

Psychology of sex and gender

Autumn, 2017; The Swedish Program; Stockholm School of Economics

Location: Room A975a, Thursdays 9.15-12.00

Instructor: MSc Maja Wall, MSc Hellen Vergoossen

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Office hours: appointment

Course description

When you meet someone for the first time, their gender is one of the first things you will notice, and by noticing it you implicitly categorize and attribute that person's behaviour. Even though we think of others belonging to a biological sex, your expectations of that person may be based on stereotypes and the social construct of sex: gender.

In the 'Psychology of Sex and Gender' course we will look at several major theories on what is thought to influence perceptions and expressions of sex, gender, sexuality, and the possible consequences for identity and social interaction. The course will include introductions to psychological research, the history of the women's movement and the study of gender differences. The focus of this course is to develop a broad knowledge base and a critical mind-set to be able to navigate discussions on a wide range of gender topics. We will integrate societal perspectives, personal experiences, existing psychological research, and gender theory.

The course follows the life phases and introduces fields within the psychology of sex and gender as they occur across one's life span. Topics include: the school experience, sexuality, gender in the media, as well as work and health.

As an interactive seminar, this course will lay a lot of weight at discussion as a way to integrate different perspectives.

Goals for the Course

- Being able to summarize, criticize and apply theories that attempt to explain gender similarities and differences
- Critically appraise psychological research on topics within the psychology of gender covered in the course.
- Understand the biological and social factors that affect thinking, relating, developing, and in general, the functioning of the genders in modern society
- Understand how gender influences and interacts with development during life
- Being able to reflect upon personal situations and experiences with the help of theories on sex and gender

Course requirements and examinations

The course will be examined by two examination papers. The first paper is guided by a number of questions to answer. The final exam is a thorough and critical examination of one

of the subjects that were presented and examined during the second part of the semester. The paper must have a clear gender perspective and it is possible to combine themes. This is an opportunity to obtain deeper knowledge about and to present a subject that interest or relate to the student. More specific information on the final exam follows later during the semester.

- Active participation: 20% (in seminars and as discussion leader)
- Midterm Exam: 30% (written paper)
- Final paper: 50% (written paper and presentation)

Active participation involves:

- Attending all classes. One lecture may be missed in case of sickness or other personal circumstances, but for every additionally missed lecture your final grade will be reduced by one step (A ---> A-);
- Participation in the weekly discussions;
- Turning in 2 discussion questions about that week's readings at least 24 hours prior to the class (with exception of the introductory class on August 31st);
- Integration of lectures and literature in the formulations of your arguments and weekly questions.

Discussion moderation: After the first hour of each lecture, a student will lead a class discussion based on the week's discussion questions. It is their responsibility to involve everyone in the discussion, to keep the discussion going, to keep overview, and to keep the group on-topic. Students can choose a lecture to moderate the discussion during the first lecture.

Required readings

Brannon, L. (2011). *Gender: Psychological Perspectives* (6th ed.). New York: Pearson. ISBN13: 9780205052684 or 9780205001651.

Articles (preliminary list, may be subject to change)*

Boskey, E. R. (2014). **Understanding transgender identity development in childhood and adolescence.** *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 9, 445-463.

Buss D.M. (2009). **The great struggles of life. Darwin and the emergence of evolutionary psychology.** *American Psychologist*, 64, 140-148.

Cuddy, A.J.C. & Fiske, S.T. (2004). **When Professionals Become Mothers, Warmth Doesn't Cut the Ice.** *Journal of Social Issues*, 60(4), 701-718.

Eagly & Wood (2013). **Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology: Moving Forward.** *Sex Roles*, 69, 549-556.

Eagly & Wood (2013). **Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology: Moving Forward.** *Sex Roles*, 69, 549-556.

Fausto-Sterling A, Garcia Coll C, Lamarre M. (2012). **Sexing the baby: Part 1 – What do we really know about sex differentiation in the first three years of life?** *Social Science & Medicine*, 74, 1684-1692.

Heilman, M.E. (2001). **Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder.** *Journal of Social Issues*, 4, 657-674.

Steele, J.R. & Ambady, N. (2005). **"Math is Hard!" The effect of gender priming on women's attitudes.** *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42, 428-436.

Wood, W. & Eagly, A.H. (2010). **Gender.** In S.T. Fiske, D.T. Gilbert & G. Lindzey (Eds.). *Gender Handbook of Social Psychology, Volume 1* (pp.629-667). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

*Articles will be available on course website

Syllabus

1. Introduction

Thursday Aug 31, 9.15-12.00

Literature:

Article: Wood & Eagly (2010). **Gender.**

2. The beginnings of sex and gender: From chromosomes to early socialization

Thursday Sept 7, 9.15-12.00

Literature: Brannon chapter 4-5.

Article: Fausto-Sterling, Garcia Coll & Lamarre. (2012). **Sexing the baby: Part 1 – What do we really know about sex differentiation in the first three years of life?**

3. Gender identity

Thursday Sept 14, 9.15-12.00

Literature: Brannon chapter 5 & 6.

Article: Boskey (2014). **Understanding transgender identity development in childhood and adolescence.**

4. Sexuality and relationships

Thursday Sep 21, 9.15-12.00

Literature: Brannon chapter 8-10.

5. **School and abilities**

Thursday Sept 28, 9.15-12.00

Literature: Brannon chapter 7 & 11

Article: Steele, & Ambady (2005). "Math is Hard!" The effect of gender priming on women's attitudes.

Mid term paper, due date: Oct 4th 12 am

6. **Work**

Thursday Oct 5, 9.15-12.00

Literature: Brannon chapter 12.

Article: Cuddy & Fiske (2004). **When Professionals Become Mothers, Warmth Doesn't Cut the Ice.**

Heilman (2001). **Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder.**

7. **Sex and gender in research**

Thursday Oct 12, 9.15-12.00

Literature: Brannon, preface, chapter 1-3.

8. **Gender and health**

Thursday Oct 19, 9.15-1b 2.00

Literature: Brannon chapter 13-15.

9. **Gender in media and communication**

Thursday Oct 26, 9.15-12

Literature: TBA

Fall Break, Oct 30th - Nov 9th

10. **Critical thinking workshop**

Thursday Nov 16, 9.15-12.00

11. Evolutionary perspectives on gender

Thursday Nov 23 9.15-12

Literature:

Article: Buss (2009). **The great struggles of life. Darwin and the emergence of evolutionary psychology.**

Eagly & Wood (2013). **Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology: Moving Forward.**

12. Final paper, presentations & peer review

Thursday Nov 30, 9.15-12

Final exam, due date December 7th 12 am
