

# Sociology 133: Sociology of Gender

## Spring 2025

### INSTRUCTOR

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**Office Hours:** Tuesdays + Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm on Zoom;  
Wednesdays 9:00-10:00am in person

**Sign-up:** <https://calendly.com/bakehorn>

### CLASS MEETING

Tuesdays + Thursdays 9:30-10:59am  
145 Dwinelle

## Course Description

Gender is one of the most salient characteristics determining one's place in any society. Gender is often the first thing you notice about another person and your assessment of a person's gender shapes your expectations of that person. These expectations (which are often requirements) place very real constraints and limitations on individuals.

The sociology of gender focuses on the **social construction of gender**. Other theories of gender such as biological explanations will be discussed in comparison to the social constructionist approach. The course will begin with an examination of key theoretical approaches to the study of gender. Special attention will be paid to how gender is constructed at the level of society as well as how we engage in the re-creation and construction of gender in our everyday lives.

Gender will be explored as an institution and a system as well as how it influences individuals. Our binary gender system is asymmetrical and hierarchical, thus operating as a stratification system. Because it does not exist in a vacuum, gender will be discussed in relation to its intersection with other social locations such as race, class, sexuality, age, and ethnicity. Throughout the course we will examine current events that highlight the importance of gender, using these examples to illustrate key concepts and theories.

We will be paying particular attention to the structural and micro-interactional processes by which we were made into gendered beings. For instance, we will examine the modern context of raising children and how the gender system works to reproduce normative ideas about gender even in the context of advocating for trans kids. Is there a way to break out of the binary system?

Some questions about gender that will be addressed in this course are:

- ❖ What is gender and why do we need it?
- ❖ What are the forces that shape gender?
- ❖ How is gender raced, classed, and sexualized?
- ❖ What happens when we don't live up to gender expectations?

Keep in mind this is a sociology course. Sociology is the study of human social activity, organization, and interaction. Sociology is about the search for patterned behavior and social, rather than individual, explanations for this behavior. Sociology is built upon empirical data, not opinions. Sociologists look beyond the taken-for-granted notions of our social environment to examine the many layers of social meaning in the human experience. (If this doesn't sound familiar to you, or if you are unclear about the *sociological perspective*, please refer to an introductory sociology text for a refresher.)

Thus, the sociology of gender avoids essentialist, reductionist explanations of gender and recognizes the complex nature of gender issues and gender relationships. As my sociology of gender professor taught me, there is a difference between speaking about gender sociologically and speaking about gender as “members of the culture.” When speaking as “members of the culture” we don't have to worry about whether what we say is actually representative or accurate. In this class, you will be expected to discuss, analyze, and write about gender *sociologically*.

This class will be **challenging** on a number of levels:

- ❖ You will be expected to keep up with a number of readings for each class meeting.
- ❖ These readings will be challenging not only in terms of their length and number, but also in terms of the subject matter presented and the complex theories proposed.
- ❖ We will be speaking frankly about issues of gender, race, class and sexuality. Some topics may be challenging in the sense that you may find the subject matter embarrassing, graphic, controversial, or difficult to discuss. Frank discussions and presentation of material may include things that some find offensive.

This course challenges many taken-for-granted assumptions about gender and the social world. Keep in mind that your personal experiences may not match the general sociological insights discussed in the course. This does not negate the insights. Ask yourself why this might be the case. You may not agree with everything we read and discuss, but I expect you to have an open mind and demonstrate your knowledge of the sociological perspective. Disagreements and debates are expected and welcome in this class; however, I will not tolerate personal attacks.

## Course Goals

- ❖ Learn the fundamental concepts of social construction theory
- ❖ Gain a better understanding of gender and its effects
- ❖ Examine how gender pervades all parts of our culture and lives
- ❖ Question the assumptions, expectations, and requirements of gender
- ❖ Utilize an intersectional understanding of gender

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- ❖ Explain how both gender and sex are socially constructed
- ❖ Demonstrate how the social structure of gender is constructed and reinforced through micro-social interactions
- ❖ Connect sociological theories to the social world and your experiences
- ❖ Use an intersectional approach to analyzing social phenomena
- ❖ Write succinct papers that effectively synthesize course materials and apply theory

## Required Texts

Pascoe, C.J. 2012. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Meadow, Tey. 2018. *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

**The books are available as PDFs on bCourses**

**Course Reader:** Individual files are available digitally on bCourses and a printed or digital reader is available from Copy Central.

## Assignments

**Reading Responses:** These reading responses test your comprehension of course readings as well as your ability to explain concepts **in your own words**. Because you will not be able to rely on direct quotations of the material, you must focus on your own understanding and articulation of the texts. You will get the opportunity to make connections between the course materials and your experience of the social world.

**Essay Exams:** Midterm and final exam. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class. These exams will focus on your ability to apply theories and to synthesize and make connections between various readings.

All work must be original (you cannot recycle work from other courses).

**Weekly Memos:** These assignments are designed to keep you motivated and engaged with the course and to provide opportunities for you to check your comprehension in preparation for the graded assignments. Assignments will be due on Mondays at 11:59pm (exceptions made for Monday holidays-the due date will be Tuesday).

These assignments give you a space to practice the skills you will later be graded on.

**Complete 10 of the 12 assignments in order to get full credit** (the lowest two scores will be dropped). **Please note that these submissions are graded for completion, not proficiency.** **In other words, we are not grading the accuracy of your submissions.**

## Grade Breakdown

Reading Responses (30%)

Midterm (25%)

Final Exam (30%)

Participation Assignments (15%)

Refer to the grade scale on the right. Scores correspond to the following degrees of competence:

A: Outstanding degree of competence

B: Good degree of competence

C: Fair degree of competence

D: Basic degree of competence

F: Failure to demonstrate basic degree of competence

Be sure to carefully consider assignment feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments. For in-text feedback, **click on the link “View Feedback.”**

## GRADE SCALE

Grade Range		Grade
100%	97%	A+
96%	93%	A
92%	90%	A-
89%	87%	B+
86%	83%	B
82%	80%	B-
79%	77%	C+
76%	73%	C
72%	70%	C-
69%	67%	D+
66%	63%	D
62%	60%	D-
59%	50%	F

## Course Format and Policies

### Readings

Complete readings prior to class to better prepare you to participate in class discussions and complete assignments. You will get a lot more out of lecture if you come prepared and I am happy to answer any questions you have.

### Email

**Please put the class number/name in the subject of the email.** I endeavor to respond to emails within 24 hours, but this is not always possible; please be patient. Please note that **I will respond to emails during normal business hours.**

### Names and Pronouns

You have the right to be referred to by the name you prefer and with the correct gender pronouns. Please inform me of your name (and pronunciation) and your pronouns so that I can ensure you are properly recognized and respected. You can update this information now via [CalCentral](#). You can refer to me as Prof. Bakehorn, Dr. Bakehorn, or Jill. My pronouns are she / they.

## Grading Policies

### Extensions

**Extensions are provided for those with this accommodation from DSP.** Please contact me prior to the due date for each assignment to discuss extensions.

If you become ill, have an emergency, caregiving responsibilities, or another circumstance beyond your control to plan for, reach out for an extension. I do not provide extensions simply because you have assignments due for other classes—this is something for which you can plan and prepare.

### TurnItIn

Assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously turned in papers as well as searching the internet.

### Re-Grades

To **request a re-grade** of an assignment: first, wait 24 hours after the assignment was returned and second, write up a statement detailing why you believe you deserve a higher grade. This statement should be about the substance of your work, not about effort. Be sure to make specific reference to your work, don't simply say that you responded to the questions asked. Demonstrate how you did so. **Request a re-grade within 7 days of the assignment being returned.** My assessment and grade of your work will be used, even if that means you get a lower score than originally given for that work.

**\*\*Note that re-grades are likely not possible on final exams due to the tight grading timeline and university grade reporting deadlines.**

## Academic Dishonesty

The University defines academic misconduct as “any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community” (UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct).

Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is collaboration with other students on papers and exams. Plagiarism includes turning in any work that is not your own as well as improper or missing citations of others' works. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the Code of Academic Conduct. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to The Center for Student Conduct.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur because students are unaware of how to cite sources or because they feel desperate. If you get to this point in your writing, contact me ASAP rather than doing something you'll very likely regret. I am happy to help.

## Use of AI

Many uses of generative AI software or Large Language Models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude, fall under the umbrella of **academic misconduct** as it involves an “action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage” and is not a representation of your own thoughts, critical thinking, and work. Academic integrity is a critical component of being a member of the university community and our ability to evaluate your work. We are evaluating your ability to synthesize and apply sociological concepts, not how well AI does this.

The use of generative AI tools is permitted in this course for the following activities:

- Brainstorming and finding information on your topic
- Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts
- Checking grammar and style

**The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:**

- Writing a draft of an assignment
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments (for instance, you may not simply enter the essay prompt, hit generate, and turn in the work, in whole or in part, as your own)
- Generating or modifying content to evade plagiarism detection

I expect all work students submit for this course will be their own. I have carefully designed all assignments to support your learning. Doing your own work, without artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your achievement of the learning objectives.

Do not assume the information or analysis you receive via AI is accurate, unbiased, sufficient for the assignment, or meets the standards of the course, even if you only incorporate it partially and after substantial paraphrasing, modification and / or editing. AI-generated content may *not* provide appropriate or clear attribution to the author(s) of the original sources.

**Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty.** For example, ideas generated using ChatGPT should include a citation such as:

“Describe the symbolism of the green light in the book *The Great Gatsby*” prompt.  
ChatGPT, 13 Feb. version, OpenAI, 8 Mar. 2023, chat.openai.com/chat.

**Failure to acknowledge your use of AI text-generation tools is a violation of UC Berkeley’s honor code. When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask for clarification.**

## Office Hours

Please see Page 1 or [this link](#) for information about my office hours. These office hours are specifically for you. We can discuss readings, assignments, post-college plans, existential dread, how to access resources, letters of recommendation, any issues you are having, what is bringing you joy, whatever.

If you are having any difficulties with the material or assignments for the course or if you are having any personal problems that are affecting your ability to complete assignments on time, please take advantage of office hours—I am here to help!

Remember that office hours are an important resource if for no other reason than getting to know your instructors could help you in the future when you may need letters of recommendation. You do not need to be struggling or have course-specific questions to go to office hours.



## Student Support Services

### Course Accessibility

This course is intended for all UC Berkeley students, including those with mental, emotional, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illnesses, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that can negatively impact equal access to education. If, at any point in the semester, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required) to contact me by email or during office hours to discuss your specific needs.

I also encourage you to contact the [Disabled Students' Program](#). If you have a diagnosis, DSP can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through DSP, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors.

### Student Learning Center

"The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the [SLC](#) helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals."

### Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services

To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: [Survivor Support](#). **Please note that I am not a confidential advocate; I am a mandated reporter.** You can speak to a [Confidential Care Advocate](#) at the Path to Care Center.

### Economic, Food, and Housing Support

If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at [the Basic Needs Center](#). You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via [Calfresh](#). If you are in need of food immediately, please contact the UC Berkeley [Food Pantry](#). More information on resources can be found [here](#).

### Mental Health Resources

All students — regardless of background or identity — may experience a range of issues that can become barriers to learning like strained relationships, anxiety, depression, alcohol and other drug problems, difficulties with concentration, sleep, and eating, and/or lack of motivation. UC Berkeley offers many services like [Recalibrate](#) and [Student Mental Health](#) that could help.

## Course Outline

Complete readings by the day listed below. Course schedule is subject to change.

### Weeks One-Three: Social Construction of Gender and Sex

#### **Tuesday, 1/21                      Welcome + Introductions**

Plagiarism Primer

#### **Thursday, 1/23                      Social Construction of Gender**

Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2011. "A Primary Frame for Organizing Social Relations." Pp 32-55 in *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Risman, Barbara J. 2004. "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender & Society* 18(4):429-450.

#### **Tuesday, 1/28                      Are Women and Men Essentially Different?**

Fine, Cordelia. 2010. "Backwards and in High Heels." Pp 27-39 in *Delusions of Gender: How our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference*. New York: W.W. Norton.

—"Gender Equality Begins (Or Ends) at Home." Pp 78-89 in *Delusions of Gender: How our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference*. New York: W.W. Norton.

—"Gender Equality 2.0?" Pp 90-96 in *Delusions of Gender: How our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference*. New York: W.W. Norton.

#### **Thursday, 1/30                      The Social Construction of Sex Through Science**

Martin, Emily. 1991. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16(3):485-501.

Halpern, Diane, Lise Eliot, Rebecca S. Bigler, Richard A. Fabes, Laura D. Hanish, Janet Hyde, Lynn S. Liben, and Carol Lynn Martin. 2011. "The Pseudoscience of Single-Sex Schooling." *Science*. September 23.

Guiso, Luigi, Ferdinando Monte, Paola Sapienza, Luigi Zingales. 2008. "Culture, Gender, and Math." *Science*. May 30.

**Tuesday, 2/4**

**Constructing and Contesting Intersex**

Davis, Georgiann. 2015. "Introduction: 'You're in the Monkey Cage with Me.'" Pp 1-9 in *Contesting Intersex: The Dubious Diagnosis*. New York: New York University Press.

—"Medical Jurisdiction and the Intersex Body." Pp 55-86 in *Contesting Intersex: The Dubious Diagnosis*. New York: New York University Press.

**Thursday, 2/6**

**Policing Biological Sex**

Cooky, Cheryl and Shari L. Dworkin. 2013. "Policing the Boundaries of Sex: A Critical Examination of Gender Verification and the Caster Semenya Controversy." *Journal of Sex Research* 50(2):103-111.

Abdul, Geneva. 2019. ["This Intersex Runner Had Surgery to Compete"](#). It Has Not Gone Well." *The New York Times*. December 16.

**Weeks Four-Five: How Gender is Done**

**Tuesday, 2/11**

**Doing Gender**

Goffman, Erving. 1977. "The Arrangement Between the Sexes." *Theory & Society* 4(3):301-331.

West, Candace and Don H. Zimmerman. 2002. "Doing Gender." Pp 3-23 in *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change*, edited by Sarah Fenstermaker and Candace West. New York: Routledge.

**Thursday, 2/13**

**Doing Sex and Undoing Gender**

Dozier, Raine. 2005. "Beards, Breasts, and Bodies: Doing Sex in a Gendered World." *Gender & Society* 19(3):297-316.

Dozier, Raine. 2019. "'You Look Like a Dude, Dude': Masculine Females Undoing Gender in the Workplace." *Journal of Homosexuality* 66(9):1219-1237.

**Tuesday, 2/18                      Intersectionality**

Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. 2020. "What is Intersectionality?" Pp 1-36 in *Intersectionality*, 2nd Ed. Medford, MA: Polity Press.

**Thursday, 2/20                      Applying Doing Gender and Intersectionality**

Abelson, Miriam J. 2019. "Introduction: 'I Don't Have One Way to Be.'" Pp 1-20 in *Men in Place: Trans Masculinity, Race, and Sexuality in America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

— "Masculinities in Space: Thugs, Rednecks, and Faggy Men." Pp 25-57 in *Men in Place: Trans Masculinity, Race, and Sexuality in America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

[READING RESPONSE 1](#) **DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21 AT 11:59PM**

**Weeks Six-Eight: Constructing and Performing Masculinities**

**Tuesday, 2/25                      Making and Performing Masculinity**

CJ Pascoe: Chapter 1: Making Masculinity: Adolescence, Identity, and High School in *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*

**Thursday, 2/27                      Becoming Masculine**

CJ Pascoe: Chapter 2: Becoming Mr. Cougar: Institutionalizing Heterosexuality and Masculinity at River High in *Dude, You're a Fag*

**Tuesday, 3/4                      The Fag Discourse**

CJ Pascoe: Chapter 3: Dude, You're a Fag: Adolescent Male Homophobia in *Dude, You're a Fag*

**Thursday, 3/6                      Compulsive Heterosexuality**

CJ Pascoe: Chapter 4: Compulsive Heterosexuality: Masculinity and Dominance in *Dude, You're a Fag*

**Tuesday, 3/11                      Girls' Masculinity: Undermining Gender Hierarchy?**

CJ Pascoe: Chapter 5: Look at My Masculinity!: Girls Who Act Like Boys in *Dude, You're a Fag*

**Thursday, 3/13                      Concluding *Dude, You're a Fag***

CJ Pascoe: Chapter 6: Conclusion: Thinking about Schooling, Gender, and Sexuality in *Dude, You're a Fag*

**Week Nine: Midterm**

**Tuesday, 3/18                      Midterm Review in Class**

**Thursday, 3/20                      Work on Midterm—NO CLASS**

**TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 21 AT 11:59PM**

**Week Ten: Spring Break: No Class**

**Week Eleven: Constructing and Destructing Trans\***

**Tuesday, 4/1                      Constructing Trans**

Valentine, David. 2007. "Chapter 1: Imagining Transgender." Pp 29-65 in *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

**Thursday, 4/3                      Exterminating a "Third Gender"**

Miranda, Deborah A. 2010. "Extermination of the *Joyas*: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1-2):253-284.

## **Weeks Twelve-Fourteen: Trans Kids**

### **Tuesday, 4/8                      Introducing *Trans Kids* + Gender Troubles**

Tey Meadow: Chapter One: Studying Each Other in *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the Twenty-First Century*

Tey Meadow: Chapter Two: Gender Troubles in *Trans Kids*

### **Thursday, 4/10                      Diagnosis and Transition: The Gender Identity Clinic**

Tey Meadow: Chapter Three: The Gender Clinic in *Trans Kids*

### **Tuesday, 4/15                      A Parent Movement**

Tey Meadow: Chapter Four: Building a Parent Movement in *Trans Kids*

### **Thursday, 4/17                      Gender Regulation**

Tey Meadow: Chapter Five: Anxiety and Gender Regulation in *Trans Kids*

**READING RESPONSE 2 DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 18 AT 11:59PM**

### **Tuesday, 4/22                      Telling Gender Stories**

Tey Meadow: Chapter Six: Telling Gender Stories in *Trans Kids*

### **Thursday, 4/24                      Concluding *Trans Kids***

Tey Meadow: Chapter Seven: From Failure to Form in *Trans Kids*

## **Week Fifteen: Beyond the Binary**

**Tuesday, 4/29**

### **Gender Outlaws**

Kusalik, Telyn. 2010. "Identity, Schmidentity." Pp 54-60 in *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation*, edited by Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

Serano, Julia. 2010. "Performance Piece." Pp 85-88 in *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation*, edited by Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

Aoki, Ryka. 2010. "On Living Well and Coming Free." Pp 143-152 in *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation*, edited by Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

Boyd, Helen. 2006. "Persphone." Pp 236-242 in *Nobody Passes: Rejecting the Rules of Gender and Conformity*, edited by Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

**Thursday, 5/1**

### **Gender Euphoria**

Shuster, Stef M. and Laurel Westbrook. 2022. "Reducing the Joy Deficit in Sociology: A Study of Transgender Joy." *Social Problems* 71(3):1-19.

Deckard, Parker Armando. 2021. "Clippers and Clarity: Cutting My Own Hair for the First Time." Pp 54-57 in *Gender Euphoria: Stories of Joy From Trans, Non-Binary and Intersex Writers*, edited by Laura Kate Dale. London: Unbound. eBook.

Strider, Koda. 2021. "Punks Against Gender Conformity: Being Agender in the Punk Scene." Pp 61-64 in *Gender Euphoria: Stories of Joy From Trans, Non-Binary and Intersex Writers*, edited by Laura Kate Dale. London: Unbound. eBook.

Niyi-Awosusi, Olu. 2021. "Fashion, Gender and Not Knowing You're Non-Binary in Nigeria." Pp 68-70 in *Gender Euphoria: Stories of Joy From Trans, Non-Binary and Intersex Writers*, edited by Laura Kate Dale. London: Unbound. eBook.

## **Week Sixteen: Reading, Review, Recitation Week**

Monday, May 5—Friday, May 9

**FINAL EXAM: DUE WEDNESDAY, 5/14 AT 2:30PM**