

Sociology/WS 327C: Sex and Gender in Society

Fall 2011

MWF 10-10:50 a.m.
308 Curtis Hall

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Course Overview and Objectives

Sociology 327 is an overview of sex and gender from the perspective of social constructionism. This means that we will look at how people create and sustain the categories that they use to make sense of what it means to be a “man” or a “woman” and how these categories affect our lives. The class has three major objectives:

1. Students will become familiar with the social constructionist perspective on sex and gender.
2. Students will become familiar with how a society’s sex and gender constructions affect people’s lives through processes like socialization, social control and stratification; and how people “do gender” in their everyday interactions.
3. Students will learn to gather data about gender in contemporary social life and theorize about it using sociological concepts.

Required Texts

Kimmel, Michael S. 2010. *The Gendered Society*, 4th ed. Oxford.

Course pack.

Students are expected to read each assigned reading before the class in which it will be discussed. A reading guide available on the web site is designed to help focus your reading and prepare you for the class discussion. The *Schedule of Assignments* (pp. 5-8) lists the readings for each day.

Office Hours

The instructor is typically in his office Wednesday and Friday afternoons. He will also meet with students by appointment.

Students are also encouraged to meet with classmates to review course material and work on assignments.

Assignments

1. Personal Gender Theory Papers (10% of course grade; 2 assignments at 5% each)

During the first week of class, students will write a paper describing their own personal theory about gender. During the final week of class, students will write a response to their first paper, describing how their personal theory of gender has developed (or not developed) since the beginning of the course. Detailed descriptions can be found under Assignment Details (p. 9).

2. Research assignments (40% of course grade; 5 assignments; 4 counted at 10% each)

Research assignments require students to conduct mini-research projects and connect their findings to course material. Detailed descriptions can be found under Assignment Details (p. 10-15). The topics are:

Assignment 1: Breaching exercise

Assignment 2: Magazine article analysis OR sit-com analysis

Assignment 3: Interview with child OR children's game analysis

Assignment 4: Interview with someone over 60 OR family gender inventory

Assignment 5: An assignment that hasn't been attempted

Since the class discussion around students' projects is an important rationale for the assignments, students with unexcused absences on the day assignments are due will lose 5 points on their assignments.

3. Quizzes (10%; 12-20 quizzes; 10 counted at 1% each)

The unannounced quizzes are designed to encourage students to keep up with their readings. The quizzes will take place at the beginning of class. Students who don't attend class or are late will not be able to take them or make them up. Each student's top 10 scores will be counted toward the course grade.

Quiz points may also be used to reward attendance at select campus events at the professor's discretion.

4. Class attendance (8%)

Class attendance is critical for learning course material. In order to encourage attendance and participation, points will be awarded as follows:

First 20 days of class attended:	1 point per day
Days 21-30 of class attended:	2 points per day
Days 31-40 of class attended:	4 points per day

Each student can earn up to 80 attendance points by attending 40 days of class. Since there are 44 class days, students can miss up to four days of class without penalty. This is a no-fault policy, i.e., the reason for the absence makes no difference.

Attendance will be recorded using an attendance sheet. Students are responsible for distributing the sheet. If no sheet is distributed, no one gets attendance credit for that day.

5. Class participation (2%; professor's discretion)

Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class, attend class and discuss the readings in class. The instructor will assign points for class participation at his discretion.

6. Examinations (30%; 3 exams at 10% each)

There will be three examinations. The purposes of the exams are (1) to encourage students to attend to, study, and commit to memory course material, and (2) to increase students' self-knowledge about their mastery of course material. Each exam will consist of questions drawn from lectures and readings and will account for 10% of the final course grade.

Letter grades

Students have the opportunity to earn 1000 points from their assignments and exams, to be distributed as follows:

Personal gender theory papers	100 pts.	2@50 pts each
Research assignments	400 pts.	4@100 pts each
Quizzes	100 pts	10@10 pts each
Class attendance	80 pts	80 pts
Class participation	20 pts	20 pts
Exams	300 pts	3@100 pts

Students must earn 900 points for a grade in the 'A' range, 800 for a grade in the 'B' range, 700 for a grade in the 'C' range and 600 for a grade in the 'D' range. There are no ways to earn points in the course other than those described in this syllabus either during the course or after it ends.

In general, the instructor will give grades in the 'A' range (90–100%) for work which is exceptional, e.g., in its creativity, thoroughness or insight. Grades in the 'B' range (80–89%) are for work which fulfills all of an assignment's requirements but which is otherwise unexceptional. Grades in the 'C' range (70–79%) are for work which fails to meet an assignment's requirements in some way, e.g., in its accuracy, completeness or writing. Grades in the 'D' (60–69%) and 'F' range (below 60%) are for work which fails to meet an assignment's requirements in some significant way.

The instructor will not grade assignments written in substandard English. Such assignments will be returned for a revision, which can be resubmitted for partial credit.

Make-Up Work

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date and take tests at the scheduled times. Students will not be able to make up work or exams unless they have a legitimate excuse, e.g., illness, funeral, family emergency. **Quizzes cannot be made up.** Students with legitimate excuses should obtain appropriate documentation and contact the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE regarding their situation.

Academic Honesty

Speaking and acting truthfully are skills acquired through practice. These skills are indispensable for successfully living and working with other people. If you practice dishonesty, you will endanger all of your relationships. You will be a bad spouse, a bad parent, a bad employee and a bad citizen.

Participating in academic life is an important opportunity to practice truthfulness since dishonesty is incompatible with and abhorrent to the purposes of the university. Therefore, students in this course are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty.

Examples of academic dishonesty include plagiarism, cheating on exams or quizzes, and signing someone else's name to the attendance sheet.

The standard punishment for academic dishonesty is failure in the course and referral to the Dean of Students. Students who are expelled from Iowa State or otherwise punished for academic dishonesty are encouraged to see their punishment as an opportunity to reflect upon their failure to practice truthfulness and to commit themselves to a new life of integrity.

Special Accommodations

Students should address any need for special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you believe you need them. Accommodations will be provided to students with a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) from the Disability Resources (DR) office (294-6624). DR is located in Room 1076 of the Student Services Building.

Sociology Code of Ethics for Human Relations

The Department of Sociology is committed to providing a professional and educational environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. The department's Code of Ethics for Human Relations and the Procedures for Filing Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment are posted on the bulletin boards on all five floors of East Hall.

Guidelines for Success

The following are guidelines for success in this class. They are what I expect from students. They are designed to help individual students and to create a positive learning environment in the class.

Attend class regularly and on time.

Class attendance is critical for learning course material. Come to class on time and stay until class is over. Do not set appointments that would require you to miss any class time. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class period.

Be an active participant.

Read the assigned readings before class, attend class and discuss the readings in class. Be on the lookout for material from media, conversations, and other classes that you can use to illuminate class material. Your active participation will contribute to a more enjoyable class for everyone.

Communicate with your professor.

Talk to your professor about any problems you are having with the course. If you do not understand the material or have questions about any assignments, make an appointment to talk. If you have problems with other students or any other issues that are impeding your learning process, tell your professor.

Develop high standards for yourself.

I have high standards for all students. I expect that students will submit carefully developed and revised papers, be prepared for class, and take the course seriously. The best way to meet these standards is to adopt high standards for yourself. Your job is to be a student. Be a professional at your job. You will take the skills and attitudes you develop as a student with you when you leave school.

Employ effective study skills.

Before class, read the assigned readings and answer the questions in the reading guide. After class, review your notes and the readings. The ability to apply the material (in exams and papers) takes a deeper understanding than a casual reading of the text will give you. The course material requires you to learn new ideas and ways of thinking. You need to be patient with yourself and commit enough time to the material before you will "get it." Do not be satisfied with a surface understanding of the course material. This type of understanding does not generally translate to excellent work in the assignments or to an ability to apply the material outside of class.

Follow common rules of respect.

Turn off your cell phones. Do not have "side conversations" during class. The noise that you make makes it difficult for others to listen and concentrate. Speak loudly when participating in class discussion so that everyone in the class can hear. When others are talking, please listen quietly. Show courtesy toward other students even if you disagree with them.

Adopted from Nancy Berns, Department for the Study of Culture and Society, Drake University.

Schedule of Assignments

Mon 8/22 (1) Course overview

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER & SEX

Wed 8/24 (2) Overview of Sex & Gender

“Introduction” (Kimmel, chapter 1)

Barnett, Rosalind C. and Caryl Rivers. 2004. “Men Are From Earth, and So Are Women: It’s Faulty Research That Sets Them Apart.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. 3. (CP)

***** Personal Gender Theory Paper (Part A) Due *****

Fri 8/26 (3) Biology, Sex, and Gender

“Ordained by Nature” (Kimmel, chapter 2)

Mon 8/29 (4) Gender Cross Culturally

“Spanning the World” (Kimmel, chapter 3)

Wed 8/31 (5) Psychological Perspectives on Gender Development

“So that Explains It” (Kimmel, chapter 4)

Fri 9/2 (6) The Social Construction of Gender, part 1

“The Social Construction of Gender Relations” (Kimmel, chapter 5)

Lorber, Judith. 1994. Excerpt from *Paradoxes of Gender*. Yale University Press. (CP)

Mon 9/5 NO CLASS

Wed 9/7 (7) The Social Construction of Gender, part 2

Stewart, Robert. 1998. “Explanations of Differences Between Females and Males.” Pp. 63-69 in *Living and Acting Together*. Dix Hills, NY: General Hall. (CP)

Roy, William. 2001. “Gender.” Pp. 110-155 in *Making Societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. (CP)

Fri 9/9 (8) Constructing Masculinity

Roy. “Gender.” (CP 28-37)

Johnson, Allan G. 1997. “Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, a Them, or an Us.” Excerpt from *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy*. Temple University Press. (CP)

Mon 9/12 (9) Constructions of Female Beauty

Saltzberg, Elayne A., and Joan C. Chrisler. 1994. “Beauty Is the Beast: Psychological Effects of the Pursuit of the Perfect Female Body” from Jo Freeman (ed.) *Women: A Feminist Perspective*. (CP)

Harris, Gardiner. 2003. “If Shoe Won’t Fit, Fix the Foot? Popular Surgery Raises Concern.” *The New York Times*, Dec. 7. (CP)

Saul, Stephanie. 2005. “Gimme an Rx! Cheerleaders Pep Up Drug Sales.” *The New York Times*, Nov. 28. (CP)

Wed 9/14 (10) Constructing Gender with Surgery

Colapinto, John. 1997. "The True Story of John/Joan." *Rolling Stone* (Dec. 11):55-74, 92-97. (CP)

Conventry, Martha. 1998. "The Tyranny of the Esthetic: Surgery's Most Intimate Violation." *On the Issues: The Progressive Woman's Quarterly* (summer). Available on-line (with photos) at: <http://www.ontheissuesmagazine.com/su98coventry.html> (CP)

Fri 9/16 (11) Doing Gender

Lucal, Betsy. 1999. "What It Means to Be Gendered Me." *Gender & Society* 13(6):781-797. (CP)

Davis, Lennard J. 2000. "Gaining a Daughter: A Father's Transgendered Tale." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 24, B4. (CP)

Mon 9/19 (12) Intersections with Race & Class

Roy. "Gender." (CP)

Staples, Brent. 1986. "Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space." *Ms.* (September). (CP)

Wed 9/21 (13) Privilege

Peggy McIntosh. 1988. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women's studies." (CP)

Fri 9/23 (14) ASSIGNMENT #1 (Breaching exercise)

Mon 9/26 (15) Exam #1

VIOLENCE

Wed 9/28 (16) Gendered Violence

"The Gender of Violence" (Kimmel, chapter 12)

Fri 9/30 (17) Rape

Lefkowitz, Bernard. 1997. "The Boys Next Door." *Sports Illustrated* (June 23): pp. 77+. (CP)

Mon 10/3 (18) Rape & Sexual Aggression on Campus

Armstrong, Elizabeth A., Laura Hamilton, and Brian Sweeney. 2006. "Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape." *Social Problems* 53(4):483-499. (CP)

Gilmore, Sean Michael. 1994. "Sport Sex: Toward a Theory of Sexual Aggression." Pp. 129-135 in *Differences that Make a Difference*, ed. Lynn Turner and Helen Sterk. Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey. (CP)

LANGUAGE & MEDIA

Wed 10/5 (19) The Gendered Media

"The Gendered Media." (Kimmel, chapter 10)

Fri 10/7 (20) Girly-Girl Culture

Orenstein, Peggy. 2011. Excerpt from *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*. (CP)

Mon 10/10 (21) Raunch Culture

Levy, Ariel. 2005. Excerpt from *Female Chauvinist Pigs*. (CP)

Pollet, Alison and Page Hurwitz. 2004. "Strip Till You Drop." *The Nation*, Jan 12/19, pp. 20-25. (CP)

Wed 10/12 (22) 10/5 (19) Pornography

Jensen, Robert. 2007. Excerpt from *Getting Off*. (CP)

Fri 10/14 (23) ASSIGNMENT #2 (Magazine article analysis or sit-com analysis)

GENDER AT SCHOOL

Mon 10/17 (24) The Gendered Classroom

"The Gendered Classroom." (Kimmel, chapter 7)

Wed 10/19 (25) Socialization to Gender Roles

Adler, Patricia A., Steven J. Kless, and Peter Adler. 1992. "Socialization to Gender Roles: Popularity among Elementary School Boys and Girls." *Sociology of Education* 65(3):169-187. (CP)

Fri 10/21 (26) Socialization to Gender Roles, continued

Pascoe, C.J. 2005. "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse." *Sexualities* 8(3):329-346. (CP)

GENDERED FAMILIES

Mon 10/24 (27) The Gendered Family

"The Gendered Family." (Kimmel, chapter 6)

Wed 10/26 (28) Mothers, Fathers and Family Care

Belkin, Lisa. 2008. "When Mom and Dad Share It All." *The New York Times Magazine*, June 15. (CP)

Gerson, Kathleen. 1993. Excerpt from *No Man's Land: Men's Changing Commitments to Family and Work*. Basic Books. (CP)

Fri 10/28 (29) ASSIGNMENT #3 (Child interview or children's game analysis)

Mon 10/31 (30) New Family Forms

Wilcox, W. Bradford. 2005. "Who's Your Daddy?" *The Weekly Standard*, Dec. 12, pp. 17-18. (CP)

Howley, Kerry. 2006. "Ova for Sale: The Art of the Deal in the Gray Market for Human Eggs." *Reason* (Oct.):18-27. (CP)

Graff, E.J. "What Is Marriage For?" 2004. *New England Law Review* 38. (CP)

Wed 11/2 (31) Exam #2

GENDER IN THE WORKPLACE

Fri 11/4 (32) The Gendered Workplace

"Separate and Unequal." (Kimmel, chapter 9)

Mon 11/7 (33) Discrimination in the Workplace

Williams, Christine L. 2006. "Shopping as Symbolic Interaction: Race, Class, and Gender in the Toy Store." *Symbolic Interaction* 28(4):459-472. (CP)

Featherstone, Liza. 2002. "Wal-Mart Values." *The Nation*, Dec. 16. (CP)

Wed 11/9 (34) Discrimination in the Workplace, continued

Williams, Christine. 1992. "The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the 'Female' Professions." *Social Problems* 39(3):253-267. (CP)

- Fri 11/11 (35) ASSIGNMENT #4 (Senior interview or family gender inventory)**
- Mon 11/14 (36) Harassment at Work**
 Quinn, Beth A. 2002. "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of 'Girl Watching.'" *Gender & Society* 16(3):386-402. (CP)
- Wed 11/16 (37) Transnational Capitalism**
 Ehrenreich, Barbara, and Arlie Russell Hochschild. 2003. Excerpt from *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild. Henry Holt and Company. (CP)
 Zarembka, Joy M. 2002. "America's Dirty Work: Migrant Maids and Modern-Day Slavery" from *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in The New Economy*, edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild. Henry Holt and Company. (CP)
 Enloe, Cynthia. 1995. "The Globetrotting Sneaker" from *Ms.*, September/ October. (CP)

BODIES, INTIMACY AND SEX

- Fri 11/18 (38) Gendered Intimacies**
 "Gendered Intimacies." (Kimmel, chapter 11)
- *** Thanksgiving Break (Nov. 21-25) *****
- Mon 11/28 (39) The Gendered Body**
 "The Gendered Body." (Kimmel, chapter 12)
- Wed 11/30 (40) Constructing sexual orientation**
 Michael, Robert, John Gagnon, Edward Laumann, and Gina Kolata. 1994. "Homosexual Partners." Pp. 169-183 in *Sex in America: A Definitive Survey*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. (CP)
 Sullivan, Andrew. 2005. "The End of Gay Culture: Assimilation and Its Meaning." *The New Republic*, Oct. 24. (CP)
- Fri 12/2 (41) Constructing Sex Acts**
 Carpenter, Laura M. 2002. "Gender and the Meaning and Experience of Virginity Loss in the Contemporary United States." *Gender & Society* 16(3):345-365. (CP)
 John Stoltenberg. 1990. "How Men Have (a) Sex" from *Refusing to Be a Man: Essays on Sex and Justice*. New York: Meridian Books. (CP)
- Mon 12/5 (42) Sex & Masculinity**
 Sabo, Don. 1994. "The Myth of the Sexual Athlete" from Michael A. Messner and Donald F. Sabo's *Sex, Violence & Power in Sports: Rethinking Masculinity*. The Crossing Press. (CP)
 Grazien, David. 2007. "The Girl Hunt: Urban Nightlife and the Performance of Masculinity as Collective Activity." *Symbolic Interaction* 30(2):221-243. (CP)
- Wed 12/7 (43) ASSIGNMENT #5 (Previous assignment you haven't done)**
- Fri 12/9 (44) Review for final exam**

***** Personal Gender Theory Paper (Part B) Due *****

General Considerations for Your Assignments

1. When writing your paper, keep in mind Erving Goffman's concept of "impression management." The content and presentation of your paper send messages about who you are. The message you want to send is, "I am an excellent student who cares about this course and this assignment." Bad writing, spelling and punctuation send the message: "I don't care about this assignment so I didn't put any effort into it."
2. There is no minimum or maximum length for your papers; the suggested length is 4-6 pages. The guiding principle should be the overall quality of your paper. Conciseness is good; padding is bad.
3. The instructor will be happy to meet with you about your paper and/or to read a draft of your paper. However, this draft should already be fairly complete and proofread. Also, your draft should be submitted no later than two class days before the due date so the instructor will have time to read it.
4. The most difficult part of writing a paper is re-writing. You cannot write a quality paper on the first draft, especially if it is written the night before the assignment is due. After you have outlined, organized and written a first draft, review and edit what you have written.
5. Double-check the spelling, grammar, and punctuation of your paper. You do not want to annoy the reader or detract from the overall quality of your paper.
6. Use quotation marks and citations to indicate words and ideas which belong to someone besides yourself. Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses against academic integrity. It is grounds for failing this course and could result in more serious penalties as well.
7. After you are satisfied with your paper, you should have a trusted friend (perhaps a member of the class) read your paper. Your friend should proofread your paper for clarity, coherence and style. After reading your paper, your friend should be able to tell you its main points. If your friend doesn't understand your paper, chances are the instructor won't be able to either.
8. Your paper must be printed on a laser-quality printer, double-spaced and stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Do not use a title page or binder. Full justify text.
9. Be sure to keep an electronic copy of your paper, in case something happens to the copy you submit before it is graded.
10. Your grade will be based on two factors: 1) whether your paper meets the specific requirements of the assignment, and 2) the overall impact of your paper, including its organization, style, coherence and insight. Take note of the grading standards described on p. 3 of this syllabus.

Assignment Details

Personal Gender Theory Paper, part A

Most people believe that men and women are different types of people. In this paper, you will explain your theory about how and why this is.

In the first part of your paper, explain how and why men and women are different. You may discuss the fact that men's and women's bodies are different, but the focus of the paper should be on the fact that men and women act differently and are treated differently by other people. Be sure to discuss (1) how men and women are different and (2) why they are different.

In the second part of the paper, explain how you know your theory is true. How and why did you learn to think this way?

The content of your theory will not affect your grade; the organization, style and coherence of your paper will.

Be sure to keep a copy of your paper so you can respond to it for the second part of the assignment.

Personal Gender Theory Paper, part B

For this assignment, read your paper written for part A of this assignment and respond to it.

In the first part of your paper, briefly summarize your original gender theory.

In the second part of your paper, describe your current theory of gender—how and why men and women are different. Explain how it differs from your original theory as well as what has not changed. If your theory has not changed at all over the course of the class, explain why not.

The content of your theory will not affect your grade; the organization, style and coherence of your paper will.

Breaching Project

The purpose of this project is to have students explore cultural expectations about gender by violating, or breaching, them. Breaching as a sociological method was developed by Harold Garfinkel, the founder of ethnomethodology, who argued that we can test the existence of cultural expectations by violating them.

For this assignment, you will hypothesize the existence of a rule or expectation regarding gender and then break it in the presence of at least one naïve subject. You may do your breaching in cooperation with classmates as long as you each submit your own paper.

Possible topics of the breaching exercise include clothing, grooming, conversational topics/styles, shopping behavior, and romantic behavior. The breaching activity must be something you do not regularly do. Possible naïve subject(s) include parents, siblings, roommates, boy/girlfriend, and strangers.

Your paper will cover four topics:

1. Explain your hypothesis about the existence of a cultural expectation regarding gender, i.e., about what men or women are supposed to do or are not supposed to do. Draw from your own experience as a cultural native/observer and/or academic research.
2. Describe your breaching exercise, i.e., what you did or said to violate the expectation. Give a detailed account including any deviations from your plan.
3. Describe the reaction of the naïve subject(s) to your breaching exercise and any interaction you had with them. If you explained the purpose of your exercise to the subject(s) after its completion, explain what happened after that. (Parts 2 & 3 may be combined in a chronological account covering what you and your subject(s) did and said.)
4. Describe your own reaction to your breaching exercise, e.g., was it uncomfortable, nauseating, exhilarating? Cover your subjective feelings before, during and after the exercise.

In your summary you should return to your hypothesis and evaluate it in light of the evidence from the reactions of your naïve subject(s) and your own reaction. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.

IMPORTANT: Students should abandon the exercise if they suspect that continuing it may result in damage to anyone's physical or psychological health, or to any relationship. If you do abandon the exercise, include an explanation in your report. In addition, your actions must not be in violation of any law or any Iowa State University regulation.

Magazine Article Analysis

The purpose of this project is to have students explore media gender socialization through analyzing a magazine article that sends messages about gender.

This assignment requires you to analyze a magazine article that gives descriptive or prescriptive information about men and/or women.

The article can be descriptive or prescriptive. A descriptive article explains what men and/or women are like, e.g., "Men are like power tools, women are like doilies," "Why men can't be faithful to one woman." Prescriptive articles give gender-specific advice, e.g., "How to meet and marry a man in 30 days," "Ten pick-up lines that are guaranteed to drive women crazy." The text can focus on one sex or on how the two sexes are different.

In the first part of the paper you will describe the article and its main argument.

In the second part of the paper you will analyze the paper from a social constructionist perspective, i.e., you will look at how the text constructs the meanings of men and/or women. Your analysis should address the following four questions:

1. What is the basis for the text's claims about men and/or women, e.g., biology, socialization, personal experience of the author, the spiritual realm. These bases should be critiqued from a social constructionist perspective, which argues that gender differences between men and women are based on meanings that people give them. (It doesn't matter if you aren't a social constructionist; play the role of one for the purpose of this assignment.)

2. Does the argument of the text support traditional constructions of what it means to be a man and/or woman or does it support alternative constructions? For prescriptive articles, another way of thinking about the question is: If the reader follows the advice, will they be performing a traditional gender role or an alternative one?

3. What are the possible consequences for the text's readers if they accept the text's argument? For the prescriptive articles, this means: What are the possible consequences of following the text's advice. For descriptive articles, this means: What are the possible consequences of believing men and/or women are like the article says they are?

4. What are the possible consequences for society if many people read the text and accept its argument? Focus not just on the consequences for the readers, but for people whose lives they might affect. For instance, if many men were to follow an article's advice on how to attract women, how might it affect women? Other men?

You may choose to address other issues in your analysis, e.g., the role of race and class in the article. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.

Sit-Com Analysis

The purpose of this project is to have students explore media gender socialization through analyzing a sit-com that sends messages about gender.

For this assignment you will watch and analyze one episode of a television situation comedy. You should consider recording the episode so you can re-watch it during your analysis. You may choose a show you watch regularly, in which case you can draw upon your expertise regarding the show, or one you've never seen before, in which case you will bring a fresh perspective to the show.

The first part of the paper will briefly describe the episode, focusing on the main characters and an outline of the plot.

In the second part of the paper, you will describe the messages that the sit-com sends about gender. For example, your episode may send messages like: men (or women) are idiots; women (or men) are superficial and overly concerned about their appearance, men (or women) are motivated mainly by sexual desire, men (or women) can't be trusted, mothers (or fathers) hold the family together, and so on. Messages may also be sent about specific types of males or females: elderly women, married men, housewives, teenaged boys, pre-teen girls, and so on.

The strength of your analysis will depend upon your ability to figure out why jokes are funny. Sit-coms depend upon the audience's understanding of societal conventions, which can then be exaggerated, inverted, etc. for comic effect. A good question to ask about a joke is whether it would be funny if the gender of the people were changed. For instance, many sit-coms have jokes about incompetent fathers. Would these jokes be funny if the incompetent parent were the mother? What does this say about how the audience is expected to view fathers and mothers?

Be aware of how intersecting identities like race, class and sexuality bear on your analysis. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.

Your conclusion should summarize your main findings, e.g., what are the key messages the sit-com sends about gender?

Child Interview Project

The purpose of this project is to have students explore gender socialization by interviewing a child (4-10 years old). The child should be someone with whom you are already familiar, such as a younger sibling, niece or nephew, or the child of a friend.

In preparation for your interview, you should formulate a research question. The research question should be about what the child has learned about how men or women are different OR about what the child has learned about how to be a boy or a girl OR how boys and girls are treated differently.

Some sample questions are:

- What behaviors will cause boys/girls to be teased for being like the other sex.
- What are the rules for boys and girls playing together and/or apart?
- How do teachers treat boys and girls differently?
- How are the jobs men do different from those women do?
- What chores are men and women supposed to do?

Before your interview, prepare a series of interview questions that relate to the research question. These questions will guide your interview. However, your interview should be open-ended enough to allow you to fully explore the research question.

Whatever your research question, you should ask the child about why things are the way the child describes them (e.g., why aren't boys supposed to play with dolls). Report the results of this line of questioning whether the child has an answer or not.

If the child has egalitarian attitudes (e.g., both men and women can do any job), you should ask the child whether other children agree with that. Such a child may be aware of other children's attitudes about gender and be able to comment on them.

Your paper will clearly state your research question and summarize your findings. It should also provide some basic information about the child to put his/her comments in social context, e.g., age, sex, race. Be aware of how intersecting identities like race, class and sexuality bear on your analysis. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.

IMPORTANT: Research with children requires the consent of their parents. Be sure to inform the parents of the child you are interviewing of the topic of the interview and that it will be used for a class assignment and may be discussed in class. You should also explain this to the child. You should not proceed with the interview if either parents or child are not enthusiastic about participating.

Children's Game Analysis Project

The purpose of this project is to have students explore gender socialization by analyzing a commercial game aimed at children. By commercial game I mean a mass-produced game, such as a board game or children's computer game.

You should choose a game that sends messages about what it means to be a boy or a girl and/or how boys and girls differ. I have in mind games aimed at either boys or girls, although some games intended for both of them may also send messages about gender.

You should consider getting together with fellow class members to play the game. However, you each need to submit your own analysis. You could also play the game with children—either novice or expert players—and draw upon their reactions for your analysis. Or you could observe children playing.

The first part of the paper will describe the game, its rules, and what it is like to play it.

The second part of the paper will describe the results of your analysis. How you do your analysis will depend upon the game. However, at a minimum you should read the rules, play the game, and examine all of the board space, cards, tokens, etc. Pay special attention to the goal of the game (e.g., criteria for winning) and what obstacles, penalties, bonuses, etc. players encounter en route to that goal. Other issues to consider include competition vs. cooperation, sharing and violence.

Your analysis should focus on what messages the game sends about what it means to be a boy or a girl and/or how boys and girls differ. Be aware of how intersecting identities like race, class and sexuality bear on your analysis. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.

IMPORTANT: Research with children requires the consent of their parents. If you involve a child or children in the research by playing the game with them or observing them, be sure to inform their parents that you are doing a class assignment that may be discussed in class. You should also explain this to the children. You should not proceed with the project if either parents or children are not enthusiastic about participating.

Interview with Person Over 60

The purpose of this project is to have students explore how some aspect of gender has changed by learning how a person over 60 experienced it.

In preparation for your interview, you should formulate a research question. The research question should be about how some aspect of gender was experienced when the subject was younger. Some possible topics for your research question include: childhood gender socialization, courtship, housework and women in the workplace. (Your research question should not be about how the subject experiences gender now.)

Before your interview, prepare a series of interview questions that relate to the research question. These questions will guide your interview. However, your interview should be open-ended enough to allow you to fully explore the research question.

After learning about the subject's experience with the research topic, ask the subject about how things are different now and what the subject thinks of that change (e.g., do they approve of the change, are things better or worse than they used to be?).

Your paper will clearly state your research question and summarize your findings, providing a rich picture of the subject's experience as it relates to the aspect of gender. You will also discuss how this aspect of gender has changed. In addressing the question of change, you may draw upon your subject's opinion, your own experience and/or academic research. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.

Your paper should provide some basic information about the subject to put his/her comments in social context. Be aware of how intersecting identities like race, class and sexuality bear on your analysis.

Family Gender Inventory

The purpose of this project is to have students explore gender in the family by investigating gender roles in a family of which they are a part.

Your paper will either focus on your family of origin (e.g., you, your parents and your siblings) or the family you have formed (i.e., you, your spouse or cohabiting romantic partner and any children you may have). Your data will include your own observations/experiences and interviews with family members.

In the first part of the article, you will describe the household division of labor in the family. What work do the males in the family do? What work do the females do? Include not just chores and childcare, but also emotional work, e.g., who provides comfort? Be sure to discuss the role of any outside help the family hires.

Your description may focus on one point in time (e.g., now or when you were in high school) or provide some history of how gender roles in the family have changed.

In the second part of the paper, describe family members' own explanations of the family division of labor. For instance, why does mom do the dusting and dad mow the lawn? Why do the boys and girls do different types of chores? Be sure to ask about and report past or present conflict related to the household division of labor. This part of the paper will require interviewing all living members of the family.

In the third part of the paper, describe what lessons about men and women a child in the house might be expected to learn. For your family or origin, this means what lessons did you and your siblings learn. For a family you formed, this means what lessons might your current or future children learn.

Your paper should provide some basic information about the family to put it in social context. Be aware of how intersecting identities like race, class and sexuality bear on your analysis. You may apply appropriate concepts from course readings and lecture as necessary.