

Psychology of sex and gender

Autumn, 2019; The Swedish Program; Stockholm School of Economics

Location: Room A975a, Fridays 09.00-12.00

Instructor: MSc Maja Wall, MSc Hellen Vergoossen

Email: maja.wall@swedishprogram.org; hellen.vergoossen@psychology.su.se

For questions related to the course, send us an email.

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 a 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 home assignments at least 24 hours prior to the class;
- Integration of lectures and literature in the weekly discussions.

Discussion moderation: After the first hour of lecture of most classes, 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

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

Boroditsky, L. (2011). **How Language Shapes Thought.** *The Scientific American*, 63-65.

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

Budziszewska, M., Hansen, K., & Bilewicz, M. (2014). **Backlash Over Gender-Fair Language: The Impact of Feminine Job Titles on Men's and Women's Perception of Women.** *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 33(6), 681-691.

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.

Geer, JH., & Robertson, GG. (2005). **Implicit attitudes in sexuality: Gender differences.** *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 34, 671-677.

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.

Morgenroth et al. (2018). **Sex, drugs and reckless driving: are measures biased toward identifying risk-taking in men?** *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 9(6), 744-753.

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.

Van der Star, A., Pachankis, JE. & Bränström, R. (2019). **Sexual orientation openness and depressive symptoms: a population-based study.** *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000335>

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.

Zosuls, K.M., Ruble, D.N., Tamis-LeMonda, C.S, Shrout, P.E., & Bornstein, M.H. (2009). **The Acquisition of Gender Labels in Infancy: Implications for Gender-Typed Play.** *Developmental Psychology*, 45, 2, 688-701.

*Articles will be available on course website

Syllabus

1. Introduction and the beginnings of sex and gender (Maja & Hellen)

Friday Aug 30, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- Fausto-Sterling et al. (2012). **Sexing the baby: Part 1 – What do we really know about sex differentiation in the first three years of life?**

2. Biology and gender identity (Hellen)

Friday Sept 6, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- Hyde, J. S., Bigler, R. S., Joel, D., Tate, C. C., & van Anders, S. M. (2018, July 19). **The Future of Sex and Gender in Psychology: Five Challenges to the Gender Binary.**
- Zosuls et al. (2009). **The Acquisition of Gender Labels in Infancy: Implications for Gender-Typed Play**

3. School and performance (Maja)

Friday Sept 13, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- Steele & Ambady (2005). **“Math is Hard!” The effect of gender priming on women’s attitudes.**
- Shutts et al. (2017). **Early preschool environments and gender: Effects of gender pedagogy in Sweden**

4. Gender roles in Sweden (Field trip to Nordiska Museet)

Friday Sept 20, 09.00-12.00

Literature: TBA

+ You will receive the midterm paper, due Oct 4th

5. Sexuality and relationships (Maja)

Friday Sept 27, 09.00-12.00

Literature: Geer & Robertson (2005). **Implicit attitudes in sexuality: Gender differences.**

- *Skam case study*

6. Gender in media and communication (Hellen)

Friday Oct 4, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- Ruscher (2017) **Prejudiced Communication** (21 pages)
- Boroditsky (2011). **How Language Shapes Thought.**

Midterm paper, due date: Oct 4th 5pm

7. Midterm presentations + feedback

Friday Oct 11, 09.00-12.00

No required readings

8. Work, career and gender (Maja)

Friday Oct 18, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- 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.**

9. Gender and health (Maja)

Friday Oct 25, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- Van der Star, Pachankis & Bränström (2019). **Sexual orientation openness and depressive symptoms: a population-based study**

Fall Break, Oct 28th - Nov 8th

10. Risk taking (Hellen)

Friday Nov 15, 09.00-12.00

Literature:

- Eagly & Wood (2013). **Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology: Moving Forward.**
- Morgenroth et al. (2018). **Sex, drugs and reckless driving: are measures biased toward identifying risk-taking in men?**

11. Sports (Hellen + Guest speaker)

Friday Nov 22 09.00-12.00

Literature: TBA

12. Final paper, presentations & peer review (Maja & Hellen)

Friday Nov 29, 09.00-12.00

Final exam, due date December 6th 12 am
