Title of Course and Course Number: Politics And Sex, Pol 272 Credits: 3

Description of course consistent with catalog: What is it like to be female in a male-dominated society? This course critically examines the sociopolitical construction of patriarchy and the conscious and non-conscious, intentional and unintentional ways in which male supremacy is reproduced in contemporary society. Particular emphasis is placed on the mechanisms of social control designed to limit women's participation in society and to ensure the perpetuation of male dominance.

Course Prerequisites: None

Course Objectives:
1. To define and critically examine the ideologies of sexism and patriarchy.
2. To delineate the ways in which sexism and patriarchy operate on the conscious and non-conscious levels of personal and political life.
3. To analyze the way social control is maintained through violence.
4. To examine the consequences of a sexist and patriarchal political order on the quality of life for women and men.
5. To evaluate strategies and models for personal and political change.

Student learning outcomes:
At the end of the semester, students should be able to:
1. demonstrate orally or in writing an understanding of the terms oppression and sexism, and their relation to issues of power.
2. define and analyze in writing the meaning of the terms equality, misogyny, heterosexism, and patriarchy.
3. explain and analyze in writing and orally biological, sociological, psychological, anthropological, and religious beliefs used to justify patriarchy and misogyny.
4. analyze the role various institutions play in defining appropriate behavior and appearance for the sexes (for example, the media, religion, education, popular culture, legal system, etc.).
5. describe and analyze the opportunities and limits placed on both men and women in patriarchal societies and systems.
6. analyze in writing how sexism permeates the structure of social institutions.
7. analyze orally or in writing the role that heterosexism plays in forming a gender identity.
8. analyze in writing the social, psychological, and physiological impact of strict adherence to one’s gender role.
9. describe and evaluate in writing the social sanctions for those who deviate from their gender expected behavior.
10. demonstrate an understanding orally or in writing of the ways the social control is accomplished through violence.
11. explain and evaluate in writing theories of causation of male sexual violence.
12. explain and evaluate orally or in writing theories that justify male sexual violence.
13. explore orally the relationship between violence against women and children and the family as an institution.
14. describe and analyze orally individual and collective action regarding issues of women’s identity, women’s rights, and sexual freedoms.
15. demonstrate in writing an understanding of the challenges to overcoming patriarchy and misogyny both personally and socially.

**Topical outline of the course content:**

I. Introduction and definition of terms: A Framework for Analysis
   
   A. Politics, Power, and Ideology
   B. Sexism
   C. Patriarchy

II. The Theories and Meanings of Male Dominance
   
   A. Who Said What About Women: The Stereotypes of Sexism
   B. The Construction of Misogyny
   C. Theories of Female Sexuality and Personality

III. The Mechanisms of Social Control
   
   A. Sex and Gender Role Socialization: This section will examine the non-violent mechanisms of social control with particular emphasis on compulsory heterosexuality, homophobia, language, and the media.

   B. Sexual Terrorism: The control of women through actual and implied violence. This will be the core of the course; we will study the theoretical constructions of violence against women and the realities of male sexual violence.

   
   This section of the course examines the web of social institutions and their impact on women’s lives. We examine the role institutions play in defining, shaping, maintaining, and reproducing sexist norms and values.

V. Beyond Dominance: Strategies for Change.
   
   This section of the course examines the concepts of resistance and agency. Resistance and agency address responses to individual and systematic oppression. We will examine the conditions which support or inhibit women’s individual and collective resistance and agency.

**Guidelines/suggestions for teaching methods and student learning activities:**

Teaching this course involves a number of pedagogical strategies, including lecture, discussion, films, group exercises, and guest speakers.

**Guidelines/suggestions for methods of student assessment:**
There will be three challenge papers; two are analytical, one is a response paper. The analytical papers are worth 40% each of the total grade; the response paper is worth 20%. Attendance and participation are required.

**Suggested readings, texts:**


*Bibliography:*


Herman, Judith. 1992. Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence, from domestic abuse to political terror. New York: Basic Books.


**Preparer’s name and date:** Dr. Carole Sheffield, Spring, 2000

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