Overview: Gender is an organizing principle of society, shaping social structures, cultural understandings, processes of interaction, and identities in ways that have profound consequences. It affects every aspect of people’s lives, from their intimate relationships to their participation in work, family, government, and other social institutions and their place in the stratification system. Yet gender is such a taken for granted basis for differences among people that it can be hard to see the underlying social structures and cultural forces that reinforce or weaken the social boundaries that define gender. Differences in behavior, power, and experience are often seen as the result of biological imperatives or of individual choice. A sociological view of gender, in contrast, emphasizes how gender is socially constructed and how structural constraints limit choice. This course examines how differences based on gender are created and sustained, with particular attention to how other important bases of personal identity and social inequality—race and class—interact with patterns of gender relations. We will also seek to understand how social change happens and how gender inequality might be reduced.

Readings: There are three required books, which are (or will be) available at House of Our Own bookstore (3920 Spruce Street, 215 222-1576).


Additional readings, marked with an asterisk on the syllabus, will be available on Blackboard.

Requirements:
1) Show up for class on time, do the reading, and be ready to participate in class discussions. No texting, internet browsing, or other distractions, please.
2) Frequent very short (from a few lines to a page) writing tasks. I will sometimes ask you to bring these to class and sometimes ask you to spend a few minutes writing at the beginning of class. These writings will not receive grades; I will simply note credit/no credit.
3) Two short papers (approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages) on assigned topics, details forthcoming. The due dates are **February 18th** and **April 8th**. You must both turn in a printed copy of your paper and submit an electronic version through Blackboard.

4) A midterm (**March 24th**), and a final (**May 5th**).

Grades will be determined as follows:
- Participation and short writing assignments: 15%
- Paper #1: 20%
- Midterm: 15%
- Paper #2: 20%
- Final: 30%

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the University's Code of Academic Integrity:
http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/osl/acadint.html

**Schedule:**

January 14: **Introduction**

Week of 1/18: **Gender as a social construction**

Freedman, Chap. 1

Week of 1/25: **Beyond dichotomy – thinking about difference**

Connell, Chaps. 1, 2, and 4

Week of 2/1: **Gender as process, gender and identity**

Week of 2/8: **Theorizing gender**

Freedman, Chaps. 2-5  
Connell, Chaps. 3 and 5

Week of 2/15: **The power of cultural frames**

*First paper, Thursday, February 18.*


Week of 2/22: **Engendering individuals: How are children’s worlds gendered?**


Week of 3/1: **Meanings of masculinity and femininity: Racial, ethnic, and class variation in the U.S.**

Week of 3/8: **Spring break**

Week of 3/15: **Beyond childhood socialization: what explains adult choices and behavior?**


Week of 3/22: **Gendered bodies: agency and control**

**Midterm in class, Tuesday, March 24.**

Freedman, Chaps. 9-10

Week of 3/29: **Sexuality: pleasure, power, and identities**

Freedman, Chap. 11
Lorber, Intro and Chap. 1

Week of 4/5: **Gender exploitation and violence**

**Second paper due Thursday, April 8.**

Freedman, Chap. 12

Week of 4/12: Gender, work, and families, I

Freedman, Chaps. 6-7.

Week of 4/19: Gender, work, and families, II

Connell, Chap. 7
Freedman, Chap. 8
Lorber, Chaps. 2-3.

Week of 4/26: Gender politics and possible futures

Connell, Chap. 8
Freedman, Chap. 14
Lorber, Chaps. 5 - Epilogue.

Final exam: Wednesday, May 5th, 9:00 – 11:00