

SOCIOLOGY 170

SHIFTING IDEAS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN SCIENCE

Gender identities and sexual preferences are eminently social practices. Nonetheless, the dominant view of gender and sexuality is that they are determined by one's biological make-up and physical attributes. Science and medicine have played a central role in defining gender and sexuality in biological terms. It is the purpose of this class to examine what sorts of beliefs held by scientists and medical practitioners have influenced this perspective, and to challenge their veracity. Over the course of the quarter, we will discuss how science has consistently reinforced the notion of biological determinism in a variety of research projects and medical experiments and consider how a different perspective influenced by feminist theory would reveal the social practices at play.

The class will be structured around lectures and class discussion. Discussion will be facilitated by students posing questions of the readings and lectures in brief essays each week. The point is to reduce the amount of time devoted to "talking heads monologues" and spark more conversation. There will be two exams: a midterm and a final, both take-home papers.

Attendance is required. You can verify your attendance by entering the attendance code that I will post on one of the power point slides I use in lecture. (The link for verifying attendance is located under Quizzes on Canvas, and called Surveys.) You are allowed to miss up to 3 classes without any penalty. If you miss more classes, then your grade will suffer. Missing a few classes (above the 3 allowed) will result in a deduction of half a grade, e.g. instead of a B, a B-. Missing a lot more classes will mean you will be graded down a full grade, e.g. instead of a B, a C. If you are ill, you must bring a doctor's note to prove it.

Exams. There will be a midterm and a final exam, both take home papers (1100-1300 words, double-spaced). We are now in the era of ChatGTP, making it easy to submit an exam that has not been written by you, but by a computer. I don't want to get rid of take-home exams, because conceptualizing and writing a good answer to essay questions is a valuable skill to acquire in college. So I suggest the following strategy to convince me that you wrote your paper: include at least two or more references to class discussions that have taken place that help you answer the essay question. Include the date the discussion occurred. You will be required to answer one of three questions distributed one week before the due date. Both exams must be submitted on-line through the Turnitin link on Canvas.

due dates for exams

Midterm **February 5 by 6:20 p.m.**

Final **March 20 by 10 p.m.**

Weekly class assignments. Each week (with the exception of Week I), you will be required to submit a 250-300 word essay question for class discussion. We will devote most of Thursday's classes to discussion, answering and debating the questions you raise about the readings for that week. I use this format for my graduate classes, and find it works to get students' perspectives into the conversation. It means that rather than having me review the readings and related materials in lecture that I consider important, we end up talking about the issues you find curious, interesting, frustrating, or just outright weird in the readings. I

don't want students to get hung up about asking "smart" questions. This should be a chance to discuss issues in as open or candid a manner as possible. That includes saying things like "I don't get this" or "I really don't like the argument."

You may pose either a question or make a comment, but it must relate to the readings for the week. Asking simple questions like "I don't understand the argument of the paper" is certainly legitimate, but then you must explain why you are confused. If you say you disagree with the argument, or a section of the paper, then the same principle applies; you must explain what is problematic or disturbing in the analysis. You may even sing the praises of an article assigned for the course, but make sure to explain why the material excites you. In any essay you write, you **must** either quote or paraphrase portions of the article to make your point. Always include both date and page number in your citation, e.g. (Rubin 2012:867). This will reassure me that you are reading the material and not simply skimming the first page. I find that students will often try to save time by not reading the materials assigned, but this is wrong-headed. I know you are busy and crunched for time, but you will benefit much more from the course if you actually read the materials each week.

I will grade the weekly assignments according to the following criteria:

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 8 points | a clearly articulated question/comment, accompanied by supporting material (only one article for the week is discussed) |
| 10 points | a clearly articulated question/comment, accompanied by supporting material (both articles are discussed) |

One or two extra points may be assigned if the question/comment is exceptionally well written and conceptualized. **No points** will be given if there is no reference (quote or paraphrase) to readings from the week.

Essays are due **Thursday morning at 9 a.m.**

Grading

Weekly assignments will constitute **40%** of the grade. The midterm and final exams will constitute **30%** each.

Readings

All articles for class are available on electronic reserves in the library (reserves.ucsd.edu).

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to complete the course in compliance with the instructor's standards. No student shall engage in any activity that involves attempting to receive a grade by means other than honest effort; for example:

- No student shall knowingly procure, provide, or accept any unauthorized material that contains questions of answers to any examination or assignment to be given at a subsequent time.
- No student shall complete, in part or in total, any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, for himself or herself by another person.
- No student shall plagiarize or copy the work of another person and submit it as his or her own work.

Plagiarism refers to the use of another's work without full acknowledgment, whether by suppressing the reference, neglecting to identify direct quotations, paraphrasing closely or at length without citing sources,

spuriously identifying quotations or data, or cutting and pasting the work of multiple authors into a single undifferentiated whole.

- No student shall employ aids excluded by the instructor in undertaking course work or in completing any exam assignment.
- No student shall alter graded class assignments or examinations and then resubmit them for re-grading.
- No student shall submit substantially the same material in more than one course without prior authorization.

Maintaining Academic Integrity: Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Students With Special Needs: In accordance with UCSD policy, arrangements to accommodate disabilities and other special individual needs must be made with Professor Lampland within the first two weeks of the quarter.

Caution: For any of those laboring under the illusion that multitasking in class is a feasible strategy, I encourage you to ask questions in class and seek me out during my office hours to discuss issues from class. I will not, however, spend time repeating lectures outside class for those of you whose attention wanders. It is your responsibility to pay attention and take notes.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Jan. 7, 9 Introduction

Week 2

Jan. 14, 16 Male or Female
Oudshoorn
Richardson

Week 3

Jan. 21, 23 Sex differences in health outcomes
Zhao et. al.
Courtenay, Will H.

Week 4

Jan. 28, 30 Figuring out gender and intersex
Rubin
Plemons

Week 5

Feb. 4, 6 Testing sexuality
Ward
Waidzunass

Week 6

Feb. 11, 13 Are races different?
Strings
Merid

Week 7

Feb. 18, 20 Neuroplasticity and neurodivergence
Lappé
Pitts-Taylor

Week 8

Feb. 25, 27 Health and toxicity in the environment
Valenius
Morgan and Fortun

Week 9

Mar. 4, 6 Sports and exercise
Henne
Verbrugge

Week 10

Mar. 11, 13 Knowledge infrastructures
Ford and Wajcman
Lingel and Crawford

Bibliography

- Courtenay, Will H. 2000. "Constructions of Masculinity and their Influence on Men's Well-being: a Theory of Gender and Health." *Social Science and Medicine* 50(10):1385-1401.
- Ford, Heather and Judy Wajcman. 2017. "'Anyone Can Edit', Not Everyone Does: Wikipedia's Infrastructure and the Gender Gap." *Social Studies of Science* 47(4):511-27.
- Henne, Kathryn. 2014. "The 'Science' of Fair Play in Sport: Gender and the Politics of Testing." *Signs* 39(3):787-812.
- Lappé, Martine. 2016. "The Maternal Body as Environment in Autism Science." *Social Studies of Science* 46(5):675-700.
- Lingel, Jessa and Kate Crawford. 2020. "'Alexa, Tell Me About Your Mother': The History of the Secretary and the End of Secrecy." *Catalyst* 6(1):1-25.
- Merid, Beza. 2016. "'Stroke's No Joke': Race and the Cultural Coding of Stroke Risk." *Catalyst* 2(2):1-25.
- Morgan, Alli and Kim Fortun. 2020. "Toxic Soldiers, Flickering Knowledges, and Enlisted Care: Dispossession and Environmental Injustice." *Catalyst* 6(1):1-26.
- Oudshoorn, Nelly. 1990. "On Measuring Sex Hormones: The Role of Biological Assays in Sexualizing Chemical Substances." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 64(2):243-261.
- Pitts-Taylor, Victoria. 2019. "Neurobiologically Poor? Brain Phenotypes, Inequality, and Biosocial Determinism." *Science, Technology and Human Values* 44(4):660-85.
- Plemons, Eric D. 2014. "Description of Sex Difference as Prescription for Sex Change: On the Origins of Facial Feminization Surgery." *Social Studies of Science* 44(5):657-79.
- Richardson, Sarah S. 2012. "Sexing the X: How the X Became the 'Female Chromosome.'" *Signs* 37(4):909-933.

- Rubin, David. 2012. "'an Unnamed Blank That Craved a Name': A Genealogy of Intersex as Gender." *Signs* 37(4):883-908.
- Strings, Sabrina. 2017. "Obese Black Women as 'Social Dead Weight': Reinventing the 'Diseased Black Woman'." *Signs* 41(1):107-30.
- Valenius, Conevery Bolton. 2004. "Gender and the Economy of Health on the Santa Fe Trail." *Osiris* 19:79-92.
- Verbrugge, Martha H. 2002. "Gender, Science and Fitness: Perspectives on Women's Exercise in the United States in the 20th Century." *Health and History* 4(1):52-72.
- Waidzunus, Tom and Steven Epstein. 2015. "'for Men Arousal Is Orientation': Bodily Truthing, Technosexual Scripts, and the Materialization of Sexuality through the Phallometric Test." *Social Studies of Science* 45(2):187-213.
- Ward, Anna E. 2018. "Between the Screens: Brain Imaging, Pornography, and Sex Research." *Catalyst* 4(1):1-28.
- Zhao, Helen et. al. 2023. "'Making a Sex Difference Fact': Ambien Dosing at the Interface of Policy, Regulation, Women's Health, and Biology." *Social Studies of Science* 53(4):475-94.