

Hong Kong University of Science & Technology
Division of Social Science
Spring 2026

SOSC 3250: Gender and Development

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in Passione coffee shop
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Office: Room LG4003 (Lift6), RPG Hub.
Class Timings: Thursdays, 1:30 to 4:20pm
Class Venue: Room LG3009

Course Description:

This course aims to help students develop a deeper understanding of the interactions between gender and development through a study of theoretical frameworks as well as a discussion of practical case studies. Students will compare different approaches to gender and development and will learn about various strategies for empowering women in developing countries - such as increasing their access to credit and employment, and their opportunities for political participation. By the end of the semester, students should be able to critically analyze developmental policies and interventions through a gender lens.

Course activities include lectures, presentation and discussion of assigned readings, a country case study report and related presentations by groups, as well as specific in-class activities and caselet discussions tailored for particular topics.

Criterion-referenced assessment will form the basis for grading each student's performance and detailed rubrics are provided at the end of this course outline for each component to be graded.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Students will develop an understanding of the underlying causes of gender inequality and its consequences for the lives of girls and women in developing countries.
2. Students will understand the benefits as well as the drawbacks of various strategies that have been used to empower women in developing countries – such as micro-credit, political quotas and cash transfers.
3. Students will develop the ability to critically assess the design and implementation of any development project or government policy/programme and propose modifications to enhance gender equity.
4. Students will practice working collaboratively in groups and will learn to participate in class discussions and debates in a mature and positive manner.

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Week 1 (5th Feb): Introductory Lecture & group formation

Women Empowerment and Economic Development by Esther Duflo. *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (Dec 2012), pp. 1051-1079 (29 pages)

Theoretical frameworks and models

Week 2 (12th Feb): Gender as a Social Construct: Socialization for Inequality

Measuring Women's Agency (2020). Aletheia Donald, Gayatri Koolwal, Jeannie Annan, Kathryn Falb & Markus Goldstein. *Feminist Economics* Volume 26, 2020 - Issue 3.

***"To each less than she needs, from each more than she can do: Allocations, Entitlements and Value" by Hanna Papanek. Chapter 10 of *Persistent Inequalities*, edited by Irene Tinker, Oxford University Press, 1990.

Week 3 (26th Feb): Approaches to Gender Planning: WID and GAD

Fixing women or fixing the world? 'Smarteconomics', efficiency approaches, and gender equality in development (2012). Sylvia Chant & Caroline Sweetman. *Gender & Development*, 20:3, 517-529.

** "Gender planning in the Third World: meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs" by Caroline Moser. *World Development*, 17 (11), 1989.

Week 4 (5th March): Economic models of the family: intra-household bargaining

Intrahousehold Bargaining and Resource Allocation in Developing Countries (2013) by Cheryl Doss. *The World Bank Research Observer*, Volume 28, Issue 1, February 2013, Pages 52–66 only.

** Diffusion and Dilution: The Power and Perils of Integrating Feminist Perspectives Into Household Economics by Cheryl R. Doss (2021) *Feminist Economics*, 27:3, 1-20.

Strategies for Women's Empowerment

Week 5 (12th March): Micro-credit to Women

The Impact of Microfinance on Poverty Alleviation: Making Sense of the Evidence (2017). Supriya Garikipati. In G. Giorgioni (ed.), *Development Finance*, Palgrave Studies, 2017.

** “Who takes the credit? Gender, power and control over loan use in rural credit programs in Bangladesh” by Anne-Marie Goetz & Rina Sen Gupta. *World Development*, 24 (1), 1996.

Week 6 (19th March): Women and Work

Female labor force participation in developing countries (2014). Sher Verick. IZA World of Labor, 2014, No 87, 87.

** “Women, Wages and Intra-household Power Relations in Urban Bangladesh” by Naila Kabeer. *Development and Change*, Vol. 28, 1997.

Week 7 (26th March): Leadership & Political Participation

Women Have Found Respect: Gender Quotas, Symbolic Representation, and Female Empowerment in Rwanda (2011) by Jennie E. Burnet. *Politics & Gender*, 7, pp. 303-334.

** “The pros and cons of gender quota laws: what happens when you kick men out and let women in?” by Lisa Baldez, pp. 102-109 only. *Politics & Gender*, 2 (1), 2006.

** “Tokenism or Agency? The impact of Women’s reservations on Village Democracies in South India” by Radu Ban and Vijayendra Rao, pp. 501- 505 and pp.526-527 only. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 56 (3), 2008.

Week 8 (2nd April): Cash Transfers

Conditional Cash Transfers: The Case of Progres/Oportunidades (2017). Susan W. Parker & Petra E. Todd. *Journal of Economic Literature*, American Economic Association, vol. 55(3), pages 866-915, September 2017. Read Sections 1 & 2; OMIT Sections 3 & 4; read Section 5 (omit sub-section 5.6); read Sections 6 & 7. OMIT Tables 6, Table 7, Table 8 & Table 9.

** *Unjust Conditions: Women’s Work and the Hidden Cost of Cash Transfer Programs* by Tara Patricia Cookson; University of California Press, 2018. Introduction: pp 1-12; Chapter 6: pp. 127-138; pg.143-147.

Week 9 (9th April): Term Paper consultations in classroom – Sign-up sheets will be put up for you to book a consultation time slot

Common Gender Issues

Week 10 (16th April): Norms of Masculinity

Youth perceptions of violence in Western Honduras (2020). Rebecca J. Williams and Paige Castellanos. *Third World Quarterly*, 2020, Vol. 41, No. 3, 397–414.

** “Men, Masculinities and the politics of development” by Sarah White in *Men and Masculinity* edited by Caroline Sweetman, Oxfam, 1997.

** “From Woman-blind to Man-kind: should men have more space in Gender and Development?” by Sylvia Chant. *IDS Bulletin*, 31 (2), 2000.

Week 11 (23rd April): Mainstreaming gender in development programmes

The 2030 Agenda: challenges of implementation to attain gender equality and women's rights (2016). Shahra Razavi. *Gender & Development*, 2016; Vol. 24, No.1, pp 25-41.

** “Mainstreaming Gender or ‘Streaming’ Gender Away: Feminists marooned in the Development Business” by Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay. *IDS Bulletin*, 2004; 35 (4).

** “Gender, Myth and Fable: The perils of mainstreaming in sector bureaucracies” by Hilary Standing. *IDS Bulletin*, 2004; 35 (4).

Week 12 (30th April): Population policy and women’s reproductive rights

The demographic transition and women’s economic participation in Tamil Nadu, India: a historical case study (2020). Rohini Prabha Pande, Sophie Namy and Anju Malhotra. *Feminist Economics*, 2020, vol. 26, issue 1, 179 -207.

** “Women’s Rights and Reproductive Choice: Rethinking the Connections” - Chapter 5 of *Population Policy and Women’s Rights* by Ruth Dixon-Mueller, Praeger, 1993.

Week 13 (7th May): Country case study presentations by the groups in class

Course Requirements

Assigned Readings: Presentation and Class Discussion

Students will form groups to present the main points of assigned readings (both required and recommended readings), **starting from Week 2**. This will be followed by class discussion of the *required* readings. There will be exactly five groups and each group will present twice during the semester – *Group 1 will present in Week 2*.

The group presentation of the readings is expected to be **not more than 20 minutes** long and should highlight the main issues raised in the articles. Groups should present a very concise summary of the recommended readings while going into greater detail when presenting the

required readings.

Students are expected to come to class familiar with the *required* readings for that week's topic and prepared to discuss and analyze the related issues – *all starred readings are required*. All readings will be available on Library Reserve and as PDF files on the course website. The TA will also have 1 set of hard copies of all the readings.

Group Project: Report and Presentation

Each group will work on a country case study - details of this project will be discussed in class. Groups must make a **20 minute presentation** of their major findings in Week 13 on **7th May**. They must also submit a **WRITTEN** project report **by 12 noon on 10th May**.

Final Research Term Paper

In lieu of a final exam, each student must submit a final, individual research paper related to the subject of gender and development. Papers should be typewritten and should not exceed **3500 words** (excluding references, tables and appendices). The deadline for submission of term papers is **12 noon on Thursday, 14th May**.

Assessment and Grades

Assessment Task	Percentage contribution to Grade	Due Date
Group project: in-class presentation	10%	Thu 7 th May
Group project: written report	25%	10 th May by noon
Class participation & discussion	25%	Whole semester
Research Term Paper	28%	12 noon, 14 th May
Group Presentation of readings	12%	TBD
TOTAL	100%	

Marks and feedback for individual submissions will be posted on Canvas in 10 working days.

Course AI Policy

Students are permitted to use ALL kinds of AI tools (such as ChatGpt) to complete assignments – guidelines for appropriate usage of such tools will be discussed in class.

Academic Integrity

All written assignments will be checked by Turnitin which is a plagiarism detection software. This is in line with the University's policies on academic integrity and plagiarism. The University takes all allegations of cheating, copying and plagiarism very seriously. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the guidelines for academic integrity posted on the University website: <https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/academic-honor-code-and-academic-integrity>. Lack of knowledge or understanding of the rules will not be accepted as an excuse under any circumstances.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Group Project Report & Presentation	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO 4	The country case study assesses students' ability to understand the underlying causes of gender inequality in developing countries and evaluate their implications (ILO 1), critically analyze existing empowerment strategies (ILO 2), and suggest beneficial changes to government policies/programs (ILO 3). It also assesses students' ability to work collaboratively in groups (ILO 4).
Class Participation in Discussions	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3	Class participation marks reflect students' ability to critically analyze gender issues by applying taught concepts (ILO 1), utilize gender frameworks to assess empowerment strategies (ILOs 1,2), and critique existing government policies and programs using a gender lens (ILO 3), demonstrating higher-order thinking skills of analysis, evaluation, and communication.
Research Term Paper	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3	The research term paper is expected to clearly demonstrate students' grasp of gender theoretical frameworks (ILO 1) by application to the study of a specific issue (such as a project/policy/program) relevant for girls/women in a developing country (ILOs 2,3). Students should display higher-order thinking skills of critical analysis and evaluation and the ability to present coherent and logical arguments.
Group Presentation of Readings	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4	The group presentations of readings are designed to assess students' basic understanding of gender concepts and their application to issues (ILOs 1, 2, 3), aligning with lower-order thinking skills of remembering and understanding. They also assess students' ability to work collaboratively in groups (ILO 4).

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a deep understanding of gender discrimination and its societal and economic impact in developing countries. Exhibits exceptional critical thinking skills in evaluating strategies and policies to empower girls and women, using relevant theoretical frameworks. Effectively communicates complex ideas about the implications of such gender discrimination and its multiple sources and manifestations.
B	Good Performance	Shows a solid grasp of basic gender concepts and theoretical frameworks and their application to developing countries. Demonstrates good critical thinking skills in assessing potential strategies to empower women. Communicates effectively about the social, economic, and ethical implications of such gender discrimination.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses a basic understanding of gender concepts and theoretical frameworks. Displays satisfactory critical thinking skills in evaluating empowerment strategies and policies. Communicates about the implications of gender discrimination in developing countries but may lack depth in analysis and application.
D	Marginal Pass	Has rudimentary knowledge of gender concepts. Shows limited critical thinking skills in evaluating gender discrimination in developing countries or any potential strategies to empower girls and women. Communicates about the implications of such discrimination but demonstrates minimal understanding and effectiveness.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of gender discrimination in developing countries and its impact on society and the economy. Lacks critical thinking skills in evaluating empowerment strategies and fails to effectively analyze their potential or flaws. Struggles to communicate about the implications of gender discrimination.

Student Rubrics

Use the following rubrics to guide you for the assessment tasks that you submit in this course.

Article Presentations by Groups: Student Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Marginal	Fail	Mapping to Course ILOs
Integration and Analysis	Insightful summary and analysis of the assigned readings, including highlighting any limitations. Makes connections to relevant gender concepts, showcasing a strong understanding of the material.	Provides a clear and detailed reflection of the readings, analyzing the substance and broader implications. Displays solid understanding of the material.	Offers some insights into the readings but analysis may lack depth or critical thinking. Understanding of course material may be limited.	Lacks in-depth analysis or critical thinking about the readings and connections to course material. Presentation may be superficial or focused solely on factual information.	Demonstrates no understanding of the material in the readings or connections to course concepts. Commentary on the readings is absent or irrelevant.	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4
Overall Quality	Presentation is logically organized; slides are clear and well-designed. Able to engage the audience by succinctly articulating the essential content of the readings.	Presentation is mostly organized; slides are clear and support the narrative. Shows good understanding of the task.	Presentation may be disorganized or unclear in parts, slides cluttered or not very informative. Displays satisfactory understanding of the task.	Presentation is poorly organized, unclear, slides inadequate or ill-prepared. Shows weak understanding of the task.	Presentation is incomplete or incoherent.	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4.

Research Term Paper: Student Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Marginal	Fail	Mapping to Course ILOs
Issue Definition	Identifies an original or under-researched issue, describing the context & its significance for gender equity. Demonstrates a strong understanding of the chosen topic.	Defines clearly the problem or issue being studied and the context but may not adequately make the connections to gender equity.	Defines the issue but may lack clarity or inadequately illustrate the importance of the issue for girls/women.	Issue definition is vague or inaccurate.	Issue is not defined or misunderstood.	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3
Critical Thinking and Analysis	Provides an in-depth analysis with a well-developed argument, critical evaluation of evidence, and synthesis of new ideas.	Offers a clear analysis with a coherent argument and evaluation of evidence, showing a good understanding of gender linkages.	Presents a basic analysis with a simple argument and some evaluation of evidence, demonstrating an ability to apply gender concepts.	Demonstrates limited analysis with a weak argument and minimal evaluation of evidence, showing a very basic understanding of concepts.	Faulty or no analysis, with no clear argument or evaluation of evidence, displaying a lack of understanding and knowledge.	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3

Class Participation in Discussions: Student Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Marginal	Fail	Mapping to Course ILOs
Integration and Analysis	Demonstrates insightful analysis of gender issues in developing countries and their broader societal impacts. Comments display a connection to relevant course concepts and theories, showcasing a strong understanding of the course material.	Displays a clear understanding of gender issues in developing countries and attempts to engage with the broader implications. Makes good connections to course material.	Offers some reflection on gender issues and the implications, but analysis may lack depth or critical thinking. Connections to course material may be limited.	Lacks in-depth analysis or critical thinking regarding gender issues and their implications, or connections to course material. Comments may be superficial or focused solely on immediately available information.	Demonstrates no understanding or analysis of gender issues, or connections to course material. Comments made are mostly irrelevant.	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3
Personal and Group Learning	Makes positive and insightful contributions to class discussions and may display leadership within own group, facilitating collaborative work. Makes insightful responses to comments and critiques by other students, actively encouraging personal and whole-group growth.	Makes intelligent contributions to class discussions. Displays active listening skills and responds appropriately to other students. Class presence is positive and facilitates collective learning.	Overall presence in class is positive but may be unable to make substantial contributions due to an incorrect reading/ understanding of the current status of the discussions.	Pays very little attention and makes minimal contribution during class discussions. Displays sporadic, irregular attendance.	Presence in class is actively disruptive through constant whispering etc. Attendance during the course may also be low.	ILO 4.

Group Country Case Study: Student Rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Marginal	Fail	Mapping to Course ILOs
Mastery of Subject Matter	The case study demonstrates exceptional comprehension by accurately explaining the root causes of gender discrimination in the chosen country, analyzing the limitations of existing policies & programs, and suggesting real-world solutions by making insightful connections.	Study shows a strong comprehension by correctly explaining key causes of gender discrimination and their implications, and suggesting remedial programs and strategies with comprehensive examples and relevant connections.	Study displays a satisfactory comprehension by utilizing basic concepts to explain gender discrimination and its implications, relating this to possible real-world solutions, with some examples and connections.	Study demonstrates a basic comprehension of fundamental concepts, and applies them to illustrate some aspects of gender discrimination. Suggested solutions may lack feasibility, with limited real-world examples and connections.	Study shows minimal comprehension of the topic, with little to no connection to relevant gender theories and concepts, and a lack of understanding and explanation of both causes of discrimination and potential solutions.	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3
Overall Quality	Report and presentation are clear and logically structured. Demonstrate an excellent understanding of the task.	Report and presentation are well organized and clear. Show strong understanding of the task.	Report and/or presentation may be disorganized or unclear in parts, with some logical/factual errors. Understanding of the task is satisfactory.	Report and presentation are poorly organized, unclear or contain significant logical/factual errors. Show weak understanding of the task.	Report and presentation are incomplete or not submitted	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4.