

CMST 3115: Communication & Gender
Department of Communication Studies
Louisiana State University
MWF 9:30 in Coates 237

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Catalog Description

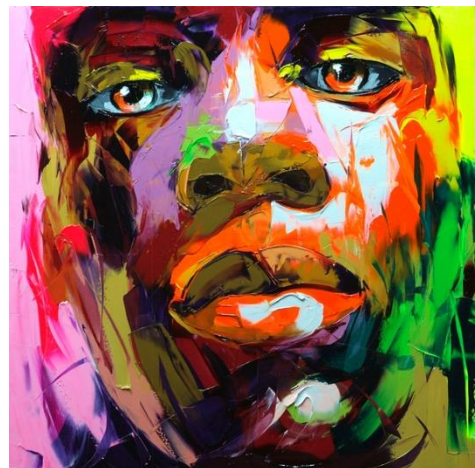
Gender differences, sex roles and sexual stereotypes in communication.

Additional Course Description:

People "do" gender through their communicative practices, and gender is constructed through the communication produced by social institutions. The purpose of this course is to raise students' awareness regarding the ways in which gender is created, maintained, and/or changed through communication. Students will gain theoretical insights and develop analytical skills to identify gendered expectations and learn how such expectations serve to limit behavior for all people. The course will enhance understanding of how predominant social assumptions and communication norms can devalue and silence women and other non-dominant groups and how students can become change agents to enhance our collective lives.

Course Objectives:

1. Intersectionality. Persons are not just female or male, feminine or masculine. To more accurately study gender, we must study gendered lives in the context of other social identities, particularly race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and national origin. Students should understand that gender is always about more than a person's sex.
2. Interdisciplinary. To understand gender/sex in communication, one must fuse and balance social scientific, humanistic, and critical methods. Students should be able to identify the various contributions of these approaches to the study of gender/sex in communication.
3. Gender diversity, not sex differences. Gender as a form of difference does not explain the complexity of gender in communication. Thus, students should understand the range of genders available to people and not look at gender in communication as merely a way to track differences.
4. Masculinity. Students should understand that the study of gender is not just the study of women.
5. Gender is performed. Students should understand that gender is something a person does, not something a person is. Gender is not something located within individuals, but is a social construct which institutions and individuals maintain (and occasionally challenge).
6. Violence. To study gender in lived experiences means to study the darker side of gender: oppression and violence. Students should more fully recognize the consequences of the prevalent gendered society in which most people live.
7. Emancipation. Even as we recognize violence, we also want to recognize the emancipatory potential of gendered practice. Gender identity need not be oppressive and limiting to persons. Students should be able to identify the way their own gendered practices hold the potential for personal and social emancipation.



Required Text

DeFrancisco, Victoria Pruin, Catherine Helen Palczewski, and Danielle Dick McGeough. *Gender in Communication*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2017).

Assignments & Point Distribution

6 Reading Responses	30	A+	97.00 – 100	C	73.0 – 76.9
2 Exams	20	A	93.0 – 96.9	C-	70.0 – 72.9
Participation	15	A-	90.0 – 92.9	D+	67.0 – 69.9
Gender Portfolio	35	B+	87.0 – 89.9	D	63.0 – 66.9
		B	83.0 – 86.9	D-	60.0 – 62.9
		B-	80.0 – 82.9	F	0 – 59.9
		C+	77.0 – 79.9		

Assignment Descriptions

Reading Responses In lieu of quizzes you will write 6 reading responses. Your response should illustrate a theoretical tension or concept in the reading from the day [min. 350 words, max. 700 words]. End with 2 questions to propel class in a discussion of the readings. To be accepted they must be shared and turned in during class. Late responses, either later that day or a month late are accepted at 50%. Possible days to share are marked with (*) [5 points each].

Exams You will have 2 exams covering the topics of the course text. If late, you may receive an exam up until the first person finishes and leaves the room. [10 points each].

Participation I recognize and respect a variety of learning styles and do not have a particularly dogmatic approach to participation. But this is a discussion-based class. I evaluate your participation on speaking in class, making use of my office hours, working effectively in groups, etc. Like life, it requires more than just showing up.

Gender Portfolio *Solo Performance of the Things That I Carry*. You will present yourself to the class as a collection of things you carry with you on a day-to-day basis. You must memorize the piece and overall it should be aesthetically interesting. Performances must be between 1-2 minutes. In addition to your performance, you will turn in a written script. [5 points]

Reworking a Family Snapshot. This is an exercise in memory work and critical analysis. Choose a family snapshot and work with the memories the picture arouses, analyze the operative photographic conventions at work in the image, and elaborate upon what the image shows by telling us about the gendered familial, social, economic and historical contexts in which it was taken/made. [10 points]

Gender Presentations. Twice, in groups develop and present a critical analysis of a particular communication/cultural artifact that deals with gender, sexuality, etc. using insights, theories, and concepts from the readings. Each group will present their analysis in a 10-12-minute presentation and facilitate a 10-12-minute dialogue and discussion with the class. See Moodle for a more detailed description. [10 points each]

Class, University, & Federal Policies

- On The Course** Throughout the semester we will encounter a variety of sensitive issues given gender/sex can be an intensely sensitive and personal aspect of being human. The content of this class has the potential to stir up strong emotional reactions. Students are asked to follow some guidelines to help maintain a constructive learning environment. Participants in this class must be open to looking at gender from a variety of perspectives. Further, it is possible that films, readings, images, music, etc. used in this class may be considered “offensive” by some. A student’s decision to stay enrolled in the class is an agreement to approach all course content with a critical academic lens. The most fundamental way to respect class participants is to complete daily readings, listen to others, and ground your own comments in principles of critical thinking.
- On Showing Up** Attendance is expected. Unless it is university-excused, proven through documentation, there is no need to email me about your absence or tardiness. Visits to the student health center are not university-excused absences. The documentation must prove you were too ill or sick to attend class. Please refer to the LSU policy handbook. Students who are constantly late, on their cell phones, or who are falling asleep are not engaged and, as a result, not able to earn participation points. Your participation grade is factored quantitatively (based off my discussion records) and qualitatively (your progression throughout the semester, your use of office hours, etc.)
- On Plagiarism** A student found to have turned in material not their own (either downloaded from the internet or written by another student) in part or in whole will receive a 0 for that assignment and be reported to the Dean of Students.
- On The ADA** If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a coordinator in the Office of Disability Affairs so that such accommodations can be arranged.
- On Title IX** In accordance with Title IX and other applicable law, LSU is committed to providing a learning, working, and living environment that promotes integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual misconduct which includes sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and retaliation.
- Acknowledgments** This syllabus is better because of colleagues who have shared their own syllabi, assignments, and policies with me. I especially thank Drs. Collins (LSU), Mack (LSU), McCann (LSU), McGeough (UNI), DeFrancisco (UNI), Manning (UNLV) and Rachel Hall (SU). I also owe much to the person who first taught me about the rhetoricity and performativity of gender, Dr. Catherine Palczewski (UNI). The course draws its critical energy and course objectives from her.

Part I: FOUNDATIONS			
Date	Topic	Read	Assignment/Activity
M 8/20	Introduction to the Course		
W 8/22			The Things I Carry
F 8/24	Gender Today	Preface (xiii-xx)	
M 8/27	Developing a Critical Gender/Sex Lens	Chapter 1	
W 8/29	Writing About & Presenting Communication Artifacts		Sign up for Presentation Dates
F 8/31	Theories of Gender/Sex: Biological & Psychological*	Chapter 2 (29-41)	
M 9/3 Labor Day			
W 9/5	Theories of Gender/Sex: Critical/Cultural*	Chapter 2 (41-54)	

Part II: INSTITUTIONS			
F 9/6	Gendered & Sexed Voices*	Chapter 3	
M 9/10			CGP 1
W 9/12	Gendered & Sexed Bodies*	Chapter 4 (75-89)	
F 9/14	Gendered & Sexed Bodies Continued*	Chapter 4 (92-99)	
M 9/17			CGP 2
W 9/19	Gendered & Sexed Language*	Chapter 5 (101-115)	
F 9/21	Gendered & Sexed Language Continued*	Chapter 5 (115-125)	
M 9/24			CGP 3
W 9/26	Social Institutions*	Chapter 6	
F 9/28	Families*	Chapter 7 (139-155)	
M 10/1	Families Continued*	Chapter 7 (155-160)	
W 10/3			Review
F 10/5 Fall Break			
M 10/8			Exam
W 10/10	Family Snapshot		Workshop
F 10/12	Family Snapshot		Workshop
M 10/15			Photo Presentations
W 10/17			Photo Presentations
F 10/19	Education*	Chapter 8 (163-176)	
M 10/22	Education Continued*	Chapter 8 (176-182)	
W 10/24			CGP 4
F 10/26	Work*	Chapter 9 (183-193)	
M 10/29	Work Continued*	Chapter 9	

		(193-201)	
W 10/31			CGP 5
F 11/2	Religion*	Chapter 10	
M 11/5			CGP 6
W 11/7 NCA			
F 11/9 NCA			
M 11/12	Media*	Chapter 11 (221-237)	
W 11/14	Media Continued*	Chapter 11 (238-252)	
F 11/16			CGP 7
M 11/19	One Last Look*	Chapter 12	
W 11/21 Thanksgiving			
F 11/23 Thanksgiving			
M 11/26			TBD/Make Up Day
W 11/28			TBD/Make Up Day
F 11/30			TBD/Make Up Day
W 12/5 [3-5 PM]			Final Exam