



COM 128 (Section 003) Gender in the Humanities

Summer 2026

Classroom: Online, asynchronously through Canvas

Dates: July 13th to August 7th, 2026

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Office Hours: By appointment via cell phone, ISU email, and Zoom

Required Readings:

Required readings are available, via Internet and Milner Library links, on the course Canvas website. In addition, it may be helpful to have access to a copy of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th edition) though help sheets are available on Canvas.

Course Description and Objectives:

The undergraduate catalog describes this course as an “Examination of gender roles, norms, and stereotypes from a broad range of perspectives within humanities across centuries and cultures.” My section approaches gender from a communication perspective with particular regard for how our perceptions of gender change throughout our lifespans. Though gender roles, norms, and stereotypes play a vital role in our human development and socialization from the time we are born, we do not typically become fully cognizant of the influence and pervasiveness these constructs have on our lives until we are older. Eventually we grow to accept, question, or reject these notions; yet the influence of traditional and cultural conceptualizations of gender remain difficult for many of us to fully understand, challenge, or escape. By critically examining multiple perspectives within the humanities, across cultures and time, this class will expose you to a vast body of literature that should prompt you to think about gender in new ways as well as cultivate your own perspectives. Thus, we will aim to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Develop students’ understanding of gender roles, norms, and stereotypes.
2. Help students appreciate how gender has been understood across time.
3. Help students appreciate how gender has been understood across cultures.
4. Develop students’ abilities to critically examine, question, and analyze gender construction.
5. Cultivate students’ abilities to read, report, and integrate academic research into scholarly arguments.

Special Needs Accommodation:

I am happy to accommodate any special needs you may have—so please let me know, although I require written documentation from Student Access and Accommodation Services (SAAS) for ongoing accommodations. Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact SAAS at 308 Fell

Hall, Office Phone (309) 438-5853, Video Phone (309) 319-7682 or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

Professionalism:

Learning is maximized by reading, critical thinking, and cognitive engagement. Professionalism includes civil receptivity to others' viewpoints (although not necessarily agreeing with those viewpoints), adherence to due dates, and active engagement through the online Canvas site. Login to Canvas prepared to discuss the readings during each day of our class schedule. Frequent and consistent online engagement is expected, as your classmates should be able to count on your presence and because by enrolling in this course you have made a commitment to being present throughout the duration of the course.

Online Engagement:

At a minimum, your engagement should involve: 1) responding to each Discussions topic; 2) posting to Discussions; 3) reading all posts others make in Discussions; and 4) responding to a couple Discussions posts others make. Make time to read posts daily, initiate your own posts, and respond to others' posts. We will use Discussions to communicate about readings, course content, and questions regarding assignments. Discussions allow us to pose questions relevant to the whole class as well as hold focused conversations.

All posts should align with the scholarly, scientific, and medical literature we are reading rather than personal beliefs. Posts in Discussions must be respectful of various gender identities and should not disparage or offend (i.e., anti-LGBTQIA+ language will *not* be tolerated).

The Modules feature will outline tasks you must complete. Canvas provides me with all sorts of data tracking when you use the site, links and files you access, and tasks you complete.

Contact me through my ISU email (for quick questions) or on my cell phone (for back-and-forth dialogue). I do not check or respond to messages in the inbox/email feature of Canvas, so do not send me messages through Canvas mail.

Reading and Learning Journals:

Your weekly *Reading and Learning Journals* should cover all required readings and course content. For each day's required readings, journal your thoughts, reflections, and notes in a manner that demonstrates you have read and thought critically about its' implications for you. Seek out memorable passages and ideas in the readings and identify ways the readings resonate with you. Also document your thoughts, reflections, and notes on videos. Take an idea and argue with it (based on academic evidence, not opinion or belief), agree with it, or illustrate it while identifying concerns that still linger in your mind by challenging or questioning key contentions from course materials. Journals need to reflect notes you make to yourself about ideas you are learning, connections between course materials and your interests, and ideas you hope to return to long after this course ends.

Format is not as vital with this assignment as is content and honesty, though I do expect typed pages in 12 point plain Times New Roman font, with 1 margins on the sides, top, and bottom, and utilizing APA style internal citations. Use a header with your full name and page number in

the top right corner of each page (i.e., “Linus Agrippa 1”). A title “Journal and Week #” should be centered on the top line of page one and boldfaced. Submit each week’s journal as a Word document in Canvas’s Assignments tab.

The more complete your journal and the more seriously you undertake weekly contributions to it, the better you will fare on these assignments. Keep up with this journal daily and it will be both easy for and useful to you; do not expect to complete the whole journal in one sitting and perform well on the assignment. I am not making you take an exam, so treat this as your opportunity to prove you have mastered the readings and course content. Use perspectives from your journal as fodder for class Discussions, but keep in mind that the audience in Discussions is our whole class and any posts must not be offensive to or dismissive of various gender identities.

Final Reflection Paper:

The *Final Reflection Paper* should follow APA style, 7th edition. The paper should be a minimum of 3 full pages, typed double-spaced in 12 point plain Times New Roman font, with 1 inch margins on the sides, top, and bottom. A header should indicate your name and page number at the top of each page (i.e., “Linus Agrippa 1”). A title “Reflection Paper” should appear, centered, on the top line of the first page and boldfaced. No title page is included. Submit the paper as a Word document in Canvas’s Assignments tab.

The purpose of the paper is to reflect on the development of your understanding of gender to this point in your life. Talk about how terminology and concepts or theories from the required readings apply to or inform your perspective moving forward. Share your experiences as well as feelings and opinions about those experiences while using terminology from the field and comparing your experiences to the concepts and theories we have read. *Integrate and cite at least 7 required readings into your paper.* Include introduction and conclusion paragraphs as well as several paragraphs in the body of the paper. Write well and proofread carefully, honestly and insightfully sharing and analyzing your experiences and perspective.

Academic Misconduct Policy:

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. All ideas are to be appropriately cited in written form when borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Inadequate citation, unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration, and/or the presentation of someone else’s work constitutes plagiarism. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonesty (including falsifying evidence or plagiarizing a written assignment) will receive a failing grade in the course and be referred for disciplinary action through Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Reporting academic dishonesty is my professional responsibility and I do not hesitate to enforce consequences.

In this course, the use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT or Adobe Firefly is *not* permitted to support the completion of any assignment. This includes, but is not limited to, using generative AI tools to ideate, pre-plan, edit, translate, or otherwise create original material you claim to be solely your creation. Use of a generative AI tool to complete assignments in whole or in part is considered academic dishonesty in this course.

Late Work and Incomplete Grade Policy:

All assignments are expected before midnight on the due date. An automatic 5% of the points possible will be deducted from late assignments, with an additional 5% deducted for each 24 hours the assignment is late. As a general rule, incomplete grades will not be given.

Course Assignments and Grades:

The grading scale is as follows: A= 100-90%; B= 89-80%; C= 79-70%; D= 69-60%; F= 59% and below. Percentages will be calculated based on points earned from:

	<u>Points Possible/Your Points</u>	
<u>Online Engagement</u>		
Discussions Posts	50	/ _____
<u>Writing Assignments</u>		
Reading and Learning Journal week 1	25	/ _____
Reading and Learning Journal week 2	25	/ _____
Reading and Learning Journal week 3	25	/ _____
Reading and Learning Journal week 4	25	/ _____
Final Reflection Paper	50	/ _____
Total	200	/ _____

All written assignments need to be submitted as Word documents on Canvas using the Assignments feature.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1	Topic	Assignments Due
M, July 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Review Syllabus (like your grade depends on it...because it does!) *Review PowerPoint introduction to course “COM 128 day 1” *Read CNN (2019) “LGBTQ terms” *Read HPW’s (2017) flyer on “Understanding Gender” *Read HPW’s (2017) flyer on “Trans Ally” *Read NIH (2015) “Defining Intersex” *Watch “Is Anatomy Destiny?” (Alice Dreger) TED Talk Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Syllabus *Explore Canvas site *Begin conversing in Discussions
T, July 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Mark (2021) “LGBTQ+ in the Ancient World” *Read Williams (2010) “Two-Spirit People” *Read Fuentes (2022) “Biological Science Rejects Sex Binary” *Read Fuentes (2022) “Busting Myths about Sex and Gender” *Watch Skip Pardee’s TED Talk Video 	
W, July 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Lorber & Moore (2007) “Intro to Gendered Bodies” *Read Muehlenhard & Peterson (2011) “Distinguishing Between Sex and Gender” *Watch Decker Moss’ TED Talk Video 	
R, July 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Lorber (1994) “Night to His Day The Social Construction of Gender” *Read West & Zimmerman (1987) “Doing Gender” *Watch “Junk Science and Trans Kids” Video 	
F, July 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Kessler & McKenna (2001) “Developmental Aspects of Gender” *Read Ridgeway (2011) “Gender at Home” 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>*Reading and Learning Journal Week #1 due before midnight</i></p>
Week 2	Topic	Assignments Due
M, July 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Rhodes (2017) “Keep Children from Learning Stereotypes” *Read Kane (2006) “Parents Responses to Children’s Nonconformity” *Read Carr (1998) “Tomboys” *Read Martin (1998) “Preschool” *Watch Christy Hegarty’s TED Talk Video 	
T, July 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Birden (2005) “Compulsory Heterosexuality as Miseducation” *Read Ainsworth (2015) “Sex Redefined” *Read Jacobson (2019) “Is Sexual Orientation Genetic” *Read Muzdakis (2021) “Debunking Neurosexism” *Watch Michele Yulo’s TED Talk Video 	

W, July 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Kahlenberg & Hein (2010) “Nickelodeon Gender Role Stereotypes” *Read England et al. (2011) “Disney Princesses” *Read Common Sense (2017) “Watching Gender” *Watch “Watching Gender” Video 	
R, July 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Brusman (2019) “Sex Isn’t Binary” *Read Wood (2011) “Gendered Verbal Communication” *Read Ridgeway (2011) “Persistence of Gender” 	
F, July 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Bond Stockton (2022) “The Stigma of Non-Conformity to Sex Binaries” *Watch “Gender Spectrum” Video 	<i>*Reading and Learning Journal Week #2 due before midnight</i>
Week 3	Topic	Assignments Due
M, July 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Hamilton (2007) “College Women’s Gender Strategies and Homophobia” *Read Epstein (2007) “Global Subordination of Women” *Read Krishna et al. (2021) “Gender Discrimination in the Workplace” *Watch “Gender Pay Gap Myths” Video 	
T, July 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Collins (1990) “Black Feminist Thought” *Read Butler (2013) “Critically Queer” *Watch “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (Kimberlé Crenshaw) TED Talk Video 	
W, July 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Hildreth (2022) “Gender is a Spectrum Not a Binary” *Read Dreger (1998) “Hermaphroditism” *Read Lorber & Moore (2007) “Ambiguous Bodies Transgender and Intersex” 	
R, July 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Hoewe et al. (2020) “Female Lead Characters TV” *Read Fejes & Petrich (1993) “Lesbians Gays and the Media” *Watch “Debunking anti-LGBTQ arguments” Video 	
F, July 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Aley & Thomas (2021) “Gender Stereotypes in Ads” *Read Furnham & Paltzer (2010) “Gender Portrayal in TV Advertisements” *Read Vokey et al. (2013) “Hyper-Masculinity in Advertisements” 	<i>*Reading and Learning Journal Week #3 due before midnight</i>
Week 4	Topic	Assignments Due
M, Aug. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Milestone & Meyer (2012) “Representing Women and Men” *Read Milestone & Meyer (2012) “Consuming Popular Culture” *Begin drafting Final Reflection Paper 	

T, Aug. 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Anderson & Sheeler (2005) “Role of Language in Politics” *Read Harmer et al. (2021) “2016 Prez Election Debates” *Read Winfrey & Pennington (2021) “Women and Social Media in the 2016 Election” 	
W, Aug. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Read Trujillo (1991) “Nolan Ryan” *Read Parsloe et al. (2021) “Hegemonic Fatherhood” *Read Wallis (2011) “Music Videos” *Read Williams (2017) “Movie Awards Going Genderless” 	<p><i>*Reading and Learning Journal Week #4 due before midnight</i></p>
R, Aug. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Watch “Myths of Gay Adoption” (Lynne Elvins) TED Talk Video *Last day for posting to Discussions *Proofread and polish Final Reflection Paper 	
F, Aug. 7 (Finals Day)	<p>*Course Evaluations due (During this last week, you should receive an email from Qualtrics to complete a survey with your feedback about the class. Check your spam/junk folder. The deadline for finishing the survey is 11:59 p.m.)</p>	<p><i>*Final Reflection Paper is due before midnight</i></p>