

WORKING WOMEN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY
(Labor Studies 575:309/Women's Studies 988:309)

Fall 2017 – Wednesdays, 12:35-3:35 pm
Labor Education Center, Room 130
Professor Dorothy Sue Cobble
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Office Hours: after class and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course analyzes the problems women face at work and the most effective approaches to solving those problems. Topics include, among others, inequalities in pay and opportunity; the revaluing of care work, segregation at work, glass ceilings and women's leadership, the body and sexuality at work, poverty and overwork, and redesigning jobs and careers to meet the needs of individuals and society.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- *Appreciate the diversity of women and men's experiences and needs
- *Understand how gender and sex interact with other identities and social structures
- *Describe how larger structures and forces affect individual action and belief
- *Understand the interconnectedness of market and family work
- *Assess the societal effects of women's entrance into market work
- *Evaluate economic, cultural, and psychological theories of inequality
- *Apply insights from scholarly research to improve workplace practices and social policy
- *Enhance written and public presentation skills
- *Develop group process and leadership skills

COURSE GRADING

- 1. Class Participation and First Responder (10%)**
- 2. Response Papers (60%)**
- 3. In-Class Quizzes (20%)**
- 4. In-Class Presentation (10%)**

PLEASE NOTE: Cell phones and other electronic devices, including laptop computers, must be turned off and closed during class. Please do not sign up for this class if you are unable to comply with this policy.

COURSE TEXTS. All required texts are available electronically through the Rutgers University sakai website, with the exception of the movie, "North Country," which you will need to purchase or rent. You will not have access to electronic copies of the reading in class. In order to prepare fully for class discussion, please bring a printed copy of the reading or substantial notes on the reading with you to class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Sept 6) Introductions and Overview

Week 2 (Sept 13) The Long Road to Equality: Part One (1920s-1960s)

Reading:

*Dorothy Sue Cobble, "More Than Sex Equality: Feminism After Suffrage," in *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movements* (2014), 1-67.

*Watch the PBS video on-line, "Makers: Women Who Make America, **Part 1: The Awakening**" (57 minutes).

Response Paper #1: What goals did US feminists pursue from the 1920s to the 1970s according to the reading and video? How successful were they in reaching their goals?

Week 3 (Sept 20) The Long Road to Equality: Part Two (1970s to Today).

Reading:

*Joan Williams, "Reconstructive Feminism: Changing the Way We Talk About Gender and Work," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* (2009)

*Paula England, "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled," *Gender and Society* 24: 2 (2010), 149-166.

*Bryce Covert, "The Best Era for Working Women Was 20 Years Ago?" *New York Times*, 2 Sept 2017.

Response Paper #2: Is the gender revolution stalled? What is "reconstructive feminism" and why does Joan Williams believe it matters for improving workplace policy for men and women? Do you agree? Why or why not?

Week 4 (Sept 27) No Class Meeting: Watch the film "North Country" (2005) with Charlize Theron and Frances McDormand.

We will discuss "North Country" on October 11 and you are asked to write about it in your response paper for that week.

Week 5 (Oct 4) Women's Wages: Unequal and Low

Reading:

*Jessica Milli, "The Impact of Equal Pay on Poverty and the Economy," IWPR Briefing Paper, (April 2017). 1-9. (For more: www.iwpr.org)

*Yasemin Besen-Cassino, "Origins of the Gender Wage Gap," in *Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America*, (2014), 123-143.

*Leslie McCall, "Increasing Class Disparities among Women and the Politics of Gender Equity," in *Sex of Class*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble (2007), 15-34.

Response Paper #3: Discuss how the title of each article captures key ideas in the text.

Week 6 (Oct 11) Women and Men in Non-Traditional Jobs

Reading/Viewing:

*Review the film, “North Country”

*Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1993), chapter 8.

*Christine L. Williams, *Still a Man’s World: Men Who Do Women’s Work*, chapters 5, 7.

*Adia Harvey Wingfield, “Racializing the Glass Elevator,” *Gender and Society* (2009), 5-26.

Response Paper #4: Compare and contrast the experiences of men in female-majority jobs with those of women in male-majority jobs. Draw on Kanter, Williams, Wingfield, and the film, “North Country.”

Week 7 (Oct 18) Group meetings to plan in-class presentations. In-class quiz.

Week 8 (Oct 25) The Motherhood Penalty?

Reading:

*Shelley J. Correll, Stephen Benard and In Paik, “Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?” *American Journal of Sociology* 112 (2007): 1297-1338.

*Ann Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*, chapters 4-5.

Response Paper #5 Is there a “motherhood penalty”? What is the “truly invisible hand” and the “mommy tax”?

Group 1 Presentations

Week 9 (Nov 1) Corporate Feminism and Moving Women to the Top

Reading/Viewing:

*Sheryl Sandberg’s Ted Talk on “Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders,” December 2010.

https://www.ted.com/speakers/sheryl_sandberg

Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All,” *The Atlantic* (July-August 2012).

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/6>.

*Jessica Nordell, “Why Aren’t Women Advancing at Work? Ask a Transgender Person,” *New Republic*, 28 August 2014.

Response Paper #6 Why are there so few women at the top? What difference would it make if there were more?

Group 2 Presentations

Week 10 (Nov 8) Care and Service Work

Reading:

*Arlie Hochschild, "Love and Gold" in *Global Woman* (2002), 15-30.

*Paula England and Nancy Folbre, "The Cost of Caring," *Annals* 39 (1999), 39-51.

*Sara Jaffe, "Trickle-Down Feminism." *Dissent* 2013.

<https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/trickle-down-feminism>

Response Paper #7 How do each of these authors explain the low pay of care and service jobs? Which do you find most convincing?

Group 3 Presentations

Week 11 (Nov 15) The Body at Work

Reading:

*Cynthia Daniels, "Competing Gender Paradigms: Fetal Rights and the Case of Johnson Controls," *Policy Studies Review* 10:4 Winter 1991/1992, 51-68.

*Joan Williams, "Poor, Pregnant, and Fired: Caregiving Discrimination Against Low-Wage Workers," *WorkLifeLaw* Issue Brief, June 2011.

*Christine Williams and Catherine Connell, "Looking Good and Sounding Right," *Work and Occupations* (2010).

Response Paper #8 Have employer policies toward pregnant women improved since the 1970s? Do current policies need to change, and if so, how? Are young workers in high-end retail being exploited?

Group 4 Presentations

Week 12 No Class Meeting-Thanksgiving

Week 13 (Nov 29) Sexuality and Sexual Harassment at Work

*Deborah Tannen, "What's Sex Got to Do With it?" *Talking From 9to5*, 242-275.

*Patti Giuffre and Christine Williams, "Boundary Lines: Labeling Sexual Harassment in Restaurants," *Gender and Society* (1994).

*Miriam Frank, "From Construction to Couture: *Coming Out in Unionized Workplaces*," in *Out in the Union: A Labor History of Queer America* (2014), 17-47.

Response Paper #9 Take one key idea in each article and discuss why you agree or disagree.

Group 5 Presentations

Week 14 (Dec 6) Solving the Job-Family Dilemma

Reading:

*Joan Williams, Mary Blair-Loy, and Jennifer Berdahl, "Cultural Schemas, Social Class, and the The Flexibility Stigma," *Journal of Social Issues* 69 (2013), 209-234.

*Janet Gornick and Maria Meyers, *Families That Work*, chapter 6.

*Jody Heymann and Alison Earle, *Raising the Global Floor* (2010), chapter 3.

Response Paper #10 What employer and societal policies would help solve the job-family dilemma according to the readings? Which make most sense to you and why?

Group 6 Presentations

Week 15 (December 13) Better Work, Less Work, No Work

Reading:

*Kathi Weeks, "The Problem of Work" *New Labor Forum* (2014), 10-12.

*Dan Clawson and Naomi Gerstel, "The Time Crunch: Will Labor Lead?" *New Labor Forum* (2014), 32-38.

*Mark Rank, ""Toward a New Understanding of American Poverty," *Journal of Law and Policy* (2006), 17-51.

Response Paper #11 Discuss how the title of each article captures a key idea in the text.

Group 7 Presentations

Final Quiz (As scheduled by University, December 15-22).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION AND FIRST RESPONDER (10%):

CLASS DISCUSSION. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion. You should read carefully the assigned texts *prior* to each class meeting and bring a copy of the readings with you to class. Students will be asked to offer their own understanding of the main claims in each text and their opinion of these claims. You will not be judged on whether or not you agree with the claims of the authors or with my opinion but on whether your ideas are informed by the week's readings and/or substantiated by other evidence and examples. Your personal experience is an important place to begin but should be evaluated in light of the experiences of others and the generalizations and research of the authors we will be reading. Students are also expected to raise the level of class discussion by interacting with others to help clarify and extend their comments. Active, respectful listening is as important to class participation as talking.

Over the course of the semester, students also will participate in small group activities and will be asked to serve as a small group discussion leader. Your goal as a discussion leader is to encourage participation from each group member; keep the group focused on the assignment; and help the group reach common or shared understandings of the material, if possible. Small group leaders should be prepared to summarize the group's conclusion and present them to the class. Small group leaders are not expected to be experts or have all the answers.

FIRST RESPONDER. Once over the course of the semester, on a pre-assigned day, each student will act as a "first responder." First responders help open up discussion on a particular reading by being prepared to share with the class, when requested to do so by the instructor, the things they have learned from the reading and the questions they have about it. First responders may also recommend to the instructor a short video (5 minutes MAX) that is relevant to the reading for the class to watch. Video recommendations with a link must be sent to the instructor for review on Tuesday, the **DAY BEFORE** the class meets. The video will be shown at the discretion of the instructor.

2. RESPONSE PAPERS (50%)

Students should submit at least **FIVE** response papers to the questions posed by the instructor on the assigned readings **before** the readings are discussed in class. At least **TWO** responses should be submitted before the first quiz on October 18 and at least **TWO** after. Students may submit two additional responses, if they wish, which will be counted in their final point total. Papers should be 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced, and 12-point font.

Responses must be submitted on Sakai **by NOON BEFORE** class begins on Wednesday and must be on the readings that will be discussed that day. No papers will be accepted after the deadline.

Papers will receive a grade of 1 point, ½ point, or 0 points. Responses that show evidence of engagement with the readings, respond to the questions posed, and do not have major writing problems will receive full credit or one point. Responses that are incomplete or poorly written (do not show engagement with the readings or do not respond to the questions) will receive partial credit or ½ point. Points translate to grades as follows:

5 (or more)=A

4.5= B+

4=B

3.5=C+

3= C

2.5=D+

2=D

Below 2 =not a passing grade

3. TWO IN-CLASS QUIZZES (10% each; total 20%).

The first quiz will be on October 18 and will take about 30-45 minutes. The second quiz will last about an hour and be given during the time the University establishes for the final exam.

The quizzes will ask you to discuss and evaluate significant terms, concepts, and claims we have encountered in class materials and discussion. The quizzes are designed to help you retain, integrate, and evaluate the information and ideas we will be covering over the course of the semester. There will be review sessions before each quiz.

4. IN-CLASS PRESENTATION (10%)

Each student is expected to make a short in-class presentation of 3-5 minutes related to one of the topics during weeks 8-15. Students should pick an issue important to them that is related to the topic for the week they are assigned. In your presentation, you should explain to the class why the issue you chose is important to you, why it matters to others, and how it connects to the topic for the day. PowerPoint and other visuals are encouraged, but no more than 3 or 4 slides and if you use a video it should be no more than 2 minutes long. Two tips for an effective presentation: do not read word for word from a printed page or from a PowerPoint slide; use PowerPoint slides with minimum or no text.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Papers you have written for other classes are not acceptable submissions for this course. In addition, using phrases from someone else's writing without quotation marks or paraphrasing another person's ideas without crediting the source of the idea is plagiarism. I use "Turn It In" and other detection methods to find duplicate papers or work cut and pasted from the Internet. Plagiarism or any form of cheating can result in failure in the course and disciplinary action through University channels.

Special Needs: Any student with a disability requiring accommodations should contact me as soon as possible.

PLEASE NOTE: INCOMPLETES ARE GRANTED IN ONLY THE MOST EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES AND ONLY WITH PRIOR PERMISSION.

THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE CORE CURRICULUM GOALS A, D, M, & N.

3 September 2017