

**PSYC362: PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN**  
**SPRING 2012**  
**Course Syllabus**

## 1. Basic Information

*Instructor:* Kristen Jones  
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*Phone #:* (703) 993-3706 Ext. 40123  
*Office:* Robinson B210  
*Office Hours:* Wednesday 3-4pm and by appointment  
*Class Time:* Monday & Wednesday 9-10:15am  
*Classroom Location:* Science Technology I, Room 120

## 2. Course Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of research and theory on gender in psychology. We will examine the myths and stereotypes associated with men and women in our society, the social and psychological gender differences that have been identified in research, and the evidence and theoretical arguments concerning the origin of these differences.

Because my orientation is that of an experimental psychologist, the class will be taught from an empirical perspective and much of the lecture material will be based on findings obtained in experimental psychological research. Thus, we will identify the studies being conducted and the answers currently being proposed by the research community on longstanding and contemporary issues pertaining to the psychology of gender. In addition, we will cover selected topics that tie in to the study of gender including discrimination, achievement, pornography, and homosexuality.

## 3. Course Goals

As the course instructor, I have several goals for each student to work toward during this term:

- 1) An awareness of the hidden and obvious gender biases in the study of human behavior and an appreciation of the complexity of the research on gender issues
- 2) Clarification of the nature and development of gender differences and gender roles
- 3) Development of critical thinking and skill in evaluating gender research as well as depictions of gender in the media and entertainment industry
- 4) Development of an intellectual tolerance and respect for others' viewpoints
- 5) Development of self-understanding and empowerment, appreciating that we need not be constrained by traditional gender roles and stereotypes

## 4. Required Text

Lips, H. (2005). *Sex and Gender: An Introduction*. Mountain View, CA: McGraw-Hill. Sixth Edition.

## 5. Attendance Policy

Though I will not take attendance and attendance will not be formally factored into your final grade, those who do not attend class on a regular basis will be at an extreme disadvantage when it comes to taking exams. Because the material covered in lecture and the material covered in your assigned readings only partially overlap, regular attendance is necessary in order to fully acquire the course

content. My exams are created and modeled LARGELY based on my lectures, so it would benefit you greatly to attend lectures and take notes.

If you miss class, you are responsible for the material you missed. This includes assignments that were due on the day you were absent. In the case of unexcused absences, assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late, and you will be penalized 5% of the assignment grade for each day it is late.

## **6. Cell Phone and Laptop Policy**

I understand that some students may take notes more easily using their laptop. However, if you are using a laptop in my class, I expect that you are taking notes on my lecture and are using the laptop for no other reasons. Please, no gchatting, facebooking, checking scores on espn, emailing, etc. Not only is it pointless for you to come to my lecture if you are going to be engaging in these irrelevant activities, but this is also distracting to other students. Furthermore, there is absolutely no reason to be on your cell phone (e.g., texting, emailing) during class. This is both disrespectful to me and to your fellow classmates who are there to learn so **DON'T DO IT!**

## **7. Arriving Late to Class**

I know this class is early and that traffic can be bad in the mornings, but I manage to be here on time every class, so you can too. If I notice that attendance in general is becoming low AND/OR that people are coming in late to class on a regular basis, I reserve the right to give short, unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class to reward those who both ATTEND class and are ON TIME to class. Arriving late is not only distracting to me as the instructor, but also to your fellow students, so please be considerate and arrive on time to class! ☺

## **8. Honor Code Statement**

Students in this course are expected to comply with the GMU Honor Code. Students should refer to the information listed on the university website (<http://www.gmu.edu/academics/catalog/9798/honorcod.html>) for definitions of behaviors such as lying, cheating, and plagiarism that are considered honor code violations. I reserve the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.

## **9. Learning Disabilities**

If you are a student with disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 709-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## **10. Grading Policy**

Final grades in this course will be calculated based on the following components:

20% Exam 1  
 20% Exam 2  
 20% Exam 3  
 20% Exam 4  
 10% Assignment 1  
10% Assignment 2  
 100% Total

Final Letter Grades will be distributed as follows:

100% - 99% = A+	86% - 84% = B	73% - 70% = C-
98% - 94% = A	83% - 80% = B-	69% - 67% = D+
93% - 90% = A-	79% - 77% = C+	66% - 64% = D
89% - 87% = B+	76% - 74% = C	63% - 60% = D-

## 11. Exams

There will be four non-cumulative exams that will each count for 20% of your grade. The format of the exams will be multiple choice questions that will be drawn from the text, lectures, videos, and class demonstrations covered during the semester. While exams will largely be comprised of material covered in lecture, approximately 20-30% of the questions will come from information in the text that was not covered in lecture. For this reason, both class attendance and completion of reading assignments outside of class are important in order to do well on the exams. Given this is an upper-level college course, I do not provide study guides for exams. Organizing information and discerning what is important is an invaluable skill that you will only acquire by practicing on your own, not by me doing it for you.

No makeup exams will be given unless I have been contacted in advance of the exam and receive an acceptable, **documented** excuse. No exceptions will be made to this policy. Makeup exams must be taken within three days of the in class examination and will be scheduled at the instructor's convenience. Students who do not take an exam and do not meet the conditions for taking a makeup will receive a zero on that exam.

## 12. Assignments

Two assignments are required for this class. These assignments are designed to enhance your understanding and memory of course material. Each of these is discussed in detail at the end of this syllabus. Each assignment is worth 10% of your final grade.

## 13. Extra Credit Opportunities

Students will receive 1% credit for each hour of research participation, up to 5% of students' final grades. This can take the form of participation in experiments or attendance at the alternative research lectures. Students must obtain a participant account at <http://gmu.sona-systems.com/default.aspx> in order to sign up to participate in research. Please email the Psychology Department Research Coordinator, Simone Erchov, at [psychlab@gmu.edu](mailto:psychlab@gmu.edu) if you have any problems obtaining an account. **Students must assign any completed credits to PSYC 362 on the sona website in order for credit to be awarded by the instructor** (otherwise, I will not be able to view your participation when I sign onto my instructor account).

## 14. Auditing Students

If you are auditing this class, you must first be registered for the course on PatriotWeb and then you must submit a Course Audit Form to the Office of the Registrar *by the end of the drop period*. Your status will then be changed from "CREDIT" to "AUDIT" without changing your tuition balance due. The Course Audit Form can be found at <http://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/CAF.pdf>.

## 15. Course Outline (subject to change)

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Monday, January 23	Introductions & Course Overview	
Wednesday, January 25	Research Methods (1)	Lips Ch 3
Monday, January 30	Research Methods (2)	<b>*Last day to add course – January 31<sup>st</sup></b>
Wednesday, February 1	Theoretical Perspectives (1)	Lips Ch 2
Monday, February 6	Theoretical Perspectives (2)	
Wednesday, February 8	Stereotypes (1)	Lips Ch 1
Monday, February 13	Stereotypes (2)	
Wednesday, February 15	<b>EXAM 1</b>	
Monday, February 20	Gender & Biology (1)	Lips Ch 5, 8, 9
Wednesday, February 22	Gender & Biology (2)	<b>*Last day to drop course – February 24<sup>th</sup></b>
Monday, February 27	Body Image (1)	
Wednesday, February 29	Body Image (2)	
Monday, March 5	<b>Assignment 1 Presentations</b>	<b>Assignment 1 Due</b>
Wednesday, March 7	<b>EXAM 2</b>	
Monday, March 12	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b> <b>*NO CLASS*</b>	
Wednesday, March 14		
Monday, March 19	Gender Similarities & Differences	Lips Ch 4, 6
Wednesday, March 21	Sexual Orientation (1)	Lips Ch 7
Monday, March 26	Sexual Orientation (2)	
Wednesday, March 28	Intimacy & Attachment (1)	Lips Ch 11
Monday, April 2	Intimacy & Attachment (2)	
Wednesday, April 4	<b>Assignment 2 Presentations</b>	<b>Assignment 2 Due</b>
Monday, April 9	<b>Assignment 2 Presentations</b>	
Wednesday, April 11	<b>EXAM 3</b>	
Monday, April 16	Gender & Work (1)	Lips Ch 13
Wednesday, April 18	Gender & Work (2)	
Monday, April 23	Gender & Power	Lips Ch 12
Wednesday, April 25	<b>*NO CLASS*</b>	
Monday, April 30	Justice, Equity, & Change	Lips Ch 14
Wednesday, May 2	<b>LAST DAY OF CLASS</b> Wrap-up	
<b>Monday, May 14</b> <b>7:30am – 10:15am</b>	<b>EXAM 4</b>	<b>Happy Summer! ☺</b>

**\*\*\*NOTE: If you cannot attend class on April 9<sup>th</sup> or April 11<sup>th</sup> due to the celebration of Passover, NOTIFY ME before Spring Break (the earlier the better) and I will arrange for you to present Assignment 2 on Wed. 4/4 and will schedule a time during which you can make-up Exam 3.**

## 16. Assignment Descriptions

There will be one presentation day for Assignment 1 and two presentation days for Assignment 2. I expect everyone to be here on those days. For each assignment, the “presentation” portion is worth half of your grade, so it is very important attend class on these days. There will be no chance for “make-up” presentations on other class days.

**\*\*PRESENTATION DAY LAPTOP/CELL PHONE POLICY\*\*** - There is absolutely no need for you to have either laptops or cell phones out on presentation days. Please be courteous to your fellow

students and give them your undivided attention as they present. **I will deduct points from your grade if I see you on your laptop or cell phone during others' presentations.**

## Assignment #1: Gender Norms

This assignment is designed to help you become more aware of the gender stereotypes that exist within our society. You are asked to do something you are rarely asked to do, especially for a class assignment. That is, you are asked to behave in a way that is seen as "inappropriate" in terms of the gender stereotypes of your sex. Your assignment is to do something in the social arena that would generally be considered MILDLY inappropriate and against the norms of your sex. You should choose one of the sex-typed faux-pas listed below as your behavior. If you decide you would like to do something different, **make sure to "OK" it by discussing it with me first.**

### Males

- Wear colorful ribbons or barrettes in your hair, paint your fingernails a bright color, or wear lipstick for a full two hours. Monitor people's reactions and comments. Ask people how they like your ribbons, nails, and/or hairdo.
- On three separate occasions, become verbally intimate with individuals you consider strangers or only mere acquaintances. Talk about 1) how you are losing your figure -- obsess constantly about your weight and how others view your appearance (e.g., Geez, I'm really losing my figure these days...what do you think...do you think I'm fat?); 2) discuss the intimate gripes you have about your most recent relationship partner; and 3) react in an overly sensitive, emotional way to neutral comments that your interaction partner makes (e.g., "you really hurt my feelings when you said that").

### Females

- Do one of the following things for a full two hours: 1) carry around sports equipment (e.g., baseball glove, hockey stick, basketball/football... the more stereotypically "male" the better) or a toolbox at the mall, down the street or some other public place, 2) wear a backwards baseball cap, a toolbelt, a construction worker's outfit (e.g., hard hat, construction boots), a hunting outfit (e.g., camouflage and hunter's orange, NOTE: NO CARRYING FIREARMS), or something of a similar nature to the examples described above (make sure to "ok" it with me first if you are doing something not specifically mentioned on this list). Monitor people's reactions and comments. Ask people how they like your outfit and/or equipment.
- On three separate occasions, interrupt people who are earnestly talking to you. Change the subject to something that appears selfish but is just plain more interesting to you. Dominate the conversations. Furthermore, in one of these three situations, announce to a friend who just wants you to listen that "her problems can easily be solved...stop complaining, take action, and stop talking about it." In at least one of the other occasions, change the subject to a feigned desire to work on cars, go fishing, or go deer hunting (e.g., "I think I might go digging for nightcrawlers tonight because I want to go fishing this weekend" or "I wonder what size buck I will get this season when I go deerhunting," or "Geez, I can't wait until my classes are over because I get to get my hands all greased up and fix my ERG valve and front wheel suspension this afternoon.").

**The Write-Up of this Assignment (50% of your grade):**

You should write your experience up in a very brief, one-page (double-spaced) paper (please do not exceed one page). In this paper, describe:

- 1) The behavior you chose and explain how it is compatible with the stereotype of the other gender and against the stereotype of your own gender.
- 2) The reactions of those present. Describe both verbal and nonverbal reactions.
- 3) How you felt when engaging in the behavior.

**In Class Presentation (50% of your grade):**

Each student will very informally share his or her experiences and/or reactions to this exercise (~1- 2 minutes) in class on Monday, March 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Instructor's Comment:**

The point of this exercise is to give you an in-depth look at gender stereotypes and behavior. This assignment may make you feel slightly uncomfortable; however, it is NOT intended to make you feel extraordinarily uncomfortable. If you feel that it does make you extremely uncomfortable, we will meet and arrange another assignment.

**Assignment #2: Gender and Psychology in the Media**

For this assignment, you should choose one of the following two options. You will briefly (and very informally) discuss the focus of your assignment in class on Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> and Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup>.

***1) Psychology of Gender in the Music Industry.***

For this project, you will choose one finding that you have learned regarding gender issues and you will create an audiotape presentation of no fewer than five songs that provide evidence for the topic that you have chosen. You are allowed (and expected) to bias your selections in favor of providing support for the gender finding that you have chosen.

For instance, say that you are interested in depicting the gender differences that David Buss writes about (i.e., men select women based on their reproductive viability, men's main goal is to ensure their genes are passed on to future generations, women select men based on their potential to support them and children). You might include:

- a) Summer Lovin' – From the Grease Soundtrack. Shows men's and women's different ideas about love. Olivia Newton-John sings about his car, his manners, his resources, while John Travolta sings about her sexual appeal.
- b) Shook Me All Night Long – Aerosmith. Guy sings about a woman he likes by describing her physical features (e.g., "She was a fast machine...she was the best damn woman that I'd ever seen....knocking me out with those American thighs")
- c) Boy from New York City - ? Woman sings about a guy with resources that she loves (e.g., "he's kinda cute, in his mohair suit, and he keeps his pockets full of spending loot.")
- d) Chapel of Love - ? Woman sings about her incredible excitement about going to the chapel to get married.
- e) Married to a Waitress, I don't even know her name? – Alan Jackson. He sings about his horrific realization in the morning that he got so drunk the previous night that he married an ugly waitress.

**The Write-Up of this Assignment (50% of your grade):**

- 1) A one-paragraph description of each of the songs describing how they relate to the gender finding that you have chosen.
- 2) You must also include lyrics of all of the songs that you include (either write them down yourself or find and print a copy of them).

**In Class Presentation (50% of your grade):**

Each student will select ONE of their five songs to share a clip of with the class. Please do not play the entire song for the class; just select a relevant portion of the song. **Please make sure your clip does not exceed one minute.** In your presentation, you should describe:

- 1) the gender finding you selected
- 2) how the lyrics in the song you are sharing support that particular finding

You may either burn the song onto a CD and use the media player on the computer, email yourself youtube links of the songs, or whatever else you can come up with. Regardless, please come prepared so that we don't have to wait for you to search for the link you need.

***2) Psychology of Gender in the Movie/TV/Commercial Industry.***

For this project, you will choose one finding that you have learned regarding gender issues and create a videotape presentation of no fewer than five clips from movies, talk shows, sitcoms, etc., that provide evidence for the topic that you have chosen.

Example: Differences in Aggression Between the Genders

- a) Clip from the Maury Povich show revealing men breaking out into a fight.
- b) Clip from Cops show demonstrating male police or criminal physical brutality.
- c) Clip from NHL hockey game where the benches clear and the teams fight.
- d) Soap Opera clip of women verbally aggressing against each other.
- e) Friends episode clip of passive-aggressive display by one of the female characters toward one of the male characters.

**The Write-Up of this Assignment (50% of your grade):**

- 1) A one-paragraph description of each of the video clips describing how they relate to the gender finding that you have chosen.
- 2) You must also include a CD/DVD with the videoclips or the links to the videoclips so that I can access them (e.g., youtube links).

**In Class Presentation (50% of your grade):**

Each student will select ONE of their five videoclips to share with the class. If the clip is short (e.g., a commercial), you can play the entire thing. If the clip is from a show or a movie, for example, please only show the most relevant portion of the clip. **Please make sure your clip does not exceed one minute.** In your presentation, you should describe:

- 1) the gender finding you selected
- 2) how the lyrics in the song you are sharing support that particular finding

You may either burn the videoclips onto a CD/DVD and use the media player on the computer, email yourself youtube links of the clips, or whatever else you can come up with. Regardless, please come prepared so that we don't have to wait for you to search for the link you need.