

SOSC 2740  
GENDER AND SOCIETY  
FALL 2020

Tuesday, Thursday, 13:30-14.50pm via Zoom

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Office Hours: Half an hour after each class on Zoom or or by appointment

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Is it true that “men are from Mars and women are from Venus?” Why do women still earn 70% of what a man earns? Why do women hold only 4.4% of Fortune 500 CEO positions? Why do women make up less than 20% of the Hong Kong Government? Who does most of the housework and childcare, and why? Why does Hong Kong have the highest proportion of incarcerated women in the world? Why do so many migrant women come to Hong Kong? Why do boys perform so poorly compared with girls in school? Why are there more female than male undergraduates in Hong Kong’s universities? Do men face gender discrimination?

The purpose of this course is to answer these questions and others by developing a *sociological mindfulness* about the importance of gender in society. By sociologically mindful, I mean that we will view gender as the product of culture, groups, and organizations. I also mean that we will be paying attention to behaviours and ways of thinking that are so taken-for-granted that we often fail to question them, with an eye to examining the nature of inequalities between men and women. The course will be organized around five main topics: 1. Gender and Biology, 2. Gender and Everyday Life, 3. Gender at Work and in the Home, 4. Gender and Intimate Relationships, and 5. Gender in the Global Economy. The focus of our discussions will be on gender issues in Hong Kong.

**Intended Learning outcomes**

**Intended learning activities**

An appreciation of how gender roles are socially constructed.	By critically examining accounts of gender that are based on biology and psychology.
Raising awareness of the significance of gender in society.	By collecting data and experiences of inequality between men and women.
An overview of the situation of men and women in education, the workplace, the media and everyday life in Hong Kong	By engaging with popular culture, movies, magazines as well as invited guest speakers from various organizations involved with gender issues in Hong Kong.
An appreciation of the gendered nature of the global economy.	By reading about the situation of migrant workers in Hong Kong

## REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

### Readings

#### *Required Readings:*

Any worthwhile university course in the social sciences requires that you do some reading outside of the class *on your own*. I have tried to keep these to a minimum. There will be one or two *required* short articles or book chapters assigned for most classes. These will be included in the course assessment.

#### *Supplementary Readings*

Students often tell me that they want to read more about a particular topic. For these students, I have provided some *supplementary* readings. Supplementary readings will not be covered in the course assessment, but they will enhance your understanding of the subject, and students tell me that they find them interesting.

The relevant reading assignments for the subsequent class will be announced at the beginning of each class. You must at least read the *required* articles before coming to class in order to be able to understand the class and take part in it. I may call on you to answer questions about them in class. Do not worry if you don't understand everything in the readings. I will help you with the more difficult points in class.

I shall make all the readings available on the Canvas webpage  
<https://canvas.ust.hk/courses/26034/files/>

### Examinations

There will be two **closed-book exams**; a Midterm and a cumulative Final (that covers the entire course). Questions will be a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions. They will test your understanding of the required readings and the in-class lectures, exercises and discussions.

### Written Assignment and Short Presentation [time permitting]

The written assignment for this course will be an exercise or research experiment that you will conduct in a group of 3-6 students. The exercise/experiment is designed to make you more gender aware of the world around you. It might involve one or more of the following: analyzing media artifacts for gender bias, observing other people as they react to your gender, and/or interviewing men and women about gendered experiences, or collecting some kind of data about gender inequalities. In light of the Covid 19, I will set an exercise that can be completely mostly online. If there is time, I will ask you to give a very short (ten minute) PowerPoint presentation to the class on what you found in the assignment. Since some assignments will require a mix of both male and female students, I will assist in assigning you to your groups. Full details of the assignment, groupings, and presentation dates will be announced after the drop-add period (Mid September 201).

## Attendance and participation

The final part of the assessment will be based on your class attendance and participation. Canvas will record time that you log in and out of the Zoom meeting. My teaching assistant will also make a note of who participates in each class. Of course, in order to be counted as present, your camera must be turned on so that we know that you are there and you must attend the entire class. I will ignore three absences/cameras off.

## The Final Grade Breakdown

Assignment (and participation) if applicable	20%
Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	40%
Attendance/participation	10% (5% for attendance, 5% for participation)

## CLASS SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTIONS

Date	Topics	Reading
Sept. 8	How much do you know about gender and society? Common sense quiz	
Sept. 10	Thinking sociologically about gender	

### PART I: BIOLOGY, SEX AND GENDER

We begin with a critical examination of various non-sociological explanations of gender differences. Early accounts of gender roles were shaped by religious beliefs. Nineteenth century biologists and psychologists advanced views about the inferiority of women based on evolutionary biology. We examine the current debates about nature and nurture in gender

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<sup>1</sup> Dates and readings may be subject to change. Please listen out for announcements in class.

differences. To what extent are the biological differences between the sexes over-exaggerated? And what should we make of these differences? How does gender vary across cultures? How do we learn our gender roles?

Sept. 15	To what extent does biology determine our destiny?	<i>Supplementary:</i> Michael Kimmel. <i>The Gendered Society</i> , Ch2. “Ordained by Nature: Biology Constructs the Sexes
Sept. 17	Biological theories and their critics	
Sept. 22	Gender across cultures	<i>Required:</i> Michael Kimmel. <i>The Gendered Society</i> , Ch3. “Spanning the World. Culture Constructs Gender Difference”
Sept. 24	Socialization and education	<i>Required:</i> Michael Kimmel. <i>The Gendered Society</i> , Ch7. “The Gendered Classroom”

## PART II: INEQUALITY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

It seems that everyone is a feminist now, with celebrities and politicians wearing T-shirts to proclaim it. But what does feminism mean and why does it matter? We examine the history of the women’s movement and the different varieties of feminist thought, along with some of its critics and its counterpart, the men’s movement. We also look at gender movements in Hong Kong. How can we become more aware of gender inequality in everyday life? How does language reinforce gender inequality? To what extent is the media gender biased?

Sept. 29	Making sexism visible: The different “waves” of feminism and the men’s movements	<i>Required:</i> Marilyn Frye. “Oppression.” <i>Supplementary:</i> Julia Wood. “The Rhetorical Shaping of Gender: Women’s and Men’s movements in the United States.” <i>Supplementary:</i> Michael Kimmel. “Angry White Men”
Oct. 1	<i>National Day</i> . No class	
Oct. 6	Gendered Language and inequality	<i>Required:</i> Sherryl Kleinman. “Why Sexist Language Matters” <i>Required:</i> Deborah Tannen. “But What do you Mean?”

		Women and Men in Conversation”
Oct. 8	Men and women in the media	
Oct. 13	Men’s and women’s bodies: What if men menstruated and had babies?	<i>Required:</i> Gloria Steinem: “If men could menstruate”

### PART III MEN AND WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE AND AT HOME

While men and women participate in almost equal numbers in the Hong Kong workforce, they remain highly segregated within it, both in terms of rank and occupation. There is also still a large wage gap between them. What prevents women from getting ahead in the workplace? Do men experience discrimination in the workplace too? What legislation protects equal opportunities in the workplace?

Oct. 15	Men and women at work.	<i>Required:</i> Lisa Wade and Myra Marx Ferree. Gender: Ideas, Interactions, Institutions. Ch12. “Work” <i>Supplementary:</i> Ryan and Alexander: The Glass Cliff
Oct. 20	Do men face discrimination? Men’s experiences in the workplace	<i>Required:</i> Christine Williams. “The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the Female Professions”

<b>Oct 22. MIDTERM EXAMINATION (online)</b>
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<b>Your Attendance is required.</b>
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Oct. 27	Men and women in the home.	<i>Required:</i> Arlie Hochschild with Ann Machung; “The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at home.” Chapters 1-3
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		<i>Supplementary:</i> Groves and Lui: “The “Gift” of help
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#### PART IV: MEN AND WOMEN IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

We will examine the changing nature of marriage, the family and intimacy and its implications for gender. Are men and women really from different planets when it comes to the world of dating and intimacy? To what extent did the sexual revolution of the 1960s liberate women? We also look at new developments surrounding sexual orientation and the fight for gay rights. We look at the social context of sexual violence against women, and legislation on sexual harassment in Hong Kong. Finally, we broaden our focus to look at the gendered nature of violence in international warfare.

Oct 29	Are men more romantic than women? Men, women, intimacy and the changing family	Reading: <i>Required:</i> Paul England, Emily Fitzgibbons Shafer and Alison Fogarty. “Hooking up and Forming Romantic Relationships on Today’s College Campuses”
Nov. 3	Gender, sexual orientation: the LGBT movement	<i>Required:</i> Travis Kong. “Queers are Ready!? Sexual Citizenship and the Tongzhi Movement”
Nov. 5	The LGBT Community in Hong Kong Guest speaker: Benita Chick	
Nov. 10	Sexual harassment in the workplace	<i>Required:</i> Beth Quinn: “Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of “Girl Watching””
Nov. 12	Are college campuses dangerous places for women? The controversy over “rape culture” on university campuses.	<i>Required:</i> Patricia Yancey Martin: Fraternities and Rape On Campus
Nov. 17	Compromised dating in Hong Kong Guest from Teen’s Keys	

Nov. 19	Domestic violence	<i>Required: Michael Kimmel. The Gendered Society. Ch. 14. "The Gender of Violence"</i> <i>Supplementary: Dobash and Dobash. The Myth of Male Symmetry and Marital Violence</i>
Nov. 24	The gender of war and peace	

#### PART V: MEN AND WOMEN IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Popular images of globalization focus on high technology, finance, communication and unlimited opportunities for social and personal advancement. In the final part of the course we focus on the lives of female migrants to understand how globalization is still reliant upon low-wage, and highly gendered and racialized labour.

Nov. 26	Domestic workers in Hong Kong	<i>Required: Kimberly Chang and L.H. L. Ling: "Globalization and Its Intimate Other. Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong"</i>
Dec 1.	Women, politics and development	<i>Required: Leta Hong Fincher: China's Patriarchal Authoritarianism</i>
Dec. 3	What's to be done? Imaging different gender arrangements  Students present their projects	<i>Required: Michael Kimmel. Epilogue: A "degendered" society</i>

**FINAL EXAMINATION**  
**(held during Final Exam Period,**  
**date to be determined by ARR)**

**Your Attendance is required.**

## RULES AND PROCEDURES

This is a large class with a diversity of students from many backgrounds. Most of you will be studying in a second language (English) because this is the only language that we all share. Some of you may not have taken social science classes before. Others may be accustomed to different academic environments in which there are different expectations. All of us, however, are adjusting to the challenge of the online environment. This means that we need to have some common rules and understandings about how the class is to proceed so that everyone has an opportunity to learn and perform well.

### **Attendance and cameras**

The University policy on cameras is as follows:

**“Students should turn on the camera in class for class participation and interaction. For courses with participation scores, students with video turned off should expect lower participation scores.”**

The surest way to achieve a high grade on this course is to *attend all the classes*, turn on your cameras and participate. The Powerpoint slides shown in the class and placed on the course webpage are intended only as outlines of the materials covered. They are not substitutes for class attendance.

While the recordings of the Zoom classes will be made available to you, my experience has been that if you do not have the time or inclination to attend the class, it is unlikely that you will have the time or inclination to study the materials outside of class. I will do my part to make the classes worthwhile, going *slowly*, and making frequent summaries to assist those with language difficulties. Fair enough? I also have a lot of interesting interactive activities that students tell me they enjoy.

Your attendance will be recorded on Canvas. To count as attendance, you must

1. Attend the whole class (absence of more than 20 minutes will count as an absence)
2. Turn on your camera during the entire lecture (but not necessary in the Break) so that we know you are there (still photos or emojis do not count).
3. Please do not log in with more than one device. That other device may not have a camera and your attendance may not be recorded.

For the purpose of assessment, we will start recording attendance after the Drop add period (September 19<sup>th</sup>). To allow for technological problems and other unforeseen circumstances, I will allow for up to THREE absences/no-camera shows without penalty.



## **Participation**

It is difficult for me to monitor the chat sessions, so for participation to count, please raise your hand and I will unmute yourself to speak. My teaching assistant will keep a record of the frequency of your participation.

## **Examinations**

Until face-to-face proctored examinations are permitted, examinations for this course will have to be conducted online. I expect them to be completed under closed-book conditions without communicating with other students, consulting PowerPoints or the internet. Precautions will be taken to prevent misconduct, including:

- Turning on your cameras so that we can monitor you and your computer.
- Giving a limited time for your answers.
- Shuffling questions and answers.

This is a large class and it is impossible to schedule make-up exams for individual students who miss exams, except where medical documentation is provided by a licensed medical practitioner to say why you could not attend. If you have to miss an exam due to medical circumstances, you must contact us within a week after the missed exam to arrange a make-up, otherwise your entitlement to a make-up will be forfeited. The exam dates will be announced early in the semester, which will give you plenty of time to plan. Do not schedule job interviews or other activities on these dates.

## **Policy on re-grading**

I have noticed that increasing numbers of students are expecting higher grades for their work. Students sometimes contact me with a request that their work be re-graded with the hope of obtaining a higher score. You will, however, appreciate that the grading of a large number of assignments and exams requires tremendous resources. We make every effort to grade your work accurately. If you do, however, request that your work/grade is reviewed, please be prepared for the possibility that your grade may move up *or down* (if, the latter case, we find your work more deficient than our original assessment). If you do ask us to look at your work again, please make sure that you have a very strong and clear justification for doing so.

## **Course Content: Talking about gender and inequality.**

In this course we will talk openly in the class about topics that some students might consider sensitive, controversial or even inappropriate for public discussion. These topics include: sexuality (including homosexuality and transgendered persons), pornography, the sex industry, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Moreover, we will talk about these topics in a non-judgmental way. Students who are not comfortable with engaging in frank and open discussions about these issues should consider taking other courses offered by the Social Science Division.