Psychology 306: Psychology of Gender  
*Brigham Young University*  
Spring 2014

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Office Hours: Flexible, by appointment  
Class Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:00-6:30 p.m., B099 JFSB

**Course Description**

The psychology of gender course familiarizes undergraduate students with basic and general psychological research that pertains to gender. Topics include gender development, gender identity, gender differences and similarities, and influences on gender. Although many topics of this course are related to political issues, and some course discussions will involve the relationship between the psychological and the political, the emphasis of this course is not on gender politics. In addition to increasing the knowledge base of students, this course seeks to facilitate research skills, critical thinking about gender issues and research, and the ability to communicate effectively about the psychology of gender.

**Prerequisites**

PSYCH 307 (Writing Within Psychology), PSYCH 309 (Psychological Testing), PSYCH 310 (Psychological Research Design and Analysis); or instructor's consent.

**Materials**

- On most weeks a supplementary reading will also be assigned; these will be provided on learning suite.

**Grading Scale and Policy**

The following table shows the minimum percentage that must be earned for the corresponding letter grade. *Note: I do not round – for example, an 89.5% is a B+.*

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60%</td>
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Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Department Objectives:
1. Gender concepts, theories, and research findings
   a. Students will demonstrate a fundamental understanding of (a) various concepts and theories of sex and gender, including models of how gender roles are developed and maintained, and (b) the major research findings regarding gender.
   b. Measurement: Multiple choice tests, short essays.
2. Research knowledge and skills
   a. Students will develop knowledge and skills within gender research for identifying and formulating research hypotheses and the theories supporting them, understanding threats to research validity, formulating designs to test hypotheses, appreciating the limitations of research findings, and critically analyzing the research literature.
   b. Measurement: Writing assignment and/or conducting research project
3. Develop skills in gender research
   a. Students will develop knowledge and skills within gender research for identifying and formulating research hypotheses and the theories supporting them, understanding threats to research validity, formulating designs to test hypotheses, appreciating the limitations of research findings, and critically analyzing the research literature.
   b. Measurement: Writing assignment
4. Critical awareness of cultural effects on gender identity
   a. Students will be aware of, identify with, and analyze the influence of media, institutions and culture on the development of gender identity, gender-related beliefs, and attitudes through class room activities and discussions; and develop an awareness of one’s own expectations and biases as they relate to gender.
   b. Measurement: Multiple choice tests, short essays, and/or conducting research project.
5. Influence of media, institutions, and culture
   a. Students will be aware of, and analyze the influence of media, institutions and culture on the development of gender identity, gender-related beliefs, and attitudes through class room activities and discussions; and develop an awareness of one’s own expectations and biases as they relate to gender.
   b. Measurement: Writing assignment

General Values

In addition to pursuing the course objectives listed above, by remaining in this course, students and teachers should agree to live by these general values. In other words, each participant in the course should endeavor to embrace and act in accordance with these values, and the course is designed to help promote these values.

1. Take personal responsibility for your learning
   a. Ask questions when you don’t understand something
   b. Come prepared to participate in discussions
2. Virtues and skills that promote success
   a. Respect and charity toward instructor and fellow students
      i. Recognize the humanity, intelligence, morality, and spirituality of others
      ii. Acknowledge that disagreements are possible among humane, intelligent, morally upstanding, and spiritually engaged individuals and groups.
      iii. Conversely, recognize that disagreement does not equal disrespect.
   b. Humility
i. Be open to correction and improvement
ii. Be aware of the limits of your own perspective(s)
c. Critical thinking
   i. Search for the strengths AND limitations of various perspectives
   ii. “Metacognition” – learn to be reflective about your own perspectives, how they
develop, what they imply, what their strengths and limitations are, and why you
embrace them.
   iii. Improve ability to understand and appreciate multiple perspectives. Seek to
understand the perspective from which others’ ideas and behaviors make sense.
d. Trust that you can do difficult things
   i. This includes emotionally difficult things – some topics of this course are
difficult to discuss. However, they are valuable professionally and personally, so
trust that you can participate in it and grow from the experience.
e. Remember the law of the harvest!!! You reap what you sow!
f. Everyone can improve somehow!

Course Assignments and Grading   500 Points

1. Exams – 280 Points (56 % of final grade)
   a. There will be two exams in the course. The midterm exam will cover the material from
   the first half of the course, and the final exam will cover the material from the second
   half. Both exams will be worth 140 points. Each exam will have some combination of
   multiple-choice, short answer, and/or essay questions.
      i. Emphasized Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Class Preparation and Participation– 5 Points Each/70 Points Total (14% of final grade)
   a. Preparation
      i. For each week’s readings, students will be required to write responses to a few
      questions about the readings. These questions are designed to help students
     focus, organize, and remember the readings and to prepare them for class
discussions and exams. (See Learning Suite for examples).
      ii. For each of these reflections, students will also be required to analyze the way
gender issues are portrayed in various media in light of the course readings and
discussions. Ideally, these will be completed in relation to the current week’s
readings, but students may e-mail me for approval to address a current issue or
event that pertains to a previous week’s readings. Any medium can be
acceptable, providing that it is pertinent to the course and in line with the
standards set forth in the Honor Code. Some examples include news reports,
popular posts on social media, movies, TV shows, and books.
      iii. Occasionally practical, experiential mini-assignments may be given in class in
order to solidify students’ understanding and retention of the material. In such
cases students will write, in their reading reflections, a very brief report of their
experience and what they learned. If the assignment is expected to take more
than 30 minutes, it will be done instead of the media portion of the weekly
Reading Reflection.
      iv. Each Reading Reflection will include a portion that encourages students to reflect
on the readings in terms of their religious, cultural, familial, and personal
traditions and beliefs.
   b. Participation
      i. Students are expected to attend and participate in class. This does not necessarily
mean that each student must speak in class each week. As long as students are in
attendance and clearly show that they are focused and attentive to class discussions, they will receive full points.

ii. Any comments will also be expected to be on topic and respectfully stated, and students should monitor their participation to ensure that all students who wish to have the opportunity to participate. This means that students may lose points for off-topic or disrespectful comments or for monopolizing class discussions. Should there be concerns in any of these three areas, I will confidentially let students know and give them a chance to improve before any points will be taken.

c. Related Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

3. Papers – 150 Points Total (30% of final grade)

a. Research Paper (75 Points)

i. Each student will choose a topic related to the psychology of gender on which to complete a research paper. This paper will include a clear identification of a research question, a clear thesis or hypothesis (depending on the type of research project), a review of related literature sufficient to identify what is known and what is not known on the topic, and a description of the method(s) the student would take if they were to complete further research on their question. After completing this paper, students should be well on their way to having enough preparation to submit a complete IRB proposal to conduct a study if they choose to do so. This paper will be 4-7 pages long. More details will be discussed in class and a rubric will be provided.

ii. Emphasized Objectives: 2, 3

b. Gender Theory Paper (75 Points)

i. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to write a paper in which you will be asked to take a position on the critical issues we discuss in class. These include such issues as: What is gender? How is gender identity developed? Are there appropriate gender roles? If so, what are they? This paper will be a maximum 8 pages long. More details will be discussed in class and a rubric will be provided.

ii. Emphasized Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Note: Late work is not accepted except in extenuating circumstances. Any concerns should be brought to my attention ahead of time (when possible) or as soon as possible (such as in the case of emergencies).

University Policy

➤ BYU Honor Code: In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university’s expectation and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.

➤ Preventing Sexual Discrimination and Harassment: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual
harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university, but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

- **Students with Disabilities:** Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

- **Academic Honesty Policy:** The first injunction of the BYU Honor Code is the call to be honest. Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life's work, but also to build character. President David O. McKay taught that 'character is the highest aim of education' (The Aims of a BYU Education, p. 6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

- **Plagiarism Policy:** Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

- **Classroom Technology:** Use of laptops or other products can be helpful and are allowed to students who wish to use them to take notes. However, they can be distracting if used for other purposes. In order to prevent distracting other students (or being distracted yourself), focus on only taking notes for class, but nothing else, even if you think it is distantly related to class (for example, doing your homework during a class discussion is not appropriate even though it is a class-related activity.) My policy is to trust students until I’m given a reason not to trust them. Details will be discussed on the first day of class.

**Caveats**

1. There may be times when unforeseen circumstances will require minor adjustments to the syllabus and schedule for this course. I reserve the right to make adjustments, but I commit to doing so only as needed and with the following commitments:
   a. No adjustments will require more work than is laid out in this syllabus. Any changes will require equal or less work.
i. Example: suppose a new study is published that completely revolutionizes the way psychologists think about sex and gender. I would probably want to address this through readings and class discussions. If so, I would remove other readings of equal length.

b. No adjustments will precipitate more stringent grading requirements. In other words, no change will lower the grade students have received on prior work, nor will it make it more difficult for them to succeed than is described in this syllabus.

c. Changes will only be made if the class will be substantially better as a result of the change and/or if circumstances in the class seem to make changes absolutely necessary.

d. Any changes will be made only after students have had the opportunity to provide feedback on it. I will ultimately decide what I think is best, but I will seek input from students regarding how potential changes will affect them. I will consider that feedback seriously.

i. Note: any potential changes will be discussed in class, and so attending class is the only way to have the opportunity to provide feedback.

2. There will be times when we will discuss sensitive subjects in this class. We may even discuss ideas that are (or at least seem) contradictory to your personal or religious ideas. Know that this is to increase your awareness of the theories, findings, and opinions that are pertinent to the field of psychology, to encourage critical reflection of your positions, and (in some cases) to encourage you to reflect on the sources of your positions (for example, is your position necessarily required by your religious/professional/ethical commitments, or is there room for differences of opinion within these traditions.) I will never intentionally be irreverent, sacrilegious, or inappropriate, and I never intend to encourage you to question the legitimacy of your personal faith.

a. If you are ever offended, confused, or concerned about anything at all in this class, do not be afraid to talk to me about it at an appropriate time! Most likely it is a misunderstanding that can be cleared up and the whole class will benefit from it if you give me a chance to explain it.