

LING 1100
Language, Thought, and Reality: Language and Gender
First-Year Writing Seminar

Course Syllabus

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Meeting Times: MWF 9:05–9:55, Morrill Hall 102
Office Hours: M 11:00–12:00, Morrill Hall 226F
(or by appointment, Morrill Hall basement)

Course Description

A significant number of our daily interactions are accomplished through language and experienced through the lens of gender. This course will examine the connection between language and gender. How does gender shape our communications, how our words are perceived, and how we perceive the language used by others? What type of language do we use to talk about gender? The course will draw on the academic literatures of both gender studies and linguistics, as well as primary sources from the media for examples of “talking about gender.” We will also examine the psychological literature on the results of experiments on gender and language use and cognition.

Learning Outcomes

During the course of the semester, you should be working to demonstrate that you are able to:

- Thoroughly and critically read academic texts in the fields of linguistics and gender studies. You should be reading with the goal of both understanding and questioning the arguments presented.
- Construct an argument utilizing secondary sources, as well as primary empirical evidence. Included in this is a **thesis** as well as an organized presentation of the **evidence** supporting that thesis.
- Incorporate sources and citations into your prose in a manner that is appropriate and consistent.
- Edit and revise both your own work and the works of others for content and style.
- Present polished final drafts that are both explicit in argument and concise in language.
- Develop an understanding of how language and gender interact with one another in our society, as well as the ability to discuss these issues in a socially-conscious and informed manner.

Required Readings

The required readings for this course will be available on Blackboard or through the library course reserves.

Expectations and Classroom Policies

It is important that students come to class prepared, which includes having completed any daily assignments and readings beforehand. Students may be called upon for questions or explanations of concepts in the readings.

Discussion and dialogue are encouraged in this class, and disagreement is anticipated. Please remember to be respectful to one another both in and out of class. If my or any other student's actions make you feel uncomfortable, please discuss it with me.

In general, **no laptops, tablets, cell phones, or other electronic devices** will be allowed in class. Exceptions may be made during discussions of specific readings, where it may be useful to have the text in front of you. However, you are expected to remain engaged in class discussions, and if I find that this privilege is being abused, everyone will be barred from using laptops in class.

Grading Breakdown and Policies

Daily Work & Participation:	15%
Large Assignments:	60%
Final Prep Work:	5%
Final Paper:	20%

Daily Work & Participation (15%)

Students will be expected to carefully read all assigned readings and regularly submit reflections or questions from those readings. Unless otherwise stated, reading discussion questions will be due via Blackboard by **10:00 pm the night before class**.

For Blackboard posts, all submissions should be typed directly into the discussion forum interface (rather than as an attachment). Anything I ask you to turn in during class time will be hard copies. In extenuating circumstances, I may allow electronic submissions. If you ever submit a document electronically, it should be in pdf format.

These kinds of assignments will not be graded, but will be scored as either adequate or inadequate, counting toward the participation grade of the course. Also included in participation are any in-class exercises, as well as students' demonstration of active engagement with the course material during class. Unexcused absences, habitual tardiness, or failure to complete course requirements and/or daily work will negatively affect the participation grade in this course.

Large Assignments (60%)

There will be between 6–8 large writing assignment grades throughout the course. These assignments should be handed in during class the day they are due (see General Guidelines for Writing Assignments below for details). Some of these will consist of multiple stages, and several will involve a revision process. Only the final draft of each of these assignments will receive a recorded grade, though you will receive feedback at every stage of the assignment. Each graded assignment will constitute roughly 10% of the course grade (though some assignments may be weighted more heavily than others).

Grading in this course will be strict, and will become more so as the course progresses and your writing improves. However, you will have opportunities to revise your assignments. See the Revisions section below for more details.

Final Paper & Presentation (25%)

Throughout the course, students will be expected to be researching a relevant topic for the purposes of your final paper. This paper will be due on the last day of class, and will constitute 20% of the course grade.

In addition to the final draft of the paper, students will be expected to turn in a paper proposal, annotated bibliography, and at least one draft with revisions. Lastly, each student will give a 5–8 minute presentation (with a handout) to the class detailing some of the background research for their research paper. Students will also be required to submit a brief questions/reflections critique of the presentations of their fellow students. This presentation and critique, along with the fulfillment of the rest of the final prep work (proposal, bibliography, draft) will serve as an additional 5% of the course grade. (This makes the final paper and all of its prep work worth a quarter of the entire course grade.)

Policy on Absences, Lateness and Extensions

As stated earlier, multiple unexcused absences and/or chronic lateness will negatively impact the participation portion of the grade.

During the course of the semester, you are allotted **three late days** for large assignments (with the exception of drafts undergoing peer editing—these you must turn in on time). These can be used all at once (one assignment, three days late), or individually (three assignments, each one day late). Beyond these three grace period days, extensions will be given only in exigent circumstances, and assignments turned in late will receive a deduction of a full letter grade for every day past the deadline. Furthermore, assignments originally turned in late will receive a maximum grade of B+ upon any revisions.

General Guidelines for Writing Assignments

- Unless otherwise specified, bring a **hard copy** of your assignment to be turned in at the beginning of class on the day it is due.
- All assignments (except in-class exercises) must be typed, following these specifications:
 - Use a standard serif font (e.g., Times New Roman, Cambria, Computer Modern, etc.) (This means NOT Arial, Calibri, Comic Sans, Papyrus, Wingdings, etc.).
 - Use 12 point font.
 - Double space, with 1 inch margins.
 - **Number your pages.**
 - At the top of the first page, include (at minimum) your name, assignment due date, and assignment number (including draft/revision number).
 - At the bottom of the last page, include a word count of the content of your essay (this excludes the heading).
- Proofread and spellcheck before bringing any drafts to class.
- Make sure that you have adequately addressed all aspects of the prompt and that your word count is within the assignment parameters.
- **Staple** your pages together.
- Use a consistent citation style for in-text citations and references. (See handout on citations and references for more detailed requirements.)
- If you turn something in electronically (which is dispreferred), make sure the file is in **pdf format**.

Revisions (read carefully)

Beyond the required revision process for selected assignments, you will also have the opportunity to revise final drafts of assignments for a new grade. You may revise any assignment, except the last assignment and the final paper, as many times as you wish. I will not provide any written comments on revisions; I will only give you a score. (If you do want feedback on a revision, you are always welcome to come to office hours or schedule a meeting with me.)

If you score higher on the revision, the revision grade will replace the original recorded grade; otherwise, the recorded grade will remain as is. You are not guaranteed an improved score simply because you turned in a revised essay. The revised essay must be substantially improved in order to warrant a higher grade than the original.

When you submit a revision, you **must** submit all previous graded drafts of the assignment in question. I will not grade revised essays without the original. So don't throw any assignments away!

The last day to submit revisions is two weeks before the last day of class. You may not submit more than one revised essay in a single 24-hour period. This means that you should be revising assignments earlier in the semester if you wish to use this option; don't wait until the night before the final deadline.

Requirement for Conferences

You are required by the Knight Institute to meet with me individually twice this semester. At these meetings, we can go over a draft or a paper that has already been returned, talk about your final project, or anything else relevant to the class, including any concerns you or I may have about your performance in this course.

The individual meetings can be fulfilled during office hours, or via independently scheduled appointments, but the meeting must be substantive (i.e., coming in to office hours to just say hi does not count). You are responsible for scheduling and keeping your meetings! Beyond these conferences, you are encouraged to attend office hours or schedule meetings with me as often as desired and/or needed.

You will get more out of these meetings if you schedule at least one of them fairly early in the semester.

Contacting your Instructor

I am available by email (see contact info). I may not respond to all emails immediately, but I will respond by the end of the next weekday. I may answer emails over weekends or holidays; however, I make no guarantees, so try to ask any questions during the week.

When you send me an email, be sure to include the string "FWS" in the subject line (this helps ensure that I see your email, as I have a filter set up prioritizing student emails.)

You should feel free to stop by office hours any time. Additionally, you are encouraged (in fact, required) to schedule meetings with me throughout the semester, and you may do so as often as you like. One-on-one detailed conversations about your work are often the best way to improve your writing, so don't be afraid to ask me to review my comments and/or look through a draft with you. I make myself available to you as a resource as often as possible, but ultimately it is your responsibility to ask for clarification or guidance if find yourself struggling in this course.

Public Domain Disclaimer

All student writing for this course will become open information for this course. As such, it may be read and shared by all members of the class at any time. This includes all in-class and take-home assignments, both graded and not graded.

University Policies and Regulations

This instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of: religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Academic Integrity

All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with Cornell's Academic Integrity Code, which is distributed to students in the *Policy Notebook*. The code, together with a guide to *Acknowledging the Work of Others*, can be downloaded at <http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/pdfs/AIAckWorkRev90620.pdf>. In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the code is an F for the term.

Collaborative work in the form of peer review and critique of students' essays by one another is authorized, and indeed encouraged, in this course.

Important Dates – Last Updated 1/14/16

(subject to change)

January 27	FIRST DAY OF CLASS	
February 1		Due: Assignment 1
February 8		Due: Assignment 2
February 15	NO CLASS: FEBRUARY BREAK	
February 17		Due: Assignment 3 Draft
February 22		Due: Assignment 4, Part 1
February 29		Due: Assignment 4, Part 2
March 7		Due: Assignment 3
March 14		Due: Assignment 5 Draft
March 21		Due: Peer Review of Assignment 5
March 25		Due: Final Paper Proposal
March. 28–April 1	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
April 6		Due: Assignment 4, Part 3
April 8		Due: Annotated Bibliography
April 11		Due: Assignment 5
April 18		Due: Assignment 6 Draft
April 22		Due: Final Paper Draft
April 27	LAST DAY TO SUBMIT REVISIONS!	
May 2		Due: Assignment 6
May 11		Due: Final Paper

Schedule of Topics

This represents an initial sketch of the schedule for the course. As we go, some of aspects of this schedule will likely be added, rearranged, or deleted. Weekly detailed schedules of readings and assignments will be handed out in class and subsequently posted on Blackboard.

Week 1 – Introduction to the Course: What is the Study of Language and Gender

Week 2 – Doing Gender: Linguistic Performativity

Week 3 – Communities of Practice & Sociolinguistic Research Methodology

Week 4 – Masculinities and Femininities

Week 5 – Performance and Power

Week 6 – Gender and Metaphor

Week 7 – Talking about Gender: Gendered Insults and Compliments

Week 8 – Power and Privilege: Masculine Generics

Week 9 – Grammatical Gender

Week 10 – *Spring Break*

Week 11–“Sexist Language” and Language Reform

Week 12 – Linguistic Reappropriation of Taboo Forms

Week 13 – Language and the Internet

Week 14 – New Research in the Field of Language and Gender

Week 15 – Final Paper Topics

Week 16 – Final Paper Topics