

## LANGUAGE AND GENDER

### Women's Studies 151 Section 003

Professor Deborah Keller-Cohen

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: T 1-2, W 2-3

and by appointment

Over the past three decades, scholars have turned their attention to the role gender plays in how we interact with language. In this course we will explore how language is used to create social differences between men and women and the consequences of these differences across the life span. We examine not only the role of gender in how people talk to each other in face-to-face interaction but also in what and how we read and write. Work in linguistics, anthropology, psychology, sociology, literature and feminist theory will be part of our readings and class discussions. This course is aimed at introducing you to different methodologies social scientists and humanists have used to study the relationship between language and gender, developing your critical thinking and writing skills, and increasing your awareness of language as an instrument for creating and maintaining power differentials.

As a small seminar, this course fundamentally depends on the contributions of each class member. Course assignments are structured to give class members experiences and responsibilities that enable them to play an on-going role in creating knowledge about and developing an understanding of language and gender. Active participation in class discussion provides an opportunity for class members to assume leadership in helping the class raise questions about course materials as well as address those questions. Regular attendance in class enables class members to establish a community of scholars who take themselves and each other seriously by their attention to and engagement with the ideas in this course. Students are expected to come to each seminar meeting having prepared the course readings and/or assignments for that class

Readings: **Note- Readings should be prepared by the date by which they are listed.**

Eckert, Penelope and McConnell-Ginet, Sally. 2003 *Language and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available at Shaman Drum. State St. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor **EMG**

Finders, Margaret. 1997 *Just Girls*. N.Y. and London: Teacher's College Press.

Coursepack available at Accucopy on E. William near Cottage Inn Pizza. Readings with \* are in Pt II, ready later this month.

**Sept. 2 Introduction**

**Sept. 4 Biology**

EMG Ch. 1 pp 9-15(middle of pg.)

Martin, Emily.1997. The Egg and the Sperm. In Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragona, & Patricia Zavella (Eds.) *Situated Lives*. N.Y. & London:Routledge, 85-98.

Lacqueur, Thomas.1990 *Making Sex:Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, Mass & London, England:Harvard Univ. Press., various pages.

**Sept. 9 Biology**

FILM: You don't know Dick

**What is gender? Social practice**

EMG Ch. 1 15-51

**Sept.11. What is gender? Social practice**

EMG Ch. 1 15-51 cont.

Weir. John. 2003 Queer Guy with a Slob's Eye. *New York Times*. Sunday August 10 Section 9, p.1 & 6.

Rich, Frank. 2003 And now, the Queer Eye for Straight Marriage. *New York Times*.Sunday August 10 Section 2, p.1 & 16.

Brown, Kathleen. 1995. Changed...into the Fashion of Man: The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6(2): 171-193.

**Sept. 16 What is gender? Social practice**

Brown, Kathleen (Cont.)

Go to  
[www.personal.umich.edu/~rustyb/211/gender.htm#transgender](http://www.personal.umich.edu/~rustyb/211/gender.htm#transgender)  
and take notes on the advice given in 3 sites and be prepared to discuss it.

**Asst I ( individual) due**

**Sept. 18 Using language**  
EMG Ch. 2

**Sept. 23 Traversing boundaries**  
Hall, Kira. 1995. Lip Service on the Fantasy Lines. In Kira Hall & Mary Bucholtz (Eds.) *Gender Articulated*. N.Y. and London: Routledge, 183-216.

Barrett, Rusty. The Homo-Genius Speech Community. In Anna Livia & Kira Hall.(Eds.) *Queerly Phrased*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 181-201.

**Sept. 25 Organizing talk**  
EMG Ch. 3

**Sept. 30 Organizing talk**  
Fishman, Pamela. 1983 . Interaction: The Work Women Do. In Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae, & Nancy Henley (Eds.) *Language, Gender and Society*. Rowley: Newbury House, 89-102.

Cameron, Deborah. 1997. Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity. In Sally Johnson & Ulrike Meinhof (Eds.) *Language and Masculinity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 47-64.

Discussing group project

**Oct.2 Making social moves**  
EMG Ch. 4

**Project proposals due. Evening appointments to discuss proposals.**

**Oct 7 Making social moves**

Differences  
Sheldon , Amy. 1998. Preschool Negotiators: Linguistic

in How Girls and Boys Regulate the Expression of Dissent in Same-Sex Groups. In Jenny Cheshire and Peter Trudgill (Eds.) *Sociolinguistics Reader. Vol. 2 Gender and Discourse*. London: Arnolds.

Deborah Tannen. 1990. Who's Interrupting ( Chapter 7) (188-216)*You Just Don't Understand*. N.Y.: Bantam Books.\*

**Oct. 9 Positioning ideas and subjects**

EMG Chg. 5

**Oct. 14**      **Fall break- no class**

**Oct. 16**      **Asst. 2 Project presentations. Hard copy due.**

**Oct. 21**      **Saying and Implying**  
EMG Ch. 6

**Oct.. 23**      **Saying and Implying: Sexual Assault**  
Go to <http://www.umich.edu/~sapac/assault.html>  
and read that page as well as the links: Know the Facts,  
Assault in Intimate Relationships and The University of Michigan  
Policy on Sexual Assault

Sanday, Peggy Reeves. 1996. Chapter 4: The No-Means- Yes  
Defense (82-99). *A Woman Scorned*. N.Y.; Doubleday

Aviel, Rebecca. 1996. Insidious Misinterpretations: The Discourse  
of Male and Female Communication in Acquaintance Rape Trials.  
In Suzanne Wertheim, Ashlee Bailey, & Monica Corston-Oliver.  
*Engendering Communication*. Proceedings from the Fifth Berkeley  
Women and Language Conference, 25-36.

Levesque, Susan and Ehrlich, Susan. 1998. Male Perpetrators/Male  
Victims: Exceptional Representations of Sexual Assault. In  
Suzanne Wertheim, Ashlee Bailey, & Monica Corston-Oliver.  
*Engendering Communication*. Proceedings from the Fifth Berkeley  
Women and Language Conference. 311-319.

**Oct. 28**      **Saying and Implying: Sexual Harassment**

Go to  
<http://www.newmedialearning.com/psh/umich/choice.shtml>  
and select the **Student** link and go through this tutorial designed  
for  
U of M students.

Boxer, Diana & Tyler, Andrea. 1996. A Cross-Linguistic View of  
Harassment. In Natasha Warner, Jocelyn Ahlers, Leela Bilmes,  
Monica Oliver, Suzanne Wertheim & Melinda Chen(Eds.) *Gender  
and Belief Systems*. Proceedings from the Fourth Berkeley Women  
and Language Conference, 85-99.

**Asst. 3 (individual) due**

**Oct. 30 Mapping the world**  
EMG Ch 7

**Nov. 4 Mapping the world**

Schultz, Muriel. 1975. The Semantic Derogation of Women. In Barrie Thorne & Nancy Henley (Eds.) *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.

Sutton, Laurel. 1992. Bitches and Skanky hobags: The Place of Women in Contemporary Slang. In Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, & Birch Moonwomon (Eds.) *Locating Power*. Proceedings from the Second Berkeley Women and Language Conference. Vol. 2, 560-572.

**Nov.. 6 Mapping the world: Institutional cases**

Hamilton, Mykol, Hunter, Barbara , & Stuart-Smith, Shannon. 1994. Jury Instructions Worded in the Masculine Generic. In Camille Roman, Suzanne Juhasz, & Cristanne Miller (Eds.) *The Women & Language Debate* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 340-347.

Trix, Frances & Psenka, Carolyn. 2003 Exploring the Color of Glass: Letters of Recommendation for Female and Male Medical Faculty. *Discourse & Society*, 14(2): 191-220. \*

**Second group project due Nov. 25**

**Nov. 11 Reading and writing gender**

Finders, Margaret. 1997. *Just Girls*. N.Y.: Teacher's College Press, Ch. 1 and 2.

**Nov. 13 Reading and writing gender**

Finders. Ch. 3 and 4

**Nov. 18 Reading and writing gender**

Finders Ch. 5

Radway, Janice. 1984. Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies: The Functions of Romance Reading. *Daedalus* , 113(3):49-73.\*

**Nov. 20 Working the market**

EMG Ch. 8

- Nov. 25**      **Asst. 4 Second project presentations. Hard copy of papers due**
- Nov. 27**      **Thanksgiving break – no class**
- Dec. 2**        **Performativity**  
EMG Ch. 9
- Dec. 4.**        **Performativity**  
McElhinny, Bonnie. 1998 “I Don’t Smile Much Anymore”: Affect, Gender and the Discourse of Pittsburgh Police Officers. In Jennifer Coates. *Language and Gender*. Oxford: Blackwell,309-327. \*
- Bucholtz, Mary. 1996 Geek the Girl: Language, Femininity and Female Nerds. In Natasha Warner, Jocelyn Ahlers, Leela Bilmes, Monica Oliver, Suzanne Wertheim & Melinda Chen(Eds.) *Gender and Belief Systems*. Proceedings from the Fourth Berkeley Women and Language Conference, 119-131. \*
- Queen, Robin. 1997 “I Don’t Speak Spritch.” In Anna Livia & Kira Hall.(Eds.) *Queerly Phrased..* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 233-256 \*
- Dec. 9**        **Reflecting on gender and language**  
**Asst. 5 (Popular advice papers-individual) due**

## REQUIREMENTS

**Asst. 1** (Individual) Due Sept. 16 **10 pts.**

Select a widely circulated image that projects an opposition (different femininities, different masculinities or masculinity and femininity). Describe the opposition and explain how the image accomplishes this. Be sure to include the image (print or video) 2-3 pgs.

**Asst. 2** (Group project) Hard copy and presentations on Oct. 16 **20 pts.**

You will develop a question of interest to your group, formulate a hypothesis, gather/examine data, report your findings and prepare conclusions. Proposals for this project are 2 Oct. 2. I will meet with each group that evening so please add that to your calendars.

All members of the group are expected to participate in the writing of the paper. The project work itself can be divided up in different ways that reflect individual, subgroup or whole group activities. You should include a description of the work each person did. Your grade will reflect the quality of the presentation as well as the written product. Active participants will receive the same grades. If you do not actively contribute, your grade will be lowered.

**Asst. 3** (Individual) Due Oct. 28 **10 pts**

This paper looks closely at naming practices (how we refer to as well as describe individuals) in our culture. Your source for this paper will be the print media. (3-4 pgs.)

**Asst. 4** (Group project) Hard copy and presentations Nov. 25 **20 pts.**

Social action project

**Asst. 5** (Individual) **20 pts.** Due Dec. 9

In this paper you will critique advice on gender and talk from some source in the popular print media such as advice books and magazines. The paper should describe and evaluate the constructions of gender, the representations of talk and their relationship. (5-8 pgs.)

**Class Participation** 20 pts.

This consists of thoughtful participation in class plus e-mailing a question about one reading each day to members of the seminar. E-mails should be received by midnight the night before class.

**Note: Students absent from more than three classes will lose 5 points from their course point total.**