

SOC 030: Sex and Gender in Society

Tufts University
Department of Sociology
Spring 2022

Updated 4.22.2022 with update of only 1 reading for the last class

When: Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45 am
Where: Eaton 202
Instructor: Associate Professor Freeden Blume Oeur (he/him)
Freeden.BlumeOeur@tufts.edu
118 Eaton Hall
Office hours: [Virtual and sign-up](#), Tuesdays 10:30-11:30 am, Fridays 1-2 pm, and by appointment
Assistant: Kimberly Rhoten (they/them)
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Photo from 2019 Boston Women's March: [Credit: The Penmen Press](#)

WELCOME

This course invites students to examine gender and its prevalence in social life: its relationship to sex, how it functions as a social construction, how it embeds power relations, how it changes and is resistant to change, and its consequences for life opportunities and outcomes. We'll consider how sociologists have been concerned with how gender is expressed through configurations of femininity and masculinity, and co-constructed with race, sexuality, social class, ability, nation, and other lines of difference. The course is organized around five units: (1) nature v. nurture, (2) gender and institutions, (3) gender and the nation, (4) masculinity, and (5) feminist politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Define sex and gender and conceptualize their interconnections through a range of perspectives.
- Interrogate gender across multiple levels of analysis (micro, meso, and macro; interpersonal, institutional, and historical) and as gender intersects with multiples lines of difference and oppression (including race, sexuality, social class, age, and nation).
- Assess the challenges and possibilities for feminist coalitions.
- Reflect on your own place as a gendered being in a gendered world.

REQUIREMENTS

Required Course Materials. All readings are available on the class Canvas page. Please be sure to have access to them during class.

Assignments.

- [10%] “Gender and me” Reflection. This is a brief, low-stakes assignment in two parts. The first reflection is due Monday, January 31 at 5 pm (worth 5%). The second part is an in-class assignment on the last day of class (May 2), where you’ll look back on your original reflection and think about where you are then.
- [40%] 2 5-page Papers, worth 20% each, due electronically on Friday, February 18 and **Friday, April 22 [new date]**.
- [50%] 2 In-class Exams, worth 25% each, on March 16 (covering the first half of the class, at last class before spring break) and May 12 (covering only the second half of class, held during exam period). Each exam will be closed-book and consist of identifications, short answers, and short essays that cover in-class discussions and the readings.

Grace Period. You have 3 grace period days that you can use, however you like, across all the written assignments (so not the exams). You can use these days to submit assignments late without penalty.

Grading Scale. A+ (100), A (94-99), A- (90-93), B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76) . . .

Academic Honesty. Our course will abide strictly by the guidelines laid out in the Tufts Statement of Academic Integrity, available at:

- <http://ase.tufts.edu/biology/bguide/classes/tahonesty.htm>

A comprehensive review of university policies is available at:

- <http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/publicationsandwebsites/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

This requires you to cite appropriately, understand what constitutes plagiarism, and consult me before submitting the same paper for this class and another (past or current) class. Possible violations of the policies outlined in the Statement of Academic Honesty will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Student Accessibility. Please reach out to me if you require any accommodations.

Contacting Freedden. Feel free to email me but check first if the information you need is on this syllabus.

Absence and Illness. While attendance will not be recorded, I ask that you notify me in case of an extended illness.

The next two items were shared by the Deans of Academic Advising and Undergraduate Studies and applies to our course.

In-Person Classroom Health and Safety Policy: When physically in person and indoors for this course, you'll be responsible for wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose. Cloth masks are no longer acceptable. You must wear a disposable 3-ply or high quality KN95 mask. It is imperative that we work together as a community to uphold these standards to help mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. Failure to do so may result in a referral to the Dean of Student Affairs Office. For more information about expectations for the Spring semester, please review COVID Guidelines [here](#).

Policy on sharing. This course is designed for everyone to feel comfortable participating in discussion, asking questions, learning, and facilitating the learning of others. In order for that atmosphere to be maintained, the recordings of our conversations will only be shared with the enrolled students in the class (not posted publicly) and it is prohibited for any of us who have access to the video to share it outside the course. Similarly, I have specifically designed the syllabus, exams, handouts, and lectures for the people who are enrolled in the course this term and those may not be shared outside this course. It is against Tufts policy for anyone to share any content made available in this course including course syllabi, reading materials, problems sets, videos, handouts, and exams, with anyone outside of the course without the express permission of the instructor. This especially includes any posting or sharing of videos or other recordings on publicly accessible websites or forums. Any such sharing or posting could violate copyright law or law that protects the privacy of student educational records.

RESOURCES

Learning in the time of COVID. These are challenging times. The assignments—and the class in general—are not intended to be a burden for you and to make an already difficult year even harder. They’re meant to enrich your life and course of study, and perhaps even help you and the people you care about navigate these times. If something comes up, just let me know and we’ll see if we can work something out.

Basic Needs Security. I urge you to contact the Office of Student Success and Advising, your academic dean, or another campus official you trust, if you’re having difficulty securing stable housing and sufficient food to eat, and especially if these difficulties are interfering with your academic performance. Please also feel free to reach out to me if I can help secure resources or put you in touch with others who can help.

Canvas. Our class relies heavily on Canvas, so make sure you can access our course page and are familiar with how it works.

- <https://canvas.tufts.edu/>

Office Hours. Students who make use of office hours tend to do better in class. The time will be more productive if you come prepared with specific concerns and questions. For these virtual office hours, you’re encouraged to stop by with a classmate or in a small group; but the entire group has to agree before one person (and only one person has to) sign up. [You can sign up on Calendly](#). Please cancel immediately if you can’t make it so someone else can sign up. Send me an email if you can’t make my scheduled hours so we can find another time to meet.

Kimberly will also be available to meet on select days before the papers are due and the scheduled exams.

Annotating. This is the process of engaging actively with a text by marking it up. Use whatever annotation system works best for you. A helpful online annotation guide is available at:

- <http://guides.hcl.harvard.edu/sixreadinghabits>

Are You Reading the Syllabus? Recently, faculty have taken to hiding a funny request in their syllabi to check whether students are reading the syllabus. Last semester my hidden request was to send me a favorite joke. One hilarious one I received: “What do you call an average sociologist? A so-so-ciologist.” This time, feel free to send me your recent favorite meme.

Writing. There are many excellent writing resources available. As a general rule, I won't read drafts of written assignments. However, I'm happy to discuss outlines or written brainstorming in office hours, if you send me these in advance. Check out Purdue University's excellent Online Writing Lab (OWL), which covers all dimensions of writing. It has a great overview of ASA formatting and style, which you should use for papers in this class.

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein have excellent suggestions for writers. Check out their templates for basic rhetorical devices in writing:

- <http://www.csub.edu/eap-riap/theysay.pdf>

Writing Tutoring. Take advantage of the writing tutoring available through the Academic Resource Center:

- <http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/writingtutoring>

Citing and Referencing. Use the American Sociological Association's style guide with your papers:

- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/01/>

The next three items were shared by the Deans of Academic Advising and Undergraduate Studies and applies to our course:

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty and recognizes the important contribution each student makes to our unique community. Tufts is committed to providing equal access and support to all qualified students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may fully participate in the Tufts experience. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the StAAR Center (formerly Student Accessibility Services) at StaarCenter@tufts.edu or 617-627-4539 to make an appointment with an accessibility representative to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.

Academic Support at the StAAR Center: The StAAR Center (formerly the Academic Resource Center and Student Accessibility Services) offers a variety of resources to all students (both undergraduate and graduate) in the Schools of Arts and Science, Engineering, the SMFA and Fletcher; services are free to all enrolled students. Students may make an appointment to work on any writing-related project or assignment, attend subject tutoring in a variety of disciplines, or meet with an academic coach to hone fundamental academic skills like time management or overcoming procrastination.

Students can make an appointment for any of these services by visiting go.tufts.edu/StAARCenter

Student Support, including Mental Health: As a student, there may be times when personal stressors or difficulties interfere with your academic performance or well-being. The Dean of Student Affairs Office offers support and care to undergraduates and graduate students who are experiencing difficulties, and can also aid faculty in their work with students. In addition, through Tufts' Counseling and Mental Health Services (CMHS) students can access mental health support 24/7, and they can provide information on additional resources. CMHS also provides confidential consultation, brief counseling, and urgent care at no cost for all Tufts undergraduates as well as for graduate students who have paid the student health fee. To make an appointment, call 617-627-3360. Please visit the CMHS website: <http://go.tufts.edu/Counseling> to learn more about their services and resources.

SCHEDULE

You should read the bulleted readings prior to class. A complete bibliography will be uploaded to Canvas. Readings are subject to change slightly, based on our progress and student interest. I'll upload readings a week or two in advance. The course is organized to provide some flexibility given the many challenges of learning in pandemic times, with a manageable reading load.

NATURE V. NURTURE I: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER	
W 1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No class.▪ Read syllabus carefully and the readings for Monday 1/24.
M 1/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mike Messner, "White Guy Habitus" (2000)▪ Lauren Rivera and András Tilcsik, "Scaling Down Inequality" (2019). Read the Abstract and Introduction (p. 248-253, through to the start of the Methods section) and look over the tables and graphs.
W 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mike Messner, "Gender Ideologies, Youth Sports, and the Production of Soft Essentialism" (2011).

NATURE V. NURTURE II: CONTROVERSY AT GOOGLE

M 1/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> James Damore, “Google’s Ideological Echo Chamber” (2017). Megan Molteni and Adam Rogers, “The Actual Science of James Damore’s Google Memo” (2017). Sarah Jeong and Rachel Becker, “Science Doesn’t Explain Tech’s Diversity Problem—History Does” (2017). <p><u>*“Gender and Me” Reflection due electronically at 5pm.</u></p>
W 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joy Buolamwini, “How I’m Fighting Bias in Algorithms” (Ted Talk). Joy Buolamwini and Timnit Gebru, “Gender Shades” (2018) (Read introduction and conclusion, Figure 1; skim the rest). Alex Hanna and Meredith Whittaker, “Timnit Gebru’s Exit From Google Exposes a Crisis in AI” (2020).

NATURE V. NURTURE III: BODIES AND REPRODUCTION

M 2/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm” (1991).
W 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scan the “Always Changing and Growing Up” website. Watch “Co-Ed Puberty Education” video. Read the 5th grade girls and boys puberty guides.
M 2/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rene Almeling and Miranda Waggoner, “More and Less Than Equal” (2013) and/or (TBD): Ann Bell, “I’m Not Really a Woman if I Can’t Have a Kid” (2019) [read only this article].

***Wednesday, February 16: No class.**

***Friday, February 18: Paper #1 due electronically at 5pm.**

***Monday, February 21: No class (President's Day).**

GENDER AND INSTITUTIONS I: WORK	
W 2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Christine Williams, "The Glass Escalator" (1992).▪ Adia Harvey Wingfield, "Racializing the Glass Escalator" (2009).
Th 2/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Millian Kang, "The Managed Hand" (2003). <p><u>*Monday's schedule substituted today</u></p>

GENDER AND INSTITUTIONS II: FAMILIES AND THE LAW	
M 2/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Kimberly Rhoten, "U.S. Family Law Along the Slippery Slope: The Limits of a Sexual Rights Strategy for Polyamorous Parents" (2022). <p>*Kimberly will join us!</p>
W 3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Carla Pfeffer, "Normative Resistance and Inventive Pragmatism" (2012).

GENDER AND INSTITUTIONS III: MEDICINE	
M 3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Paige Sweet, "Chronic Victims, Risky Women" (2015).

GENDER AND INSTITUTIONS IV: SCHOOLS	
W 3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Michela Musto, “Brilliant or Bad?” (2019)
M 3/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simone Ispa-Landa and Mariana Oliver, “Hybrid Femininities” (2021).

***Wednesday March 16: In-Class Exam 1**

***Monday, March 21 and Wednesday, March 23: No class. ENJOY YOUR SPRING BREAK!**

GENDER AND THE NATION	
M 3/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oluwakemi Balogun, “Cultural and Cosmopolitan” (2012). ▪ Mickell Carter, “Black Beauty Queens and Global Representational Politics” [reading added on 3-23]
W 3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kimberly Hoang, “Competing Technologies of Embodiment” (2014).
M 4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cara Daggett, “Petro-Masculinity” (2018).

***Wednesday, April 6: No class (University make-up day).**

MASCULINITY	
M 4/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jane Ward, “Dude-Sex” (2008).

W 4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kelsy Burke and Trenton Haltom, “Created by God and Wired to Porn” (2020). <p><u>*Monday, April 18: No class (Patriot’s Day).</u></p>
W 4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chong-suk Han, “Geisha of a Different Kind” (2006). <p><u>[Class had previously been cancelled today].</u></p> <p><u>*Friday, April 22: Paper #2 due electronically at 5 pm.</u></p>
M 4/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chong-suk Han, “Geisha of a Different Kind” (2006)

**FEMINIST POLITICS:
ALLIANCES, DIVISIONS, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

W 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Public Hearing, Private Pain</i> (video) (1992). ▪ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Whose Story is it Anyway?” (1992).
M 5/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Angela Jones, “I Get Paid to Have Orgasms” (2015). ▪ Sydney Boothroyd et al., “(Re)producing Feminine Bodies” (2017). ▪ Mara Dolan, <i>Teen Vogue</i>, “4 Climate Activists Explain Why the Climate Justice Movement Needs Feminism” (2021). ▪ Topic TBD based on student interests; possible topics include trans-feminist coalitions and tensions, feminism and other youth-led movements. ▪ Wrapping-up.

***Wednesday, May 11: In-Class Exam 2 during Exam Period, 3:30-5.**