

Gender Issues in the Workplace (LER 590GI)

School of Labor & Employment Relations
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Spring 2020

Wednesday in LER 51 from 11:00am – 1:50pm

Instructor	Office Phone	Office	E-mail	Office Hours
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Course Description and Objectives

Despite public and organizational policies for fair and equal treatment for employees in the workplace, *both women and men* still confront existing and newly emerging challenges at work. For an HR professional, it is quite complex and difficult to address sex and gender issues at work as they are often subtle and intricately related to various individual, organizational, legal, societal, and cultural aspects. Thus, for those who will be in HR positions, it is crucial to understand a range of sex and gender issues from diverse perspectives, as well as critically think and discuss how to better manage employees in organizations.

Throughout the course, students will read a mix of book chapters and journal articles on various topics. Example topics include but are not limited to: stereotypes, selection & employment decisions, workplace discrimination, gendered organizational injustice, power & relationships, leadership & leadership development, work-family balance & career, and LGBTQ. In-class activities will consist of a mixture of lectures, small-group debates and discussions, case analyses, individual exercises, and etc. Students will also conduct a team-based learning project to facilitate in-depth understandings of a workplace issue that the team selects, and critically think possible ways to address the issue in organizations. By fulfilling the course requirements successfully, students will gain knowledge of the literatures to better understand the nature of workplace gender issues from various perspectives, as well as obtain practical insights as to how to manage and address gender issues in organizations.

Course Requirements

Weekly papers (50 points)

Prior to each Wednesday class (by 11:00pm Tuesday), you will submit a short paper on the assigned reading materials each week (no more than 3 pages, 12 font size, double-spaced, left alignment, 1 inch margin, no cover page). This should be typed and turned in to Compass. Even if you have to miss a class, you will still need to submit the assignment through Compass. No late papers will be accepted without a university-accepted excuse. *Your paper should indicate that you thought about the assigned topic in depth (e.g., provision of your reflections on the issues) in addition to your short summary of the content or important concepts/principles.* Your written reflections will come in handy when discussing topics in class and studying for your exams. Each week's paper counts 5 points (10 weeks x 5 pts = 50 pts; starting from Week 2). Note that these papers will be checked based on a "pass" or "fail" basis. Every 30 minutes late, you will lose 1 point.

Overall class participation (30 points)

The success of this course is heavily dependent on students' active participation in discussions (e.g., asking and answering questions, sharing and providing thoughts, ideas, opinions, and experiences, etc.). Contributions to in-class discussions come from both quantity and quality. Class decorum is also a fundamental basis for class discussion (*please see the section for student conduct*). Your class participation and decorum count 30 points.

In-class assignments and case studies (60 points)

I will be giving you *in-class assignments on 5 random days throughout the semester*. Assignments can include exercises, discussion & debate, instant writing after reading a short article, etc. *Only the four best scores* will count towards your grade, so you can miss *one without penalty* (4 assignments x 5 pts = 20 pts). Also, there will be *4 case studies that students will work during class* (see the course schedule). Case study will be done in small groups, and each group will present their group answers and discussion results in front of class (4 cases x 10pts = 40pts). NO makeup in-class assignments or case studies for points will be given unless students have a valid excuse (e.g., travel for a job interview, hospitalization). Make-ups must be completed and turned in within 7 days of the missed assignment. It is your responsibility to find out if you missed an assignment and ask for the materials (e.g., handouts, sources of video clips, etc.). Your in-class assignments will be returned to you after I post grades on Compass. You are responsible for keeping the returned assignments to prepare for your exams, or for just in case to claim for scores that were accidentally missing on Compass.

Exams (100 points)

Two examinations will be given during the semester (a midterm & a final exam: 50pts x 2 exams). The exams will consist of two parts: (1) short answer essays and (2) long essays. Remember that for each portion of the exams, questions are based on all aspects of the course: the reading assignments, in-class activities & group discussions, lectures, and video clips.

Make-up exam policy. If you must miss an exam due to a documented excuse, contact me as soon as possible to schedule a make-up date in advance. If you know you are going to miss an exam, you must notify me before the exam date. If I am not notified, no make-up exam will be given.

- The make-up exams cannot be taken on any time after its scheduled date and time.
- However, for extraordinary circumstances, I reserve the right to give an early or late make-up exam for any students not taking the exam during the regular testing time period.

Final project (100 points)

To facilitate in-depth learning experiences beyond our classroom setting, students will conduct a group project. Each group will be responsible for researching on a chosen topic. As an example, possible topic areas are listed below, and you may decide and choose a more specific topic of your own. Topics need to be cleared with me before beginning your full-stage research. More specifically, each team will be responsible for submitting a short 2-page project proposal (1.5 spaced, hard copy) to me in class any time by March 13th. This proposal will not be graded, but it is to ensure that each team moves the project forward in a timely manner and receives feedback from the instructor. No late proposals will be accepted.

The proposal should...

- a. include a chosen topic of interest, planned time line of the project, and team member names
- b. state why the chosen topic is important to address as a future HR professional
- c. outline overall questions that the team would like to answer by conducting research (e.g., how grooming and dress code policies affect women and men differently in the workplace? What employers and employees can do to make sure employees are not adversely affected by the policies?).

Example topic areas to name a few:

- Gender and dress code & grooming polices in organizations/occupations
- Provision of gender-neutral toilets in organizations
- Gender issues in specific fields (e.g., nursing, engineering, blue collar work, entrepreneurs)
- Pay gap between women and men in a specific industry
- Teenage workers need a sexual harassment training
- Allyship in promoting diversity

On 5/6, as a final deliverable, your team is required to make an oral presentation on your topic. Team points are 50 and these will be based on the overall quality of your presentation content as delivered in class. I will also have you rate each of your team member's individual contribution to the team project, and this individual points are 50. Thus, you can earn up to 100 points through the group project (50 for team performance, 50 for individual contribution). The rating format and more detailed guidelines for presentations will be introduced in class. Throughout the project, you are more than welcome to consult your instructor regarding your group project. No written report is required but you must deposit your presentation slides in Compass.

Course Grades and Grading Scale

Grades will be determined by 4 areas of your performance:

1. Reaction papers & Active class participation: 80 points
2. In-class assignments & case studies: 60 points
3. Exams: 100 Points (each 50 pts x 2 exams)
4. Team Project: 100 Points

A total of 340 points

A (96-100%), A- (92-95.9%), B+ (88-91.9%), B (84-87.9%), B- (80-83.9%)
 C+ (77-79.9%), C (73-76.9%), C- (70-72.9%), D+ (67-69.9%), D (63-66.9%)
 D- (60-62.9%), F (Below 60%)

Classroom Formats & Student Conduct

1. Class is held once per week. Please be courteous to others by being to class on time. Students are expected to be an active learner in all components of classes.
2. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Mobile phones: Please silence them and do not use them during class time. If you need to have your cell phone on for emergency reasons, please put them on the vibrant mode and you may sit near the door to step outside the classroom. No text-messaging and emailing is allowed in classroom. If you have emergency, you may exit the classroom to use your phone.

Laptops: Students' laptop use in class is strictly limited to note taking and class purposes. Personal emails, instant messaging, accessing social media, Internet surfing, or any other use unrelated to class are prohibited. If such a case (laptop or mobile phone use) is caught, you will lose your participation points (Each violation will result in -5 points from your participation points).

Eating: You can have your lunch or snack during a break as I typically give a 15 min break. Please do not have your food delivered to classroom during our class time.
3. **We are each responsible for creating a friendly learning environment in this course. Be courteous to your peers regardless of their different opinions, languages, and backgrounds.**
4. Communication:
 - a. If you have to miss more than 2 classes in a row due to long-term constraints or if you will have to miss an exam, please do let me know. You should ask for the missed materials for in-class activities—please talk to me in person shortly before or after the class.
 - b. Throughout the semester, you're more than welcome to set up an appointment with me to talk about how to improve your performance in this course. Please note that the grading scale is clearly provided in this syllabus. *Grades will not be adjusted via email communication on the last minute. Therefore, if you have any concerns or questions, please come talk to me early on.*

- c. The syllabus contains important information that you will be responsible for knowing throughout the semester (e.g., policies & rules, course evaluation elements, course schedule, etc.). Therefore, if you have a question about the course, please consult the syllabus before you contact me. I will gladly respond to emails if you need clarification about what is covered in the syllabus; however, I will not respond to emails about questions that can be easily answered by reading the syllabus.

Other Important Policies

Students with Disabilities: UIUC provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, please refer to the following website and contact the University's disability services office.

<http://www.disability.illinois.edu/>

Academic Integrity Policy: As with any other University course, plagiarism, cheating or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any way. ***Cases of academic integrity infractions will be pursued to the fullest extent allowed by University regulations*** (see http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-402.html for details). ***Ignorance of a rule is never a defense. Therefore, it is students' responsibility to educate themselves about the risk of academic integrity infractions and to avoid it. Just don't do it!!***

Sexual Misconduct Policy and Reporting: The University of Illinois is committed to combating sexual misconduct. Faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX and Disability Office. In turn, an individual with the Title IX and Disability Office will provide information about rights and options, including accommodations, support services, the campus disciplinary process, and law enforcement options.

A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors, confidential advisors, and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<http://wecare.illinois.edu/resources/students/#confidential>

Other information about resources and reporting is available here: <http://wecare.illinois.edu/>

Course Schedule

Week 1: 1/22

- Course introduction
- A quick snapshot of gender inequality trend across nations

Week 2: 1/29

- Three approaches to understanding gender and sex differences
- Gender stereotypes

Week 3: 2/5

- Benevolent and hostile sexism at work
- Making employment decisions
- **Case Study I. (job offer & accept decisions)**

Week 4: 2/12

- Sex/gender discrimination at work & Legal framework in the U.S.

Week 5: 2/19

- Workplace sexual harassment
- **Case study II. (sexual harassment in the U.S. Military)**

Week 6: 2/26

- Physical attractiveness & interpersonal relationships at work
Workplace romance & friendship

Week 7: 3/4

- **Exam I**

Week 8: 3/11

- Career issues for women and men & Mentoring
- **Case study III. (mentoring program in medical field)**

3/14 – 3/22 Spring Break

Week 9: 3/25

- Work-life balance for women and men

Week 10: 4/1

- Gender, leadership, and leadership development

Week 11: 4/8

- LGBTQ in the workplace

Week 12: 4/15

- Managing diversity at work
- Approaches to developing gender-inclusive organizations
- **Case study IV. (Google diversity manifesto and leader candor)**

Week 13: 4/22 (No Class, Instructor will attend a conference in Austin, TX)

Week 14: 4/29

- **Group project**

Week 15: 5/6

- **Group presentations**

A final exam schedule will be announced later.

** This schedule and topic is subject to change due to unexpected constraints or events.*