

Fall 2023

STS-342 (101): Gender, Technology, and Society

Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

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STS 342-101: GENDER, TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

How We Think About Identity—Now

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

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COURSE CANVAS: <https://njit.instructure.com/courses/29929>

CLASS MEETINGS: Tuesdays, 6:00-8:50 pm Cullimore Lecture Hall #2

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BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION: STS 342 focuses on the intersection of gender, sexual identity, race, and ethnicity in the world today. Using a variety of print and digital materials--including SF films, video games, and web content in all its forms--we'll explore the ways in which gender and ethnic/racial identity are being contested...in politics, mass media, and high-tech workplaces.

REQUIRED TEXTS: There are no textbooks to buy for this course. All of the required readings are available in our course Canvas either as downloadable files or URLs.

REQUIRED FILM VIEWING: I will show several films and film clips in class. You will also be asked to see additional films on your own. Some of the films/videos are available for free at the URLs indicated in the syllabus. The others are widely available for a small rental fee on YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, iTunes, and/or Vudu, among other sources. If you have trouble finding a given film, please contact me.

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

GRADE	POINTS
A	90-100
B+	88-90
B	80-87
C+	78-80
C	70-77
D	65-70
F	Below 65

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ GRADING (Here’s How You Earn those 100 Points!)

Two analytical essays on assigned topics--

Essay #1: due November 14	20 points	
Essay #2: due December 12	20	
Midterm exam: October 15	20	
Cumulative Final Exam: December 19	30	
Weekly In-Class Quizzes	5	[10 quizzes @ 0.5 points each]
Weekly Class Participation Grade	5	

WEEKLY READING/ DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

The schedule below provides a basic outline of each week’s readings/films and discussion topics. You should have completed the assigned reading and/or seen the assigned film by the date on which it is scheduled for discussion. There will be a short quiz at the beginning of each class.

September 5 FIRST CLASS MEETING: Course Overview
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Discussion Topics: Course objectives; course structure; grading process; the meaning of *gender*; the social construction of norms; changing views of gender identity

PowerPoint Lecture: Women and Technology: Images & Realities
In-class exercises: “Who Are You?” and the Bem Gender-Role Inventory
In-class feature film: *Zootopia* (2016)



Homework--to be completed by Sept. 12:

- **Become a member of our course Canvas. Respond to the *Zootopia* Forum Assignment. Complete Core Readings 1a-1c and take Implicit Bias Tests [See below]**

Homework—to be completed by Sept. 26: See in in-theater film “Barbie” (2023)

MODULE 1 September 12 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER--part 1
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READINGS:

- 1a.** Messner, Mike. “Ah, Ya Throw Like A Girl!” In *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, (4th ed.) ed. Paula Rothenberg, 46-48. New York: St. Martins, 1998.
- 1b.** Kimmel, Michael. *The Gendered Society* (6th ed. 2017). New York: Oxford UP, 2000. [Hereafter “Kimmel”] “KIMMEL EXCERPT #1”
- 1c.** Fausto-Sterling Anne. “Where Does Gender Come From?” in Kimmel, Michael and Amy Aronson. **CANVAS**

HOMEWORK EXERCISE: Take the GENDER-SCIENCE IAT test at: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html>

DISCUSSION TOPICS: Decoding *Zootopia*; the social construction of gender; implicit bias.

In-class Film Clips: Dare to Compete: *The Struggle of Women in Sports* (HBO, 1999)
Kay Switzer Clip
“Playing with Gender”
“Implicit Bias/ Concepts Unwrapped”
“Barbie” (2023) Trailer

MODULE 2 September 19 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER--part 2
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READINGS:

- 2a.** Bem, Sandra L. “In a Male-Centered World, Female Differences Are Transformed into Female Disadvantages,” **CANVAS**
- 2b.** Hyde, Janet. The Gender Similarities Hypothesis” *American Psychologist* (September 2005): 581-592. **CANVAS**
- 2c.** Kimmel. “KIMMEL EXCERPT 2” **CANVAS**
- 2d.** Rippon. Gender and Our Brains **CANVAS**
- 2e.** Fuentes, Augustin. “Biological Science Rejects the Sex Binary, and That’s Good for Humanity.” *The Scientist*. 12 May 2022. **CANVAS**
- 2f.** “Busting Myths About Sex and Gender.” Excerpted from the second edition of *Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You*. © 2022 by Augustin Fuentes. Published by the University of California Press. **CANVAS**



Homework Film Assignment (due September 26): See the film *North Country* (2005) directed by Niki Caro

MODULE 3**September 26****THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER & WORK****READINGS:****3a.** KIMMEL EXCERPT #3 CANVAS**3b.** Willer, Robb et. al. "Overdoing Gender: A Test of the Masculine Overcompensation Thesis." In Kimmel & Aronson. CANVAS**3c.** Kimmel, Michael. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity." In *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, (11th ed.) ed. Paula Rothenberg with Christina Hsu Accomando, I:7. New York: Worth Publisher/Macmillan Learning. New York 2020. CANVAS**3d.** Ely Robin and Debra Meyerson. "Unmasking Manly Men." In Kimmel & Aronson. CANVAS**FILM TO SEE BEFORE CLASS:** *North Country* (2005) [Amazon, Vudu, iTunes, 2 hours, 6 minutes]**In-class short film and discussion:** "Who Are You?"**Feature Film Discussion:** "Barbie" (2023)**DISCUSSION TOPICS:** The social construction of gender and work in *North Country* and in our country;**Homework Film Assignment (due October 3):** *Hidden Figures* (2016) [Amazon, iTunes, Vudu, 2 hours, 7 minutes]**MODULE 4****October 3****THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE****READINGS:****4a.** Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. "Racial Formations" in Rothenberg: 13-22. (excerpt) CANVAS**4b.** Smedley, Audrey and Brian Smedley. "Race as Biology Is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem Is Real: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives on the Social Construction of Race." *American Psychologist* (January 2005): 16-26. CANVAS**4c.** Jen, Gish. "An Ethnic Trump." In Rothenberg, 284-86. CANVAS**4d.** Subramaniam, Banu. "Snow Brown and the Seven Detergents: A Meta-Narrative on Science and the Scientific Method." In *Women, Science, and Technology*, ed. May Wyer, Mary Barbercheck, Donna Giesman, Hatice Orun Ozturk, Marta Wayne, 36-41. New York: Routledge, 2001. CANVAS**4e.** Rutherford. *How to Argue with a Racist: What Our Genes Do (and Don't) Say About Human Difference*. Amazon/ The Experiment, 2020. (excerpt) CANVAS**4d.** Elizabeth Aries on the impact of college diversity:<https://theconversation.com/at-a-small-liberal-arts-college-black-students-learned-to-become-bicultural-to-succeed-and-get-jobs-but-stress-followed-193429>**FILM TO SEE BEFORE CLASS:** *Hidden Figures* (2016) [Amazon, iTunes, Vudu, 2 hours, 7 minutes]**In-Class Short Film & Discussion:** *Lunch Date* (1990)**In-Class Video:** [Can Artificial Intelligence Have a Bias?](#)**DISCUSSION TOPICS:** The social construction of race; racism in *Hidden Figures* and *Lunch Date*—and in our world today; the "Alt-Right"; microaggressions**Homework Film Assignment (due October 10):** *No Ordinary Man* (2020) [Amazon, Vudu, YouTube, 1 hour, 23 minutes]**MODULE 5****October 10****TRANSGENDER IDENTITY****READINGS:****5a.** Strangio, Chase. "The Unbearable (In)visibility of Being Trans." In *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, (11th ed.) ed. Paula Rothenberg with Christina Hsu Accomando, VI:12. New York: Worth Publisher/Macmillan Learning. New York 2020. CANVAS**5b.** P. Carl. "Becoming a Man." *New York Times Magazine*. 22 January 2020. CANVAS

FILM TO SEE **BEFORE CLASS**: *No Ordinary Man* (2020) [Amazon, Vudu, YouTube, 1 hour, 23 minutes]

In-Class Video: [Dr. Sasha Costanza-Chock on Design Justice](#)

DISCUSSION TOPICS: gender identity

MODULE 6	October 17	MIDTERM EXAM + film excerpts
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In-Class Film & Discussion (after the midterm Exam): *Picture a Scientist* (2020) [1 hour 43 minutes]

MODULE 7	October 24	SCIENCE AND GENDER (Then and Now)
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READINGS:

7a. Barrett, Andrea. "Rare Bird." In *Ship Fever*. 59-79. New York: Norton, 1996. **CANVAS**

7b. Le Guin, Ursula. "Sur." In *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 2008-2022. New York: W.W. Norton, 1985. **CANVAS**

7c. Moss-Racusin, Corinne A., John F. Dovidio, Victoria L. Brescoll, Mark J. Grahama, and Jo Handelsman. "Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students." *PNAS* October 9, 2012 vol. 109 no. 41 16474-16479

In-Class Film Clips: *Picture a Scientist* (2020)

DISCUSSION TOPICS: *Picture a Scientist*—then and now; Explicit and implicit bias in science; the Old Maid stereotype; the Imposter/Perfect Girl Syndromes; the 80%-20% rule



Homework Film Assignment (due October 31): See *The Race for the Double Helix* (1987) [97 minutes]

PART I: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xitlyu>

PART II: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xitmu3>

MODULE 8	October 31	APPLYING GENDER SCHEMA THEORY TO THE FRANKLIN CASE
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FILM TO SEE **BEFORE CLASS**: *The Race for the Double Helix* [aka *Life Story*] (1987) [97 minutes]

PART I: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xitlyu>

PART II: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xitmu3>

In-Class Film Excerpts:

NOVA "The Secret of Photo 51" [56 minutes]

Virginia Valian. "Remedying the (Still) Too Slow Advancement of Women" (2016):

OPTIONAL READING FOR THIS CASE STUDY:

Brenda Maddox. *Rosalind Franklin. The Dark Lady of DNA* (Paperback). Harper Perennial (October 1, 2003).

James Watson. *The Double Helix*. New York: Mentor NAL, 1968.

VISUAL HISTORY: "[17 Rare Images Tell the Real Story of Women in Tech.](#)"

DISCUSSION TOPICS: The Franklin Case; Women in STEM—Then and Now



Homework Film Assignment (due November 7): *Arrival* (2016) starring Amy Adams [Amazon, Vudu, iTunes, 2 hours]

MODULE 9	November 7	GENDER AND LEADERSHIP...in OUTER SPACE Part I
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REMINDER: ESSAY #1 IS DUE NEXT WEEK

READING:

9a. Asimov, Isaac. "Introduction" and "Liar," *I, Robot*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991 [1950]: vii-xi and 111-135. CANVAS

FILM TO SEE BEFORE CLASS: *Arrival* (2016) starring Amy Adams [Amazon, Vudu, iTunes, 2 hours]

DISCUSSION TOPICS: Continued discussion of Franklin case; discussion of *Arrival*

MODULE 10 November 14 GENDER AND LEADERSHIP...in OUTER SPACE Part 2

REMINDER ESSAY #1 IS DUE TODAY, NOVEMBER 14!

In-Class Film & Discussion: *Star Trek OS: "Turnabout Intruder"* (1969)

In-Class Film Clip & Discussion: "Kate Bowman" and her computer "Lucille" in *Red Planet* (2000)]

NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 21

HAPPY THURSDAY TURKEY DAY!

MODULE 11 November 28 CAREER SUCCESS STRATEGIES: Communication & Negotiation

READINGS:

11a. Aries Elizabeth. "Women and Men Talking: Are They Worlds Apart?" In Walsh: 91-100. CANVAS

11b. Rosalind Barrett and Caryl Rivers. "Men and Women are from Earth." In Kimmel & Aronson. CANVAS

In-Class Film Clips:

Deborah Tannen's corporate training film *Talking 9 to 5* (1997)

Presentation by Sara Laschever, co-author of *Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide* (2003).

MODULE 12 December 5 CAREER SUCCESS STRATEGIES: (Work/ Life Balance)

READINGS:

12a. Williams, Joan. "Hitting the Maternal Wall." *Academe*. Washington: Nov/Dec 2004. 90(6): 16-31. CANVAS

12b. KIMMEL EXCERPT #5. CANVAS

12c. England, Paula. "The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled." In Kimmel & Aronson. CANVAS

In-Class Video: Joan Williams. "What Works for Women at Work"

MODULE 13 December 12 LAST CLASS! ESSAY #2 DUE TODAY!

Course review; final exam preparation

December 19

FINAL EXAM!