Gender is a significant part of our identity, shaping our lives in powerful and nuanced ways. But what is gender exactly and how does it reflect different social locations? In everyday conversation, sex and gender are often used interchangeably, but the terms are not synonymous. Sex is generally seen as referring to the biological make-up one is born with (one is born a female, male, or a combination of the two in varying degrees), while gender refers to our social understanding of what it means to be a woman or a man (i.e., masculinity and femininity) and how those meanings get embedded in our social relations, institutions, and character.

In this course, we will look at specifically at the social and political context in which gender, as a complex process of identity and performance, is played out. The exploration of key institutions such as the family, state and workplace will give us some understanding of the social, economic and cultural factors that shape our lives as women and men. We will also look closely at various forms of media which provide gendered messages that reflect and reproduce gender inequality as well as empowering us to change.

While gender will be our pivotal axis, we will also be exploring the intersection of gender with class, race and ethnicity to broaden our conception of femininity and masculinity in order to move away from hegemonic ideologies and reframe the discussion to femininities and masculinities. We will ask how various social forces affect the diverse experiences of women and men with different identities (class, sexuality, race, etc.) You will gain the ability to apply your academic work to your own experiences and see how they are situated in gendered institutions and culture.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course has a tendency to attract a wide range of students – from Sociology and Women's Studies majors and minors to students looking only for an interesting class to fill the University’s Capstone requirement. As such, the course has been designed to give you all an overview of the sociology of gender. That said, this course is more substantive than an introductory course would be. If you are not familiar with Sociology or Women's Studies terminology and concepts, you may feel a bit
overwhelmed at first. This is to be expected, but it is not something that cannot be overcome with some assistance and perseverance.

One of my primary goals during this course is to help you develop what the eminent sociologist, C. Wright Mills, called the sociological imagination. The sociological imagination enables one to understand how a person’s social position (standpoint) in society (and the world) influences who they are, who they may become, the choices they will have, and the decision they will make. Further, it allows one to see how his or her personal troubles are often the result of a society’s public issues. This ability to see the social in the personal will be one of the most important conceptual tools, I believe, you will ever develop and being able to integrate your academic experience with your personal experience will be invaluable. But in a culture that values individualism, this will be challenging.

Prerequisites: SOC 101; junior or senior standing and completion of all General Education courses that build Core Objectives 1-3 and satisfy Core Objectives 4-8.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


ADDITIONAL READINGS:

In addition to your chapters, there will be two supplemental readings each week. Some of them are in the Weitz reader, the others will be available in PDF format on WebCampus. I may also assign current news articles if they pertain to our topic of the week.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course satisfies Core Objective 10 and 13.

Silver Core Objective 10: Diversity and Equity calls for students to be able to develop a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate attentiveness to and analysis of diversity and equity. Specifically, we will address diversity and gender equity by looking at the intersectionality of class, race, gender, and sexuality and understanding there are
different outcomes for women and men as expressed through various masculinities and femininities.

Students will learn to identify, apply and evaluate major sociological paradigms (functionalism conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism) and feminist approaches (liberal, radical, and socialist feminisms) used to analyze gender diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals through the reading, analysis, and critique of original research in the area of gender.

**Student Learning Outcomes for CO 10:**

Students will be able to:

- Analyze and interpret information about social rules and political and social biases in their own society that affect the experiences of marginalized and centered groups.
- Describe and investigate social issues related to gender diversity and equity using a sociological lens.
- Describe how sex and gender are socially constructed categories by exploring what gives them meaning, how the categories are maintained or transformed, and how they are related to concerns of equity.
- Analyze and articulate how sex and gender are distinct from and intersect with other major axes of social identity and life, such as class, race, and sexuality in relation to your own life experiences and the experiences of non-dominant or marginalized groups within the U.S.

**Silver Core Objective 13:** Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge enabling them to analyze complex problems. Students will survey the history of gender relations and be able to make comparisons locally and globally. Students will become critical consumers of media: TV, movies, magazines, and contemporary music in order to recognize and challenge current gender stereotypes and apply their knowledge to the complex work of achieving gender, class, and race equity. Students will be able to critically evaluate the methodological and theoretical assumptions underlying the literature in the area of gender and society (CO3) and will be able to express, both verbally and orally their understanding of the intersections of class, race and gender as they reflect culture and institutional structures and shape individual experience (CO1).

**Student Learning Outcomes for CO 13**

Students will be able to:

- Apply theoretical perspectives from previous courses in sociology, women’s studies and other fields to the complexities of race, class and gender inequality.
- Critically examine how one’s location within intersecting social forces impacts one’s worldview and relationships in personal and institutional settings.
Effectively communicate verbally and in writing their mastery of the theoretical and methodological debates in the area of Gender Studies.

Students will be able to verbally and orally apply their knowledge of gender and society to everyday experiences and problems related to gender, class and race.

Students will be able to criticize assumptions about gender as expressed in everyday conversations as well as policies and political discourse.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
To help facilitate your learning process I will require your steady attendance and active participation in class sessions. As such, your attendance is vital. Classes will begin with student questions and discussion drawn from the readings. Questions are to be addressed by all students, not just myself, although I will help guide the discussion, developing and expanding theoretical paradigms as needed. Moving through the material this way will help you to become a more critical thinker.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS
Attendance and participation is crucial to not only your success, but for the rest of members of the class. Therefore, attendance (due to the format of the class, I will assume if you are in class, you will be participating) will be taken into consideration when calculating your grade. A class such as this usually attracts committed students, but I realize that life happens or you just need a day off; as such, I have outlined below what I believe to be a reasonable schedule for attendance. If you find you are running into difficulty, you should speak with me as soon as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>RESULT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two classes missed</td>
<td>No effect on grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four classes missed</td>
<td>5% lower overall grade (1/2 grade point)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or more classes missed</td>
<td>10% lower overall grade (1 grade point)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“I entered the classroom with the conviction that it was crucial for me and every other student to be an active participant, not a passive consumer...education as the practice of freedom.... education that connects the will to know with the will to become. Learning is a place where paradise can be created.” –bell hooks

This course meets both Capstone and Diversity requirements, therefore, your reading and writing expectations may be greater than those to which you are accustomed.

WEEKLY WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (10 points each/100 points total)
There will be ten (10) weekly writing assignments asking you to reflect on the current week’s readings, lecture, video, and/or class discussion: this will usually (but not
always) include a chapter in the Ryle text and the additional readings for the week. I will provide specific weekly guidelines for you on WebCampus.

What am I looking for? Your thinking, your ability to engage with the readings and take a concept or a theoretical insight and push it in a direction that matters to you (CO1 and CO3), either because it is related to your area of interest (education, criminal justice, women’s studies, etc.), or because it simply interests you and forces you to apply your readings and class discussions in new and interesting ways (CO10 and 13).

‘A’ papers will include a discussion of current terms/concepts/theories we are discussing, citations from the readings, integration with the current Ryle chapter (if applicable), and connections to your experiences. In other words, you will be asked to integrate, synthesize, and apply your knowledge of the material in regards to the complex issues surrounding gender (CO13).

Weekly papers are to be one-page, single-spaced, 12pt font, one inch margins.

INTEGRATIVE MINI-RESEARCH PROJECTS (50 points each/100 points total)
To help bring the material and sociological and feminist research together, there will be two (2) mini-research projects scheduled throughout the semester:

1. Toys R Us/Hallmark – The Socialization of Adults and Children
2. Gender in the Media – Stories Our Culture Tells Us

Each project will require you to collect your own data (CO2), present the data in an understandable format (CO1), and analyze it drawing on course materials to interpret the meaning of your findings (CO3).

The format of the paper will be as follows: an introduction of the subject with a thesis statement pointing to the terms, concepts, and/or theories that will be used to analyze your findings (1-1/2 pgs); a short methodology section indicating the type of methodology used and how you went about collecting your data (1 pg); a findings and discussion section in which you discuss and analyze your findings integrating the applicable course materials into the discussion (4-5 pgs); and lastly, your conclusion where you answer the “so-what” question: why is this important? How does it perpetuate or challenge gender relations? What are the consequences for women? for men? (CO10)

Specific instructions for each project will be handed out so that you have ample time (approximately 2 weeks) to complete it: due dates are listed below in the Course Outline and on your WebCampus calendar.

ASSESSMENTS (50 points each/150 points total)
There are three scheduled exams throughout the semester. Each exam will consist of two substantive essay questions in which you demonstrate your understanding of the material by integrating terms, concepts, and theories discussed in the text and synthesizing them with the lectures and additional support materials (Weitz readings, WebCampus readings, videos). (CO1, 3, 10, 13)

**WANT TO CHAT?**

I do! I want to talk with you throughout the semester. Although I may be available if you drop by the office, it is best to make an appointment. Email is the best method to make an appointment. Please see me if you are having a problem with some aspect of the course, but remember that office hours are not just for problems. I am eager to address any questions you may have, explore your ideas, brainstorm topics that interest you, or discuss future academic or professional goals.

For the quickest response, please email me at: cheryl.maes@yahoo.com

**EXPLANATION OF REQUIREMENTS**

Generally, you can expect a B grade if you attend class regularly, participate, contribute good reflections and assessment papers. Especially insightful in-class participation, excellent written work, and thoughtful assessment papers will increase your grade. Sloppy or late work, infrequent class attendance, or a noticeable lack of effort will result in a lower grade.

**General Grading Criteria for Assignments and Exams**

A  Wonderful Work! The paper or project (1) used the relevant course material to answer the question; (2) applied the relevant material correctly and accurately; (3) demonstrated obvious understanding of the material; (4) provided examples from your own life, another reading, or an acceptable form of media; and (5) indicated you *intellectually engaged* the course material by pushing the boundaries of critical thinking with regard to analysis, interpretation or approach to the subject matter. You understood the material and made connections!

B  Solid Work! The paper or project (1) used the relevant course material to answer the questions; (2) applied the relevant material correctly; (3) demonstrated an understanding of the material; (4) provided an appropriate example; but (5) did not push the boundaries of critical thinking with regard to analysis, interpretation or approach. You did a good job, but more of a summary than a critical analysis: ask questions, make connections.

C  Good Effort! The paper or project (1) is unclear but appears to make a solid attempt to answer the assigned prompt; (2) relevant concepts are used, but their use is inaccurate or incomplete; and (3) provides underdeveloped or inaccurate examples. You made the effort, but either didn’t understand the assignment or didn’t give yourself enough time to completely formulate a response.
D  Fundamental problems exist. The paper or project is (1) unclear; (2) inaccurate or incomplete; and (3) makes little attempt to intellectually engage the material. You either didn’t read the material and thought you could wing it (this can happen with time issues) or you are having real difficult and should come and discuss the matter with me as soon as possible.

F  Too many fundamental problems exist. The paper or project is (1) not turned in because of absence (one must be present to turn in the assignment); (2) the assignment has nothing to do with the course material; or (3) the assignment does not demonstrate knowledge of the material.

To receive a good grade on any of the requirements, you do NOT have to reproduce the answer that you think I may be expecting. Instead, you should demonstrate a good grasp of the readings and other materials used in the class. Most importantly, you need to think for yourself and provide evidence to support your claims and arguments. If you have any concerns about your grade, please make an appointment to discuss it sooner 😊 rather than later 😕.

GRADING SCALE:
Total points for the class will be 400 points: 100 points for the weekly discussion papers; 150 points for the three mini-projects; and 150 points for the three exams.

\[
A = 300-270 \quad B = 269-240 \quad C = 239-210 \quad D = 209-180 \quad F = 179-0
\]

Please note that these are the general parameters: the plus/minus system will be utilized. Attendance and class participation will be taken into consideration for your final grade; therefore, it is in your best interests to come to class prepared to discuss the issues that week.

POLICIES
You are responsible for meeting course requirements. Keep track of your writing assignments, attendance, assessments – in other words, be aware of all deadlines listed on the syllabus.

Late papers will be graded down 1/2 of a grade for every late day, except in cases of verifiably legitimate reasons. Such reasons include illness or other severe circumstances and must be communicated to me before the assignment is due.

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the university policy below if you are uncertain about what academic dishonesty means. Depending upon the severity of the offense, the consequences may range from failing the assignment to failing the course.

I will only give incompletes in extraordinary circumstances, and only with a written contract. Almost always, it is better to submit a “work in progress” than to delay your academic progress by taking an incomplete.
It is University policy to provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in the course or meet requirements. Please contact me to discuss any individual needs. The sooner you do, the better.

The syllabus can be understood as a contract between us. I do, however, reserve the right to make minor changes in the course as I see necessary for the good of the class. I will do my best to maintain this original syllabus and will make sure everyone is made aware of any changes in a timely and appropriate manner. Be sure to check the announcements on WebCampus weekly.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:**

**Statement on Academic Dishonesty:** “Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses” constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the UNR General Catalog.

**Statement of Disability Services:** Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

**Statement for Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-443 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), the Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and the University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/). These centers support your classroom learning, but it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

**Statement on Audio and Video Recording:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.
**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week of January 19th – What Have You Gotten Yourself Into?!**

*Monday, Holiday, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*

An introduction into issues of diversity and equity as they pertain to gender and gender relations. We will look at some statistics illustrating some of the major lines of inequality focusing on the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handout:</th>
<th>Still Needing the F Word</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WebCampus:</td>
<td>Fear of Feminism</td>
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**Gendered Knowledge**

Feminism directly confronts the idea that one person or set of people [has] the right to impose definitions of reality on others.

~Liz Stanley and Sue Wise

**Week of January 26th – Anatomy and Destiny**

This week we will look briefly at the two reigning explanations of gender: essentialism and social constructionism. The first perspective relies on biological arguments of difference; the second perspective relies on the social construction of difference. Students will be able to differentiate arguments relying on either perspective enabling them to evaluate readings throughout the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ryle:</th>
<th>Ch 1: Introducing Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weitz:</td>
<td>Believing is Seeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weitz:</td>
<td>A History of Women's Bodies</td>
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**Week of February 2nd – The Social Construction of Gender**

In addition to further developing the social constructionist perspective, this week students will be introduced to basic sociological paradigms in regards to gender and
gender relations: the interactional, the institutional, and the intersectionality of gender, race/ethnicity, and class. Students will learn to differentiate between the different paradigms and be able to apply them to gendered relations.

Feminist Perspectives

. . . if young women have a problem, it’s only that they think there’s no problem. The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.

~Gloria Steinem

Week of February 9th – The “F” Word: A critical Analysis

WebCampus: Feminists and Feminism
              “We Don’t Have Time for Social Change”
              Black Woman: Shaping Feminist Thought

Week of February 16th – Other Perspectives: Conflicts and synthesis

*1st Exam, Weds, 02/18

Ryle: Ch 2: Understanding Sociology & Gender (26-end)
Weitz: Affronting Reason
       Becoming a Gendered Body

Explanations of Gender

The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, "It's a girl."

~Shirley Chisholm

Week of February 23rd – Socialization: Becoming Different

Ryle: Ch 3: Some Additional Theoretical Approaches
Weitz: Caveman Masculinity
       The Determined Patriarchy
WebCampus: Barbie Girls and Sea Monsters

Week of March 2nd – The Politics of Desire: Gendered Sexuality

Ryle: Ch 5: The Gender of Sexuality
Weitz: Daring to Desire (Weds)
       “So Full of Myself as a Chick”
Week of March 9th – Thinking About Our Bodies: Cultural Perspectives
*1st Mini-Project Due, Weds, 03/11
Ryle: Ch 7: The Gender of Bodies & Health
Weitz: A Tale of Two Technologies
WebCampus: Stylish Hard Bodies

Week of March 16th

Spring Break – Enjoy!!!

Gendered Relationships
Sometimes I wonder if men and women really suit each other. Perhaps they should live next door and just visit now and then.

~Katherine Hepburn

Week of March 23rd – The People We Live With: Difference and Dilemmas
Ryle: Ch 8: The Gender of Marriage and Families
WebCampus: Fathering: Paradoxes . . . Dilemmas
Till Death Us Do Part

Week of March 30th – Gendered Violence: Class, Race and Violence
*2nd Exam, Wednesday, 04/01
WebCampus: Culture, Gender, and Violence
Weitz: Navigating Public Spaces
Till Death Us Do Part

Women in the Workplace
I'm tough, I'm ambitious, and I know exactly what I want. If that makes me a bitch, okay.

~Madonna Ciccone

Week of April 6th – The Wage Gap: A Complicated Story
Ryle: Ch 9: The Gender of Work
WebCampus: Sexual Harassment and Masculinity
The Illusion of Progress

Our Gendered Culture
You know, when I first went into the movies Lionel Barrymore
played my grandfather. Later he played my father and finally he played my husband. If he had lived I'm sure I would have played his mother. That's the way it is in Hollywood. The men get younger and the women get older.

~Lillian Gish

**Week of April 13th – Cultural Messages: Reinforcing Stereotypes**

Ryle: Ch 10: The Gender of Media & Popular Culture
Weitz: Foucault, Femininity, . . . Patriarchal Power

**Week of April 20th – Cont.**

Weitz: Brain, Brow, and Booty
Weitz: “Get Your Freak On”
Weitz: The Moral Underpinnings of Beauty

**Week of April 27th – The End of Patriarchy?: But, the End of Inequality? and Mini-Project Due, Wednesday, 04/29**

Ryle: Ch 10: The Gender of Politics & Power
Weitz: Branded with Infamy
Weitz: Reclaiming the Female Body

**Week of May 4th – Wrap-Up: Integrating Difference and Inequality**

WebCampus: The End of Gender?
WebCampus: What Can We Do?

**FINAL EXAM**

**WEDS, MAY 13th**

12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.