

STS 342-101/HM1: GENDER, TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

How We Think About Identity—Now

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Nancy Steffen-Fluhr

Associate Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences Department
Director, Murray Center for Women in Technology

OFFICE: 265 Campus Center (in the Murray Center)
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 3 to 5 pm & by appointment
PHONE: Cell: 201-919-4018 Landline: 973-208-9015
EMAIL: steffen@njit.edu
COURSE CANVAS: <https://njit.instructure.com/courses/43246>

CLASS MEETINGS: **Tuesdays, 6:00-8:50 pm Cullimore Lecture Hall #1**

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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. There is one novel on the syllabus, however: *Annie Bot* by Sierra Greer (Mariner Books, 2024). It's available from Amazon as either a paperback or a Kindle e-book. All of the other 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 12	20 points	
Essay #2: due December 11	20	
Midterm exam: October 22	20	
Cumulative Final Exam: December 17	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 3 FIRST CLASS MEETING: Course Overview

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. 10:

- **Become a member of our course Canvas. Respond to the *Zootopia* Forum Assignment.**
- **Complete Core Readings 1a-1c**
- **Take Implicit Bias Tests [See below]**
- **See the film "Barbie" (2023)**

MODULE 1 September 10 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER--part 1

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. **CANVAS**

1b. Kimmel, Michael. *The Gendered Society* (6th ed. 2017). New York: Oxford UP, 2000. [Hereafter "Kimmel"] "KIMMEL EXCERPT #1" **CANVAS**

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; Barbie's pink and blue world.

In-class Film Clips: "Implicit Bias/ Concepts Unwrapped"
"Barbie" (2023)

Viewing Party: The Presidential Debate between Kamala Harris and Donal Trump

MODULE 2 September 17 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER--part 2

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 Agustin Fuentes. Published by the University of California Press. **CANVAS**



Homework Film Assignment (due September 24): See the film *North Country* (2005) directed by Niki Caro

MODULE 3 September 24 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?"

DISCUSSION TOPICS: The social construction of gender and work in *North Country* and in our country.



Homework Film Assignment (due October 1): *Her* (2013) directed by Spike Jonze [Amazon, MAX, 126 minutes]
Have completed reading the 2024 novel *Annie Bot*

MODULE 4	October 1	GENDER, EMBODIMENT—and BOTS
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Discussion: Gender and agency in *Annie Bot* and *Her*.



Homework Film Assignment (due October 8): *Hidden Figures* (2016) [Amazon, iTunes, Vudu, 2 hours, 7 minutes]

MODULE 5	October 8	THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE
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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**
- 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 6	October 15	TRANSGENDER IDENTITY
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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. Excerpts: Butler, Judith. *Who's Afraid of Gender?* (New Yor: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2024). **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: sex and gender identity

October 22	MIDTERM EXAM + film excerpts
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In-Class Film & Discussion (after the midterm Exam): *Picture a Scientist* (2020) [excerpts]

MODULE 7	October 22	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**

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 29): See *The Race for the Double Helix* (1987) Vimeo [97 minutes]

Lower Quality Option:

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

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

MODULE 8	October 29	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/xitlvu>

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

In-Class Film Excerpts:

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

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 5): *Arrival* (2016) [Amazon, Vudu, iTunes, 2 hours]

MODULE 9	November 5	GENDER AND LEADERSHIP...in OUTER SPACE
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REMINDER: ESSAY #1 IS DUE NEXT WEEK



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

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

DISCUSSION TOPICS: Continued discussion of Franklin case; discussion of women in SF

MODULE 10	November 12	GENDER, EMBODIMENT—and BOTS Part 2
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REMINDER ESSAY #1 IS DUE TODAY, NOVEMBER 12!

In-Class Film & Discussion: *Ex Machina* (2013) directed by Alex Garland. (109 minutes)

MODULE 11	November 19	CAREER SUCCESS STRATEGIES: Communication & Negotiation
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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)

NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 26

HAPPY THURSDAY TURKEY DAY!

MODULE 12	December 3	CAREER SUCCESS STRATEGIES: (Work/ Life Balance)
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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 10	LAST CLASS!	ESSAY #2 DUE TOMORROW!
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Course review; final exam preparation

December 17

FINAL EXAM!