

Boston University – Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

WS101 Gender & Sexuality I: An Interdisciplinary Introduction – Fall 2014

Lecture MWF 10:00–11:00 am, CAS B12

Small group discussion F 11:00–12:00 (D1–4), 1:00–2:00 (D5)

Faculty: Ashley Mears (Sociology) mears@bu.edu SOC 257, 96 Cummington Mall
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Teaching Fellow:

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Office Hours: Mears: Wednesdays 12–2 pm

Preston: Wednesdays 8:30-9:45 am, Fridays 12–1 pm

Warkentin: Mondays 1–3 pm

O’Connor: Fridays 12–3 pm

Additional office hours by appointment

Nature vs. nurture? Is it biology or social construction? Polarized debates like these are often invoked in discussions of gender and sexuality or the sources of masculinity and femininity. In this class, we will discard the “either/or” elements in these debates to explore gender and sexuality from the perspectives of natural science, social science, and the humanities. We will ask how our biological evolution, social and cultural experiences, AND imaginative constructions affect our understanding of what it means to be men and women.

The first semester of the course will consider the origins, diversity, and expression of gendered and sexed individuals, while the second semester will focus more on communities and institutions. Topics in the first semester include the evolutionary origin of sexes; evolution, development, and social construction of sex differences; sexual differences, similarities and diversity in bodies, brains, behavior, and artistic and intellectual expressions. The second semester turns to the institutions of patriarchy, religion, familial organization, and colonialism, among others, as well as how communities launch movements for social change. The distinction between the two semesters is a matter of emphasis rather than strict division, as the individual cannot be understood without examining the communities within which she or he lives, and all communities are shaped by those they include and exclude. Moreover, our biological bodies and brains, shaped by evolutionary history, affect both individual experience and social interactions.

This Interdisciplinary Introduction is the required year-long gateway course for the minor in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Each semester we will work with many different kinds of readings, including empirical research articles and scholarly essays in the natural and social sciences, including biology, anthropology, archeology, psychology, and sociology; scholarly works from many humanities disciplines, including literature, history, philosophy, and religion; as well as novels, plays, films, and poetry. Lecture and discussion time will be devoted to the tools and strategies needed to make the most of these diverse readings. By the end of the two-semester course you should feel confident in approaching a research report, a piece of literary criticism, a novel, or a play.

Course Structure: Most weeks, Mondays and Wednesdays will be devoted to lectures by two different faculty addressing related issues from different disciplinary perspectives. A full-class discussion on Friday (10–11 am) with all faculty present will integrate across perspectives. For the second hour on Fridays (11–12, 1–2), we will divide into smaller groups to discuss issues in a more intimate setting. Faculty will rotate among small discussions through the semester.

Required Materials available at the BU Barnes & Noble Bookstore or online.

- Eugenides, J. 2002. *Middlesex: A Novel*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. 2012. *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World*. Routledge.
- *Clicker Audience Response System* – You must purchase or rent the ResponseCard RF clicker. Clickers can be purchased at the BU Bookstore or directly from Turning Technologies at <https://store.turningtechnologies.com/> using the college code: wh4a. You are responsible for **registering** your clicker through Blackboard, so that your responses are associated with your name and BU ID, and for bringing your clicker to every class.
- All other course readings will be posted on the course Blackboard web site at learn.bu.edu or available online through the BU Library or through other links provided in Blackboard.

Required reading assignments, listed below and on Blackboard, should be completed **before** coming to class on the day for which the reading is assigned and will be the subject of graded clicker questions. **Any updates to readings during the semester will be posted on Blackboard.**

For some readings we have identified **specific portions of the article or chapter** in Blackboard. You are responsible for carefully reading the material in the selections listed. We usually post entire articles or chapters and encourage you to read or skim more than the assigned selections. We also post many **optional** readings for students with a strong interest in the material. Often, these are pieces we have consulted when developing our lectures; they are **not required** and will not appear in clicker questions or on exams.

Soon after each lecture, we will post our **lecture slides** on Blackboard, as well as **questions** to think about for discussion and to guide your studies. The content of some exam questions will be very closely related to study questions, although the format will differ to facilitate consistency of grading. In addition, we will sometimes post poll questions to answer online. Your responses to those questions will help guide our Friday discussions.

CLASS SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS

Wed. Sept. 3: Introduction to course: Interdisciplinarity – All faculty

- Read the syllabus and check out the Blackboard website.

Weeks 1-2. **ORIGINS OF SEX & GENDER**

Fri. Sept. 5: Why are there sexes? – KW. Small group discussion 11–12, 1–2.

- Zimmer, C. 2009. On the origin of sexual reproduction. *Science*, 324(5932):1254-1256. BU Library Online.

Mon. Sept. 8: Performing genders I – CP

- Butler, J. 1988. Performative acts and gender constitution. *Theatre Journal*, 40.4: 519-33. READ Parts I, pgs. 519-524, and III, pgs. 529-531.
- Butler, J. 1993. Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion. In *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex,"* p. 121-142. New York: Routledge. READ pgs. 128-137.

Wed. Sept. 10: Performing genders II – AM

- Carney DR, Cuddy AJC, & Yap AJ. 2010. Power posing: brief nonverbal displays affect neuroendocrine levels and risk tolerance. *Psychological Science* 21, 1363-1368. BU Library Online.

Fri. Sept. 12: Discussion

- Feng, J, Spence, I, & Pratt, J. 2007. Playing an action video game reduces gender differences in spatial cognition. *Psychological Science*, 18: 850-855. BU Library Online.

Week 3. **SYSTEMS OF INEQUALITIES**

Mon. Sept. 15: Trafficking women and the origins of the sex/gender system – CP

- Rubin G. 1975. The traffic in women: notes on the 'political economy' of sex. In *Feminist Literary Criticism*. p. 392-412. New York: Norton.

Wed. Sept. 17: Contemporary trafficking – AM

- Hamilton, Laura. 2007. "Trading on heterosexuality: College women's gender strategies and homophobia." *Gender & Society* 21:145-72. BU Library Online.
- Martin, P.Y. & R. A. Hummer. 1989. "Fraternities and Rape on Campus." *Gender and Society* 3:457-73. BU Library Online.
READ pgs. 466 – 469, "Fraternities' Commodification of Women."

Fri. Sept. 19: Discussion

Week 4. **SEX DIFFERENCES AND SEX ROLES**

Mon. Sept. 22: Sexual selection and the evolution of sex differences and roles: a current biological perspective – KW

- Kokko, H & MD Jennions, 2008. Parental investment, sexual selection and sex roles. *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, 21: 919-948. BU Library Online.

Wed. Sept 24: Gender bias and sex role socialization – AM

- Emily Kane. 2006. "No Way my Boys Are Going to Be Like That! Parents' Responses to Children's Gender Nonconformity." *Gender & Society* 20 (2): 149 – 176. BU Library Online.

Fri. Sept. 26: Discussion

Week 5. **REPRODUCTIVE DIVERSITY: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

Mon. Sept. 29: Sexual diversity: determination, development and reproduction – KW

- Bachtrog D, Mank JE, Peichel CL, Kirkpatrick M, Otto SP, et al. (2014) Sex determination: why so many ways of doing it? *PLoS Biology* 12(7): e1001899. BU Library Online.
- Alam, F. 2014. What we can learn from the tree of sex. *Science Made Easy (blog)* <http://sciencemadeeasy.kinja.com/what-can-we-learn-from-the-tree-of-sex-1585353821>

Wed. Oct. 1: Social implications of reproductive biology: thought experiments in fiction – CP

- Butler, O. 1984. “Bloodchild.” In *Bloodchild and Other Stories*. 2005. New York: Seven Stories Press. Blackboard.
- Le Guin, U. 1995. “Coming of age in Karhide.” In *The Birthday of the World and Other Stories*. 2003. New York: Harper Perennial. Blackboard.

Fri. Oct. 3: Discussion

Week 6. **FAMILIES AND THEIR DIVERSITY**

Mon. Oct 6: Cooperative breeding: our evolutionary heritage – KW

- Blaffer Hrdy, S, 2009. Ch. 3. Why it takes a village. *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Belknap, Cambridge, MA. p. 67-109. Blackboard.

Wed. Oct. 8: Social Construction of Family Values – AM

- Coontz, S. 2005. Chapters 1 – 3, pgs. 15 – 50. *Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Penguin Books. Blackboard.
- SKIM Chapter 2, “The Many Meanings of Marriage,” pgs. 24 – 33.

Fri. Oct. 10: Discussion (SO away)

Mon. Oct. 13: Columbus Day Holiday – No Class

Week 7. **THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Tues. Oct. 14 (Monday Schedule): Phenotypic plasticity: Sex as a reaction norm – KW

- Ah-King, M & S Nylin, 2010. Sex in an evolutionary perspective: just another reaction norm. *Evolutionary Biology*, 37(4): 234-246. BU Library Online.
- Fausto-Sterling 2012, Ch. 7. Thinking about groups, thinking about individuals. P. 99-108. Ch. 8. Pink and blue forever. p. 109-111. Ch. 9. The developmental dynamics of pink and blue p. 112-118.

Wed. Oct. 15: Review for midterm – all faculty

Fri. Oct 17: Midterm Exam (no discussion)

Week 8. **WHERE DO GENDER DIFFERENCES COME FROM?**

Mon. Oct. 20: Sexed brains? – KW

- Jordan-Young, R, and RI Rumiati. 2011. Hardwired for sexism? Approaches to sex/gender in neuroscience. *Neuroethics* 5(3): 305-315. BU Library Online.

Wed. Oct. 22: Gendered organizations – AM

- Christine Williams, “The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the ‘Female’ Professions,” pgs. 211-224 in *Men's Lives*, edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, 2000. Blackboard.
READ from p. 212, beginning with “Methods”
- Kristen Schilt, 2006. “Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible in the Workplace.” *Gender & Society* 20 (4): 465-490. BU Library Online.
SKIM pgs. 465 – 473, and read from p. 473, “Transmen as Outsiders Within at Work”

Fri Oct. 24: Discussion

- Ingalhalikar, M, A Smith, D Parker, TD Satterthwaite, MA Elliott, K Ruparel, H Hakonason, RE Gur, RC Gur, R Verma. 2013. Sex differences in the structural connectome of the human brain. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111(2): 823-828. BU Library Online.

Weeks 9-10. **SEXUALITIES**

Mon. Oct. 27: Primate sexuality: humans in evolutionary context – KW

- Blaffer Hrdy, S. 1999. Ch. 4, Unimaginable Variation. In *Mother Nature*. p. 79-95.

Wed. Oct. 29: Cultural variation in sex norms – AM

- Schalet, Amy T. 2011. *Not Under My Roof: Parents, Teens, and the Culture of Sex*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Selections.

Fri. Oct. 31: Discussion

Mon. Nov. 3: The invention of heterosexuality & homosexuality – CP

- Halperin, D. 1990. One Hundred Years of Homosexuality. In *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*. New York: Routledge. p. 15-40.
Read section I through the break on pg. 18, skim or skip section II, and then read section III through the end, pgs. 25-40.

Wed. Nov. 5: Animal sexual diversity & homosexuality – KW

- Bailey, NW & Zuk, M. 2009. Same-sex behavior and evolution. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 24: 439-446. BU Library Online.

Fri. Nov. 7: Discussion (CP away)

- LeVay, S. 1991. A difference in hypothalamic structure between heterosexual and homosexual men. *Science* 253:1034-1037.

Weeks 11-12. **LIBERATION MOVEMENTS: CHANGE AND STASIS**

Mon. Nov. 10: The history of women's liberation, gay liberation, and the Civil Rights Amendment (Happy Fiftieth Birthday CRA!) – CP

- Wilchins, R. 2004. Ch. 1, Women's Rights, pgs. 5-11, Ch. 2, Gay Rights, pgs. 13-20. In *Queer Theory, Gender Theory*. Los Angeles: Alyson Books.

- Behind the Civil Rights Act: How it was made and what it means today. NPR.
<http://apps.npr.org/behind-the-civil-rights-act/#/annotations>

Wed. Nov. 12: From liberation to intersectionality: gendered and racialized homophobia – AM

- C.J. Pascoe. 2009. Ch. 1 and 3, *Dude You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. U of California Press.

READ "Methodology" in Ch. 1, pgs. 15 – 22, and Ch. 3, pgs. 52 – 83

Suggested: Ch. 4, "Compulsive Heterosexuality," pgs. 84 – 114.

Fri. Nov. 14: Discussion

Mon. Nov. 17: Liberation revisited: rights, identities, and other unfinished business – CP

- Burk, M. 2014. Fifty years after the Civil Rights Act, is the joke on women? *Huffington Post*.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/martha-burk/50-years-after-the-civil_b_5497034.html

- Moreno, P. 2014. Civil Right Act at 50. *The Wall Street Journal*.
<http://online.wsj.com/articles/paul-moreno-the-civil-rights-act-at-50-1404253782>

- Sandberg, S. 2013. from *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. New York: Knopf.
<http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/07/why-i-want-women-to-lean-in/>

- hooks, b. 2013. Dig Deep: Beyond lean in. *Feminist Wire*.
http://thefeministwire.com/2013/10/17973/?fb_source=pubv1

Wed. Nov. 19: Structural and cultural change – AM

- England, P. 2010. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled." *Gender & Society* 24: 149 – 166.

Fri. Nov. 21: Discussion

Weeks 13-14. **VARIETIES OF BODIES AND GENDERS**

Mon. Nov. 24: Intersex & the biology of sexual development – KW

- Fausto-Sterling 2012. Ch. 2. Of spirals and layers. P. 3-11. Ch. 3. Of molecules and sex. p. 12-26. Part of Ch. 4. Am I a boy or a girl? p. 49-69.
- Eugenides, J. 2002. *Middlesex: A Novel*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Note: The **entire** novel must be read before this class.

Wed. Nov. 26: Thanksgiving Holiday

Fri. Nov. 28: Thanksgiving Holiday

Mon. Dec. 1: Reading fiction, reading sex – CP

- Eugenides, J. 2002. *Middlesex: A Novel*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Wed. Dec. 3: Text and context – SO

- Eugenides, J. 2002. *Middlesex: A Novel*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Fri. Dec. 5: Discussion (AM & KW away)

Week 15. **EXPANDING (AND REVIEWING)**

Mon. Dec. 8: Queer nation, queer globe (or just another empire?) – CP

- Puar, J. 2007. Introduction, pgs. 1-36. In *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in queer times*. Durham: Duke.

READ: Homonationalism and biopolitics, pgs. 1-3. U.S. sexual exceptionalism, pgs. 3-1. Queer as regulatory, pgs. 11-24. Queer necropolitics, pgs. 32-36.

Other current readings may be added.

Wed. Dec. 10: Review for final – all faculty

Wed. Dec. 17: FINAL EXAM 9 – 11 a.m.

Grading and Assignments

Your grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Papers I–III	30%
Class participation	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	30%

Papers (10% each)

You will write three papers as described below. More detailed instructions for each paper will be posted on the course Blackboard site. Paper grades will be based 8% on your final revised paper and 2% on your work as a peer reviewer. You must submit a draft paper in order to participate in peer review. **All paper stages (draft, peer review, revision) must be submitted electronically by 10 am on their respective due dates; late papers will not be graded and will receive no credit.** Specific submission guidelines for each paper will be provided separately.

Papers I and II: Thought experiment in the social implications of reproductive biology

For both of these papers, you will write a draft, exchange these drafts with a peer and write a peer review of your colleague's paper following guidelines that will be provided. You will then revise your paper in response to peer comments and turn in both versions, as well as your peer review exercise. Each paper will be worth 10 points, two of which will be awarded on the basis of your peer review work. Revising papers in response to peer review is a feature common to all academic disciplines and a crucial part of the process of generating and sharing knowledge.

Paper I. Research and write a 2–3 page scientific review paper summarizing the key features of the reproductive biology of a species that differs substantially from humans in its mode of reproduction, appropriately citing your research sources. You will be provided with a list of candidate species, or may choose another in consultation with Prof. Warkentin. **DRAFT DUE OCT. 6, PEER REVIEW DUE OCT. 10, REVISED FINAL PAPER DUE OCT. 15**

Paper II. In the tradition of science fiction "thought experiments," write a ~3-page fictional narrative exploring the social and cultural implications of a non-human form of reproductive biology for an advanced society of intelligent beings based on the reproductive biology of the species you researched for Paper I. **DRAFT DUE OCT. 24, PEER REVIEW DUE OCT. 29, REVISED FINAL PAPER DUE NOV. 5.**

Paper III. Using qualitative social science methods of participation observation, in-depth interviewing, and/or content analysis, collect empirical research on the mechanisms of gender inequality in any two comparative sites on BU campus. You may collect data on interaction patterns, representations, discourses, or any other manifestation of gender on campus, in for instance, two classrooms or two social clubs. Analyze how your observations reproduce or challenge systemic inequality. **DRAFT DUE NOV. 19, PEER REVIEW DUE NOV. 24, FINAL PAPER DUE DEC 8.**

Participation (20%)

Your participation grade includes 3 or 4 components. **5%** will be based on your contribution to class discussions by asking relevant questions and offering responses. Disruptive behavior (e.g. cell phone use, chatter in class or online) will severely affect your participation grade.

10% will be based on your in-class responses to questions through the audience response system. All students are required to acquire a clicker response card (NOT the app) and **bring your clicker to every class**. Some questions will be surveys for which there is no right or wrong answer; your participation will earn you points. Some questions will be based on the assigned reading for that day; your correct answer will earn you points. **If you do not bring your clicker to class, we will not be able to record your response or allocate you any points.**

5% will be based on your online posts to the Blackboard discussion board. This is an opportunity to give faculty feedback on lectures that will inform Friday discussions. Posting at least 6 times during the semester will earn you full credit. **Posts are due by midnight on Wednesday; late posts will not receive credit.**

Potential bonus 5% – You may attend two events outside of class, such as course-related lectures, performances, exhibits, or other events relevant to the course and submit event reviews for bonus credit. We will announce some relevant events in class or post them to the course

Facebook page; for other events, check with a faculty member to determine if they are suitable for bonus credit. You may write and submit two event reviews of approximately 1 page in length (**2.5% each**) describing the goals of the event, evaluating its success in meeting these goals, and relating the event to course concepts or questions. If you attend events, we encourage you to write and submit event reviews within 1 week of the event to benefit from the sharpness of recent memory; delayed reviews are often poor reviews. **Event reviews submitted after Dec. 10 will not be graded and will receive no credit.**

Midterm exam (20%) – Fri. Oct. 17, in class

Covering course readings, lectures, and discussions up to and including Oct. 15.

Final exam (30%) – Wed. Dec. 17, 9–11 am

Covering course readings, lectures, and discussions throughout the course, with an emphasis on material since the midterm.

Exams will be closed book. Most questions will be multi-part True/False questions, as in the prior exams that are available on Blackboard. Exams may also include other question formats requiring brief answers that demonstrate your knowledge of course material and paragraph-length responses demonstrating your ability to use and reason with material covered in the course.

Expectations of conduct

Students are expected to attend all four weekly class meetings, to come to classes having read the assigned material, to bring their clickers to each class, and to participate thoughtfully and actively in class discussions. **Other than clickers, no electronic devices will be permitted in class (no laptops, no phones); this is based on pedagogical research.** Students are expected to check both their BU email accounts and the course Blackboard website regularly and are responsible for information disseminated by both means. Faculty will hold regular weekly office hours and are also available by appointment. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss with faculty any questions or concerns they may have about course readings, assignments, deadlines, and requirements, in a timely manner.

Students who miss an exam or an assignment deadline because of illness, family emergency, or other excused absence will be given an opportunity to do a make-up exam or assignment at a later time agreed to with the instructor. **Students should notify faculty in advance of such missed work if at all possible, and otherwise as soon as possible afterwards, to make arrangements.**

Students needing **academic accommodations** must contact the **Office for Disability Services** (617-353-3658), whose staff will advise faculty of the appropriate accommodation. If you require academic accommodations, please notify faculty within the first two weeks of class so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner.

Students are expected to exhibit the highest standards of academic integrity and never to submit work as their own which is the work of others. Students should familiarize themselves with BU's **Academic Conduct Code**: (<http://www.bu.edu/academics/academic-conduct-code/>). Academic misconduct is the misrepresentation of one's academic achievement and includes cheating on examinations, falsely indicating your own or another's attendance in class, and plagiarizing

written work. Failing to properly acknowledge and cite sources of information in a paper, or presenting another person's words or ideas as if they were your own constitutes plagiarism. All cases that violate Boston University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to failure in the course. Plagiarism detection software will be used; please note that it is easy for faculty to find the same online sources as you can find and to check your text against the contents of the web.

This course is likely to challenge your assumptions about gender and sexuality, along with race, ethnicity, class, and other elements of our identities. We will discuss sensitive topics with multiple personal and political dimensions, and diverse opinions and academic dispute are expected and welcome. You are expected to participate in any and all debates with respect for your classmates and instructors. Though personal opinions may differ, you will be graded only according to whether you learned the concepts taught in this course.

Challenges to our basic assumptions can feel uncomfortable, and the possibility of feeling overwhelmed and distressed is magnified when the topics being studied are so deeply connected to the ways we understand ourselves. If you are concerned, feel free to talk with any of the instructors in office hours. Counselors are always available to students at Behavioral Medicine (617-353-3569, <http://www.bu.edu/shs/behavioral/>) and the Sexual Assault Response and Preventions Center (617-353-SARP, <http://www.bu.edu/sarp/>).

We look forward to a challenging and stimulating semester!