

Psychology and Women (Psych BC3153)

Fall, 2009
Wednesday 4:10-6, 237 Milbank

Professor Wendy McKenna
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Office hours: Wednesday, 1:30-3:30

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This course is a critical examination of how female experience is and has been understood by psychologists. Through an understanding of gender as a social construction and issues raised by the intersections of gender, sexuality, class, and race, the course will analyze assumptions about what causes us to be gendered and about how being gendered affects behavior.

Prerequisite: Junior or Senior standing and at least two psychology courses. Permission of instructor required for majors other than Psychology or Women's Studies. Enrollment limited to 20 students. 4 points.

This is an advanced seminar and I assume that you are able to be analytic and critical about issues, even if that presents a challenge to your own values and beliefs. A large part of the course (and your grade) is dependent on your thoughtful participation in class discussions.

All reading assignments are electronic. They are either e-journals, ebrary, they will be posted on Courseworks, or they will be emailed to you. If you prefer hard copies, then you can use some of the money you would spend on books for this course to print most of them.

There will be one exam. It will consist of several brief essays and will be open book. There will also be written assignments for virtually every class, Courseworks postings and a term paper. Psychology majors may use the paper to fulfill the departmental requirement. Grades will be based on the exam (15%), written assignments (25%), the term paper (20%), Courseworks postings (15%), and class participation (25%). (These percentages are approximations.) It is very important that you come to class, that you be on time, and that you do the reading BEFORE the class for which it is assigned.

Students who need accommodations of any sort are encouraged to discuss this with me as early in the semester as possible.

Any violation of academic honesty (e.g., plagiarism) will result in penalties as described in the Barnard College Student Handbook.

There will be no make-up exams or late papers accepted for anything other than a serious and documented emergency, in which case you must notify me by e-mail within 24 hours of the relevant class. The exam is on October 21 and the final class is on December 9. Please arrange your end of semester transportation taking this into account.

All information, updates, readings, assignments, etc. will be posted on Courseworks.

*Class Date**Topics, Readings, Assignments*

Key: EB= Ebrary EJ= Electronic journal EM= will be emailed or posted on Courseworks

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|----|-------------|--|
| 1 | 9/9 | <p>Foundations of the course: Psychology of Women, Psychology by Women, Psychology and Women, Feminist Psychology, Women and Culture, Psychology and Gender.</p> <p>Baker, N. (2006) Feminist Psychology in the service of women: Staying engaged without getting married. <i>Psychology of Women Quarterly</i>, 30, 1-14. EJ</p> <p>Biaggio (2000) <i>Issues in the Psychology of Women</i>. Ch 1,2
EB</p> |
| 2. | 9/16 | <p>Gender as a dependent variable: positivism, social c constructionism.</p> <p>Gordon, L and Abbott, S. The social constructionist's "essential" guide to sex. EM</p> <p>Almeling, R. (2007) Selling genes, selling gender. <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 72(3), 319-340. EJ</p> <p>Lorbur, J. Believing as Seeing: Biology versus Ideology
EM</p> <p>Correll (ed) <i>Social Psychology of Gender</i>, Ch. 1 EB</p> |
| 3 | 9/23 | <p>Gender as an independent variable: Sex and Gender, "sex differences", research design</p> <p>Collins. L. (ed.) (2002) <i>Charting a New Course for Feminist Psychology</i>, Ch 1 EB</p> <p>Skim both of the following and read one or two chapters in Rhodes (2004) <i>Taking Sex Differences Seriously</i> EB</p> <p>Sax (2006) <i>Why Gender Matters</i> EB</p> |
| 4 | 9/30 | <p>Becoming Gendered:</p> <p>Worrell, J. (ed.) (2005) <i>Handbook of Girls' and Women's Psychological Health</i>, Ch 19, 28 and 30 EB</p> |
| 5 | 10/7 | <p>Gendered Bodies: Reproductive processes: menstruation, pregnancy, menopause (Term paper assignment distributed)</p> <p>Collins Ch 11</p> <p>Worrell, Ch 27,38,39</p> <p>Young, I. <i>On Female Body Experience</i>, Introduction and Ch 6 EB</p> |

- 6 **10/14** **Gendered Bodies: Sex and Sexuality**
Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualizationrep.pdf
Biaggio Ch 8
Kim et al. (2007) From sex to sexuality: exposing the heterosexual script on primetime TV. *Journal of Sex Research*, 44(2), 145-157. EJ
- 7 **10/21** **EXAM** and discussion of paper topics
- 8 **10/28** **Gender and psychopathology:** body image and eating disorders, body reconstruction and body mutilation, self-image and depression
Collins, Ch 12, 13
Worrell Ch 7
Young, Ch.2, 4
- 9 **11/4** **Psychopathology of gender**
Corbett, S. The women's war. *The New York Times Magazine*, March 18, 2007, 40-57,71-72. Worrell 5, 6, 47
- 10 **11/11** **The social construction of gender**
Readings TBA
- 11 **11/18** **The (mis)Uses of Gender, Is Gender Necessary?**
Readings TBA
- 11/25** **NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)**
- 12 **12/2** **OPEN-** Topic and Readings TBA
- 13 **12/9** **Last Class:** Discussion of papers: Papers due

Weekly Assignments (always subject to revision)

All written assignments must be typed and grammatical, as well as thoughtful and analytic. Instructions for assignments will be distributed enough in advance for the assignment to be completed.

There will be written assignments due for classes 4, 5, 11

There will be assignments related to the term paper due for classes 6 and 9, and the paper is due at the last class.

Courseworks: For Weeks 2, 3, 6, 8, 10, *by the Sunday preceding the class*, post a link to a website that is relevant to the topic of the next class, on the Courseworks discussion board (which means that you must have done at least some of the reading). Alternatively, any time *after* a class, you may begin a thread about an issue you want to discuss more than we had time to do in that class. By Wednesday morning, respond to at least two threads other than your own, and to the comments left on your thread, if any. I will be checking the boards on Sunday evening and Wednesday afternoon. In other words, you are expected to begin one thread and respond to at least two others.

Every week come to class with about a page (typed) of some combination of the following: one or two quotes from the readings that you would like to discuss in class; questions and thoughts stimulated by the readings; observations and discussions outside of class relevant to the topic/readings; other readings/books/films relevant to the topic. This will help you prepare for class and will insure that you will always have something to talk about in class. Make a copy to turn in to me at the end of each class.