
PSYCHOLOGY & GENDER in Fall 2020 (PY2010)

Course Code	PY2010	Professor(s)	Sharman Levinson
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	PL-101
Class Schedule	M: 16:20-19:45 in G-009	Office Hours	By appointment
Credits	4	Email	slevinson@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In Psychology today, we tend to think of “sex” as being biological and anatomical, whereas gender would have more to do with cultural, social and personal identity. Other than historical, are there any relations between these two concepts? How many sexes and genders are there? Why and to whom might this matter? We may all have opinions and even convictions on these issues, and may be tempted to wonder, “What does science have to say?”.

In this course, we will focus on psychology, but not exclusively, because psychology is a relatively “recent” university discipline, beginning as such, in Europe in the 19th century, where it drew on clinical medicine, physiology, and philosophy. Now psychology itself is divided into a large number of sub-disciplines and specialties (to name a few: biological psychology, neuropsychology, social psychology, psychodynamic psychology, cognitive psychology, cultural psychology, health psychology, etc.) Psychology research continues to be informed by a larger network of neighboring disciplines (from public health to the social sciences) and influences them in turn. In many countries, psychology (perhaps more specifically “American psychology”) has in fact become quite successful in its influence on other disciplines and even on our common-sense thinking about what it means to be a person, as well as a person with a particular sex or gender.

What then do psychologists, other scientists and social scientists have to say about *what it means* to be a man or a woman? On what basis do they make these claims? How does “scientific discourse” on gender influence our ideas about being men or women? How have political, social and cultural preoccupations influenced the *questions researchers or scholars have asked* about sex and/or gender over the course of history? What relationships have they postulated between gender, sexuality and sexual behavior? How are these related to power and the political? How are they related to the body?

There are no unequivocal answers to these questions but entire fields of investigation. Even for one individual, the questions as well as “answers” are susceptible to change over the life

course, with experience, social change and exposure to new research. And researchers themselves are not immune to these changes!

In this course, we will introduce some of the ways psychologists, other scientists and scholars study gender, sex and sexuality. Many of the issues we discuss will be controversial and may touch on personal experience. They will also challenge us to examine relationships between “science and society”, and lead us to debate about *what science is* and what role it has in our lives.

CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS, ‘CONTROVERSIAL’ MATERIAL, AND THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

We aim to foster a collaborative learning environment marked by respect for everyone’s ideas and personal convictions. But we will also challenge each other to explore new areas of research and learn how to better formulate arguments on the basis of critical analysis of existing work, both historical and contemporary, qualitative and quantitative. All the while, each student will have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience conducting original exploratory qualitative research. Each person will have a particular role to play in our class project, but will also have the opportunity to work individually and in small groups. Small groups will have opportunities to work with the professor outside of our weekly course sessions. And individual appointments can be made for more personal feedback on student work and contributions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this course is to foster critical thinking about one of the most fundamental forms of social categorization, gender, and the relationship of this concept to sex and sexuality. It is intended that students not only learn about scholarly research but also that they use this material to become more aware of the social, cultural, and historical underpinnings of their own modes of thinking and behaving towards gender and power. Analysis of one’s own experience (including observations of others) will also be called upon as a source of insight, and as a step towards further investigation and elaboration of a specific research topic. At the same time, understanding the way that scholar’s (or apprentice scholar’s) personal involvement participates in framing a research subject, and in the interpretation of theoretical works and interpersonal data, is an essential part of the learning process. The course will give you tools that will help understand how awareness of your reactions can give you a new understanding of the topic and/or yourself.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to understand distinctions between “sex” and “gender” concepts.

Students will be able to compare arguments concerning difference and dominance in explaining the positions of men and women in society.

Students will be sensitized to new developments in the psychology of “masculinity”

Students will be able to assess the advantages as well as the limits of the notion of “power” from within the context of psychology and social psychology.

Students will understand relationships between division of labor and gender inequality in a given society.

Students will have an understanding of cultural constructions of gender.

Students will acquire effective debating as well as listening skills when it comes to discussion of intimately challenging and often controversial subject matter.

Students will understand the importance and relevance of historical research and history of psychology in the understanding of gender.

They will be able to assess different research methods used in the study of sex, gender, sexual behavior and relationships. Students will gain experience conceptualizing and conducting qualitative research.

Students will develop skills as critical readers and thinkers in a subject laden with common sense, prejudice, and stereotypes. They should be able to use research to challenge these stereotypes, all the time being aware that these stereotypes may be modulating the way research questions are asked and results are interpreted and diffused.

Exploring and Engaging Difference: Students will think critically about cultural and social difference; they will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities that can relate to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion, or class. (CCI LO3)

Civic and Ethical Engagement: Students will demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations relating to specific societal problems, values, or practices (historical or contemporary; global or local) and learn to articulate possible solutions to prominent challenges facing societies and institutions today so as to become engaged actors at various levels in our interconnected world. (CCI LO4)

General Education

GLACC: *The Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum*

This course can be used to fulfill the Integrated Inquiry requirement (CCI) and as such has the following learning outcomes (Learning Outcomes for **GLACC** components are defined on the [AUP GLACC Website](#)):

Exploring and Engaging Difference: You will think critically about cultural and social difference. You will identify and understand power structures that determine hierarchies and inequalities relating to race, ethnicity, gender, nationhood, religion or class.

Civic and Ethical Engagement: You will demonstrate awareness of ethical considerations relating to specific societal problems, values or practices (whether historical or contemporary, global or local) and learn to articulate possible solutions to prominent challenges facing societies and institutions today so as to become an engaged actor across various levels of our interconnected world.

Course Outline

OUTLINE:

The course is divided into two sections.

PART 1. 'The making of ': gender, sex, sexuality and the body, relationships between historical and contemporary research (sessions 1 to 6)

A lot of us are interested in learning about the latest cutting-edge research and may be disappointed at first that we will spend a fair amount of time studying 'old' science. 'Old' science is deceptively easy to criticize. Its theories or results may have been disproven and its biases identified. It is much more difficult to truly understand how and why people believed these ideas at the time. This makes 'past' science an excellent case study for understanding how contexts (cultural, political, institutional, etc.) influence knowledge production. Practicing thinking about 'past' science in context can help us formulate questions about the specificities of today's contexts and how these influence current scientific production.

Also, knowledge of 'old science' can help us identify 'epistemic ghosts' and understand how current thinking is 'haunted' by these past ideas and methods of "observing" and "knowing". Sometimes, old theories are discarded 'en bloc', but some parts of them may return with newfound relevance. Sometimes, old theories may be actively sought out, as the science-society relationship faces new strains.

Finally, a genealogical perspective may sometimes help understand some of the forgotten

sources of seemingly new scientific ideas. Although this is not a history course per se, the first half of the course will draw heavily on history of scientific thought on sex and gender.

We will focus in particular on what it means to “observe” sex, gender and sexual behavior. We will particularly develop questions related to emotions, hormones, anatomy, and behavior, all of which are disputed objects between biology and the social sciences, for which psychology, beginning in the late 19th century sometimes played a refereeing role.

Each session will center on a mix of lecture, class discussion of a historical reading, as well as a current media source, so as not to lose sight of related contemporary concerns.

PART 2. PREPARING AND CONDUCTING EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON GENDER, SEX, SEXUALITY AND THE BODY (sessions 7 to 13)

This part of the class introduces you to interview research and discourse analysis. The class as a whole will produce a corpus of 10 in-depth interviews on a topic we will choose and develop over the course of the semester. The topic will be chosen for its relevance to student interests and to the course, but also taking into account feasibility and ethical concerns. Students working in small teams of 4 students (approximately) will review relevant literature on their own specific sub-topic (approved by the professor) and contribute to the whole class' Interview Protocol. The small research teams will conduct in-depth analyses of two interviews and will analyze one “theme” related to their subtopic that is present across the 10 interview transcripts contributed by the whole class. (Two methods of analysis will be taught in class, and you will have the occasion to get feedback from the Professor on your analyses before you present them). There is no ‘final exam’ because your final project (contribution to the Class research study) will be presented with your team during a conference session in the form of a twenty-minute oral presentation per team, with a short discussion period following your presentation. Students will hand in their slides and bibliography only.

Rationale for “team work” as opposed to individual final projects:

Empirical research is almost always a ‘team effort’. Team members can and should challenge and inspire one another. But ‘team dynamics’ can also be a source of frustration and misunderstandings. Researchers must learn to deal with these challenges, often over long

periods of time. We will learn ways to get the most out of team research, so the product does not become the least common denominator, but something much better than anyone could have done alone.

Each person will have to reflect about what he or she can best contribute to the team and class. Choosing to work with people who complement you, but with whom you share enthusiasm about your particular sub-topic is a good start.

Don't be too picky about achieving perfect equality of contributions, because this ideal can lead to resentment. But do come up with a 'fair-enough' plan for who is responsible for different tasks involved in preparing, conducting and analyzing the research.

SUMMARY :

Most of the theoretical concepts we use will be introduced during the first six sessions of class. For this reason, you will have a mid-term exam on this first "section". The second part of the course will involve student participation in a qualitative research project led by the professor. Students will contribute individually and in small groups to the conceptualization design and implementation of the research project starting with a common "theme" and elaborating different sub-topics in small groups. Students will contribute to a literature review, and will be assigned to different roles in designing, conducting, transcribing and analyzing interviews (roles will be assigned based on students' previous experience and motivation). Thus, the bibliography for the second part of the course will be based on student input on the research project and the content of student literature reviews.

REMINDER: THE GOAL OF OUR RESEARCH IS TO LEARN SOMETHING THAT WE DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW. BE WARY OF CHOOSING A SUB-TOPIC THAT IS SIMPLY MEANT TO ILLUSTRATE OR TO CONFIRM THE OPINIONS YOU CARE ABOUT! ALTHOUGH IT IS 'NATURAL' TO BE CURIOUS TO SEE IF OTHER PEOPLE FEEL OR EXPERIENCE THINGS IN WAYS SIMILAR TO YOU, YOU SHOULD DEVELOP A RESEARCH QUESTION THAT ALLOWS YOU TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW AND AT LEAST IN SOME WAYS UNEXPECTED!

Structure of Each Double Period Session:

During the first period of each class, we usually begin with a 'short' lecture (+/-30 minutes) going over important vocabulary and concepts, opening the floor for discussion. During the second period we generally work on the class' research project. We usually begin this second

period with a short presentation of steps in conducting research followed by student activities in small groups.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (separate document)

CLASS SCHEDULE:

September

Week I – 23rd – 25th No class. Psychology and Gender begins on a Monday, so our first session is on September 28th.

Week II – 28th – 2nd

N.B. Rather than discussing sexual orientation and homosexuality as a separate « topic », we hope to include all sexual orientations into the entire range of topics.

While the first part of the class is based mostly on a western historical perspective, we hope to reflect on how these western models have been received, rejected, appropriated and/or accommodated in non-western cultures.

PART 1: ‘The making of ‘: gender, sex, sexuality and the body, relationships between historical and contemporary research (sessions 1 to 6)

(All readings can be found on TEAMS).

SEPTEMBER 28th, 2020

INTRODUCTION AND 'BRAINSTORMING' ON GENDER AND THE BODY

1. Introduction to the course and Syllabus presentation. Presentation of professor, her research itinerary and teaching philosophy. Discussion of course objectives. This is also the time to decide if this class is right for you!

1. Research preparation activity: Brainstorming in small groups about the theme of the class research project. What is "the body"? Is the brain a part of the body? How are bodies 'experienced'? What sort of relations do you envisage between gender and the body? What topics related to gender and the body "challenge" your views on distinctions between, mind, body and culture...?

In conclusion: A starting "theme" for our class research project will be selected.

Homework for October 5th:

1. Read: Stephanie Shields (2007) Passionate men, emotional women, psychology constructs gender difference in the late 19th Century, *History of Psychology*, Vol. 10, n°2, pp. 92-110.

2. With 3 other students, find a recent press article (last 5 years) that presents scientific studies related to gender and emotion. Exchange your impressions of the article and be prepared to discuss these impressions in class on October 5th.

September 30th – last day to drop/add courses online

October

Week III – 5th – 9th

OCTOBER 5th, 2020

**EMOTIONS AND GENDER IN THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY: HOW AND WHY STUDY
'EMOTIONS' IN CONNECTION TO GENDER**

Discussion: Emotions: 'Embodied' and 'Ineffable' (cf. Stephanie Shields).

Popular press and books about men, women and (physiology of) emotion in the late 19th century and today. What does the author's historical research have to say about European social commentators' views on gender and race?

Research activity: composition of small groups and elaboration of subtopics for research project.

At the end of this class, instructions will be given for a 2-3 page personal essay to be handed in on WK4.

Homework for October 12th

1. Write your Personal Essay on the topic selected in Class
2. Read : Oudshoorn, Nelly (1990) Endocrinologists and the Conceptualization of Sex, 1920-1940. Journal of the History of Biology, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), pp. 163-186
3. With three other students, find a recent press article on a hormone or a sex hormone

Week IV –12th – 16th

OCTOBER 12th, 2020

GENDER, HORMONES, SEX HORMONES AND MODEL ORGANISMS: OBSERVING AND INTERPRETING EXPERIMENTAL ORGANISMS IN HISTORY

Introductory Background: Professors' short lecture on ***Sex and animal models: what are model organisms?***

Class discussion: The strange histories of (sex) hormones and animals (cf. N. Oudshoorn)

(HAND IN YOUR PERSONAL ESSAY)

Research Activity: experience and “conceptualization”, elaborating a “research question”.

Creating an INTERVIEW GUIDE

Homework for October 19th

1. Read selected chapters in Thomas Lacqueur's (1992) *Making Sex – Body & Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Harvard University Press.
2. With 3 other students, find online a medical anatomical drawing of a male and a female body. Compare your impressions within your group. Save the link to your image and POST IT TO THE TEAMS CHAT so we can discuss it in class.
3. HAND IN YOUR GROUP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Week V – 19th – 23rd

OCTOBER 19th

SEX AND ANATOMY: Seeing is believing?

Professors lecture: *Sex in the dead house*

Discussion: Seeing and interpreting 'male' and 'female' anatomy (cf. Th. Lacqueur)

Discussion of medical anatomical drawing and contemporary medical imagery

Discussion of "seeing the brain and visualizing "function" today.

Research Activity: Direct and Indirect observation, Discourse and Meaning, Interview methods
Part 1

Homework for October 26th:

Read: Eriksen, Julia with Stephen, Sally (1999) *Kiss and Tell : Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press. (Selected Chapters on a Teams file)

Think about "measures" and "variables" related to gender, sex and sexual behavior, think about their "use" and "meanings". How can surveys create the norms they are supposed to be observing?

What does the term "healthy relationship" mean to you?

Week VI – 26th – 30th

October 28th, Mid-semester

OCTOBER 26th, 2020

**A FORM OF ‘INDIRECT OBSERVATION’: HISTORY OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR SURVEYS
AND THE EMERGEANCE OF THE SEXUAL HEALTH CONCEPT: THE ROLE OF
PSYCHOLOGY AND GENDER**

Professors' Lecture *An inside look at the making of French National Sexual Behavior Surveys from 1970-2005.*

Discussion: History of Sexual Behavior Surveys, critical analysis of methods of quantification and sampling challenges in the 20th-21st century. Construct validity and “indirect” observation of sexual behavior, identity and orientation.

Research Activity: From qualitative to quantitative research and back. Interview Guides and Non-Directive Interview techniques

Homework for November 2nd, 2020

Read: Giami, Alain. (2002). Sexual Health: The Emergence, Development, and Diversity of a Concept. *Annual review of sex research*. 13. 1-35.

Short essay 1 page to prepare class discussion: What does the term “healthy relationship” mean to you? How about “unhealthy relationship”?

Finalize the themes your group will be contributing to the course interview guide.

November

Week VII – 2nd – 6th

NOVEMBER 2nd, 2020, THE MAKING OF THE SEXUAL HEALTH CONCEPT

Discussion of: A. Giami on the history of the Sexual Health concept. Medicalization and 'biopower' in question. Sex as a "measurable" public health concern. The concept of 'healthicization'. Creating universal versus local norms and expectations for "sexual health".

+ Preparation for mid-term exam. The essay 'prompt' and guidelines will be revealed during today's class!

Homework for November 9th:

Write your mid-term 'take home exam essay' in response to the 'prompt' given in class. The exam essay is due on the 9th of November.

Week VIII – 9th- 13th

NOVEMBER 9th 2020

HAND IN 'TAKE HOME EXAM'

+ INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH-INTENSIVE PART OF THE CLASS

November 11th to December 11th

Week IX – Week XII

Training in Interview Analysis Methods

We will be analyzing the Interviews for the Research Project using two different methods taught in class.

December 12th - 15th, reading days

December 16th – 22th, FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE:

This is a heavily discussion based class: attendance, preparedness and active participation are mandatory. Class starts at 4:20, and you are expected to be on time. If you feel that this time slot creates difficulties for following the class from your time zone, please contact the professor about your individual situation so we can reach an agreement about what will be best for you (slevinson@aup.edu).

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending classes remotely when special circumstances apply. For example when students are placed under quarantine by the French authorities or by their doctor, or when students present symptoms of Covid-19 and are directed, by their doctor or the AUP Health Office, to remain home. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that their professor might have set in the course syllabus. In particular, Students attending remotely from distant Time Zones should check with their professors about the specific attendance policy for remote learners.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

In all cases of missed course meetings, the responsibility for communication with the professor, and for arranging to make up missed work, rests solely with the student.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may also recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.*

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising processes, while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

Grading Policy

GRADING:

You will receive 4 grades:

10% Take-home personal essay (self-ethnography)

(2-3 pages single spaced) describing an interesting observation based on your experience, your surroundings, or questions that interest you in relation to a “theme” presented by the professor. This will be one of the first steps in conceptualizing your interest in a research topic. The essay should not be so “personal” that you don’t want to share it with others!

30% Mid-term Exam (Take home essay exam based on lectures, readings, and course learning objectives)

20% Participation, Attention and Preparedness (including short non-graded assignments that have to be done on time to receive credit)

40% Your contribution to the class Research Project (*see separate document for further details--Oral presentation with supporting document describing your personal and small groups' contributions*)

Assignments and Diversity policy:

All Students may propose alternative assignments that are more conducive to their learning style and are evaluated by the professor to be of equivalent difficulty and correspond to the same learning objectives as the work assigned. *These alternatives and their rationale need to be presented and approved by the Professor well in advance of the assignment's due date.*

Other
