

SOSC 2740  
GENDER AND SOCIETY  
FALL 2021

Tuesday, Thursday, 1500-1620 rm.2407

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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 8% 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 among 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 in Hong Kong.

**Intended Learning outcomes**

**Intended learning activities**

An appreciation of how gender roles can be 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

### **Attendance and participation**

#### **Attendance**

The surest way to achieve a high grade on this course is to *attend all the classes* and, whilst doing so, *to disconnect yourself from and put away all electronic devices 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. You are responsible for taking your own notes during the classes and for catching up and obtaining notes from others/watching the online video of the class if you miss a class (details of arrangements for students approved to take the course from outside of Hong Kong will be provided shortly).

#### **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.

### **Examinations**

There will be two in-class **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. Alternative arrangements will be made only for those approved to study outside of Hong Kong.

## 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. 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).

In order to encourage all group members to participate equally, a component of the grade for the assignment will be based on peer-review, in which group members will evaluate each other's performance.

## The Final Grade

Assignment (and presentation if applicable)	25%
Midterm Exam	35%
Final Exam (cumulative)	40%

## Extra Credit

Up to 5 percent **extra credit** may be awarded to individual students who make regular and outstanding contributions to the in-class discussions, or who frequently ask relevant questions.

# CLASS SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTIONS

Date	Topics	Reading
Sept. 2nd	How much do you know about gender and society? Common sense quiz	
Sept. 7th	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 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. 9 <sup>th</sup>	To what extent does biology determine our destiny?	<i>Supplementary:</i> Michael Kimmel. The Gendered Society, Ch2. “Ordained by Nature: Biology Constructs the Sexes
Sept. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Biological theories and their critics	
Sept. 16 <sup>th</sup>	Gender across cultures	<i>Required:</i> Michael Kimmel. The Gendered Society, Ch3. “Spanning the World. Culture Constructs Gender Difference”
Sept. 21 <sup>st</sup>	More than two sexes? Transgender. Guest speaker, Benita Chick	
Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Socialization and education	<i>Required:</i> Michael Kimmel. The Gendered Society, Ch7. “The Gendered Classroom”

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

## 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. 28 <sup>th</sup>	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”
Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup>	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. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Men and women in the media	
Oct. 7 <sup>th</sup>	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. 12 <sup>th</sup>	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
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Oct. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Chung Yeung Festival	
Oct. 19 <sup>th</sup>	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 21<sup>st</sup> MIDTERM EXAMINATION IN CLASS</b>
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Oct. 26 <sup>th</sup>	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 <i>Supplementary:</i> Groves and Lui: "The "Gift" of help
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#### PART IV: MEN AND WOMEN IN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

We 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, as well as the rise of "hook-up culture" liberate women? How do men and women consume pornography? 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. 28 <sup>th</sup>	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. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Gender, sexual orientation: the LGBT movement	<i>Required:</i> Travis Kong: "Oral histories of older gay men"
Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Sexual harassment in the workplace	<i>Required:</i> Beth Quinn: "Sexual Harassment and Masculinity: The Power and Meaning of "Girl Watching""

Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Are college campuses dangerous places for women? The controversy over “rape culture” on university campuses.	<i>Required: Patricia Yancey Martin: Fraternities and Rape On Campus</i>
Nov. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Compromised dating in Hong Kong Guest from Teen’s Keys	
Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup>	Domestic violence	<i>Required: Michael Kimmel. The Gendered Society. Ch. 14. “The Gender of Violence” Supplementary: Dobash and Dobash. The Myth of Male Symmetry and Marital Violence</i>
Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup>	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. 23	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>
Nov. 25	Women, politics and development	<i>Required: Leta Hong Fincher: China’s Patriarchal Authoritarianism</i>
Nov. 30 <sup>th</sup>	What’s to be done? Imaging different gender arrangements	<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. 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.

### **Coming Late and Leaving Early**

The class will not begin until all students are seated and quiet. When students come late to the class, they disrupt the whole class by walking around the classroom to look for their friends while the class is in progress. They also miss important information that will be covered in the exams. Some instructors solve this problem by locking the doors after the class has begun. To minimize disruption, however, I will reserve some seats nearest to the doors on one side of the classroom to assist late students. On the occasion that you have to come late to the class, please sit at these seats, rather than walk around the lecture theatre while the class is in progress.

As with late students, students who leave the class early disrupt the class and miss important information too. Each class will have a ten-minute break in the middle. Please wait until the break or the end of the class before leaving (except, of course, in the case of a medical emergency or fire). If you get up to leave in the middle of a class, you will be asked to return to your seat. If you know, in advance, that you do have to leave early, please contact me or one of the teaching assistants before the class so that we can seat you close to an exit to prevent disruption of the class.

### **Mobile Phones, Tablets, Texting and Computers**

Mastering a sociological outlook will require your full attention during the class. If you are using laptop computers (for whatever purpose, including note-taking) or texting on your phone, you will miss important information. You are also turning away from your classmates, the instructor, and the course content, and depriving everyone of a good learning environment.

I use to simply require that electronic devices be switched off during the class. But I know that as long as the devices are in front of you, it is impossible to resist the temptation to play with them or continue to take calls and return text messages.

I will therefore require that all electronic devices ***not only be switched off, but also put away*** in a bag or purse and remain completely ***out of sight*** while the class is in progress. The class will not begin until this is done. If you continue to text or take phone calls during the class, your name will be recorded, and ***your Final Grade for the course may be affected***.



One exception to this, however, will be when we do the Mentimeter quizzes

### **Eating and Drinking in the Classroom**

Bringing food into the classroom leaves a mess and smell for your classmates. This is not a conducive atmosphere for learning. Would you like it if your classes were held in a McDonald's restaurant? I wouldn't think so! For this reason, the University prohibits eating in the classroom. There are many places where you can eat on campus. Please observe the "No Eating" signs in the classroom and have your meals before or after the class.

### **Examinations**

Examinations will be closed-book and must be taken without communicating with other students.

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 Western medical practitioner to say why you cannot 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. (Details of exam arrangements for students approved to study outside of Hong Kong will be provided shortly).

### **PowerPoints**

I'm happy to share my PowerPoints with you after each class, however, please note the following:

PowerPoints are intended only as outlines for each class and not substitutes for class attendance. Some students ask me to put more detailed lecture notes on the Canvas webpage. My experience, however, has been that if you don't 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.

It is impossible for me to release PowerPoints *before the class*. This is because the PowerPoints may give away answers to my questions as well as information that will compromise my in-class exercises and activities. Also, providing PowerPoints in advance does not allow me the flexibility to change the content of the class and PowerPoints in accordance with student's interests.

Finally, please respect my copyright, and *please do not share my PowerPoints or any other materials* on course-sharing websites, on social media, or anywhere else on the

internet. If we find you have done this – and we look around the internet quite often for our materials, we will ask you to take them down and may have to report you to the website and to the University for violating our copyright.

### **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 120 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, in 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.

A special note to **international students**: You have been instructed by the University during your orientation that you are required to stay for the entire exam period. Please do not book your flights home before the Final Exam or schedule other trips during the mid-term examination (October 18th). There will be no make-up exams should you choose to do this and there will be no credit or re-weighting of scores for the exam that you missed.

A special note to **students who have taken Sosc1662 with Prof. Groves**: As introductory sociology classes, it is unavoidable that there will be some overlap between these two classes. I do not encourage you to take both classes. It is better that you get a broader perspective in the social sciences by taking classes from other professors. If, however, you do decide to take both classes, please allow other students in class to answer questions that you may already know the answer to from Sosc1662. I do appreciate your cooperation with this.

### **Course content: Talking about gender**

In this course, we will talk openly in the classroom 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.