

# **Language and Gender**

## **HONR 300 W/S (LOs 2/9)**

**Instructor:** Professor Moskowitz

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**Office:** Office hours will be conducted online until further notice

**Office Hours:** Tues and Thurs 2:15-3:30, or by appointment

### **An in-person, discussion-based seminar**

Much of our social world is constructed through language. As such, social constructions of gender and sexuality mediate and are mediated by linguistic phenomena. In this course, we focus on the way individuals and societies delineate notions of gender, sex, sexuality, and desire in various cultural contexts through the resources language provides.

While we spend time considering these issues in the U.S., we also spend a good portion of the class looking at notions of gender and sexuality abroad. Cross-cultural exploration of these topics offers a great deal of insight into the cultural basis of these concepts.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. To demonstrate knowledge regarding language, gender and sexuality as understood within the discipline of linguistic anthropology. (CO1)
2. To analyze the role linguistic phenomena play in the social construction of gender. (CO2)
3. To construct a sound argument in writing. (CO3)

### **General Education LOs:**

LO2: Students will write effectively, considering audience and purpose.

LO9: Students will analyze social systems or human behaviors using knowledge, theories or methods appropriate to the social sciences.

## Course Outline

### **Week 1: Introduction to Gender**

Tues Jan 11

Course introduction

Thurs Jan 13

- McElhinny, Bonnie, Theorizing Gender in Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology: Toward Effective Interventions in Gender Inequity,” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, ch 2)
- Skapoulli, Elena. “Transforming the label of ‘whore’: Teenage girls’ negotiation of local and global gender ideologies in Cyprus” in *Youth language at the intersection: From migration to globalization*, Edited by Mary Bucholtz and Elena Skapoulli, eds. 2009.
- McMillan, Laurie, “Mixed Messages: Slut Shaming in Mean Girls and Easy A,” *Peitho Journal*: Vol. 20.1, 2017 (optional, skim, read conclusion)

### **Week 2: Linguistic Anthropology**

Tues Jan 18

- Whorf, Benjamin Lee, “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language,” in *Selected Readings*
- Podesva, Robert J. 2007. Phonation type as a stylistic variable: The use of falsetto in constructing a persona. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 11 (4): 478-504.

Thurs Jan 20

- Romaine, Suzanne, Variation in Language and Gender, *Handbook of Language and Gender*, pp98-105
- Eckert, Penelope, “Language and Power in the Preadolescent Marketplace,” *American Speech*.
- Greenwood, Alice, “Floor management and power strategies in adolescent conversation” in *Rethinking Language and Gender Research*, Longman.

### **Week 3: Pronouns**

Tues Jan 25

- McGlashan H. and K Fitzpatrick, “I use any pronouns, and I'm questioning everything else': transgender youth and the issue of gender pronouns,” *Sex Education*, 2018
- Mann, Michelle, *Not 'Him' or 'Her': A Quick Guide to Understanding and Using Nonbinary Pronouns*, excerpt.

Thurs Jan 27

- Moskowitz, Nona. “Gender, Maturity, and “Going Out into the World”: Self-Referent Term Choice at Ogasawara Middle School,” *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*. Number 47. 2014.
- Saisuwan, Pavadee. "Kathoey and the linguistic construction of gender identity in Thailand" in *Language, Sexuality and Power*, 2015.

## **Week 4: Conversation, Discourse**

Tues Feb 1

- Bergvall, Victoria L. “Constructing and enacting gender through discourse: negotiating multiple roles as female engineering students” in *Rethinking Language and Gender Research*, Longman, 1996.
- Wilkinson, Sue and Celia Kitzinger. “Conversation Analysis in Language and Gender Studies” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, Ch7)
- Zimman, Lal. “The discursive construction of sex: Remaking and reclaiming the gendered body in talk about genitals among trans men” in *Queer Excursions: Rethorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Lal Zimman, Jenny Davis, and Joshua Raclaw, eds, 2014.

Thurs Feb 3

- Foucault, Michel, “An Incitement to Discourse,” *The History of Sexuality*.
- Polanyi, Livia and Diana Strassmann. “Storytellers and gatekeepers in economics” in *Rethinking Language and Gender Research*, Longman, 1996.

## **Week 5: Language Ideologies**

Tues Feb 8

- Cameron, Deborah. “Gender and Language Ideologies,” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, Ch 14)
- Philips, Susan U. “The Power of Gender Ideologies In Discourse,” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, Ch 15)

Thurs Feb 10

- McConnell-Ginet, Sally. “Meaning-Making and Ideologies of Gender and Sexuality,” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, Ch 16)
- Caldas-Coulthard, Carmen Rosa and Rosamund Moon, “The Transgressive, the Traditional: sexist discourses of grandmothering and ageing,” in *Innovations and Challenges: Women, Language and Sexism*, Routledge, 2020.
- Diaz, Vanessa. “Body Teams, Baby Bumps, Beauty Standards” in *Manufacturing Celebrity*, Duke University Press, 2020.
- King, Brian. “Becoming the intelligible other: Speaking intersex bodies against the grain,” *Critical Discourse Studies*, Volume 13, issue 4. 2016.

## **Week 6: Performance and Hegemonic Masculinity**

Tues Feb 15

- Butler, Judith. “Subjects of sex/gender/desire” and “Conclusion: From parody to politics”, *Gender Trouble*, 1990.
- Motschenbacher, Heiko. “Speaking the gendered body: The performative construction of commercial femininities and masculinities via body-art vocabulary” *Language in Society*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Feb., 2009), pp. 1-22, 2009.

Thurs Feb 17

- Connell, R.W., “Hegemonic Masculinity” in *Masculinities*, excerpt
- Hiramoto Mie and Yanning Lai, “Building a body of followers: Neoliberalism and online discourse of fitness and masculinity” *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, Volume 6, Issue 2, p. 262 – 291. 2017.
- Hall, Kira. Boys' Talk: Hindi, Moustaches, and Masculinity in New Delhi. In Pia Pichler and Eva Eppler (eds.), *Gender and Spoken Interaction*. Palgrave Macmillan. 139-162. 2009.

### **Week 7: Queer Theory**

Tues Feb 22

- Bershtling, Orit. “Speech creates a kind of commitment: Queering Hebrew” in *Queer Excursions: Retheorizing Binaries in Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Lal Zimman, Jenny Davis, and Joshua Raclaw, eds., Oxford. 2014.
- Milani, Tommaso M. “Queering Masculinities” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, 13)
- Claire Maree, “Sorry Guys! The discursive construction of queer spatiality in Japanese women-only club flyers” *Language, Sexuality and Power*, Oxford, 2015.

### **Love, Desire**

Thurs Feb 24

- Ahearn, Laura. “Writing desire in Nepali love letters” *Language & Communication*, Volume 23, Issue 2, Pages 107-12, 2003
- Manning, Paul, *Love Stories: Language, Private Love, and Public Romance in Georgia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2015.

**\*\*Spring Break\*\***

### **Week 8: Love, Desire (cont.)**

Tues Mar 15

- Kulick, Don. “Language and desire” in “The feminist foundations of language, gender, and sexuality” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014
- Levon, Erez. "Conflicted selves: Language, religion and same-sex desire in Israel" in *Language, Sexuality and Power*, Oxford, 2015.

Thurs Mar 17

- Kulick, Don and Jens Rydstrom, *Loneliness and Its Opposite: Sex, Disability, and The Ethics of Engagement*, Duke University Press, 2015, excerpts.

### **Week 9: Cyber- and New Identities, Technologies**

Tues Mar 22

- Lukacs, Gabriella. “Labor and Gender in Japan’s Digital Economy” in *Invisibility by Design*, Duke University Press, 2020.

Thurs Mar 24

- Robertson, Jennifer. “Embodiedment and Gender,” in *Robo Sapiens Japonicus*, University of California Press, 2018.

### **Week 10: Courts, Consent**

Tues Mar 29

- Kulick, Don. “No” *Language & Communication* 23(2):139-151, 2003.
- Ehrlich, Susan and Ruth King. “Consensual sex or sexual harassment: negotiating meaning” in *Rethinking Language and Gender Research*

Thurs Mar 31

- Ehrlich, “Language, gender, and sexual violence,” in *Handbook of Language, Gender and Sexuality*, 2nd edition, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley Blackwell, 2014.

Week 11: Investigating...The Case of Reality Winner

- FBI Investigation Transcript: Reality Winner
- Lakoff, Robin, “Women and Power,” *Handbook of Language and Gender*
- Sweet, Paige L., “The Sociology of Gaslighting,” *American Sociological Review*, 2019, Vol. 84(5) 851–875.

Week 12: Investigating...

### **Week 13: Activism**

Tues Apr 19

- Lazar, Michelle M. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Relevance for Current Gender and Language Research ,” in *The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality*, Susan Ehrlich, Miriam Meyerhoff, Janet Holmes, eds., Wiley. 2014. (HLGS, Ch 9)
- Zimman, Lal. “Agency and the gendered voice,” *Awareness and Control in Sociolinguistic Research*, Cambridge, 2016.
- Arnold, Lynette. “The reconceptualization of agency through ambiguity & contradiction” *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 52, Pages 10-19, 2015.

Thurs Apr 21

- Pauwels, Anne. “Linguistic Sexism and Feminist Linguistic Activism” *Handbook of Language and Gender*, (Pages: 550-570)

Week 14: Presentations

**\*\*Final Papers due May 6 at noon\*\***

## **Assignments:**

**Participation:** Your participation grade will be based on the degree to which you actively and thoughtfully participate in the various activities in the class. Some of the activities are hands-on and require that you work together with others. In these activities, your participation grade will be based on the degree to which you are an active participant in the task assigned to the group. In class discussion contexts, your participation will be based on the level in which you contribute to class discussion. While all comments and personal thoughts are encouraged in discussion, thoughtful ideas based on the readings will be weighted more heavily during discussions on the reading. (You are allowed 2 absences without penalty.)

**Language-in-Use Contribution:** Once during the semester you will be responsible for collecting and bringing to class an example of language in use to expand our discussion. This can be a newspaper article, an ad, a song, a youtube video, standup comedy routine, etc. Play or distribute your contribution and discuss how it says something interesting about language and gender or sexuality. Turn in a 1-2 page summary (single-spaced) of your analysis.

**Discussion Leader:** You will be responsible for leading discussion for two class periods during the semester. To lead discussion, you should develop a set of questions on the reading to pose in class. Be prepared to lead discussion for 20-30 minutes. You will submit your questions by 9am the morning you will be the discussant.

**Article Writeups:** There are 3 article summaries and reflections due over the course of the semester. For these, you will submit a 1.5-2 page writeup (single-spaced) of the reading(s). These writeups should a) summarize the main argument as well as do one of the following: b) cite and discuss particular passages that are interesting, relevant, unusual, or seem particularly important; OR c) connect the reading to current events, your own life, popular culture, etc. and analyze. Use the letters (a, b, c) to identify the two parts of your write-up. Article write-ups should not coincide with days you are the discussion leader. Be prepared to share your thoughts.

**Final Paper and Presentation:** The final research paper for the class (12-15 pages) will be based on a topic of your choosing (which relates to the course content). There is a reflection component to this assignment as well.

## **Grade Breakdown:**

Participation	30% (CO1)(LO9)
Language-in-Use Contribution	10% (CO2)(LO9)
Discussion Leader	10% (CO1)
Article Reflections	20% (CO1, 2)(LO2)(LO9)
Presentation	5%
Final Paper	25% (CO2, 3)(LO2)(LO9)
	--bibliography and topic submission (2.5%)
	--reflection component (2.5%)
	--peer review workshop (5%)
	--research paper (15%)

### **Grading Scale:**

A+ = 98%-100% A = 93%-97% A- = 90%-92%  
B+ = 88%-89% B = 83%-87% B- = 80%-82%  
C+ = 78%-79% C = 73%-77% C- = 70%-72%  
D+ = 68%-69% D = 63%-67% D- = 60%-62%  
F = Below 60%

### **Cell Phone and Laptop Policy:**

Phone calls, texting, surfing the web, and other activities not related to the class are not permitted (unless otherwise instructed). There is a penalty for these offenses: you have the option to either take 2 points off your next exam grade or deliver a 10 minute presentation to the class **for each offense** noted.

### **Communication:**

You can expect me to reply to your email within 48 hours. Understand that email sent over the weekend may not receive a reply until Monday morning.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating:**

Maintaining a high standard of academic integrity is in the best interest of everyone at Wittenberg and is everyone's responsibility. Plagiarism and cheating can take various forms including taking something from the web and passing it in as your own work, copying answers from someone else, not properly citing a source... In this class, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarizing is to receive a zero on that assignment; it is possible to fail the course for plagiarizing. In some cases, I will have you sign the assignment assert that you have not cheated or plagiarized. By signing, you acknowledge that you have not borrowed material without acknowledging sources (plagiarism), nor have you copied homework or quiz/exam answers. If at any time you have questions about plagiarism or cheating, please see me or raise those questions in class. You can also follow this link to the Honor Council webpage:  
<https://www.wittenberg.edu/academics/academicintegrity>

### **Accessibility and ADA:**

Wittenberg University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, learning, chronic health, physical, hearing, vision and neurological, or temporary medical conditions, etc.), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, you must register with Accessibility Services by contacting Gwen Owen, the Director of Accessibility Services at 937-327-7870 or by email at [oweng@wittenberg.edu](mailto:oweng@wittenberg.edu). Please note that services are confidential and may take time to put into place, and are not retroactive. The Accessibility Services Office is located in the Office of Academic Services COMPASS Sweet Success Center, Thomas Library on the first floor. Walk-in appointments are welcome 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday.