

# Psychology of sex and gender

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Autumn, 2018; The Swedish Program; Stockholm School of Economics

**Location:** Room TBA, Thursdays 10.00-13.00

**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 31<sup>st</sup>);
- 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 will be assigned a session to moderate during the first lecture.

### **Required readings**

Brannon, L. (2011). *Gender: Psychological Perspectives* (6<sup>th</sup> 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.

Shutts, K., Kenward, B., Falk, H., Ivegran, A., & Fawcett, C. (2017). **Early preschool environments and gender: Effects of gender pedagogy in Sweden.** *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 162, 1-17.

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**

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### **1. Introduction**

**Thursday Aug 30, 10.00-13.00**

Literature:

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

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

**Thursday Sept 6, 10.00-13.00**

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 13, 10.00-13.00**

Literature: Brannon chapter 5 & 6.

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

### **4. Sexuality and relationships**

***Thursday Sep 20, 10.00-13.00***

Literature: Brannon chapter 8-10.

**5. School and abilities**

***Thursday Sept 27, 10.00-13.00***

Literature: Brannon chapter 7 & 11

**Article:** Steele, & Ambady (2005). “Math is Hard!” The effect of gender priming on women’s attitudes.

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***Mid term paper, due date: Oct 5<sup>th</sup> 12 am***

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**6. Work**

***Thursday Oct 4, 10.00-13.00***

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 11, 10.00-13.00***

Literature: Brannon, preface, chapter 1-3.

**8. Gender and health**

***Thursday Oct 18, 10.00-13.00***

Literature: Brannon chapter 13-15.

**9. Critical thinking workshop**

***Thursday Oct 25, 10.00-13.00***

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***Fall Break, Oct 30<sup>th</sup>- Nov 9<sup>th</sup>***

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**10. Gender in media and communication**

***Thursday Nov 15, 10.00-13.00***

Literature: TBA

**11. Evolutionary perspectives on gender**

***Thursday Nov 22 10.00-13.00***

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**

***Tuesday Nov 29, 10.00-13.00***

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***Final exam, due date December 7<sup>th</sup> 12 am***

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