

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
SOCIOLOGY OF SEX AND GENDER (M.A., Autumn 2013)

This seminar surveys approaches to gender and sexuality shaping the sociology of sex and gender. While many of the thinkers assigned this semester are not sociologists, we will survey work that has influenced the discipline of sociology. Of central concern will be how theorists have conceptualized the distinction between the body, gender, and sexuality. We will begin with the pioneering work of Sigmund Freud and Simone de Beauvoir. Though both theorists offered groundbreaking accounts of the social construction of gender and sexuality, they left a difficult theoretical legacy for feminists who especially took up the “problem” of the sexed body as of the 1970s. We will examine some French theorists whose work both embraced and rejected Beauvoir and Freud, and a distinct set of developments across the ocean in the United States. We will also examine how the Marxist intellectual zeitgeist of the late 1970s/early 1980s affected theories of gender and sexuality, and the increasing departure from the Marxist framework as of the late 1980s. The explosion of feminist theorizing in the 1970s and 1980s also led to a realization that “gender” is not a synonym for “women,” and we will read theorists who took up the challenge of conceptualizing masculinity too.

The seemingly stable category of gender was increasingly questioned from the late 1980s. Voices from the Global South and from women of colour began articulating powerful critiques of white, western feminism, and post-modern and post-structuralist theories of gender and sexuality burst onto the scene shortly thereafter. Yet, while Judith Butler is perhaps one of the most widely read intellectuals alive today, the biological sciences have continued to affirm the determinism of sex hormones and even a “male” and “female” brain. The course thus finishes with two theorists who question the epistemological primacy given today to the natural sciences.

Due to the very limited amount of time we have, this course is not an introductory survey of the wide field of the sociology of sex and gender. We will not, for example, look at sociological approaches to labor (but Éva Fodor’s course this semester does), the state, gender and politics, feminist political theory, reproduction and abortion politics, gender and punishment, gender and religion, nationalism, sex work, and feminist epistemology. Rather, the course primarily probes the problématique of the body that continues to preoccupy sociological (and related) theorists of gender and sexuality.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation: 30%

Online Discussion/Criticism: 20%

Final Essay: 50%

Participation: You are expected to come to class having thoroughly read the assigned reading, and to actively participate in class discussion. If you miss **three** or more classes, you cannot pass the course (if exceptional circumstances arise, please speak to me in person).

Online criticism: You are expected to contribute **FIVE** comments to the course E-Learning site. These need to be posted **8PM on Sunday** before class. The responses should be critical responses to that week's reading. You can determine how you will pace those five responses, but make sure to complete five by December 2.

Final Essay: This will be a 3000-word essay examining the theories of gender and sexuality you will have read throughout the semester.

Late Paper Policy: Paper grades will be docked 10% for each day a paper is late beyond the due date.

Course Schedule:

Week one, Sept 16: Intro

Week Two, Sept. 23: Freud, Beauvoir, and the Sexed Body

Freud, Sigmund (1989) "Femininity." In *Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. New York: Norton & Co.

de Beauvoir, Simone (1988) *The Second Sex* (H.M. Parshley, Tr.). New York: Picador, pp. 13-29, 69-83.

Week Three, Sept. 30: Freud and Beauvoir's Difficult Legacies

Irigaray, Luce (1991) "The Poverty of Psychoanalysis," and "The Three Genres." In *The Irigaray Reader*, Margaret Whitford, ed. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 79-104, 140-154.

Wittig, Monique (1992) "The Category of Sex"; "One is Not Born a Woman"; and "The Straight Mind." In *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 1-32

Week Four, Oct. 7: The Anglos Conceptualize Gender

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

Scott, Joan W. (1986) "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 19(5): 1053-1075.

Week Five, Oct. 14: The Family as a site of Gender Reproduction

Chodorow, Nancy (1989) "Family Structure and Feminine Personality." In Nancy Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Hartmann, Heidi I. (1981) "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework," *Signs* 6(3): 366-394.

Week Six, Oct. 21: Adding Sexuality to the Mix:

Rich, Adrienne (1980) "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5(4): 631-660.

Emilio, John (1983) "Capitalism and Gay Identity." In *Powers of Desire*, Anna Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, eds. New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 100-116

Week Seven, Oct. 28: Critiques of White, Western Feminism:

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988) "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30: 61-88.

Crenshaw, Kimberle (1991) "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43(6): 1241-1279.

Week Eight, Nov. 4: Men are Gendered Too

Connell, R.W. (1987) *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, pp. 183-188.

Connell, R.W. and James W. Messerschmidt (2005) "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society*, 19(6): 829-859.

Krishnaswamy, Revathi (2002) "The Economy of Colonial Desire." In *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, Rachel Adams and David Savran eds. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 292-317.

Week Nine, Nov. 11: The Post-Modern Turn

Butler, Judith (1999) *Gender Trouble*. New York & London: pp. 3-33, 163-180.

Nicholson, Linda (1994) "Interpreting Gender," *Signs*, 20(1): 79-105.

Week Ten, Nov. 18: Returning to The Problem of the Body

Bordo, Susan (1993) "Reading the Slender Body." In *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 185-212.

Week Eleven, Nov. 25: The Problem of the Body Continued

Butler, Judith (1993) "The Lesbian Phallus." In *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York and London: Routledge, pp. 57-91.

Week Twelve, Dec. 2: Is Biology Politics by Another Name?

****Class starts 30 minutes earlier, at 1pm.**

Fausto-Sterling, Anne (2000) "Do Sex Hormones Really Exist? (Gender Becomes Chemical)," in *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York: Basic Books, pp. 170-194.

Haraway, Donna (2004) "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," in *The Haraway Reader*. New York & London: Routledge, pp. 7-46.

Final essay questions distributed

Final Essay Due: Monday, Dec. 23, 2013, to be emailed before midnight