Course description

This course focuses on the sociological study of gender and work. We examine changing roles that women and men play in paid (labor market) and unpaid (caregiving) work, how these roles interact and reinforce each other, and how these roles are socially constructed, through socialization practices, social interaction and the expectations built into social institutions, particularly the family and the labor market. Students will have the opportunity to think critically about the explanations that have been offered for the persistence of the gender-based division of labor in the family and of gender inequality in the workplace. In looking at the workplace, we will pay special attention to the gender gap in pay, occupational segregation, “the glass ceiling,” the “gendered culture” of work organizations and the plight of low-income single mothers. The intersection of gender, race, ethnicity and social class on individuals’ involvement in work will also be explored; our reading also provides a cross-national perspective on gender and work issues. Finally, we will cover how government policies affect the status of men and women in unpaid and paid work. This course will be taught as an intensive seminar, structured around discussion of shared reading, mini-research assignments, films, and students’ individual exploration of a topic of special interest.

Learning objectives

Students who complete this course will have gained a sophisticated understanding of linkages between gender and work in modern society and how these have been studied by social scientists.

Students will also develop important intellectual skills to help them succeed in school and aid them in establishing the habit of life-long learning, including:

- the ability to comprehend intellectual text material and apply this knowledge
- the ability to express oneself well in writing
- the ability to think critically (questioning arguments and facts, analyzing complex issues, and synthesizing information from various sources to arrive at sound conclusions)
- the ability to participate actively in worthwhile discussions (which includes thinking and listening as well as speaking), so students will develop the capacity for clear communication of ideas and a respect for complexity and diverse perspectives
- the ability to locate and use authoritative research literature and websites
**Course requirements – there are no quizzes, midterm exams or a final exam in this course.**

Instead we need:

1. **Prompt and continued attendance** – - 5% of final course grade
   This course aims to become a community of learners; therefore, it is important that students attend most classes (missing no more than two), and that they arrive on time and stay for the whole period.

2. **Use of Oncourse** – Students are expected to regularly check Oncourse (the original) for announcements and mail, as well as for grades.

3. **Enthusiastic and thoughtful participation in discussions** – 10%
   Research shows that students learn more when they are engaged in meaningful and enjoyable interaction with others. Students share responsibility with the instructor for the quality of discussion. It is important to deal directly with the questions and comments of others (not just those of the instructor), to think and listen as well as to be eager to speak.

4. **Well-written reaction papers** – 30%
   Students will actively think and write about a “reaction paper” on assigned reading prior to class, to ensure good discussion. 26 papers will be assigned, but students may skip three papers entirely and turn an additional three papers up to two weeks late. If all papers are completed, the lowest three grades will be dropped. Papers are due hard copy at class time. (If you will be absent, they can be sent electronically via Oncourse.) Papers should have the following topics and can be single spaced to save trees. Aim for (only) one page per reading.

   1. Thesis statement – What is the writer’s main claim? Summarize in ONE sentence. (Note: A thesis asserts a specific claim concerning the material. It sets forth the basic argument of a writer, who then attempts to prove it. It is an assertion, not a statement of fact or an observation, e.g., fact or observation: People use many lawn chemicals. Thesis: people are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their laws clean. A thesis represents the stand the author is taking about the material; it does not merely announce the subject of the reading (e.g., not a thesis: the reading is about lawn chemicals).
   2. Significance – What do you think is significant about this thesis/claim? What “real world problem” is this reading addressing?
   3. Evidence – What evidence does the author use to support this thesis?
   4. Most provocative sentence in the piece – copy it with a page number and then briefly discuss why it is provocative.
   5. Question – What passage, quote, or theme from the reading would you like to explore further in class (giving a page number if applicable). Write a question on this and explain why it is worthwhile to answer, but don’t answer it yourself. A good question has the following qualities: It is one you are personally interested in; it requires more than a simple yes or no answer and there is more than one plausible answer; it is clearly presented and understood; it is important to answer, taking a knowledgeable person to a new plateau of knowledge; it addresses key and important subjects in the assigned reading.
5. **Enthusiastic carrying out of mini-research assignments – 20%**

To supplement the reading and enliven our discussions, some mini-research assignments have been developed. Students will **pick two** of the four to do. Each is worth 10% of the final course grade. See due dates under course schedule. Any of these could be a term paper in itself. Treat each instead as an opportunity to explore a topic to a small extent. These are meant to get you involved just a little in collecting original data because that is what is exciting about studying sociology.

a. **Oral history** – You would interview an older person about their work experiences across time (the older the better). They should be asked about their first job, then their second and so forth. (You could also start with the most recent job.) No set questions are obligatory here, try to create a conversation that lets you gently explore why they had the jobs they did. If someone has had very many jobs, then you could focus on the jobs they had the longest, liked the best or the least. When convenient, try to find out whether the jobs they were in were traditional for their sex at that time or not. (e.g., were there any other men working in the dish room?) At the end ask them what job they would like to have had that they haven’t worked in and why (why they would like that job, and why they didn’t have it), and then what advice they would give a young person today about work in general. Take copious notes. Write a one page summary of what you learned about the subject of gender and then attach the notes. If not legible, please type.

b. **Cultural representations of gender and work** – You would bring in three such representations (from the same medium), which can be on different topics or the same topic, along with a one page written discussion of how they all relate to our course topic. Media possibilities include ads, news articles/editorials, magazine articles, popular songs, TV shows, or popular movies. Consider bringing in excerpts from TV shows and movies to class. A good approach is to focus on a medium you are regularly accustomed to looking at (e.g., TNT’s nighttime drama *The Closer*, 3 episodes).

c. **Work statistics** – Collect, analyze and critique a set of statistics about gender and the workforce (e.g., unemployment, job segregation, wage gap), including one other social status in the analysis (e.g., race, ethnicity, age). Use the U.S. Department of Labor website for this purpose ([www.dol.gov/wb](http://www.dol.gov/wb)). Provide hard copies or url of any data analyzed, and a page analysis and critique of these statistics.

d. **Workplace ethnography** – Analyze a work organization you are very familiar with in terms of gender politics. To what extent is the workforce women vs men? Who has what types of jobs (including management levels)? What types of beliefs about men and women as workers seem to be commonplace in this organization? What happens if a man or a woman is in a job nontraditional for their sex? Write up your results in a one-page paper. Instead of listing the name of the work organization, give it a pseudonym that reflects its sector of the economy, like The Car Company, or the Office Supply Store. Do not reveal any individual identities.

6. **Well-written “real world problem paper”**¹ – 35%

Each student will study a specific topic under the general subject of gender and work to focus on for this assignment. This is mainly a “library research project,” focusing on what social science research has to tell us about the topic and where research should go next. This project allows

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everyone to pursue a particular interest; we will discuss individual projects in class throughout the semester so that students can help and learn from each other.

The goal is to gain a clearer understanding of a “real world problem” concerning gender and work. Examples of topics: single mothers and low wage work, work-family conflict, women’s acceptance in well-paying nontraditional occupations like construction or engineering, men’s acceptance in nontraditional caregiving occupations like daycare work, lack of family policies supporting workers’ caregiving responsibilities, the persistence of the glass ceiling, the status of women workers in the developing world, problems African American women have being accepted as medical doctors…

A 15-30 page paper will be completed, in stages. (See schedule for due dates.) At each stage, students will get feedback from the instructor and classmates and have an opportunity to revise what they have done before final submission. The goal is for students to be supported so they can do their best work. The final copy of the paper will be due December 14.

a. Introduction – Write a general statement of the problem or topic in 1-2 sentences. The problem must connect gender with work. Then answer, what is the significance of this topic? Why should anyone care? What makes it a “real world” problem?

b. Literature review – Using the social scientific literature and authoritative statistics on the problem, you should answer: How have social scientists addressed this problem? What is the theoretical background on this topic? How have these theories been tested in empirical research? What have been the results?

For the literature review, students should acquire 20 or more references on this subject, published since 2000, primarily focusing on peer-reviewed academic research articles that would be accessible via Sociological Abstracts (web-based article search at University Library), EconLit, PsychInfo, or the database developed by Boston College’s Center for Work and Family. 

http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF (will put link on Oncourse).

At least one authoritative website and one research monograph should be included in the 20.

c. Discussion – What has the literature taught you about this real world problem? Briefly summarize the findings as learned from the literature review. What conclusions can you draw based on previous research? What are some of the possible solutions for this problem that are offered by previous researchers? What are the potential limitations of the current research?

d. Research proposal - How might you address this problem if you conducted your own research? How would this approach solve some of the problems or address some of the limitations in current research? This proposal includes a description of specific sociological research methods that could be used to collect evidence. The study itself will not be conducted for this class; however, students might consider developing the study further for another class, independent research credit, or their master’s theses.

**Required reading**

Shared reading will be found in Nancy Sacks & Catherine Marrone (eds.), *Gender and work in today’s world*. Cambridge, MA: Westview Press, 2004 (available in the bookstore).

**Special needs**

Students with special needs should feel free to contact the instructor; students with documented challenges requiring accommodation need to register with Adaptive Educational Services, CA001E, ph. 274-3241.
Course and School Policies on Academic Misconduct

As a student in this course, you are governed by the IU Code which prohibits “Academic Misconduct.” According to this Code which was adopted by the IU trustees in 1998, “The university may discipline a student for academic misconduct, which is defined as any activity which tends to undermine the academic integrity of the institution. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating.
A student must not use or attempt to use unauthorized assistance, materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise, including, but not limited to, the following:
a. A student must not use external assistance on any "in-class" or "take-home" examination, unless the instructor specifically has authorized external assistance. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, the use of tutors, books, notes, and calculators.
b. A student must not use another person as a substitute in the taking of an examination or quiz.
c. A student must not steal examinations or other course materials.
d. A student must not allow others to conduct research or to prepare work for him or her without advance authorization from the instructor to whom the work is being submitted. Under this prohibition, a student must not make any unauthorized use of materials obtained from commercial term paper companies or from files of papers prepared by other persons.
e. A student must not collaborate with other persons on a particular project and submit a copy of a written report which is represented explicitly or implicitly as the student's individual work.
f. A student must not use any unauthorized assistance in a laboratory, at a computer terminal, or in field work.
g. A student must not submit substantial portions of the same academic work for credit or honors more than once without permission of the instructor to whom the work is being submitted.
h. A student must not alter a grade or score in any way.

2. Fabrication.
A student must not falsify or invent any information or data in an academic exercise including, but not limited to, records or reports, laboratory results, and citations to the sources of information.

3. Plagiarism.
A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following:
a. Quotes another person's actual words, either oral or written;
b. Paraphrases another person's words, either oral or written;
c. Uses another person's idea, opinion, or theory; or
d. Borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material, unless the information is common knowledge.

4. Interference.
a. A student must not steal, change, destroy, or impede another student's work. Impeding another student's work includes, but is not limited to, the theft, defacement, or mutilation of resources so as to deprive others of the information they contain.
b. A student must not give or offer a bribe, promise favors, or make threats with the intention of affecting a grade or the evaluation of academic performance.

5. Violation of Course Rules.
A student must not violate course rules as contained in a course syllabus which are rationally related to the content of the course or to the enhancement of the learning process in the course.

A student must not intentionally or knowingly help or attempt to help another student to commit an act of academic misconduct.”
# COURSE SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

## INTRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>R Aug. 24</td>
<td>Course orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>T Aug. 29</td>
<td>Conceptualizing the linkages between gender and work (no reading assigned – mini assignment due on Thursday)</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Aug. 31</td>
<td>History of gender and work –oral histories due!</td>
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## INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AT WORK

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<th>Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>T Sept. 5</td>
<td>Read Part I. Write four reaction papers, one on each chapter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Sept. 7</td>
<td>Continued discussion of women at work.</td>
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## INTRODUCTION: MEN AT WORK

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<tr>
<td>T Sept. 12</td>
<td>Read Part II. Write three reaction papers, one on each chapter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Sept. 14</td>
<td>Continued discussion of men at work.</td>
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## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND MINI-RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT WORK

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<tr>
<td>T Sept. 19</td>
<td>No class today. Skim rest of book and consider what topic you would be VERY EXCITED about to research for your “real world problem paper”. (Your topic might not be covered by the text.) Feel free to discuss it over Oncourse by e-mailing your classmates. Instructor may not have ready access to e-mail until the end of this week. Plan to e-mail your topic introduction (short) to the instructor on Oncourse anyway by <strong>Friday, Sept. 22</strong>. If you struggle with finding an <em>exciting</em> topic, don’t panic; we’ll sort it out later. It’s ok to have more than one idea at an early stage, also.</td>
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<tr>
<td>R Sept. 21</td>
<td>No class today. If you have come up with your topic introduction (or are stymied) you could complete your second mini research assignment and be done with that part of the course: Both “cultural representations” and “work statistics” papers are due in class on <strong>Tuesday, Sept. 26</strong>. Remember you do only 2/4 projects, you skip two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Sept. 26</td>
<td>Class back in session. Discussion of mini research assignments on cultural representations and statistics. What do we learn from them about women and men at work?</td>
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LITERATURE SEARCH WORKSHOP

R Sept. 28 By this date, everyone will have picked an exciting topic and their introductions have been approved by the instructor. Students are encouraged to begin search for the references for their literature review. To develop momentum for this we will discuss searching for research literature – strategies that work. Note: It’s not uncommon at this stage for students to alter their topic slightly, based upon their discovery of research literature. If this happens, a new topic introduction should be submitted for approval.

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WOMEN AND MEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL JOBS

T Oct. 3 Read Part III. Write 3 reaction papers, one on each chapter.

R Oct. 5 Continued discussion of women and men in non-traditional jobs.

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NONTRADITIONAL WORK STRUCTURES

T Oct. 10 Read Part IV. Write 3 papers, one on each chapter.

R Oct. 12 Reference list OF 20 SOURCES for paper due!
Continued discussion of nontraditional work structures.

T Oct. 17 Further consideration of traditional vs. nontraditional work structures – no new assigned reading. Begin developing an outline for your literature review for class on Thursday.

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WRITING WORKSHOP

R Oct 19 Writing a literature review – how can we make this easier?

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GENDER INEQUALITY/GENDER MATTERS

T Oct. 24 Read Part V, writing reaction papers on the three chapters.

R Oct. 26 Continued discussion of reasons for gender inequality at work

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YOUR PROJECTS

T Oct. 31 Literature review draft due. We’ll discuss results in class, paving the way for the next section of the paper, “discussion.”
PROBLEMS ON THE JOB

R Nov. 2 Work ethnographies, last mini research assignment, due today. Read Part VI, writing reaction papers on three chapters.

WORK/HOME CONFLICT

T Nov. 7 Read Part VII, write papers on three chapters.
R Nov. 9 Continued discussion of work/home conflict

YOUR PROJECTS

T. Nov. 21 “Discussion” section of project papers due today. Class attendance optional IF your paper is submitted before class (can be sent as an attachment via Oncourse).
R. Nov. 23 Thanksgiving recess – no class

THE GENDER-BASED DIVISION OF FAMILY WORK

T Nov. 28 Read Part VIII, write papers on four chapters.
R Nov. 30 Continued discussion of the gender-based division of family work

YOUR PROJECTS

T Dec. 5 “Research proposal” portion of the project paper is due at class time; we Discuss individuals’ proposals and give them constructive feedback
R Dec. 7 Continued discussion of individual research proposals; course evaluation

By now students will have completed drafts of all four sections of their project papers: introduction, literature review, discussion, and research proposal. They should revise these per instructor and classmate feedback to be submitted by 4:30 pm hard copy please in CA303M on December 14.