Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to help you explore some of the psychological, social, cultural, and biological factors which influence individual women’s behavior, experience, and identity. We will explore both commonalities and diversity among women; examine the evidence for both differences and similarities between women and men; and consider important aspects of women’s lives across the lifespan, including work, relationships, sexuality, and physical and psychological well-being. We will attempt to think critically about, and integrate, readings in psychological research and theory, accounts of other women’s experience, and our own personal knowledge and experience. This course is intended for women and men who would like to learn more about women’s experience and what shapes it.

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- Describe and compare a number of theoretical perspectives in the psychology of women.
- Describe important psychological, social, cultural, and biological factors that shape women’s identity, experience, and behavior.
- Identify some psychological similarities and differences between women and men as groups.
- Describe some variations in women’s experience resulting from class, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation.
- Distinguish among unfounded popular beliefs, well-established research findings, and unresolved controversies in the psychology of women.
- Identify some of your own values and choices about gender, including ways that ideas from the course can be applied in action for positive personal, social or political change.
**Required Reading**


Crawford, Mary, & Unger, Rhoda (eds.) *In our own words: Writings from women’s lives* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Some additional articles will be made available on reserve.

**Evaluation Methods**

Your responsibilities in the course, and the ways your learning will be evaluated, are these:

- 4 short observation/reflection papers, 18% of grade each 72%
- 1 small-group oral presentation 18%
- prepared class participation 12.5%

**total** 102.5%

Each of these assignments is described more fully below.

**Assignments**

**OBSERVATION/REFLECTION PAPERS (72%)**

The purpose of these papers is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate that you understand the ideas of the course, and to encourage you to compare, evaluate and apply these ideas. Three times during the course, you will receive a list of projects or questions requiring thoughtful reflection on the reading, and giving you the option of doing some informal observation and data collection. You are to choose one project or question as the basis for a 3- to 5-page (typed, double-spaced) paper, which includes information and ideas both from the reading and lectures and from your own thinking and observation of the world around you. The fourth paper, due at the final exam period (there won't be a final), will ask you to reflect on your experience of the course as a whole.

A good paper

- summarizes ideas from the reading accurately, in your own words;
- explores those ideas thoughtfully and originally through your own observations, examples, applications, evaluative comments, or comparisons and connections to other ideas;
- is written in clear, well organized, correct English.
ORAL PRESENTATION (18%)

The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to explore a topic of interest to you beyond the information in the assigned reading, to challenge you to work in a small group, and to expand the class learning experience by sharing students’ learning. In a small group of 2 to 4 students, you will choose one of the topics listed below; identify a question that interests you related to that topic; gather, summarize and evaluate information from the psychological research literature and other relevant sources; organize a presentation; and present what you have learned to the class on the day indicated. The whole group’s presentation should take 5 to 20 minutes.

You may, if you wish, propose to the instructor a topic that’s not listed below. Your presentation may focus on a practical or an empirical question, or may present and evaluate a theoretical position.

You will turn in an outline of your part of the presentation, along with a list of 4 or 5 references you used (beyond the assigned readings for class). While the oral presentation is a group project, your grade will be based on your own presentation. A good presentation

- identifies and poses a specific, relevant question;
- presents relevant, accurate evidence and argument, based on recent research and your own thinking;
- is well integrated as a whole group project;
- is presented in a clear, lively, well organized way;
- is accompanied by a detailed outline and reference list.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (13%)

When a class meets just once a week, it is especially important that you attend every meeting. Come to class, having done the assigned reading ahead of time, bringing your comments and questions. To encourage you to complete the assigned reading and think about it before class, beginning on January 25 each class session will begin with a very brief (3 questions, 5 minutes) short-answer “reading verification quiz” on some major ideas of the reading assignment. Each quiz counts .5% of your grade (totaling 6.5%). These quizzes cannot be made up.

In addition, beginning on February 1, each week you will take part in a small group discussion of two or three reading selections from the Crawford and Unger collection, or on on-line reserve. Along with one or two other group members, you will be responsible for presenting one article to the rest of your group, and you will learn about the other assigned article(s) from the other group members. Group members will evaluate each others’ presentations each week, and the instructor will occasionally listen in and evaluate presentations. Each week’s presentation will count .5% of your grade (totaling 6%).
Deadlines and Other Expectations

Observation/reflection papers are due at the beginning of class on the date listed on the course schedule. The last one, due at the final exam period, cannot be accepted late. You may turn in one of the other papers up to 3 days late (i.e. by Friday afternoon at 3:30) without penalty. Other late papers will receive a lowered grade. I expect you to submit a paper copy of any paper to me in class or to my mailbox in John Dewey Hall; i.e. please do not submit papers by email.

Because oral presentations are scheduled to connect to weekly class topics, and because other people in your group depend on you, please make every effort to be in class and make your presentation when it is scheduled. If in an emergency you are unable to be there, the rest of your group and I will decide whether to go ahead without you (and arrange a make-up activity for you) or postpone the group presentation for a week.

Reading verification quizzes and small-group assigned reading presentations cannot be made up.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-18</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>ch 1</td>
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<td>1-25</td>
<td>Research methods; Theoretical perspectives</td>
<td>ch 2; ch 3</td>
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<td>2-1</td>
<td>Biological influences</td>
<td>ch 4</td>
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<td>2-8</td>
<td>Socialization</td>
<td>ch 5</td>
<td>Paper 1</td>
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<td>2-15</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>ch 6</td>
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<td>2-22</td>
<td>Cognition and achievement</td>
<td>ch 7</td>
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<td>3-1</td>
<td>(no class)</td>
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<td>3-8</td>
<td>Work</td>
<td>ch 8</td>
<td>Paper 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-15</td>
<td>Personality &amp; social interaction</td>
<td>ch 9, 281-306</td>
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<td>3-22</td>
<td>(no class—spring vacation)</td>
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<td>3-29</td>
<td>Friendship &amp; intimacy</td>
<td>308-350, 358-373</td>
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<td>4-5</td>
<td>Pregnancy, childbirth, mothering</td>
<td>399-412,350-358</td>
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<td>4-12</td>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>375-399,412-423</td>
<td>Paper 3</td>
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<td>4-19</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
<td>ch 12</td>
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<td>4-26</td>
<td>Violence against women</td>
<td>ch 13</td>
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<td>5-3</td>
<td>Mental health &amp; psychotherapy</td>
<td>ch 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>(Thursday, 4:00 p.m.)</td>
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<td>Paper 4</td>
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*Schedule may be changed with advance notice.
**Readings are in Rider: Our Voices: Psychology of Women, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. Additional reading assignments in the Crawford and Unger collection are listed on the following pages.
Readings for Small Group Discussions

Readings are available either in Crawford and Unger: In our own words: Writings from women’s lives (2nd ed.)—page numbers are given for articles in Crawford and Unger—or on on-line reserve at Bailey-Howe Library.

2/1 Biological Influences

b) Tavris: The mismeasure of woman. On reserve.

2/8 Socialization


2/15 Communication

a) Eng: She learns to shout. Pp 73-80.

2/22 Cognition and Achievement


3/8 Work


3/15 Personality and Social Interaction

a) Orenstein: Rising above: I like myself. On reserve.
3/29 Friendship and Intimate Relationships
   b) Rubin: The approach-avoidance dance: Men, women, and intimacy. On reserve.

4/5 Pregnancy, childbirth, mothering
   a) Pratt: One good mother to another. Pp 190-193. AND
      Crawford: Two careers, three kids, and her 2,000-mile commute. Pp 251-254.
   b) Garcia: I just came out pregnant. On reserve.

4/12 Health

4/19 Sexuality
   b) Christina: Are we having sex yet? Pp163-166 AND
      Hex: Celina’s commitment. Pp 144-146.

4/26 Violence

5/3 Mental health and Psychotherapy
   a) Rex: My left hand. Pp 93-97 AND
   b) Hooks: Writing from the darkness. On reserve.
Suggested Oral presentation topics

2/22  Women’s ways of knowing: Is there a ‘women’s style” of learning? What educational practices best support women’s learning?

Attributions for success and failure: What are constructive attribution patterns, and how can they taught?

3/8  Tokenism: How does it feel to be a token woman in a traditionally male workplace? What factors can modify the token experience?

Evaluation on the job: Are women and men evaluated differently?

3/15 Self-in-relation: Do women develop a sense of self through relationships?

Relational aggression: Are there ways in which girls and women are the more aggressive sex?

3/29 Power in intimate relationships: What determines the balance of power in a marriage or partnership?

Death of a partner: What factors help women to cope with widowhood or partner loss?

4/5 Stereotypes of mothers: What are our society’s stereotypes of mothers, and how do they differ by race and class?

“To mother” vs. “to father”: Why is it that women care for children?

4/12 The doctor-patient relationship: Do women’s and men’s experience and treatment as patients differ? How? Why?

Puberty: What helps girls make the transition to adolescence comfortably?

4/19 Sexual education: What kinds of educational programs are effective in decreasing adolescents' risky sexual behaviors?

Sexual satisfaction: What factors are associated with women’s satisfaction with their sexual lives?

4/26 Sexual harassment: What can be done to discourage sexual harassment at work or in school?

Childhood sexual abuse: What do survivors of incest or other childhood sexual abuse need for psychological health?
Prevention of eating disorders: What can be done to prevent the development of anorexia or bulimia?

Double standard of mental health: Are women’s and men’s mental health evaluated by different standards?