

He, She, Ze: The Construction and Deconstruction of Gender

TTh 12:50-2:20 pm

Office Hours: MWF 10-11 am, and by appointment

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to explore both the way gender is a socially constructed concept and how people have deconstructed this concept through gender queering. We will use feminist theories to analyze the differences between gender and sex, gender roles, the medical construction of gender, and alternatives to a binary gender system. The course will include a self-reflective aspect, in which students are challenged to analyze their own relationships with gender.

Course Objectives

- to think and write critically and analytically about the concept of gender
- to gain a broader understanding of feminist thought
- to connect theory to daily life
- to strengthen critical reading skills

Required Texts

Kolmar and Bartkowski, *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, third edition (McGraw-Hill 2009)

Scholinski, *The Last Time I Wore a Dress* (Riverhead Books 1997)

All additional readings will be posted to WISE

Assignments

Paper 1

For the first paper, find a newspaper article about a current event and provide a well-organized analysis of the event through the lens of one of the theorists we have read. The paper should only be 2-3 pages long, so be concise.

Paper 2 and Presentation

For the second paper, use the work of the theorists we have read to analyze your own life and experience with gender. This is not simply a narrative, journaling paper, but should engage in a critical analysis and use of theory. 4-5 pages. Each student will give a short presentation about their paper with a creative visual aid.

Paper 3

The third paper will analyze *The Last Time I Wore a Dress* by using the work of one to three theorists we have read over the semester. 4-5 pages.

Reflections

Once per week, you will be expected to post a 400-word reflection to your WISE blog based on the readings for the week. Use your analysis to connect back to previous readings. At the end of each reflection, pose a question for discussion. These reflections must be posted before the readings are discussed in class.

Please also feel free to use this blog to bring up other questions or thoughts that you'd like to discuss with your peers, whether related or not to the readings. These extra posts and responses to your peers' posts can count towards your participation grade.

Event Attendance

Over the semester you are required to attend two events that relate to the class. This could include attendance to the Vagina Monologues, speakers on campus, films, and more. I will provide a calendar with possible events as I learn of them. If you have doubts about an event's relation to the course, ask me. Post on WISE a 500-word reflection and analysis of each event within a week of attendance.

Policies

Academic Integrity

Students of Willamette University are members of a community that values excellence and integrity in every aspect of life. As such, we expect all community members to live up to the highest standards of personal, ethical, and moral conduct. Students are expected not to engage in any type of academic or intellectually dishonest practice and encouraged to display honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all they do. Plagiarism and cheating are especially offensive to the integrity of the courses in which they occur and against the College community as a whole. These acts involve intellectual dishonesty, deception, and fraud, which inhibit the honest exchange of ideas. Plagiarism and cheating may, therefore, be grounds for failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College.

Attendance and Tardiness

Since this is a discussion-based class, regular attendance is crucial. More than two unexcused absences will significantly affect your participation grade. Let me know *before* class if you have a legitimate reason to be absent. I will always start class on time because I respect your commitment to this course. In turn, please be on time so you do not disrupt the class.

Classroom Etiquette

No electronics.

Be kind to each other.

Always come to class prepared.

Self-assess. If you are unable to participate fully in class because of illness or sleep-deprivation, listen to your body, stay home, and take care of your health.

Disability Statement

Willamette University is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. The Disability and Learning Services Office strives to facilitate reasonable accommodations for those students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it. Any student who requires these accommodations should contact the Disability and Learning Services Office.

Grading

Participation (including in-class work and WISE reflections) – 30%

Paper 1 – 15%

Paper 2 – 25%

Paper 3 – 25%

Event Attendance – 5%

Course Schedule

Week 1 - introduction

Tuesday: Course Introduction and What Do All These Pronouns Mean Anyway?

(all readings in class)

-Jamila Stevenson, "Using Gender Neutral Language"

-The Pronoun Question

<http://genderqueerchicago.blogspot.com/2009/08/pronoun-question-by-malic-moxie.html>

-The Pronoun Problem: How to Say it Right

<http://www.chicagonow.com/blogs/new-gender/2010/03/the-pronoun-problem-how-to-say-it-right.html>

Thursday: Judith Lorber, "'Night to His Day': The Social Construction of Gender"

Week 2 – gender and sex

Tuesday: Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism vs. Post-Structuralism"

Thursday: Denise Riley, "Does Sex Have a History?"

Week 3 - patriarchy

Tuesday: Allan Johnson, "Patriarchy, the System"

Thursday: Gerda Lerner, "The Creation of Patriarchy"

Catherine MacKinnon, "Sexuality"

Week 4 - masculinities

Tuesday: R. W. Connell, "The Social Organization of Masculinity"

Michael Kimmel, "Consuming Manhood"

Thursday: Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body"

Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia"

Anne Fausto-Sterling, "How to Build a Man"

Week 5 – femininities

Tuesday: Meredith Tax, "There was a Young Woman who Swallowed a Lie"

Ellen Willis, "Women and the Myth of Consumerism"

Linda Phelps, "Death in the Spectacle"

Thursday: Laura Hamilton, "Trading on Heterosexuality"

Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Feminist Thought"

Week 6

Tuesday: Draft workshop for Paper 1

Thursday: No class. Paper 1 due by 5 pm.

Week 7 - medical

Tuesday: Judith Lorber, "Paradoxes of Gender"

Suzanne Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender"

Thursday: Cheryl Chase, "'Cultural Practice' or 'Reconstructive Surgery'?"

Barbara Ehrenreich, "Welcome to Cancerland"

Carolyn Herbst Lewis, "Waking Sleeping Beauty"

Week 8 – queering gender

Tuesday: Verta Taylor and Leila J. Rupp, "Learning from Drag Queens"

Diana Fuss, "The 'Risk' of Essence"

Thursday: Susan Stryker, "Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question"

Nancy A. Naples, "Queer Parenting in the New Millennium"

Week 9

Tuesday: Judith Halberstam, "Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum"

Judith Halberstam, "An Introduction to Female Masculinity"

Jeannine Delombard, "Femmeism"

Thursday: Cathy J. Cohen, "Punk, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?"

Watch Fagette music video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ayyPzuHGNU>

Week 10

Tuesday: Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability: Transforming Feminist Theory"

Thursday: Draft workshop for Paper 2

Week 11

Tuesday: Presentations. Paper 2 due by 5 pm.

Thursday: Presentations

Week 12

Tuesday: Daphne Scholinski, "The Last Time I Wore a Dress" pg ix-41

Thursday: Daphne Scholinski, "The Last Time I Wore a Dress" pg 43 - 101

Week 13

Tuesday: Daphne Scholinski, "The Last Time I Wore a Dress" pg 103 - 163

Thursday: Daphne Scholinski, "The Last Time I Wore a Dress" pg 165 - 200

Week 14

Tuesday: Small group work on paper 3

Thursday: Draft workshop for paper 3

Week 15

Tuesday: No class. Paper 3 due by 5 pm.

Thursday: Closing discussion and dessert