Work—both paid and unpaid—has long differentiated men from women, defining social and economic relationships and contributing to our understanding of gender. Yet gender is far from static. Rapid changes in the economic and social organization of paid employment, together with challenges to related laws and norms, have altered our understanding of gender. Reconsidering conventional definitions of gender have, in turn, altered our definition of work. Yet gender continues to organize social and economic relationships and rationalize differences that affect opportunities, earnings, and individual choices, as well as organizational practices and public policies at many levels.

This course will address the various ways in which gender differences have been developed, understood, and altered as women and men participate in work. We will consider theories of gender difference and their significance for working women and men. We will place gender in a context of broader inequality, encompassing race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and immigration status. We will analyze the relationship between gender and organizational practices that enhance or constrain opportunity. Expanding our scope of concern beyond the workplace, we will address the relationship between work and family and the role of public policy in effecting change for both men and women in the workforce.

Course Requirements

This course is an exploration organized as a seminar. We will spend most of each class period discussing the readings, their context, and related topics. You will therefore need to attend class each week having read the assigned reading well enough to participate in class discussions. You can expect short lectures on the topics covered in this course, but you should also feel free to raise questions, challenge ideas, and respond to me and to your classmates. You need not agree with all of the author(s) you have read. You need not even understand all of the reading. Class discussions will, ideally, answer questions, foster critical engagement, and explore areas of disagreement.

To facilitate discussion, you will be responsible for synthesizing and presenting an analysis of one week’s readings at one point during the semester. The goal of each presentation is to consider the significance of the topic covered that week, the main points addressed in each of the readings, and questions that each week’s readings raise.
In other words, you need not summarize what you’ve read but should assume that your classmates have read it as well. Key to each week’s analysis is a consideration of the relationship between gender and work, the dynamics of gender difference and inequality, and the prospects for social and economic change.

Two reflection papers should also address one week’s readings. These may cover any week you choose with these exceptions: your papers should not cover the same readings on which you presented orally in class, and you should complete at least one reflection paper before mid-semester. Reflection papers, approximately three to five pages, should consider the same questions raised in class presentations: the significance of the topic; its contribution to our understanding of gender, work, and inequality; and prospects (or lack of prospects) for change. Papers should cite readings appropriately in one of the standard formats used for social science.

Your final paper may cover a topic of your choice related to gender and work. You should feel free to use the course readings to identify and topic and the additional reading and research you will undertake. I encourage you to use the paper to address a topic of personal interest or to inform other work you may be planning. I also encourage you to begin work on your paper as early as possible and to discuss your topic with me. Note that a written proposal is due by mid-November.

I will calculate grades as follows:

- Class participation and presentation: 50 percent
- Reflection papers (2): 20 percent
- Final paper: 30 percent

In class, I will distribute more detailed instructions for the final paper.

You are welcome to contact me between class sessions and during times outside my office hours. If you want to schedule a meeting outside my office hours, let me know. If you are working on an assignment and concerned about some aspect of the reading, please do not hesitate. You need not hesitate anyway. I usually check my e-mail more than once a day, and I try to respond promptly. If you need to reach me in a hurry, feel free to try both e-mail addresses.

**Course Outline**

**Week 1, September 11**  
**Introduction**

**Week 2, September 18**  
**Definitions of Gender and Work**


**Week 3, September 25  Occupational Segregation and Relative Valuation**


**Week 4, October 2  Feminization and Gender Typing**


**Week 5, October 10  Intersection and Exclusion**

**Note:** No class Monday, October 9. Tuesday is a Monday schedule.


**Week 6, October 16  Men in “Women’s” Occupations**


**Week 7, October 23  The Gendered Organization**


*At least one reflection paper should be submitted by this point.*

**Week 8, October 30  Legal Rights and Social Policy**


**Week 9, November 6  Sexual Harassment and Organizational Norms**


**Week 10, November 13  Gender and Women in Unions**


**Proposal for final paper due**

**Week 11, November 20  Domestic Work, Care Work**


**Week 12, November 27  Work, Family, and U. S. Welfare Policy**


**Week 13, December 4  Work and Family: Employment Policy and Practice**


**Week 14, December 11  Work and Family: Nonstandard Work Arrangements**


Guidelines for In-Class Presentations

Presentations are a means for opening discussion on an assigned portion of the course readings. The purpose is not merely to summarize what the readings said but to analyze the researchers’ questions, strategies, and arguments. Presentations can—and should—raise questions about these issues. If you don’t understand some part of the research you’re presenting, feel free to flag questions that you think need clarification in class.

Presentations should take approximately 10 minutes. You should consider the following questions, but you need not organize your presentation in response to the questions, and you do not (really do not) need to address them all. Rather, the purpose of your presentation is to consider, challenge, and apply what you read.

1. What appears to be the central research question or concern that the readings address? What assumptions about gender, work, and inequality underlie these readings?

2. What do these readings contribute to our knowledge of gender, work, inequality, and social difference?

3. What are some implications of these theories, findings, or analyses? (Consider, for example, organizational practices and public policies.)

4. What further research and analysis might these readings suggest?

5. What do these readings suggest about the prospects for long-term change related to gender and work?