

Gender in Communication
COMM 324-01-4168 / WGST 324-01-4168
Fall 2016
Tuesday/Thursday 4:00pm-5:15pm
Strickler Hall, Room 208

Instructor: Mary Mudd
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Phone: [\(502\) 852-3522](tel:(502)852-3522)
Office: Stevenson Hall, Room 416
Office Hours: By appointment
Required Text: Wood, Julia T. *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*
Various readings on BlackBoard or distributed in class

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus as needed. Students will be notified of any changes in a timely manner whenever possible.

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

The goal of this course is to create a community where students of all social locations (e.g. class, race, gender, sexuality, etc.) can meet to:

- Understand the influence of gender on social behavior and society (and vice versa)
- Recognize ways we use gender to make sense of ourselves, others, and society
- Learn ways of becoming more effective, ethical gendered beings
- Demonstrate the interconnectedness of gender, sex, sexuality, and communication
- Analyze and apply theoretical approaches to gender
- Makes sense of gender and communication in your own everyday life
- Write critically, interpretively, and reflexively about gender and communication

Title IX/Clery Act Notification

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other consensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain **confidential** support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to **University faculty or instructors** of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is **not confidential** under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide at (<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>).

Disability Access

If you have disabilities and require accommodations so you can participate in the course (whether they are physical or emotional), let's work together to provide them. Stop by my office, call, or e-mail me so we can identify what is needed and what will work. You should also contact the Disability Resource Center if special assistance will be required. They can be found at:

Disability Resource Center
Stevenson Hall, Room 120
Phone (502) 852-6938
Fax (502) 852-0924
Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
<http://louisville.edu/student/dev/drc/>

Safety

We will discuss safety plans in the event of an emergency, but there is no substitute for simply being cognizant of your environment. I encourage each of you to be aware of your surroundings and the location of safety exits at all times.

Classroom Policies

Classroom environment: Until proven wrong, I will assume that you are adults so I don't have a lot of rules. But I'm not a fan of anarchy, either, so I have developed the following short list of suggestions for how to conduct ourselves:

- Attendance: Learning does not occur simply because you are occupying a seat in an assigned classroom at an assigned time. How much you get from this (or any) class is up to you. On the other hand, you can't learn if you don't attend class; there are few students who can excel at debate without regular attendance. I am a teacher, however, not a task master, so there is no set attendance policy and no penalty for (most) absences. Come to class, don't come to class, it's up to you. If you do choose to miss a class, it's your responsibility to get any information you missed. I *will* take roll every day, but it's mostly to help me learn your names (and to remind you of how often you were absent if you come begging for better grades at the end of the semester). To encourage you to come to class, however, I will award 10 extra credit points to all students present on three random dates, with an additional 10 points for perfect attendance.
- Late/missed papers: Grades for late papers will automatically be reduced by 10% for each 24 hour period past the due date; papers are submitted via email to mary.mudd@louisville.edu so an excused class absence does not equal an extension.
- Laptops/Cell phones: I prefer that you don't use a laptop in class—notes aren't really necessary since the class is discussion-based and there are no exams. I don't flat-out ban them, but I will say that laptops create a barrier that diminishes learning through interpersonal interaction. Further, being on facebook will do nothing to increase your ability to absorb and synthesize the concepts presented and discussed. As for cell phones, I'll be

honest...if I receive a text, I'll read it. I may even respond to it (if it's time-sensitive and necessary). You are free to do the same, but I expect you to act like adults and not high school students; keep it minimal, discreet, and silent.

- Food/drink: It's fine to eat or drink in class, but keep it quiet and clean up after yourself.
- Be respectful of your classmates: We may discuss concepts in here that ruffle your feathers. You may have strong views and opinions about the topics. Lively debate and clash are completely acceptable, but there is a vaguely defined line in the sand that should not be crossed. I say vaguely defined because where the line falls depends on the class as a whole; each one is different and has different tolerance levels. We will figure out the line together. **At no time, however, will I tolerate any comments that are blatantly rude, abusive, offensive, or harassing; this includes comments that are sexist, racist, homophobic, fat-phobic, transphobic, classist, able-ist, etc.** I reserve the right to shut down any discussion or commentary that I think crosses the line.

Above all...speak up! Ask questions, offer observations, formulate and express ideas and opinions, make jokes (as long as they're funny)! The best way to become a stronger critical thinker is to actively engage. You should also, however, be prepared to for a lack of complete agreement with your views. Challenge each other. Challenge me. Challenge yourselves.

Assignments

Discussion Forum: You are required to post at least two items on the BlackBoard forum (although I encourage you to post more often). The items can be anything you want—a cartoon, a BuzzFeed video, a blog post, a television or print advertisement, an article from a magazine or journal, etc.—and should be accompanied by a brief explanation of how the item relates to the course content. Additionally, you are required to comment on at least three items posted by others; comments should demonstrate an understanding of how the items relate to the course material. Each post—of material to share or as a response to others—is worth up to 20 pts. (maximum is 100 pts.).

Exploration Papers (100 pts. ea.): 3-5 pages, MLA formatted, submitted via email. Claims should be supported by evidence, with sources (for evidence and information/ideas created by others) cited and properly formatted. The assignments will be on the following topics:

- Gender in your childhood: This paper should reflect on your first understanding or awareness of gender. It could include your first memory of gender, gendered experiences from your childhood, and/or the ways in which gender was constructed in YOUR childhood. Consider messages from family, friends/peers, educational environment, etc. A sample paper is posted on BlackBoard.
- Cultural gender: Compare the gender norms of two distinct cultures (e.g. contemporary US Black culture, 1950s US White culture, contemporary China, Europe during the Middle Ages, a Pentecostal church community, etc.). What is different? What is the same? Which one do you think is better, and why?

- Intersectionality: Pick at least two social identities you hold (e.g. race, class, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, etc.) and discuss how they intersect with your gender. For example, if you are gay, how does that change your social group's expectations for how you express your gender? Or if you are Muslim, how do gender norms within the Islamic community impact your gender expression? In what ways do you perform adherence to or defiance of the norms?
- Media critique: Analyze how gender is represented in a particular entertainment media source (e.g. a movie or TV show, the videos or songs of a single artist or musical genre, a magazine or publication, a series of novels, etc.). How does the media source reflect and/or contribute to the construction and maintenance of gender norms in our society?
- Defying a gender norm: Go out into the world and defy a gender norm you don't already defy, then report on the experience. How did you feel while defying the norm? How did others react?
- Theories of Gender Development: Pick one of the theories covered in Chapter Two of the book—biological, psychodynamic, psychological (social learning or cognitive development theory), cultural, symbolic interactionism, critical (standpoint or queer performative)—and discuss its strengths and weaknesses in explaining the construction of gender, using the textbook, classroom discussion, and other materials (as needed or appropriate) to support your position.

Final Project: The final project, which can be a traditional research paper or a creative presentation, should utilize the concepts and theories discussed in the class to examine the role of gender in some area of life.

- Papers should be 10-12 pages, MLA formatted with appropriate in-text citations and a properly formatted Works Cited page (not included in the page count). Claims should be supported by a minimum of ten credible, primary sources.
- Creative presentations can include paintings, photo montages, poems, videos, 'zines, drag performances, step routines, musical arrangements, surveys and findings, or any other audio and/or visual depiction of gender. Components include a ten-minute classroom presentation and a 3-5 page written explanation of the project—MLA formatted with appropriate source citation.

Grading

100	Discussion forum posts
600	Reflection Papers (100 ea.)
300	Final Project
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1000	TOTAL

Grade Scale	
A	1000-901
B	900-801
C	800-701
D	700-601
F	Below 600

Course Schedule

8/23	Introduction	
8/25	Chapter 1: Communication, Gender, and Culture	
8/30	Chapter 2:	
9/1	Theories of Gender	
9/6	Chapter 3: Feminist Groups	
9/8	Chapter 4: Masculinist Groups	
9/13	Chapter 5:	
9/15	Verbal Communication	DUE: Post 1
9/20	Chapter 6:	
9/22	Nonverbal Communication	DUE: Response 1
9/27	Chapter 7:	
9/29	Gender and Childhood	DUE: Exploration (Childhood)
10/4	NO CLASS – Fall Break	
10/6	Chapter 8:	DUE: Post 2
10/11	Gender and Education	
10/13	Chapter 9:	DUE: Exploration (Culture)
10/18	Gender and Relationships	
10/20	NO CLASS	DUE: Response 2
10/25	Chapter 10:	
10/27	Gender and Organizations	DUE: Exploration (Intersectionality)
11/1	Film: Killing Us Softly @ Ekstrom	
11/3	Chapter 11:	DUE: Response 3
11/8	Gender and Media	
11/10	Film: Miss Representation	DUE: Exploration (Media Critique)
11/15	Chapter 12:	
11/17	Gender and Power	DUE: Exploration (Norm Violation)
11/22	Gender and Power, cont'd	
11/24	NO CLASS - Thanksgiving	DUE: Exploration (Gender Theories)
11/29	Final Presentations	
12/1	Final Presentations	
12/6	Final Presentations	
12/10	FINAL 4:45pm-7:15pm	If needed