose **six** prompts to respond to. Note that each prompt has a specific due date. It is your prerogative which papers you choose to complete, however, I encourage you to choose the prompts that most resonate with you. To help stay on track, **aim** to complete three papers by **June 12<sup>th</sup>**, and the final three papers by **June 26<sup>th</sup>**. Each paper should be between 350 and 400 words. You are welcome (but not required) to complete more than 6; I will only count the highest 6 scores when I calculate final grades.

### **Scheduled Exam – 100 points/20% of course grade**

Two short answer/essay exams will be administered. All material you are exposed to in this class will be “free game.” I will post the exam at 10am and you must submit your answers by 10pm. The exams will be open-book.

In addition, please check your TAMU email daily, because important information regarding this class will be emailed to you. I am not perfect and I may err, so please keep copies of all completed assignments and graded work until final grades are posted. Be sure to discuss grade posting omissions and errors with me immediately. Please do not collaborate on graded work with other students.... it really gets in the way of me getting at *your* thought process and knowledge.

## Grading

Grades can be accessed on eCampus. All grades in this course must be earned. There will be no curving or extra credit offered. A grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in cases of emergencies late in the semester and when official documentation is provided. **Please inform me of any difficulties or hardships negatively affecting your class performance as soon as possible to maximize the amount of time available to manage the problem.** As you can see below, no one assignment will make or break your grade.

<b>Grade Component</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
CR #1	50	10%
CR #2	50	10%
CR #3	50	10%
CR #4	50	10%
CR #5	50	10%
CR #6	50	10%
Midterm Exam	50	10%
RG #1	20	4%
RG #2	20	4%
RG #3	20	4%
RG #4	20	4%
RG #5	20	4%
Final Exam	50	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Letter grades will be assigned based on total points earned, as a percentage of points possible. The grading scale is as follows:**

<b>Course Grade</b>	<b>Point Range</b>	<b>Percentage Range</b>
<b>A</b>	450 or more	90%-100%
<b>B</b>	400-449	80%-89%
<b>C</b>	350-399	70%-79%
<b>D</b>	300-349	60%-69%
<b>F</b>	0-299	0%-59%

### **Class Conduct and Expectations**

I believe that learning should be an empowering process. I also understand that this process can be challenging or uncomfortable. Gender is one of the most polarizing topics; everyone has an opinion, everyone feels personally or politically tied to those opinions, and many people are either ready to brawl or too detached to even entertain discussions. Regardless, I ask that you be prepared, because we will address topics that may cause strong emotional responses. You may find some theories in this course controversial or their explanation of gender and society may challenge your beliefs. But the aim of this course is not necessarily consensus; the aim is the development of critical thinking and writing skills. I expect that in navigating any discomfort with ideas or content, that you respect your classmates and the instructor. This means that you may challenge or assess claims; however, you must use critical evidence that does not rely on mere personal beliefs, anecdotes, or opinions. Finally, I ask that you **not** share my PowerPoints. I appreciate your cooperation with these important aspects of creating a class of which we all want to be a part!

## Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do.” Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code (above), to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System.

## Plagiarism

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest edition of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

## ADA Statement

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>. Disabilities may include, but are not limited, to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

## Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University and the College of Liberal Arts are committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws provide guidance for achieving such an environment. Although class materials are generally considered confidential pursuant to student record policies and laws, University employees — including instructors — cannot maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues that jeopardize the health and safety of our community. **As the instructor, I must report (per Texas A&M System Regulation 08.01.01) the following information to other University offices if you share it with me, even if you do not want the disclosed information to be shared:** Allegations of sexual assault, sexual discrimination, or sexual harassment when they involve TAMU students, faculty, or staff, or third parties visiting campus. These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In many cases, it will be your decision whether or not you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the Student Counseling Service (<https://scs.tamu.edu/>). Students and faculty can report non-emergency behavior that causes them to be concerned at <http://tellsomebody.tamu.edu>.

## Course Schedule

Within the "**Course Materials**" tab in *eCampus*, you will see 5 folders, one for each week of the course.

Each week's folder contains the readings and PowerPoint lectures you need, which are organized by subject. Videos are available on **Kanopy**.

To access Kanopy videos, go to → <https://library.tamu.edu/search/video.html> and click "Kanopy Streaming Video." If not already logged into your TAMU account, you will be prompted to log in before searching for the video.

Day	Subject	Readings/Videos
T May 26	<b>Welcome to the Course!</b>	None. I encourage you to submit your "Getting To Know You" assignment
W May 27	<b>Thinking Like a Sociologist</b>	None
Th May 28	<b>Gender Essentialism</b>	Fausto-Sterling. "Why Sex Is Not Binary."
F May 29 <i>"Getting to know you assignment" due 10pm</i>	<b>Socialization vs Doing Gender</b>	Watch <i>The Role of Gender</i> (Kanopy)
M June 1	<b>Hegemonic Masculinity</b>	Watch <i>The Mask You Live In</i> (Kanopy)
T June 2	<b>Feminism &amp; Postfeminism</b>	Rivers. "Postfeminism in Action..."
W June 3	<b>Intersectionality &amp; Black Feminist Thought</b>	The Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement."
Th June 4	<b>Theories of Sexism</b>	Rivers. "Institutionalized Sexism on Campus."
F June 5	<b>The Family</b>	hooks. "Revolutionary Parenting"
M June 8	<b>Religion</b>	Wilcox. "Religion & the Domestication of Men."

Day	Subject	Readings/Videos
T June 9	Media	Watch <i>Dreamworlds 3</i> <a href="#">abridged version</a> (Kanopy)
W June 10	Education	Watch <i>Creating Inclusive Schools</i> (Kanopy)
Th June 11	Catch up!	Use this day to catch up on writing assignments
F June 12 <b>First three CRs should be completed by this date</b>	Review for Midterm	Review readings and notes. Prepare questions. I will be available on Google Hangouts.
M June 15	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
T June 16	Beauty Politics	Watch <i>The Illusionists</i> (Kanopy)
W June 17	Paid Work	Weissinger. "Gender matters. So do race and class: experiences of gendered racism on the Wal-Mart shop floor."
Th June 19	Dating	Kao et al. "Asian American men in romantic dating markets."
F June 20	Health	Cottom. "I was pregnant and in crisis. All the doctors and nurses saw was an incompetent Black woman."
M June 22	Violence	Lee & Reid. "Serial Killers & Their Easy Prey."
T June 23	Reproductive Politics	Gurr. "The Ruling Relations of Reproductive Health Care."

---

<b>Day</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Readings/Videos</b>
W June 24	<b>Social Change</b>	Jaffe. "The Collective Power of #MeToo"
Th June 25	<b>Catch up!</b>	Use this day to catch up on writing assignments
F June 26	<b>Review for Final</b>	Review readings and notes. Prepare questions. I will be available on Google Hangouts.

---

**All CRs and RGs must be completed by this date**

---

**FINAL EXAM: Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>**