

## GENDER AND POLITICS

Updated 25 Jan 2021

\*\*\*Updates again on 14 February 2021 (several changes in April assignments marked \*\*\*)

POL 335/GWS 335 – Honors (002) and Non-Honors (001) – Spring 2021

Tuesday and Thursday – 3:30–4:45 pm – **Live Online!**

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With courtesy appointments in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies,  
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Contact me by email and expect a response within 48 hours (often quicker!)

Office hours: via email or scheduling a conference

Log in to our D2L course webpage for important materials and updates

### Course Description

This course examines **gender** (understood as a hierarchical dichotomy privileging that which is 'masculinized'--ideas, entities, identities, activities--over that which is 'feminized') and its intersection with **politics** (understood as systemically/pervasively operating power relations). The materials present gender as a varying dimension of intersecting (co-produced, interactive) structural inequalities, primarily of sexuality, race/ethnicity, disability, class and nation, with varying and complex implications. This course does *not* focus on 'women and politics' or electoral, governmental practices. Rather, we take a more comprehensive look at: how gender is socially *constructed* ('made' through historical, socio-cultural and institutional processes) and how gender shapes our 'identities,' ways of thinking and ways of acting (through stereotypes, expectations, norms, etc.) – including how we participate individually and collectively (and both intentionally and *unintentionally*) in the production, reproduction, resistance to and legitimation of the unequal social systems in which we live.

### Learning Objectives

The overall objective of the course is to sensitize students to social constructions of gender and their political implications; in other words, to explore the implications of 'taking gender seriously' in our examination of 'politics.' Politics is understood not narrowly (as electoral or governmental activities) but systemically (as power operating through symbols, language, thinking, identities, norms, behaviors, activities, and institutionalized practices).

Through this course, students will be able to:

1. Define basic concepts and identify key approaches (theories, paradigms) for understanding how gender is shaped by power relations and how power relations are gendered.
2. Recognize the diversity of human experiences, including the ways that gender, sexuality, race, class and nationality interact to shape those experiences.
3. Integrate a variety of interdisciplinary concepts, methods and perspectives for making sense of gender and politics.
4. Demonstrate an ability to effectively communicate critical knowledge about gender and politics to academic and general audiences.
5. Recognize the myriad ways that gender and related inequalities shape personal, local, national and international contexts and connect this knowledge to projects for personal and

social change.

### *Course Expectations, Processes and Priorities*

Teaching and learning in virtual courses, both ‘live online’ (synchronous, in Zoom sessions) and ‘online’ (asynchronous, without ‘live’ interactions) involves both familiar and new challenges. Our course webpage on UA’s D2L <https://d2l.arizona.edu> is where you will find the most important information for making your way through the course. The ‘Course Home’ link takes you to ‘Announcements’ (updated info) and the ‘Calendar’ (upcoming events, assignments, etc.). Under ‘Content’ you will find a list of ‘Modules’ that include Weekly course materials (including an overview of that week’s ‘theme, links to assigned readings and visual materials, etc.). You will be able to follow your grades on the D2L site, and there are additional Modules (under ‘Content’) that include supporting materials: e.g., glossaries, recommended readings, and on and off campus info and links of potential interest.

Given the ‘live online’ modality of our course, I have spent additional time selecting materials (new articles and more videos!) and preparing to teach the course in this modality (many tutorials and tech frustrations!). I am committed to making this a valuable, interactive, thought-provoking and *enjoyable* course, and I dearly hope that this ‘front end’ preparation enhances how the course experience unfolds. I look forward to working with you throughout the semester, but ultimately the success of the course *depends on active student participation*, and especially, your willingness to engage the materials and ask hard questions about the world(s) we live in. Students are expected to attend all zoom sessions and to participate in class discussions on the basis of an engaged and critical reading of each session's assignments (including items to read, listen to, watch) *prior* to sessions. I encourage you to take the course seriously and examine how you think about power and how systems of power shape all of our lives, futures, and emotional attachments to particular ‘identities’ – with political implications!

This is an *upper-division course* and presumes some prior knowledge/coursework regarding gender and analyses of power. The prerequisites are sometimes waived, but if you lack background/familiarity be prepared to undertake additional reading to ‘catch up.’ (The Crawford reading in January provides a ‘background overview,’ and more suggestions are posted on D2L under Content>Additional Materials). In an upper-division course students are expected not only to be well prepared (as in lower-division courses) but also to show initiative in class participation and in taking up the challenge of critical, intellectual inquiry (as is appropriate for advanced students!). Because these materials are challenging, attendance and participation are crucial, both to avoid ‘getting lost’ or confused and to enable an interactive, *collective* learning process. We know this is more difficult via remote settings, but please help me and your classmates by being prepared and also *participating!*

*Prepare for discussions* by thinking about the following questions before class: What are the key points and arguments of the assignments? What are the terms and assumptions the author employs? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments? How do the readings/assignments relate to one another throughout the semester? And how do the assignments improve (or not!) your understanding of current events and possible responses to them?

‘Politics’ is notoriously controversial, and ‘gender’ is increasingly so. We can expect, therefore, that the topics addressed in this course may at times elicit feelings of discomfort and perhaps frustration or tension. Learning in this class requires a willingness to examine one’s own assumptions about gender and power. Because so many of our assumptions about gender and

power are simply taken-for-granted (as ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ rather than historically ‘made’), we often resist thinking about them critically. ‘Reflectivity’ is very helpful - this involves paying attention to your emotional and intellectual reactions to the material, and noting especially *what prompts ‘resistance’ and exploring why this is so*. One key objective of the course is to move beyond ‘either-or’ thinking (binaries, dichotomies); whatever your political positioning, it is important to appreciate how complex (and often uncomfortable) analyses of power are - especially when they challenge us to rethink familiar assumptions. A second key objective is to recognize how complex life, social relations, and systems of power are – and how our participation is shaped by conscious and also by *unconscious* (implicit, unintended) ways of thinking and behaving.

While personal experiences and feelings are relevant in classroom discussions, personal opinions cannot substitute for thoughtful contributions that are informed by and engage with the course materials. The objective (I’m sure you’ll agree) is learning and growth: first, being open to perspectives that may initially seem unusual or uncomfortable; and second, recognizing that growth often requires moving *through* discomfort to new and deeper understanding. In this course, understanding the material does not mean that you have to agree with it, but it does mean that you must read the material attentively, be aware of its points and argumentation, and be able to discuss it knowledgeably.

Please note: “Active and thoughtful participation” does not mean simply providing “correct answers” to questions; rather, it means any participation in discussion that is a sincere attempt to come to terms with the material and/or advance the class’s consideration of the issue at hand. Such attempts may include raising your own questions about the text, pointing out connections that you see, responding to another student’s comments, and so forth. Be as constructive and productive as possible! Try to be concise (clear but brief!) and encourage contributions from students less confident of speaking up. Complicated issues are not quickly resolved, so feel free to ask for clarification or to return to a previous point; numerous discussions will often be necessary. Overall: this is a university classroom and I expect everyone to approach the subject matter—and each other—with respectful attention and commitment to learning from and with each other (that includes the professor).

**Class meetings via Zoom.** Attendance is expected at all scheduled live class sessions. It is especially important to have read, viewed, and absorbed all the course materials (that are made available through D2L) *prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned*. This will enable us to more briefly review course materials and make more time for more engaged discussions and other activities. Assigned materials are posted and hyperlinked in our course modules on D2L. If you anticipate being absent, are unexpectedly absent, or are unable to participate in class online activities, please contact me as soon as possible. If you are experiencing unexpected barriers to your success in this or other courses, the Dean of Students Office (520-621-7057) is a central support resource for all students and may be helpful.

**Technical support.** If you experience technical problems that interrupt your ability to complete class work, it is important that you know where to seek help immediately. If your computer crashes, or if your internet connection fails, you are still responsible for your course responsibilities. Call the D2L help desk at **520 626-6804** for problems with access to D2L and our course website, links, videos, dropbox, etc. Let me know ASAP if you are having problems that are disrupting your participation - so that technical problems do not impact being graded for your work. (Please recognize that I am not able to provide technical assistance!)

**Communicating with me.** I will respond to emails within 48 hours at the most, but

typically in a few hours during the work week. Please review all of your course materials such as the syllabus, modules and announcements *before* writing to me to make sure your question has not already been addressed. Each email message should include the course number (335) and your first and last name in the message. So that you do not miss important information and/or updates, make sure you are checking messages appearing in your official *UA email address* (that D2L assumes).

**Assignments** must be completed by their due dates and times for full credit. *Late assignments will not be accepted* unless there is a documented medical or other emergency/serious problem that I am ideally informed of in advance of the due date/time so that adjustments can be considered.

**Grades and Grading Policy:** Again, students are expected to have done the readings prior to class sessions, to bring questions you have to class, and to be ready to engage in discussion. Grade components reflect these expectations and the significance of continual participation. Your **course grade** is a combination of: 1) classroom attendance, preparation and participation [10%]; 2) ‘quizzes’ and/or short writing assignments on assigned readings [30%]; 3) discussion boards [10%]; and 4) two essay exams/papers [25, 25 = 50%]. Further details and guidelines (regarding preparation of materials, grading criteria, etc.) will be posted on D2L and discussed in class. I will continually post announcements/news regarding the course on our D2L webpage so please make sure that you are able to access this site – and your official UA emails – and do check frequently.

**Honors Credit.** Course grade for Honors students will reflect my higher expectations of their participation and work more generally, and *additional* questions/essays/expectations to be included when completing the essay exams/papers. Clarification will be provided on D2L and in communications with those enrolled for Honors credit.

#### General **Grading Rubrics** for Submitted Work

A work: follows assignment instructions well and creatively, uses key and compelling course content to show mastery of it in exploring and organizing ideas, uses language that is clear, fluid, and skillful with hardly any errors

B work: mostly follows assignment instructions, uses relevant course content to develop, explore, and organize idea(s), uses clear language that conveys appropriate meaning and has few errors in language or grammar

C work: minimally responds to assignment instructions, uses some course content to convey a simple idea, uses language and grammar in ways that sometimes impedes meaning and/or contains a number of errors

D work: does not sufficiently follow assignment instructions, use course content, and/or convey an idea or meaning due to many errors

F work: falls below a passing score; does not submit assignment

University of Arizona Syllabus Rules require that I include the following:

Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee) will be honored. If you are not in class, for whatever reason, it is *your* responsibility to find out what you missed, including any new assignments. The UA's policy concerning Class Attendance and Administrative Drops is available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/classatten.htm>. The UA policy regarding absences on and accommodation of religious holidays is available at <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/accommodation-religious-observance-and-practice>.

Plagiarism: all work submitted must be the student's own. The University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at:

<http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. See: <http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/academic-integrity/students/academic-integrity>.

Threatening behavior by students is not permitted at any time; you are responsible for being familiar with the University's policies in this regard:

<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/~policy/threaten.shtml>

Students with special needs who are registered with the S.A.L.T. Center (<http://www.salt.arizona.edu/>) or the Disability Resource Center (<http://drc.arizona.edu/>) must submit appropriate documentation to the instructor if they are requesting special accommodations. Please let me know how I can be helpful.

UA Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment policy:

<http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy>

UA Academic policies and procedures are available at: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/aaindex.html>

Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance>

Confidentiality of Student Records: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

**Note:** Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice. **Any new or revised information will be posted on our D2L coursepage, so make sure that you check the site and emails (sent to your official UA email address) frequently.** If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding the course, please share them with me *sooner rather than later!*

### Texts and Schedule of Assignments

**Only one textbook is required:** Allan G. Johnson. *The Gender Knot*. 2014, 3rd Edition. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. [Identified as **AJ** in the scheduled assignments.] As we will read almost all of it, the 2014, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of this book is *required* and I hope many of you obtain hard copies (better for studying). The book is available at the UA bookstore, and as an e-book through the UA library (on D2L coursepage select 'Library Tools' on NavBar> login to UA access>look in box top right 'Unlimited-Use Ebooks' and click on link to our text), and through used bookstores, Amazon, etc. but *be sure* to purchase only the correct 2014, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition! Check out Johnson's website <http://www.agjohnson.us/> for many additional blog items and very helpful essays.

All **additional assignments** (listening, reading, watching) will be posted on D2L and accessed through links in the relevant Modules. **NOTE:** When an entire article or chapter is not required, you are *only responsible for the pages indicated in bold* on the syllabus and on D2L. Please also note that posted on D2L (under Content>Additional Materials) are various items that are *not required* but are relevant to course topics (glossaries, powerpoints, suggested readings, videos, etc.) or for further exploration of specific issues.

## Calendar of Scheduled (Reading, Video) Assignments

Again, you are expected to have completed the assigned materials (listening to, reading, watching) *prior* to, and be ready to discuss them on, the dates shown below. I advise reading/watching them in the order presented for each date. Quizzes will cover most and sometimes ALL of the readings assignments and will also occur *prior* to the scheduled dates shown. (Note that quizzes count for a significant portion of your course grade.)

These assignments also appear *within* each Weekly Module under 'Reading Assignments as shown on the syllabus' (they are the last section of the syllabus: 'Calendar of scheduled assignments'), and links to the actual readings (pdf files) and videos (links to internet websites) for that week then appear under 'Reading Assignments.'

### **Jan 14:** Getting started

Introductions and getting started. No reading assignment, but we will begin discussion of key topics. Your participation is important!

### **Jan 19:** Feminism/s

#### **Read:**

Harding, Kate. 2010. The power of pink. [2 pp.]

AJ (our main text: 2014. Gender Knot) Ch 5 feminisms **pp. 92-105 and pp. 119-121 only**

Chu, Arthur. 2015. Plight of bitter nerd. [4 pp.]

Miscellaneous cultural 'reminders' [3 pp.]

hooks, bell. 2015. *Feminism is for Everybody*. [pp. vii-xiv].

Shaw and Lee. 2010. Thank a feminist [ 1 p.]

### **Jan 21:** Gender Matters, Difference Matters

#### **Read:**

Rich, Adrienne. 1979. Claiming an Education. [Pp. 22-25] **\*\*** Take this reading seriously.

Allen, Brenda. 2011. *Difference Matters*. **pp. 1-16 only** in Chap 1 and **pp. 23-39** ( all pages) in Ch 2

### **Jan 26:** Gender, Status and Power

#### **Read:**

Crawford, Mary. 2012. Chap 2: Gender, Status, and Power [pp. 25-56]. **\*\*Basic background overview** of gender studies, and essential if you are unfamiliar with this field. Take notes!

### **Jan 28:** Sexism and Inequalities

#### **Read:**

Ahmed, Sara. 2015. Sexism - A problem with a name. [5 pp.]

Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins. 2010. Why Race, Class and Gender Still Matter (pp. 1-15).

Newman, 2007. Excerpts from Chap 2, 'Manufacturing Difference' **pp. 30-39 only**.

### **Feb 2:** Privilege and Power Relations AKA Politics

#### **Read:**

McIntosh, Peggy. 1988. White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack [6 pp.]

Erin Tatum. 2015. 10 Examples of straight privilege. [4 pp.]  
Schacht, Steven. 2001. Teaching about being an oppressor. *Men and Masculinities* 4, 2; 201-208.  
Heathcott, Joseph. 2014. Liberals have a white privilege problem too. [3 pp pdf]

#### **Feb 4:** Privilege and Power Relations AKA Politics

##### **Read:**

Wendell, Susan. 1996. Social Construction of Disability. [Pp. 90-99]  
Acker, Joan. 2006. Is capitalism gendered and racialized? [pp. 137-145]  
Gina Crosley-Corcoran. 2019. Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person [4 pp.]  
Rozsa, Matthew. 2016. Good new: only 170 more years... [2 pp.]

**Watch:** Tarana Burke. 2019. Me Too is a movement not a moment. 16'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP3LaAYzA3Q>

#### **Feb 9:** Constructing Sex and Sexualities

##### **Read:**

AJ Ch 6 'Sex in the patriarchy' **pp. 138-144 only**  
Hubbard, Ruth. 1990. The Social construction of sexuality. [3 pp.]  
Sears, Alan. 2015. The social reproduction of sexuality: An Interview. [5 pp.]  
Peterson, V. Spike. 2014. How queering the intimate queers the international. *International Studies Review* [5 pp.]  
Peers, Danielle and Lindsay Eales. 2017. 'Stand Up' for exclusion? Queer Pride, Ableism and Inequality. *BQA* [3 pp.]

#### **Feb 11:** Constructing Sex and Sexualities

##### **Read:**

Stryker, Susan. 2007. Transgender Feminism. [Pp. 63-69.]  
Khan, Farah Naz. 2016. A history of transgender health care [3 pp.]  
Nelson, Jamie Lindemann. 2016. Understanding transgender and medically assisted gender transition. [Pp. 217-221.]  
Horton, Richard. 2017. Racism—the pathology we choose to ignore. [Pp. 394-395]

##### **Watch:**

A trans history. 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcGqeBfNzk0> 7'

#### **Feb 16:** Gendering Bodies and Desires

##### **Read:**

Grewal and Kaplan. 2006. Representations, cultures, media and markets. [Pp. 265-268].  
Shaw and Lee. 2012. Inscribing gender on the body. [21 pp. 213-233]  
How to read ads (shortened) [2pp. posted pdf]  
No comment ads

#### **Feb 18:** Gendering Bodies and Desires

##### **Read:**

Media literacy - 1 page overview  
Media literacy [4 pp.]  
Lisle, Debbie. 2014. How do we find out what's going on in the world? [**Pp. 154-157 only**]  
Ingliš, Jeff. 2018. You're being manipulated on social media: 4 essential reads. [2 pp. pdf.]

**Feb 23: Reproductive Politics**

**Read:**

**Watch:** Dr. Willie Parker, Reproductive Justice: A Different Horizon. 2016. 11'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFpNJgtoCvg&feature=youtu.be>

Price, Kimala. 2010. What is Reproductive Justice? How Women of Color Activists Are Redefining the Pro-Choice Paradigm. [22 pp.]

Andrews, Katherine. 2017. The dark history of forced sterilization of Latin Women. [2 pp.]

Holloway, Kali. 2015. The 7 biggest myths about abortion. [4 pp. pdf]

McDonough, Katie. 2013. A banner year against reproductive rights. [1page]

**Feb 25: No class UA 'break day'**

**Mar 2: Empowerment and/or Exploitation?**

**Read:**

Tolentino, Jia. 2016. A Woman's Worth. *NYT* [2 pp.]

Cognard-Black, Jennifer. 2007. Extreme Makeover: Feminist Edition. [2 pp.]

Douglas, Susan. 2010. Enlightened sexism. [pp 479-483]

**Mar 4: EXAM/PAPER (details to be posted on D2L)**

**Mar 9: No class UA 'break day'**

**Mar 11: Unraveling 'the gender knot'**

**Read:**

AJ Ch 1 Where are we? **\*\*Important introduction** to this important book! The key arguments here are essential for understanding the rest of the book – and the rest of the course!

**Mar 16: Unraveling 'the gender knot'**

**Read:**

AJ Ch 2 Understanding how *systems* work

**Mar 18: Unraveling 'the gender knot'**

**Watch:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSy1gR4HbDE>

Allan Johnson Interview at WSU 2013 **view first 60'** AJ gives a remarkably clear 'overview' of how privilege is problematic for everyone.

**Mar 23: Unraveling 'the gender knot'**

**Read:**

AJ Ch 3 Why target patriarchy?

**Mar 25: Patriarchal History**

**Read:**

Images: Viewing women through the ages. [posted pdf]

Hackman, Rose. 2015. Women are just better at this stuff. [pp. 515-517]

Higgins, Charlotte. 2018. The age of patriarchy. [pp. 517-524]



**Mar 30:** Unraveling ‘the gender knot’

**Read:**

AJ Ch 4 Ideology and myths **pp. 73-84 and 86-91 only**

**Apr 1:** Gendered parts and whole systems

**Read:**

\*\*\*Johnson, Allan. 2013. Women are not guys. [3 pp]

\*\*\*Johnson, Allan. Aren't systems just people? [4 pp]

**Apr 6:** Unraveling ‘the gender knot’

**Read:**

AJ Ch 7 What patriarchy? **\*\*This chapter makes many key points!** Take notes!

**Apr 8:** Gendered paradoxes and false parallels

**Read:**

\*\*\*Johnson, Allan. 2013. Is Affirmative Action Racist? [3pp]

\*\*\*Johnson, Allan. 2013/2017. Proud to be White? [3 pp]

**Apr 13:** Unraveling ‘the gender knot’

**Read:**

AJ Ch 10 **\*\*Overview** of gendered violence.

**Apr 15:** Gendered violence

**Read:**

Solnit, Rebecca. 2013. Global epidemic of violence against women. [8 pp.]

Murphy, Heather. 2017. What experts know about men who rape. NYT [4 pp.]

Koss, Mary and Alexandra Rutherford. 2018. What We Knew About Date Rape Then, and What We Know Now. *The Atlantic* [2 pp.]

Chemaly, Soraya. 2013. Five ways that “staying safe” costs women. [2 pp.]

**Apr 20:** Unraveling ‘the gender knot’

**Read:**

AJ Ch 9 Shame, guilt and responsibility

**Apr 22:** Bystander politics

**Watch:** Jackson Katz. 2013. Not so innocent bystanders... 20'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTvSfeCRxe8>

**Apr 27:** Patriarchy, racism and right-wing social movements **\*\*These are important readings for analyzing today's troubling politics**

**Read:**

AJ Ch 8 Paradoxes of power **pp. 187-191 only**

Kaplan, Sarah. 2016. Sexist men have psychological problems. *Washington Post* [2 pp.]

Dietze, Gabriele and Julia Roth. 2020. Right-Wing populism and gender. [10 pp.]

Naber, Nadine. 2019. Here we go again: saving Muslim women and queers... [5 pp.]

**Apr 29:** Making (some) sense of right-wing movements

**Read:**

Lynch, Conor. 2018. Angry young white men, the “incel rebellion” and an age of worldwide reaction. [3 pp.]

O’Hehir, Andrew. 2014. White privilege: An insidious virus eating American from within. [4 pp.]

**May 4:** Unraveling ‘the gender knot’

**Read:**

AJ Ch 11 What can we do?

**May 12: FINAL EXAM/PAPER 3:30-5:30 pm**