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Description: Professor Caitilyn Allen's syllabus includes her expectations for rough drafts as well as overviews of the various papers she assigns throughout the semester.

Women's Studies 530: Biology And Gender Syllabus

Meets: 9:55 MWF in 222 Ingraham Hall
Instructor: Caitilyn Allen
Office Hours: Monday, 3:30-5:00, 885 Russell Labs, or by appointment
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Course Overview: Over the millenia many belief systems have attempted to discuss and explain the differences between women and men. In recent centuries, scientific approaches have predominated. In this course, we will examine biological theories about gender differences. We will focus on several distinct fields of biology. These include primatology, neurology, endocrinology, molecular genetics, and evolutionary theory. Each field will be introduced with a general scientific overview to give students a common background, and then we will proceed to discuss specific research findings. For each group of experiments and data, we will analyze the experimental design, the methods, and the results obtained. We will ask: Is this good science? Why were these questions asked? Do the data support the conclusions? What are possible implications of this research for social policy? The course will consider both contemporary and historical perspectives. In addition to the original and secondary scientific literature, we'll also draw substantially on feminist critiques and the popular media.

Course Format: Mixed lecture and discussion, with occasional in-class writing.

Exam Format: A final essay exam drawing on required readings and lecture material.

Books:
Myths of Gender, 2nd Ed. (MOG), by Anne Fausto-Sterling. Basic Books, 1992. Available at Room of One's Own.
Thinking Critically About Research on Sex and Gender (TC), by P. Caplan and J. Caplan. Harper Collins College Publishers, 1994. Available at Room of One's Own.
WS530 Course Reader (CR) available at Fast Copy in the basement of Ag. Engineering (comer of Linden Dr. & Henry Mall; 262-1241).
Note: The books and the Course Reader are on reserve at Helen C. White Library

Course Requirements and Grading:

4 one-page paper summary/responses	15 points
Evolutionary psychology paper	20 points
Popular media paper	20 points
Aggression Project	5 points
Attendance/participation	10 points
In-class writing	10 points
Final examination	20 points
Total	**100 points**

Students are expected to regularly attend class, keep up with the assigned readings, and contribute to class discussions. **Note that attendance, class participation, and in-class writing make up 20% of your**

grade. Students are strongly encouraged to activate their email accounts to facilitate communication for group projects and out-of-class discussion.

If you have questions about a grade, speak first to your instructor. If the problem is not solved, speak with the Chair, Nancy Kaiser, or the Associate Chair, Jane Collins. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

Fall 1998 Course Syllabus

Date	Topic	Assigned Reading (*=optional)
Sept. 2 (W)	Course introduction: gender concepts; bias in science	
Sept. 4 (F)	Birth of modern science and the Scientific Method	MOG p. 3-12 Popper: "Science & Falsifiability"
Sept. 6 (M)	*No class-Labor Day*	
	Part 1: Genes and Evolution	
Sept.9 (W)	Biological determinism and the primacy of gender	TC p. 19-29 Sidorowicz: "Baby X Revisited"
Sept. 11 (F)	Introduction to genes	MOG p. 61-71 Genetics of gender *Gonick & Wheelis: "Cartoon Guide…"
Sept. 14 (M)	Are we our gametes? Egg/sperm relations	Biology & Gender Study Group: “Feminist Critique of Cell Biology"
Sept. 16 (W)	Introduction to genetics and evolution Natural selection of physical traits	Charles Darwin: Natural selection (p. 130-142)
Sept. 18 (F)	Sexual selection Darwin in historical context	C. Darwin: Sexual selection (p. 867-75; 907-908)
Sept. 21 (M)	Genetics of behavior: human sociobiology	Wilson: *On Human Nature* (p.128-154)
Sept. 23 (W)	Human sociobiology: the coy female and the aggressive male	Bleier: Science & Gender (p.15-48) Buss: "From vigilance to violence"
Sept. 25 (F)	Evolutionary psychology	Wright "Our Cheating Hearts" Cowley: "The Biology of Beauty" *Horgan: "Eugenics Revisited"
Sept. 28 (M)	Gender behavior in primates	Hardy: "Raising Darwin's consciousness" Kolata: "Sex and the dominant male"
Sept. 30 (W)	Primate behavior, continued	Hardy: "Natural-born mothers" Morell: "Seeing nature through the lens"
	Part II: Hormones	
Oct. 2 (F)	The endocrine system: introduction *-Evol. Psych paper due*	MOG p.90-122

Oct. 5 (M)	Estrogen and spatial ability	TC, p. 29-35 Hampson: "Estrogen-related variation" *Kimura: "Tests favoring men/women"
Oct. 7 (W)	Premenstrual syndrome	AuBuchon & Calhoun: "Menstrual cycle symptomatology" *Profet: "Menstruation as a defense..."
Oct. 9 (F)	Prenatal hormone studies	Ehrhardt et al: "Fetal androgens" Berenbaum & Hines: "Early androgens"
Oct. 12 (M)	Hormones and aggression	MOG p. 126-132 TC, p.59-67 *Anon, "Winning with testosterone"
Oct. 14 (W)	XYY individuals and aggression	Witkin: "Criminality in XYY"
Oct. 16 (F)	Race, genes, and violence *-Begin Group Project on Aggression*	Richardson: "A violence in the blood" Roush: "Conflict marks crime conference" *Angier:"Gene defect tied to violence"
	Part III: The Brain	
Oct. 19 (M)	Introduction to the brain: neurology *-Evol. Psych revised paper due*	Bleier: "The brain and human 'nature'"
Oct 21 (W)	Measuring brains - historical	Distant: "On the mental differences" Gould: "Women's brains" *Rushton: "Cranial capacity" (abstr. only)
Oct. 23 (F)	Race, class, & intelligence	NYT: "It's a grim message: Dummies fail" Beardsley: "For whom the bell curve tolls"
*Oct. 26 (M)	No class- Group Project	
Oct. 28 (W)	Measuring brains – contemporary *-Group Project Due in Class*	DeLacoste & Holloway: "Sex dimorphism in the human" Gray: "Mars & Venus Together Forever"
Oct. 30 (F)	In-class analysis of original data from Byne and Bleier	Byne et al:" Variations in the Human corpus callosum do not predict gender"
Nov. 2 (M)	Brain structure and sexual orientation	LeVay: "A difference in" MOG p. 245-56
Nov. 4 (W)	Genetics and sexual orientation	Bailey et al: Lesbian twins *Pool: "Evidence for gay gene" *Chast: "Heterosexuality gene"
Nov. 6 (F)	Mathematical ability & gender	Benbow & Stanley: "Sex differences in math..." and critiques
Nov. 9 (M)	*No class*	
Nov. 11 (W)	*No class*	

Nov. 13 (F)	Math & gender, cont'd - *Popular media paper due*	TC, p. 37-47 Hyde et al: "Gender differences in math performance..."
Nov. 16 (M)	"Brains on Toast" and "Boys & Girls ARE Different" (videos)	Hammer & Dusek: "Brain difference research & learning styles"
Nov. 18 (W)	In-class analysis of videos	
Nov. 20 (F)	Why do this research? Essay & discussion on ethics and outcomes	

Part IV: Contemporary Health Research

Nov. 23 (M)	Male is the norm: Clinical research	Holloway: "A global view" NYT: "Asking why heart treatments fail" *Healy: "The yend syndrome" *WSJ: "Female doctors likelier to..." *NYT: "Bias in doctors' offices..."
Nov. 25 (W)	Jobs and reproductive function	Smith: "Higher education of women" *Robinson & Giacomini: "A reallocation of rights..."
*Nov. 27 (F)	*No Class-Thanksgiving Break*	
Nov. 30 (M)	Reproductive technology *-Popular Media revised paper due*	Hubbard: "Of embryos and women" *Lewin: "Fears, suits, and regulations"
Dec. 2 (W)	RU486: Political biology	Challum et al: "RU486- Yes & No" *NYT: "Abortion Pill Reaches New U.S"
Dec. 4 (F)	Women in science	Brush: "Women in science…"
Dec. 7 (M)	Women in science, continued	
Dec. 9 (W)		
Dec. 11 (F)	Debunking As Positive Science; Overview	
Dec. 14 (M)	Course evaluation *Final exam questions handed out*	
Dec. 18 (F)	12:25 P.M. Final Exam	

Written Assignments

WS530 is a Writing-Intensive course. During the semester you will submit four brief summary papers and two longer papers. In addition, there will be several in-class writing exercises. These written assignments will help you understand and analyze the course material and simultaneously improve your writing skills. You are expected to write thoughtfully and revise your work to make it concise and clear.

The WS530 Writing Fellows. We are fortunate to have two peer writing tutors, called Writing Fellows, assigned to our course this semester. They will work with you individually outside the classroom to help you improve the clarity and effectiveness of your writing. I have chosen to work with Writing Fellows in this

course because I believe in the philosophy behind this program. "All writers, no matter how accomplished, can improve their writing by sharing works in progress and making revisions based on constructive criticism."

Writing Fellows <u>are</u>:

- undergraduate students who will read your writing and make constructive suggestions for revision
- trained in how to critically evaluate writing and respond helpfully
- supervised closely by your professor

Writing Fellows <u>do not</u>:

- grade your papers
- teach you course-specific content

How it works. The Writing Fellows will work with you on two different assignments, the evolutionary psychology paper and the popular media paper. In each case, you will submit a polished draft* of your paper to me on the assigned due date. I will pass it on to your Writing Fellow, who will carefully read your paper, make comments on your draft, and then meet with you individually for a conference to discuss your writing and suggestions for revision. You will then revise your paper and submit *both* the original draft and your revised version on the specified revision due date. Please include a cover letter briefly explaining how you responded to each of your Writing Fellow's comments.

***What's a Polished Draft?** A polished draft represents your best effort at the assignment. It is typewritten (double-spaced) and has a complete bibliography. It is of quality comparable to what you would turn in for grading. It is not an outline, a rough draft, or a first draft. *Proofread* carefully to remove any grammar or spelling errors (see handouts on common usage errors and editing your own prose). This will ensure that when you meet, your Writing Fellow can focus on larger issues like organization, presentation, and clarity of style.

<u>Due date policy:</u> I will deduct 10% per day up to two days if papers are late. I will **not accept** papers more than two days after the due date. Please see me if you start to fall behind or need assistance.

<u>References:</u> You must cite references for facts and ideas that are not your own. Anything less is plagiarism. If you refer to material from the course reader, you may cite it simply by author and year in parentheses, e.g.: (LeVay, 1991). You may also cite class lectures as (WS530 Lecture). Give a more complete citation in a footnote if you cite an outside source. Sample format:

Fisher, Helen. 1992. <u>Anatomy of Love: The Natural History of Monogamy, Adultery, and Divorce</u>. W. W. Norton and Co., New York. 431 p. *(book)*

Profet, Margie. 1993. "Menstruation as a defense against pathogens transported by sperm." <u>Quarterly Review of Biology</u> 68:335-386. *(journal article)*

Academic Honesty: You should be familiar with the University's standards for academic honesty as described in the pamphlet, *Academic Misconduct: Rules and Procedures*, published by the Dean of Students' Office. You are expected to work *alone* on the individual writing assignments and exams. Books, articles, and class notes may be consulted but you must cite any such sources in your papers and exams. The only exceptions to this policy are the explicitly-labeled group assignments.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

1. <u>Four one-page summary papers.</u> An important goal of this course is to teach you to read scientific literature critically. To help you take an active rather than a passive approach to these readings, you are expected to write brief summaries of four assigned readings (boldfaced in the readings list). Together, these short papers are worth 15% of your grade. They are **due in class on the day the reading is assigned.**

Each paper should contain a **concise summary of the research or concept** described in the reading, followed by **your critique**. Typed papers should be **one page, double-spaced**. Handwritten papers should be two pages; if you must hand-write your papers, please skip lines and write legibly.

The **summary** should answer the following questions:

1. What hypothesis was the author(s) trying to test?
2. What methods were used to test the hypothesis?
3. What results were obtained?
4. How did the author(s) interpret these results?

* *You should be able to write a general summary in four or five sentences. Don't get bogged down in unnecessary details. Avoid copying the abstract.*

The **critique** may consider one or two of the following questions (or others as appropriate):

1. Did the experimental approach adequately test the hypothesis?
2. Did the results obtained justify the interpretation and conclusions?
3. Were appropriate controls used?
4. Could bias have affected the results obtained? How?
5. Were all relevant results or sources considered?

* *Effective critiques often use specific examples to support an argument. Cite your sources!*

2. A five-page paper on evolutionary psychology. - (WF) Respond to a *New Republic* article by Robert Wright entitled "Feminists, Meet Mr. Darwin." Mr. Wright proposes that feminists do not understand, or accept, the theory of evolution by natural selection. In a carefully documented essay, critically assess Mr. Wright's arguments. Are his statements supported by experimental scientific data? Is any relevant evidence omitted? Cite sources supporting your view. Write this essay as a letter to the editor of the *New Republic*. This means it should be understandable to an educated audience of non-scientists. Your essay may work best if it makes one central point. This paper is worth 20% of your grade.

Due-date: A polished draft of this paper is due in class on Friday, October 2. The revised version of this paper is due in class Monday, October 19.

3. A five-page "laboratory-to-breakfast table" analysis (popular media paper), (WF) We learn most of what we know about scientific research on biology and gender from the popular press. What happens to a scientific idea as it travels from the lab bench to your morning newspaper? How is scientific information "translated" by the press for the general public? Is press coverage of such research accurate, objective, and complete? Follow these steps to complete this assignment:

A. **Choose a well-publicized scientific paper related to biological differences between human groups**. If you are unsure if your choice is appropriate, discuss it with me. Alternatively, you may base your paper on one of the following articles:

Hamer, D., S. Hu, V. Magnuson, N. Hu, and A. Pattatucci. 1993. "A linkage between DNA markers on the X chromosome and male sexual orientation." Science 261:321-327.

Perrett, D. L, K. A. May, and S. Yoshikawa. 1994. "Facial shape and judgements of female attractiveness." Nature 368:339-242.

Profet, M. 1993. "Menstruation as a defense against pathogens transported by sperm." Quarterly Rev. Biol. 68:335-386.

B. Begin this longer paper with a brief (about 1 page) **summary of the research and results** as described above.

C. In the remaining four pages, **critically consider mass media reporting of the research** described in the scientific source. What aspect of the research was emphasized? Was anything important omitted? Were the results accepted uncritically? Were conflicting opinions discussed? How did different popular articles differ from each other? This paper will require some library research since *you must cite at least two non-scientific articles* about the research paper.

D. **Attach copies of your research sources to your completed paper.**

- Research sources: Search the CD-ROM databases in Memorial, Middleton, or Steenbock Library (staff are very helpful if you aren't familiar with this technology). Use multiple terms in your search; try the author's name and home institution, together with general terms like *menstruation* or *homosexuality*. Avoid excessive specificity. Try searching indexes like "The New York Times," "Washington Post," or

"Wall Street Journal" for newspaper articles. For periodicals like newsweeklies or women's magazines try Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. If you want to effectively criticize the original scientific article, the media response, or both, you will probably need to cite some scientific sources as well.

- Database searching is very thorough and ultimately a big timesaver, but it may take you awhile to learn to use it efficiently. Start this assignment early.

- List your sources at the end of the paper, using the reference style described above. This paper should be about **five double-spaced pages**, typewritten, and is worth 20% of your grade.

***Due-date*:** A polished draft of this paper is due in class on Wednesday, November 11. The revised version of this paper is due in class Monday, November 30.

Assignment Due Dates:

1-page summary: "Baby X Revisited"	Wed., Sept. 9
1-page summary: "From vigilance to violence"	Wed., Sept. 23
Evolutionary psychology essay	Fri., Oct. 2
1-page summary: "Menstrual cycle symptomatology"	Wed., Oct. 7
Revised evolutionary psychology essay	Mon., Oct. 19
Aggression experiment group project	Wed., Oct. 28
1-page summary: "Heritable factors influence sexual orientation"	Wed., Nov. 4
Popular media analysis	Wed., Nov. 11
Revised popular media analysis	Mon., Nov. 30