Women, Men and Culture

“If you were born a man rather than a woman or a woman rather than a man, would your life be different?” Our assigned biological sex is one of the most profound categories that defines our identity and experience. However, we often take the gender norm of a society for granted and find the boundaries between men and women natural. This tendency gives rise to a social and cultural context in which people having difficulties fitting themselves into existing categories struggle a lot. These people include, for example, men who do not enjoy being aggressive, women who find themselves value a career more than motherhood, a person who has a female body but sees himself as a man, and people who are sexually interested in others of the same sex.

This course takes an anthropological perspective to address gender and sexuality. Anthropologists argue that sex, gender, and the relationship between men and women are not given but largely products of cultural and social processes. We argue that political, economic, material, and environmental factors are a part of such processes. This course will start from introducing core concerns, arguments, and approaches related to gender and sexuality. After the introductory sessions, we will focus, week by week, on common (or controversial) gender and sexual issues we encounter in lives. These weeks will be discussion intensive and relevant analysis and scholarly works will be introduced to deepen your understanding of gender and sexuality via the topics. Students are encouraged to examine their own gender identities and beliefs critically; to not only understand how our gender assumptions are shaped but also to develop their own gender statement.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

• acquire a holistic understanding of the making of gender and sexuality;
• analyze contemporary gender issues anthropologically;
• develop their own gender and sexual statement;
• apply idea learned to their lives and have alternative choices to cope with related challenges.

Course Requirement and Evaluation:

The success of this course depends on students’ commitment to participate and contribute to class discussion and willingness to stay curious and explore relevant thoughts among academic works and beyond. The following evaluation is designed to encourage these efforts.

Class participation 20%
1 group presentation 40%
2 short reflection papers 40%

Participation: The evaluation will be based on both your attendance and, more importantly,
your engagement (asking or answering questions and other forms of participation) in classes.

Group presentation: In each of the issue-centred week, two groups of students will lead the discussion by presenting their likely contradictory perspectives on the issue. Each student will sign up to one group, hence be a proposer or opposer for one presentation, through the semester. Group presentation/debate should be supported by well researched evidence and delivered in clear arguments. A collage of google search results or plain team opinions on an issue should be avoided. Time will be given for the preparation.

Reflection Papers: There will be three chances for you to write short reflection papers: 1) By the end of the foundation weeks; 2) after your group presentation; and 3) at the end of the semester. You can choose 2 from the 3 options.

1) A reflection paper that reviews and addresses what you learned in the foundation weeks. The paper is expected to be critical, concise and relevant to what we covered in classes. Due on 28 September in class.

2) A reflection paper about the topic of your presentation. Focusing on one or a couple points that interest you during this experience is sufficient; no need to cover everything you learn through the presentation. The paper should be based not only on your preparation for the presentation; but also on the discussion in class — both with the other team and from the audience and teachers. Due 1 week after your presentation.

3) Choose one creative work (i.e., music, images, novels, essays, films, sculpture, etc.) and use idea and argument you learned in this class to write a discussion about that work. You are required to cite some works and discussions we have in this course. Due on 8 December.

These papers give you a chance to reflect and consolidate in writing your learning in this course. All papers should a) have a clear argument and state your original idea, b) show your familiarity with course materials and discussion, 3) be synthetic and concise. Each of them should be no more than 1000 words in English and 2000 words in Chinese. Marking criteria will be provided later.

Voluntary Feedback: After each presentation week, you are welcome to submit a short (suggestion: no more than 150 words in English or 300 words in Chinese) voluntary feedback (questions, critique, inspiration or summary, etc.) regarding the presentation. This is a chance for you to consolidate what you learned and will also help me to incorporate your response to following classes. This is completely voluntary and is not a part of our class evaluation. Please send your feedback to the course TA Portia via email (portiaxiong@link.cuhk.edu.hk).

*Formats and VeriGuide: For all written assignments, please 1) use double-spaced, font size 12 or larger, and standard margins 2) submit to VeriGuide (https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jspx) before hand in your papers in class. An assignment without a signed declaration from VeriGuide will not be graded.

Readings: 
All readings listed are not required but reference materials for your learning. Though students are not assumed to know the materials when they come to class, the materials should
be very useful for you to contemplate on each topics, prepare for group presentations, and write your reflection essays. Besides, they are all quite interesting! So, we make them all available on Blackboard. Please take time to enjoy works interest you and feel free to consult me and Portia if you would like to explore any topic further.

COURSE OUTLINE

Section I: Foundation

WK1 (Sep. 7): Introduction: Cross-cultural Understanding of Gender
Syllabus and course overview

Recommended academic works:
Mascia-Lees, Frances E. and Nancy Johnson Black
Lewin, Ellen

Other recommended materials:
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87XvVdLaWT8)

WK 2 (Sep. 14): Sex and Sexuality

Recommended academic works:
Harris, Marvin
Fausto-Sterling, Anne

Other recommended works:
Sax, Leonard
Video: Me, My Sex and I. BBC One. (2011, 50 mins)
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87XvVdLaWT8)
http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Stanford-bioethicist-fights-gender-tests-
**Article:** A graphic history of sex: ‘There is no gene that drives sexuality. All sexuality is learned’ [https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/oct/29/a-graphic-history-of-sex-there-is-no-gene-that-drives-sexuality-all-sexuality-is-learned](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2016/oct/29/a-graphic-history-of-sex-there-is-no-gene-that-drives-sexuality-all-sexuality-is-learned)


**WK 3 (Sep. 21): Difference and Inequality**

**Recommended academic works:**
Harris, Marvin

Brown, Judith K.

Rubin, Gayle

**Other recommended materials:**

**Video:** Oppressed Majority (Majorité Opprimée) (by Eleonore Pourriat, 2014, 11 mins) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4UWxlVvT1A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4UWxlVvT1A)


**Article:** 孫金昱：女權主義如何面對社會底層的性別歧視？ [https://theinitium.com/article/20160918-opinion-Sunjinyu-feminism/](https://theinitium.com/article/20160918-opinion-Sunjinyu-feminism/)

*Review paper of the Foundation weeks due on 28 Sept. in class.*

**Section II: Contemporary Topics**

**WK 4 (Sep. 28): Domestic Work: Should housewives be paid?**

**Recommended academic works:**
Lamphere, Louise

Harris, Marvin

Shandy, Dianna and Karine Moe
Other recommended materials:

**Article:** 《月薪嬌妻》不可逃避的難題: 女性勞務的選擇與價值
http://opinion.udn.com/opinion/story/5754/2225323

WK 5 (Oct. 5): The Day Following the Mid-Autumn holiday. No class.

WK 6 (Oct. 12): Marriage: Is marriage a trap that we should get rid of?

*Recommended academic works:*
Townsend, Nicholas W.

Nakano, Lynne Y

*Video:* Asante Market Women (first half) (1991, 53min.)

Other recommended materials:

*Video:* What I do is for your own good (春節自救指南)
https://www.facebook.com/wechatinchina/videos/1831875713697136/#

*Article:* The Modern Marriage Trap — and What to Do About It.

WK 7 (Oct. 19): Objectification: Is sex appeal empowering or oppressive?

*Recommended academic works:*
Urla, Jacqueline and Alan C. Swedlund

Other recommended materials:

Sax, Leonard


*Article:* 譚蕙芸：因女藝人欣宜「高調肥」捱轟，我重讀了約翰．伯格
WK 8 (Oct. 26): Man Adrift: Is a man without property marriageable?

Recommended academic works:
Bourgois, Philippe

Other recommended materials:

WK 9 (Nov. 2): Non-binary Gender and Sexuality: Can one choose his/her own gender?

Recommended academic works:
Sommer, Matthew H.
Valentine, David

Other recommended materials:
Article: 一對女同志夫妻「生孩子」有多難？
https://theinitium.com/article/20160725-taiwan-same-sex-marriage/
Article: 'Gender Revolution' Portrait Carries a Message of Hope
Article: Norway Set To Make Changing Gender Easier with “Breakthrough” Bill

WK 10 (Nov. 9): Intimate Labor: Can people sell sex?

Recommended academic works:
Vance, Carole S.
Alison, Anne
1994 “Introduction.” In Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure, and Corporate Masculinity

Other recommended materials:

Article: 流連非洲賭場的中國性工作者

WK 11 (Nov. 16): Congregation ceremony. No class.

WK 12 (Nov. 23): China: Can Two-Child Policy improve women’s status in China?

Recommended academic works:
Fong, Vanessa L.

Other recommended materials:


WK 13 (Nov. 30): Concluding Discussion

Policies

Late Submission: Late submission will suffer a fraction of a grade per day. For example, an A will become an A-.

Academic Honesty: You are required to cite properly (guidelines: http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/tstyle.doc) and please refer to the university website ( http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/index.htm and http://www.ilc.cuhk.edu.hk/english/resource/referencing_avoidingplagiarism1.pdf) to avoid plagiarism.

Laptop Policy: This course discourages students from using mobile phones, tablets, or laptops in class.