

# **SOCIOLOGY 759**

## **THE SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY**

### **FALL 2021**

**Instructor:** Melanie Heath  
**Email:** [mheath@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mheath@mcmaster.ca)  
**Meeting time:** Tues 2:30pm-5:30pm  
**Office:** KTH-638

**Office Hours:** by appt  
**Zoom:**  
<https://mcmaster.zoom.us/j/95327374787?pwd=UWsrcDRhNS9YdllovVzZLZXhVamFodz09>

### **Course Description**

This course provides an overview of the sociology of gender and sexuality at the graduate level. The sociology of gender has sought to analyze gender, or gender relations, as a central category of sociological thought. The sociology of sexuality draws on interdisciplinary research to uncover the social organization of sexuality and desire. The literature is vast, and this course is by no means a comprehensive survey of it. We will focus on specific examples of contemporary empirical research that analyze gender and sexuality as central axes of inequality, and the intersections of these with class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. We will pay particular attention to the relationship between gender, sexuality, structure, and power.

### **Course Objectives**

This course will offer you:

- Challenge you to gain a broad knowledge of research on the sociology of gender and sexuality and apply this knowledge to your own research.
- Encourage you to think about methods and the way methods connect to theory as key to being a sophisticated consumer of social scientific research.
- Sharpen your oral, critical thinking, and writing skills in analyzing and discussing the literature on the sociology of gender and sexuality.

### **Required Readings**

Most required books and all articles are available using the library's online catalogue (<http://library.mcmaster.ca>).

Connell, Raewyn. 2020. *Gender in World Perspective*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Cambridge: Polity Press. **You need to buy this book (e-book for \$17.79 at Amazon.ca, or you get it on library loan (3<sup>rd</sup> edition is okay).**

Meadow, Tey. 2018. *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. **You need to buy this book.**

Pascoe, C.J. 2012. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. **(Available as e-book)**

Puri, Jyoti. 2016. *Sexual States: Governance and the Struggle Over the Antisodomy Law in India*. Duke University Press. **(Available as e-book)**

Ward, Jane. 2020. *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*. New York: New York University Press. **(Available as e-book)**

### **Recommended Readings**

American Sociological Association. 2019. *ASA Style Guide*, 6th edition. Available for purchase through the ASA's online bookstore at <https://www.asanet.org/research-and-publications/journal-resources/authors>.

### **Class Format**

This course will meet online via Zoom. I expect to use Zoom as if it were a regular classroom. Thus, all students are expected to put on their cameras and focus their attention exclusively on our class during the weekly class meeting. If there are circumstances that make these expectations difficult for you, please contact me via email or zoom chat to discuss an alternative. Please plan to attend every class meeting.

### **Requirements**

**Seminar participation (20%)** This course is a graduate seminar and students are expected to attend every class meeting having thoughtfully completed the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them.

Seminar participation will be evaluated based on the quality not quantity of your contributions, and your ability to listen to other student comments and contribute to them. Quality contributions include probing questions, clarifications, and critical assessments of required readings. Inappropriate or rude comments will not be tolerated. I encourage you to meet with me if you experience any challenge to fully participating in the seminar, such as an unwelcoming/non-inclusive environment. As a seminar focusing on social inequalities, gender, and sexuality, we must consider how dynamics in class might marginalize some voices.

**Critical Response Memo (20%)** Each student will choose two readings from the assigned reading list. At the beginning of class on Thursdays, two to three students will present their critical response memos. The memo should be four-pages, double-spaced and should include the following: 1) A statement of the research question(s) that the author(s) expressly or implicitly seeks to answer; 2) A statement of how the author(s)

answers the question, such as using a theoretical argument or through empirical methods; 3) An analysis of how effective the research is at achieving its stated objectives (the strengths and weaknesses of the research); and 4) An assessment of the contribution to the overall field of gender and sexuality. Do not summarize the readings. Instead, provide an analysis that digs into the “so what” question to identify the significance of this work to the field. The critical response memo will be submitted to Avenue on the **Monday** before our Tuesday class **by 5pm**.

Each presenter will be allotted ten minutes in class to present the main ideas of their memo. Please submit a list to me of your top five preferences of an article or book (you can just use the author’s name) by **September 15, 2021, at 5pm**. I will do my best to give you your top choices.

**Term paper proposal (10%) and final paper (50%)** Students will write a critical review on a topic concerning gender and sexuality of 12-15 double-spaced pages (not including references). This paper should provide an analysis and not just a description of the current literature on your topic. Good examples of this type of critical assessment of the literature can be found in *Sociology Compass*. A literature review provides a synthesis of the current state of the literature, offers an analysis of any gaps and critically assesses the arguments being made.

Your literature review should cite at least 8 academic, peer-reviewed sociology articles or books that have been published since 2000. Article databases such as Sociological Abstracts, Scopus, or Google Scholar are a good way to search for recent works. Required readings for this course published after 2000 can also be included in the 8 articles/books. Any works published before 2000 and non-sociology works (e.g., political science, psychology) can also be cited, but they should not be used to meet the 8 article/book requirement. More information on the term paper will be provided in class.

Students will submit proposals for the term paper to Avenue by **Friday, October 22 at 11:59pm**. Proposals should consist of a two-page outline describing the area of gender and sexuality that the paper will address, including the research question(s) that will drive the paper. The proposal should provide the complete list of 8 references. Consult the ASA Style Guide for formatting. After I have assessed the proposals, I will meet with all students to discuss the term paper, and I also encourage you to meet with me before turning in the proposal.

The term paper is to be submitted to Avenue by **Tuesday, December 14 at 11:59pm**. Late papers will not be accepted. The paper should follow the style standards of the ASA: double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with page numbers and properly formatted citations for all sources. I will evaluate your term paper in terms of the how well you assess the literature and the strength of your critical analysis.

## **Evaluation**

Marks will be assigned for each course requirement, as follows:

Seminar Participation	20%
Response memos	20% (10% each)
Paper proposal	10%
Final seminar paper	50%

## **Weekly Course Schedule**

### **Week 1. Introductions: The Question of Gender**

**September 14**

Connell, Raewyn. 2021. Chapters 1 and 2 in *Gender in World Perspective* (pp. 1-28).

Mini lecture

### **Week 2. Gender: Individual, Interactionist and Structural Approaches**

**September 21**

Student Presentations

Judith Lorber. 1993. "Believing Is Seeing: Biology as Ideology." *Gender & Society* 7: 568-81.

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125 -151.

Connell, Raewyn. 2021. Chapter 4 in *Gender in World Perspective* (pp. 52-67).

Mini lecture

### **Week 3. Gender: Other Theoretical Approaches**

**September 28**

Student Presentations

Risman, Barbara. 2004. "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender & Society* 18:429-50.

Ridgeway, Cecilia L., Kristen Backor, Yan E. Li, Justine E. Tinkler, and Kristan G. Erickson. 2009. "How Easily Does a Social Difference Become a Status Distinction? Gender Matters." *American Sociological Review* 74(1):44-62.

Westbrook, Laurel and Kristen Schilt. 2014. "Doing Gender, Determining Gender: Transgender People, Gender Panics, and the Maintenance of the Sex/Gender/Sexuality System." *Gender & Society* 28(1):32–57.

Mini lecture

## **Week 4. Gender: Intersectional Approaches**

**October 5**

Student Presentations

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge. Preface to Second Edition and Chapter 11 (available as an e-book on the library's online catalogue).

Choo, Hae Yeon, and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010. "Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities." *Sociological Theory* 28(2): 129-149.

Everett, Bethany G., Sarah M. Steele, Alicia K. Matthews, and Tonda L. Hughes. 2019. "Gender, Race, and Minority Stress Among Sexual Minority Women: An Intersectional Approach." *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 48: 1505–1517.

Mini lecture

## **Midterm Recess**

**October 12: No Class**

## **Week 5. Gender: Challenging the Binary**

**October 19**

Student Presentations

Meadow, Tey. 2018. *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press (Focus on Chapters 1, 3, 5-7, and Appendix B).

Mini lecture

## **Week 6. Sexuality: Overview and Classics**

**October 26**

Student Presentations

Arlene Stein. 1989. "Three Models of Sexuality: Drives, Identities, and Practices." *Sociological Theory* 7(1):1-13.

Rubin, Gayle. 1993[1984]. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." Pp. 3-44 in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, edited by H. Abelove, M. Barale, and D. Halperin. New York: Routledge. (Can be downloaded at <http://sites.middlebury.edu/sexandsociety/files/2015/01/Rubin-Thinking-Sex.pdf>).

Simon, William and John Gagnon. 2003. "Sexual Scripts: Origins, Influences and Changes." *Qualitative Sociology* 26(4):491–497.

Mini lecture

## **Week 7. Sexuality: Field Approaches**

**November 2**

Student Presentations

Green, Adam Isaiah. 2008. "The Social Organization of Desire: The Sexual Fields Approach." *Sociological Theory* 26(1): 25-50.

Wade, Lisa. 2020. "In Pursuit of the Potential of Sexual Field Theory: A Research Agenda." *Sexualities*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460720976973>.

Martin S. Weinberg and Colin J. Williams. 2013. "Sexual Field, Erotic Habitus, and Embodiment at a Transgender Bar." In *Sexual Fields: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life*, edited by Adam Isiah Green. Chicago: U Chicago Press (available as an e-book on the library's online catalogue).

Mini lecture

## **Week 8. Sexuality: Intersecting Race and Class**

**November 9**

Student Presentations

Carrillo, Héctor, and Jorge Fontdevila. 2014. "Border Crossings and Shifting Sexualities among Mexican Gay Immigrant Men: Beyond Monolithic Conceptions." *Sexualities* 17(8): 919–38.

Moore, Mignon. 2008. "Gendered Power Relations among Women: A Study of Household Decision Making in Black, Lesbian Stepfamilies." *American Sociological Review* 73(2):335-356.

McDermott, Elizabeth. 2011. "The World Some Have Won: Sexuality, Class and Inequality." *Sexualities* 14(1):63 - 78.

Mini lecture

## **Week 9. Masculinity, Sexuality, and School**

**November 16**

Student Presentations

Pascoe, C.J. 2012. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mini lecture

## **Week 10. Sexual Assault and #MeToo**

**November 23**

Student Presentations

Hirsch, Jennifer, and Shamus Khan. 2020. *Sexual Citizens: A Landmark Study of Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus*. Norton. Introduction. **Available on Avenue.**

Saguy, Abigail C., and Mallory E. Rees. 2021. "Gender, Power, and Harassment: Sociology in the #MeToo Era." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47:417–35

Mini lecture

## **Week 11. Sexuality and the State**

**November 30**

Student Presentations

Puri, Jyoti. 2016. *Sexual States: Governance and the Struggle Over the Antisodomy Law in India*. Duke University Press (focus on Chapters 1, 3, 5-6).

Mini lecture

## **Week 12. Critically Studying Heterosexuality**

**December 7**

Student Presentations

Ward, Jane. 2020. *The Tragedy of Heterosexuality*. New York: New York University Press.

Mini lecture

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights](#)



[& Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.