

Spring 2008  
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**SYLLABUS for SYD 6325:  
 Comparative Sociology of Gender Seminar**

This course examines how gender is sociologically constructed within an historical comparative perspective while considering questions raised by gender in relation to possibilities for social change. How can there be a “global” feminist movement if the very notion of feminism and the “global” are challenged by post-modernism? How can we theoretically relate sophisticated academic research and data to practical sociological outcomes? Can there be a theory and praxis of global feminist change? Themes here will focus sociologically on domination, inequality and equality related to sex/gender, race, and class.

**Required Readings:** The following texts can be purchased at the university bookstore, local book stores or on-line and they are all in paperback:

Amy Wharton, The Sociology of Gender. Blackwell 2005.  
 Joan Huber, On the Origins of Gender Inequality, Paradigm 2007.  
 Joan Acker, Class Questions: Feminist Answers, Rowman and Littlefield 2006.  
 Catharine A. MacKinnon, Are Women Human? Harvard University Press 2006.  
 United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World, 2006  
 Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, Social Dominance, Cambridge University Press 1999.

**Requirements:** Final grade will be based on attendance (10%) , in-class participation and presentation of assigned readings (40%), and completed original research project and paper with sociological data and sources (40%) that you present (10%).

**Course Outline**

**Weeks 1-2: Introduction** to the comparative study of gender using historical comparative methods. Overview/background/review of U.S. sociology of gender. Reading: Skocpol, “Emergent Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology.”

Wharton all.

**Week 3: Biology: Motherhood** is what women share with each other but not with men. Some argue that may be the singlemost reason for women's power or woman's inequality. Yet what difference does a biological fact make to feminism?

Reading: Huber all—tries to locate inequality in origins theory of evolutionary biology/anthropology.

Suggested: Hrdy on mothers in evolutionary anthropology.

Dorothy Dinnerstein, The Mermaid and the Minotaur and Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering for psychoanalytic perspectives.

**Week 4: Global women** U.N. Women's Decade conference laid out women's global agenda. Review here

Reading: UNRISD all.

**Weeks 5-6: Global law:** Radical feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon has impacted national and international legislation. Here we consider her theories and legal discussion.

Reading: MacKinnon all.

**Weeks 7-8: Class: Materialism** structures everyone's lives, but how can sociological theories and research help social change.

Reading: Acker all.

**Weeks 9-10: Domination: Social Psychology** offers a theory of sex/gender domination.

Reading: Sidanius/Pratto all. Recommended: James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance.

**Week 11: SPRING BREAK No Classes**

**Weeks 12-13: Feminist Movements and Social Change.**

**Week 14 (April 9): No class—work on paper.**

**Week 15: Your research PRESENTATIONS.**

**Final research paper due.**