Gender Stratification
Course #: 034:256
Spring Term 2006
T 9:30 – 12:00 pm
W18 Seashore Hall

Instructor: Mary Noonan
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Office Hours: T 12:00 – 1:30, TH 9:30-11:00 (or by appt)

Course Description

This seminar examines major theoretical and research issues in gender stratification and inequality. We will draw largely on the sociological literature, although the reading list includes some selections from other social science disciplines such as economics and political science. Our subject matter includes: the gender gap in wages, occupational segregation, gender inequality in work inside the home, men’s and women’s changing economic roles, the feminization of poverty, and the implications of social policy for gender stratification. Approximately three-fourths of the term is devoted to discussion of the readings. The last part of the term is devoted to presentation and discussion of student research proposals.

Prerequisites

Graduate standing or permission of the instructor is required. Some familiarity with quantitative research methods is also highly recommended.

Course Materials

Throughout the course, we will be reading/discussing a collection of scholarly articles and books. Most of the articles are available electronically via the course web page (denoted by WEB in topic schedule). The url for the course web page is: http://www.uiowa.edu/~c034256. Some of the articles, and all of the books, are only available in hard copy (denoted by HARD COPY in topic schedule). I will leave these articles/books on my office door for you the week before we discuss them so that you can make your own photocopies. Please do not borrow these materials for more than one hour at a time.

Requirements

There are three major requirements:

1. Leading Discussion. Each week two students will be responsible for leading discussion. Each discussion leader will prepare summaries for 2-3 of the readings, as well as a series of questions for class discussion. More specifically, the summaries should: (1) briefly review and evaluate the theoretical and substantive contributions of the assigned readings, (2) discuss how the readings relate to each other, and (3) identify a few broad questions for class discussion. The summaries
will be posted on the class website before the class meeting (Friday by 5pm). Each student should read these summaries before attending class.

Typically, I will present for the first 30 minutes of class and then turn to the discussants. Leading a week’s discussion entails providing the class with a short overview (20 minutes) of the main issues (strengths, weaknesses, and controversies) and then leading a discussion based on the questions posed in the summary memo.

2. Research Proposal. Each student will prepare a research proposal (approximately 20 pages, typed, double spaced) on a topic related to gender stratification. The proposal should include a statement of the research question, the rationale for posing the question, a review of the relevant literature, and a description of the data, methods, and analyses that will be used to address the question posed. The research question should be a question that prior literature has not yet adequately addressed. Also, the proposal should be a new piece of work for the student (i.e., this should not be something that you have already submitted for another course). Students are encouraged to use the proposal to develop a master’s proposal, dissertation proposal or a journal article.

- A brief (2-3) description of the research proposal must be submitted for my approval no later than Friday, February 24th.

- During the final two weeks of the semester (April 25th and May 2nd), students will make oral presentations of the first drafts of their proposals. Presentations should be roughly 20 minutes in length. The presentation should be polished, similar to a presentation at a professional meeting.

- A randomly chosen seminar participant will serve as “discussant” of the paper. Presenters must give the discussant and instructor a copy of the first draft no later than the Thursday before the presentation (either April 20th or 27th). Following the presentation of the proposal, the discussant will present a 10-15 minute summary of the proposal’s strengths and weaknesses.

- Students should revise the proposal in light of the instructor’s and discussant’s comments. The final draft of the proposal is due by May 9th at noon.

3. Participation. For the seminar to be a success, students are expected to do the assigned readings and make regular and thoughtful contributions to classroom discussions. As you do the readings, think about what the author did right as well as wrong. What are the interesting ideas in the paper? If you disagree, what would it require to persuade you? A good seminar should have active dialog and debate. If someone proposes an idea that is contrary to your view, speak up.

**Grading Procedure**

Class participation, discussion leading, and serving as a discussant contribute 40% to the final course grade. The research proposal contributes 60% to the final course grade.

Late work will not be accepted; the grade of “incomplete” will not be given.
Other Considerations

(1) Academic accommodation. If you have a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements, please notify me after class or during my office hours so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

(2) Procedure for student complaints. If anyone is faced with an issue regarding this class that they feel they cannot resolve by speaking with me, please contact Michael Lovaglia, the Department of Sociology Executive Officer.

Tentative Topic Schedule

1. Organizational Meeting (January 17)

2. Theoretical Perspectives on Gender (January 24)

Marxist Approach


Radical Approach


Gender Perspective and Family Research


3. Theoretical Perspectives on Gender Continued (January 31)

Rational Choice Approach


Psychoanalytic Approach


**Sociobiological and Biological Approaches**


“Exchange on the Biological Limits of Gender Construction.” American Sociological Review 66:592-621. (WEB)

See also:


**4. Occupational Sex Segregation (February 7)**


See also:


5. Sex-Based Wage Gap (February 14)


6. Explanations for Occupational Sex Segregation and Sex-Based Wage Gap (February 21)

Neoclassical Economic Models (and Evidence)


**Brief Description of Research Proposal is Due Friday**
7. Explanations for Occupational Sex Segregation and Wage Gap Continued (February 28)

Structural Models


Marxist/Patriarchal Models


See also:


8. Gender Roles and Family Formation and Dissolution (March 7)


See also:


** No Class on March 14 due to Spring Break **

**9. Intersections Between Family Roles, Paid and Unpaid Labor - Housework (March 21)**


Gupta, S. “Her Money, Her Time: Women’s Earnings and Their Housework Hours.” Forthcoming in *Social Science Research*. (WEB)


See also:


**10. Intersections Between Race and Gender (March 28)**


11. Intersections Between Family Roles, Paid and Unpaid Labor - Marriage and Economic Dependency (April 4)


12. Work/Family Conflict and Motherhood Penalty (April 11)

Work/Family Conflict


Wage Gap Between Mothers and Non-Mothers


See also:


13. Gender and Poverty (April 18)


Miscellaneous


15. Research Proposal Presentations (May 2)