

Gender, Sex & Power (ANT/WMS 305)

Time: Tu/Th 8:00 am - 9:30 am

Location: Rm. C-3 in Cooper

Email: pesara@brockport.edu

Office hrs: Mondays 9:30am-12:30 pm and Thursdays, 1:15-2:15pm

Dr. Pilapa Esara

Office: Cooper C-17

Phone: 585-395-5705

Course Success & Objectives:

In this course, we will examine perceived differences between the sexes in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world. What does it mean to be a man in a particular cultural system? What accounts for the perpetuation of gender inequalities? The answers to these questions require delving into the nuances of human experience and understanding topics of socialization and normative roles; identity and self; gender and biology; sexuality and society; the commodification of women; and the intersections between gender, class, ethnicity, and race. Our course-long exploration of gender and sex constructions, we will grapple with contemporary issues such as being transgendered, economic development, globalization, social inequalities, HIV/AIDS prevention, and sex tourism. Course readings provide international scope focusing on Mexico, United States, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, and the Dominican Republic via anthropological case studies, N. American fiction and video documentaries.

This course is designed for students with little to no prior coursework in Anthropology. It is introductory in scope but not simple or “dumbed down.” As befits a 300-level course, course materials will be drawn from scholarship written by professional social scientists with the intent of teaching critical thinking, and more advanced writing and communication skills. This course is **READING** and **RESEARCH INTENSIVE**. Overall ANT/WMS 305 benefits students interested in issues of gender politics, social justice, human welfare, public health, and economic development as well as persons pursuing the following career fields: Anthropology, Sociology, Political Science and International Studies, International Business and Economics, Health Science, and Social Work among others. Credit from this course satisfies general education requirements for Contemporary Issues (I) and Perspectives on Women (W).

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to...

- Identify how sex and gender are socially constructed in various cultural contexts
- Analyze how gender structures notions of identity and perceptions of “normalcy”
- Assess how power inequalities are based upon social differences such as gender, race
- Describe how economic development can influence local gender hierarchies
- Exercise and improve your reading, writing, presentation and research skills

Course Requirements:

Punctual attendance, active class participation, and the timely completion of all reading/submitted assignments are expected of each student and required to earn a passing grade (though I would hope students will strive for higher). Student performance in this course will be evaluated in accordance to the Department of Anthropology's *Guidelines for Student Evaluation* (available on ANGEL class site). Letter grades are calculated as follows: A: 100-93; A-:92-90; B+:89-87; B:86-83; B-:82-80; C+:79-77; C:76-73; C-:72-70; D+: 69-67; D:66-63; D-:62-60; E:59-0. Additionally, I recommend that you read "Your Right to know and Academic Policies Handbook" (<http://www.brockport.edu/publications/yrtk/>) which details various college-wide standards concerning attendance and academic dishonesty.

Evaluation of student performance includes the following tasks totaling 100 points:

- 15 Class Participation (includes Discussion Starter and other tasks)
- 05 Pop Quizzes (top 2 scores will be counted at 2.5 pts. each)
- 20 Test (Part I)
- 40 Research Project
 - Topic Meeting & Proposal (10)
 - Research Paper (20)
 - Presentation (10)
- 20 Test (Part II)
- 100 pts

Late Assignment Policy

Assignments must be submitted in hard-copy form at the start of the class in which it is due. I do not accept late assignments except in emergency situations as defined in the Student Handbook.

Office hours & Contact Information

Immediate questions and assignment-specific concerns are best addressed during office hours or through appointments. Email should only be used for *non-immediate* topics and responses can be expected in *2-3 business days*. I am happy to grant learning accommodations if given a couple of weeks notice.

Academic Dishonesty

"Academic dishonesty, 'cheating' and other forms of misrepresenting others' work as your own, such as plagiarism, are considered serious breaches of academic integrity and are major violations of the standards of ethical behavior that the College expects from all its students. When detected, academic dishonesty can result in a range of disciplinary actions including failure of a course or even conduct dismissal from the College."

This text is excerpted from Chapter 7 of *Your Right to know and Academic Policies Handbook*.

Electronic Devices:

As stated in the Handbook, cell phones, PDA, and other electronic devices should be turned off when in the classroom. When we see phones vibrate and peers texting/reading messages, our attention is disrupted. I always notice these disruptions and one occurrence will significantly affect your Class Participation score. Moreover, I do not allow note-taking on laptops in my classroom. If you would like note-taking assistance to better facilitate your learning process, please talk to me *and* the staff at the Student Learning Center.

Course Materials:

This course has two Required Texts, which we will use at the start of the semester. Afterwards, assigned course readings will be accessible through ANGEL Reserves and the Drake Memorial Library Reserves Desk, if the school owns it. Copies of Required Texts will also be put on Library Reserve. For budget-minded students, consider sharing the cost and use of books, or schedule time weekly to utilize the library reserves.

REQUIRED:

1. Eugenides, J. (2003). *Middlesex: A Novel*. New York: Picador
2. Herdt, G. (2006). *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.
3. Various assigned readings on ANGEL (designated with brackets)

Course Schedule:

Reading and submitted assignments are due *on the day* in which they are listed. Completion of a reading assignment includes not just the physical act of reading but also comprehension of the material. For days in which an assignment is not due, I recommend reviewing your class notes or the prior reading in preparation for class. (Note: The Course Schedule is subject to change with notice.)

Part I. The Social Construction of Difference

WEEK 1 - Studying Cultures from an anthropological perspective

Tuesday, Sept. 1st - Welcome

Thursday, Sept. 3rd -

Read: Herdt, Introduction, Ch.1 “Mountain Settings” & Ch. 2 “Warfare”
(pp. 1-41)

WEEK 2 – Definitions of sex, gender. How is gender and sex socially-constructed?

Tuesday, Sept. 8th

Read: Herdt, Ch. 3 “Social Individuals” & Ch. 4 “Men’s Secret Society”
(pp.42-122)

Thursday, Sept. 10th

Read: Herdt, Ch. 5 “Magical Age 10” (123-136)
Suggested: Eugenides, finish Book 1

WEEK 3 – Where does one learn how to be and what it means to be a man/woman?

Tuesday, Sept. 15th

Read: Herdt, Ch. 6 “Sex/Gender, Power” & Ch. 7 “Sexuality and Revolutionary Change” (pp. 137-168)

Suggested: Eugenides, start Book 2 (pp. 79-165)

Thursday, Sept. 17th

Suggested: Eugenides, finish Book 2 (pp. 166-214) & start Book 3 (pp. 215-251)

TOPIC MEETINGS

WEEK 4 – What is sexuality and how is it socially constructed?

Tuesday, Sept. 22nd -

Read: Eugenides, Book 1, 2, and 3

Thursday, Sept. 24th

TOPIC MEETINGS

WEEK 5 – What does it mean to be normal: social ideas vs. biology?

Tuesday, Sept. 29th

Read: [ANGEL] Fausto-Sterling, A. (1997.) How to build a man. In Lancaster, R. N and di Leonardo, M. (Eds.), *The gender sexuality reader: Culture, history, political economy* (pp. 244-248). New York: Routledge.

Read: Eugenides, Book 4 excerpt (pp. 401-423, “Oracular Vulva”)

Thursday, Oct. 1st

Read: Eugenides, Book 4 excerpt (pp. 424-458, ending with “Go West”)

WEEK 6 – Morality and Conformity, maintenance of norms and what is “natural”

Tuesday, Oct. 6th

Read: [ANGEL] Gilmore, D. (2001.) The Manhood Puzzle. In Brettell, C. & Sargent, C. (Eds.) *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (pp. 207-218). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

DUE: PROPOSAL

Thursday, Oct. 8th

Read: Eugenides, finish Book 4 (pp. 459-529, starting with “Gender Dysphoria”)

Part II. Economic Development and Gender Role Change

WEEK 7 – Gender and household divisions of labor, definitions of “work”

Tuesday, October 13th -

TEST (on Part I only)

Thursday, Oct. 15th

Read: [ANGEL] Greenhalgh, S. (1988). Intergenerational Contracts: Familial Roots of Sexual Stratification in Taiwan. In Dwyer, D. and Bruce, J. (Eds.), *A Home Divided: Women and Income in the Third World* (pp.39-70). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

WEEK 8 –What is economic development and how does it affect gender hierarchies?

Tuesday, Oct. 20th - HOLIDAY

Thursday, Oct. 22nd

Read: [ANGEL] Wolf, D. (1991). Female Autonomy, the Family, and Industrialization in Java. In Blumberg, R (Ed.), *Gender, Family, and Economy: The Triple Overlap* (pp.128-148). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications

WEEK 9 – Differences that make a difference: Gender, Race and Class

Tuesday, Oct 27th

Read: [ANGEL] Heng, G. & Devan, J. (1995). State fatherhood: The politics of nationalism, sexuality and race in Singapore. In O. Aihwa & M. Peletz (Eds.), *Bewitching women, pious men: Gender and body politics in Southeast Asia* (pp. 195-215). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Thursday, Oct. 29th

Read: [ANGEL] Ch. 2 “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression” in hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (pp. 17-31). Boston: South End Press.

Part III. Families & Consensual Unions as Sites of Cultural Reproduction

WEEK 10 – What is marriage, family? Families as sites of cultural reproduction

Tuesday, Nov. 3rd

Read: [ANGEL] Watson, R. (2004.) The named and the Nameless: Gender and Person in Chinese Society. In Watson, J. & Watson, R., *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories* (pp.199-220). Hong Kong: Chinese University Press.

Thursday, Nov. 5th

Read: [ANGEL] Ch. 3 “The Significance of the Feminist Movement” in hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (pp.33-41). Boston: South End Press.

Video: Long Bow Group (Producer) & Harton, C. and Gordon, R. (Directors). (1984). *Small Happiness* [Motion picture] (Available from Long Bow Group, New York, NY 10024)

WEEK 11 – Gender Ideologies and social inequality: the case of companionate marriage
Tuesday, Nov. 10th

Read: [ANGEL] Hirsch, J., Higgins, J., Bentley, M., and C. Nathanson. (2006). The Social Constructions of Sexuality: Companionate Marriage and STD/HIV Risk in a Mexican Migrant Community. In J. Hirsch & H. Wardlow (Eds.), *Modern Loves: The Anthology of Romantic Courtship and Companionate Marriage* (pp. 95-117). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Thursday, Nov. 12th

Read: [ANGEL] Ch. 3 “Changing Perspectives on Power” in hooks, b. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (pp.83-93). Boston: South End Press

WEEK 12 – The Commodification of Love: Agency and Subjectivity

Tuesday, Nov. 17th

Read: [ANGEL] Brennan, D. (Autumn, 2004). Women Work, Men Sponge and Everyone Gossips: Macho Men and Stigmatized/ing Women in a Sex Tourist Town. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 77(4), pp. 705-733.

Thursday, Nov. 19th

WEEK 13 –

Tuesday, Nov. 24th

TEST (Part II-IV)

Thursday, Nov. 26th - **HOLIDAY**

WEEK 14 – Presentations

Tuesday, Dec. 1st

Presentations (Group 1)

Thursday, Dec. 3rd

Presentations (Group 2)

WEEK 15 – Presentations

Tuesday, Dec. 8th

Presentations (Group 3)

Thursday, Dec. 10th

Presentations (Group 4)

Research Paper due Tuesday, Dec. 15th by 10am. Drop off at Cooper C-12.