Human, Social and Political Science Tripos 2019-2020

Part II

SOC10: Sociology of Gender

Paper Guide

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Course Organiser and Supervision Coordinator

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Lecturers

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Lecture Time and Location

Thursdays, 10:00-12:00, room B, 17 Mill Lane, 2nd floor

Paper Details

Aims and Objectives of the paper

• To introduce key concepts and debates in the sociology of gender
• To develop familiarity with the intersectional analysis of race, class, gender and sexuality
• To engage with theoretical work and projects from global perspectives
• Use empirical evidence to substantiate arguments
• Make connections between theory and concepts and what is happening locally
• To develop oral and written skills through supervision presentations, essay writing and group discussions in lectures or supervisions.

Course Content
This paper engages with a mixture of approaches that address the question: What is gender and why does it matter? Key to this engagement is the use of intersectional analyses that hold gender in
relationships with and tension to other political, social and cultural identities and locations. Lectures for this paper begin by outlining the feminist analysis of sex, gender, the sexual division of labour, and the gendered economies of production and reproduction. Intersectionality, the emergence of a global feminist movement, affect and embodiment, the role of agency and its relation to gender identity, population politics, and arguments about gender, science and biology are address in the first term. In the second term the paper includes lectures on black feminisms, sexualities, masculinities, new reproductive technologies, gender and its relationship to the environment, medicine and the body, trans/queer theory and institutional violence. Throughout, a strong emphasis is placed on the relationship between identities, institutions and inequalities, and also on the integration of conceptual, theoretical and empirical analysis in contemporary feminist thought. The paper is offered in a lecture/seminar format and a key text (or texts) are required reading which students are expected to prepare in advance.

Teaching Format

The course will be taught in 16 two-hour lectures in the Michaelmas and Lent terms, followed by a revision session in the Easter term. The lectures are designed to be interactive and require pre-preparation of assigned readings: an hour lecture is followed by questions, discussion and careful examination of assigned texts. There will be a strong emphasis on seminar-style discussion and participation from all students is expected throughout the year. Come to the lectures prepared to engage with the core readings as indicated in this paper guide.

Supervisions

Throughout the year, students are expected to attend at least six supervisions, for which they need to write a minimum of four short essays addressing the supervision essay questions listed in this paper guide. Supervisions will take place in small groups, with supervisors assigned to specific lectures rather than particular students. Supervisions will be arranged at the beginning of each term and a sign-up sheet for students will be made available after the first lecture.

Mode of Assessment

The paper will be examined by a three-hour exam at the end of the year, in which students must answer three questions from an undivided paper.

Student Feedback

Student feedback will be collected via anonymous online questionnaires distributed at the end of the Michaelmas and Lent terms.

Lecture Outline

Michaelmas Term 2019

Lecture 1. Introduction: What is the Sociology of Gender? (10 October, Professor Franklin)

Lecture 2. Intersectionality: Politics and Practice (17 October, Asiya Islam)

Lecture 3. Gender, Emotions and Feminism (24 October, Gavin Stevenson)

Lecture 4. Gender and Population Politics (31 October, Dr Hilevych)
Lecture 5. Vulnerabilities (7 November, Dr Page)

Lecture 6. Gender and Institutional violence (14 November, Dr Page)

Lecture 7. Medicine, Science and the Gendered Body (21 November, Dr Merleau-Ponty)

Lecture 8. Cyborg Feminism (28 November, Dr Merleau-Ponty)

Lent Term 2020

Lecture 9. Gender and Reproductive Technologies (16 January, Dr Smietana)

Lecture 10. Men and Masculinities (23 January, Dr Pralat)

Lecture 11. Sex and Sexualities (30 January, Dr Pralat)

Lecture 12. Queer and Trans (6 February, Dr Smietana)

Lecture 13. Black Feminisms (13 February, Dr Medien)

Lecture 14. Gender and agency (20 February, Dr Page)

Lecture 15: Gender, Nature and the Environment (27 February, Dr Dow)

Lecture 16. Gender and Labour (5 March, Asiya Islam)

Easter Term 2020

Course Review and Revision Session
Thursday 23 April, 10am-12pm, room B, 17 Mill Lane, 2nd floor (or online – to be confirmed)

General Background Reading

Collins, Patricia Hill and Bilge, Sirma 2016 *Intersectionality* Polity
Davis, Angela 1990 *Women, Culture and Politics* Vintage
Ehrenreich, Barbara and Hochschild, Arlie Russell 2003 *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy* Henry Holt
Franklin, Sarah (ed) 1996 *The Sociology of Gender* Edward Elgar
Guillaumin, Colette 1995 *Racism, Sexism, Power and Ideology* Routledge
Lewis, Sophie 2019 *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism Against Family* Verso
Mitter, Swasti 1986 *Common Fate, Common Bond: Women in the Global Economy* Pluto
Oakley, Ann 2002 *Gender on Planet Earth* Polity
Sydie, Rosalind Ann 1987 *Natural Women, Cultured Men: A Feminist Perspective on Sociological Theory* Methuen

**Lecture Details**

**Michaelmas Term 2019**

**Lecture 1. Introduction: What is the Sociology of Gender?**
Professor Sarah Franklin

This lecture introduces the sociology of gender from within and outside of the discipline, and from the 1970s until the present, with reference to the rise of two key concepts within gender theory: ‘intersectionality’ and ‘trans’. On the one hand, a struggle for feminist theory has been to challenge existing sociological concepts, such as ‘political economy’, ‘historical materialism’ and ‘the family’, in order to take account of the forms of power, inequality and experience they often exclude. At the same time feminists have attempted to develop new theories based on the intersections between gender, race and class oppressions, developing alternative concepts such as ‘capitalist-patriarchy’, ‘cyborg feminism’ or ‘sexual politics’ – to name but a few. Amidst the current political climate of uncertainty about both established norms of social progress and effective means of political participation, new combinations of older and more recent concepts from gender theory and feminist scholarship are the subject of experimentation both within sociology and well beyond the academy. Since the goal of the series of lectures designed for this paper is to increase your ability to understand, compare, critically assess, and use the various concepts, case studies, readings and arguments that inform contemporary sociological theories of gender, we begin with two key concepts that will recur across the paper as a whole, whilst also looking back at their origins.

**Supervision Essay Question**
How has the distinction between sex and gender changed since the 1970s?

**Core Reading**

**Background Reading**
Haraway, Donna 1997 *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan_Meets_OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* Routledge
hooks, bell 1981 *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* South End Press
Lorde, Audre 1984 *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* Random House

**Lecture 2. Intersectionality: Politics and Practice**
Asiya Islam

Intersectionality has become a ubiquitous buzzword, even lending to ontological categories (one can be an ‘intersectional feminist’), to the extent of confusion and ambiguity. In this lecture, we take a step back to comprehensively interrogate the concept of ‘intersectionality’, with reference to its history, critique, and contemporary significance. Although the term ‘intersectionality’ is relatively recent, the politics and practice of intersectionality has a much longer history, rooted in Black feminist thought that challenges the notion of ‘global sisterhood’. As a methodological and analytical
practice, intersectionality argues against monolithic constructions of lived experiences, emphasising the multiplicity of people’s identities. Rather than adopting an additive approach, it highlights the power relations that inform the complex interactions between gender, race, class, disability, sexuality, and so on. An essential concept in gender studies, intersectionality features across various topics for this paper.

**Supervision questions**
Discuss the main criticisms of the concept of ‘intersectionality’.

What is the contemporary relevance of intersectionality? Discuss with examples.

**Core Reading**

**Background reading**

**Lecture 3. Gender, Emotions and Feminism**
Gavin Stevenson

This lecture examines emotions in relation to gender and feminism. Social scientists have shown that emotions are not simple biophysical responses to certain phenomena, but social processes that vary across time and place. We will discuss the social life of emotions, and the role of lived experience within research that involves paying attention to the politics of emotional knowledges and cultural and social representations of pain and wounding. In particular, we will focus on what we might term “everyday” social phenomena such as slights, offences and microaggressions to think about the mechanisms and social processes that constitute and/or govern social interactions as effects of inequality and power.

**Supervision Essay Questions**
Is "microaggression" a useful sociological concept for the study of gendered inequalities? Discuss with reference to examples.

What (if anything) can we learn about the reproduction of inequality through the feelings of guilt, shame and/or defensiveness? Discuss with reference to examples.
Core Reading
Youtube: Everyday sexism: Laura Bates at TEDxCoventGardenWomen: 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhjsRjC6B8U

Background Reading
(esp. Chapter 1)


Lecture 4. Gender and Population Politics
Dr Yuiliya Hilevych

Who is allowed to be reproduced and why? Think on the one hand about single and lesbian mothers and women of colour in mid 20th century in Western societies and on another about ethnic minorities and migrant communities today. Can you identify any similarities? We will start unfolding the connections by examining gender, class and race in the development of population thinking, namely around Malthusianism, neo-Malthusianism, eugenics and demographic transition theory. We will then look at the examples of fertility and immigration politics (core readings) in a comparative perspective. Our goal will be to understand what ideas about gender, family and relatedness have been (re)produced in the past population politics and why applying this lens is important to critically (re-)examine neo-liberal population politics today.
Supervision Essay Questions
Why is Collins’s discussion of eugenics relevant also beyond family planning debate?

How have normative ideas about gender and family shaped population politics? Use two different examples to support your argument.

Core reading

Background reading

Lecture 5: Vulnerabilities
Dr Tiffany Page
This lecture will discuss the concept of vulnerability and the related concepts of precariousness and precarity as ways of understanding how a particular social, cultural political and economic structures work. We will discuss the tensions with understanding vulnerability and its connection to negative conditions, as a universal condition that has potential for empathy and non-violent ethics, and its ability to address specific inequalities and injustices that involve an uneven distribution of vulnerability. We will also discuss what obligations vulnerability might present in the form of responsibility and dependency upon others in order to support and sustain lives.

Supervision Essay Questions
How has discussion of vulnerability in feminist theory challenged its traditional understandings as a negative condition?

Are there limits to the potential of vulnerability as a means or demand to address inequalities?

Core Readings


Introduction.

**Background Readings**


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**Lecture 6. Gender and Institutional Violence**

Dr Tiffany Page

This lecture will discuss the ways in which institutions enact forms of violence, position of institutions as perpetrators of harm, and how we might consider the kinds of responses to this. In utilising current case work on sexual and gender based violence in higher education we will do so by examining different temporalities in which sexual violence and harassment might occur, and how violence is often portrayed as a single incident, rather than as an ongoing experience. This includes analysing how sexual harassment can be positioned as a single event involving a single, individual perpetrator, while simultaneously existing within a long duration within an institution that both reproduces and presents new forms of trauma and harm.
Supervision Essay Questions:
Can different conceptions of violence help in addressing inequalities?
What relationship do institutions have to experiences of violence?

Core Readings:

Background readings:
Sundaram, V. & Jackson, C. 2018, 'I have a sense that it's probably quite bad ... but because I don't see it, I don't know': staff perspectives on 'lad culture' in higher education', Gender and Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1501006

Lecture 7. Medicine, Science and the Gendered Body
Dr Noémie Merleau-Ponty

This lecture examines how biology and medicine are knowledge making practices of sex and gender. We will explore how biomedical approaches shape understandings and interventions on bodies and their reproductive organs and the extent of which this is rooted in the idea that science deals with facts. We will also explore the intertwining of these approaches with gendered stereotypes of male and female roles in society. An underlying logic of ‘nature and culture’ will be delineated at this
occasion, as well as its intersections with the notion of ‘race’. Finally, the lecture will ask what an understanding of biology as technology do to sex and gender norms.

**Supervision Essay Questions**

How do sex and gender relate to one another?

What are the roles of science and medicine in defining gendered bodies?

**Core Reading**


**Background Reading**


Keller, Evelyn Fox. 1987. 'The gender/science system: or is sex to gender as nature is to science?' Hypatia 2(3): pp 37-49.

Keller, Evelyn Fox., A feeling for the organism: the life and work of Barbara McClintock. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, c1983


Löwy Ilana, Sex on a Slide: Antoine Lacassagne and the Search for a Microscopic Definition of Masculinity and Femininity, History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences, Vol. 35, No. 3, Microscope Slides


Lecture 8. Cyborg Feminism  
Dr Noémie Merleau-Ponty

This lecture examines the arguments about gender, science and biology offered by Donna Haraway in a series of publications from the mid-1970s onward, in which the relationship of nature to technology figures centrally. Our specific focus will be on Haraway’s signature 1985 publication ‘A Manifesto for Cyborgs’, and we will examine in detail her claim that she ‘would rather be a cyborg than a goddess’. We will also study how her work has been received when read through an intersectional framework and compared to non-Western contexts.

Supervision Essay Questions
How does the notion of “cyborg” challenge gender binaries?

What is Haraway’s critique of feminism?

Core Reading

Background Reading
Goodeve, Thyrza Nichols 2005 How Like a Leaf: an interview with Donna Haraway, New York: Routledge
Haraway, Donna 1997 Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: FemaleMan meets OncoMouse, New York: Routledge
Haraway, Donna 2004 The Haraway Reader, New York: Routledge
Haraway, Donna 2008 When Species Meet, Minneapolis, MN:University of Minnesota Press
Lykke, Nina 1997 “To be a Cyborg or a Goddess?” In Gender, Technology and Development. 1 (1): 5-22
Schneider, Joseph 2005 Donna Haraway: live theory, New York: Continuum

Lent Term 2020

Lecture 9. Gender and Reproductive Technologies
Dr Marcin Smietana

Revisiting Shulamith Firestone’s (1970) radical feminist argument for the liberatory potential of assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), this lecture explores how intersectional gender hierarchies are reproduced and challenged through ARTs, such as IVF, gamete donation, surrogacy and genetic selection technologies. We discuss the ‘ontological choreography’ (Thompson 2005) through which different aspects of reproduction are orchestrated and kinship is disambiguated in order to create babies and parents considered normal and natural. In this process, we ask if key determinants of ‘Euro-American kinship,’ such as biology, continue to be relevant at all and how. We
also explore how the hierarchies of ability, race (Roberts 2009), citizenship and social class (Inhorn 2015) as well as sexuality and gender (Franklin 1997) may be reproduced through ARTs. We take a closer look at gender to investigate how persistent expectations of altruism in reproductive labour are reproduced by egg agencies and sperm banks (Almeling 2007). We conclude by considering the approach of reproductive justice (Roberts 2009, Luna & Luker 2013) as a possible way forward.

**Supervision Essay Questions**

What can the notion of *reproductive justice* offer - as opposed *reproductive rights* - in the era of neoliberal politics?

What makes a mother, according to Charis Thompson’s analysis?

**Core Reading**


**Background Reading**


**Further Reading**

Beynon-Jones, Sian. 2013. ‘We view that as contraceptive failure’: Containing the ‘multiplicity’ of contraception and abortion within Scottish reproductive healthcare’. *Social Science & Medicine* 80: 105-112.

Nordqvist, Petra. 2012. ‘I don’t want us to stand out more than we already do’: Lesbian couples negotiating family connections in donor conception. Sexualities 15(5-6), 644-661.
Van de Wiel, Lucy. 2014. For Whom the Clock Ticks: Reproductive Ageing and Egg Freezing in Dutch and British News Media. Studies in the Maternal 6 (1).

Lecture 10. Men and Masculinities

Dr Robert Pralat

This lecture will examine the development of masculinity studies and what this area of research has added to our understandings of gender. We will explore R. W. Connell's influential concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' and how it has been applied, critiqued and updated over the past thirty years. We will also discuss the relationship between masculinity and homophobia. By focusing on recent case studies, we will look at key empirical and theoretical questions that have concerned sociologists working in this field.

Supervision Essay Questions

Is it useful to think of masculinity as 'hegemonic'?

How do masculinity scholars explain homophobia?

Core Reading

Background Reading
An extended reading list, including journal articles and book chapters, will be provided at the lecture.

Lecture 11. Sex and Sexualities

Dr Robert Pralat

The focus of this lecture will be on the relationship between gender and sexuality. We will begin with the feminist debates of the 1980s and the ongoing tension between opposing violence and exploitation and defending pleasure and diversity. The lecture will also engage with the concept of 'compulsory heterosexuality', originally theorised by Adrienne Rich, and with subsequent contributions to the sociological understanding of sexuality from lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer studies.

Supervisions Essay Questions
Is heterosexuality still 'compulsory' in the 21st century?

Why have feminists disagreed about sexuality?

Core Reading

Background Reading

An extended reading list, including journal articles and book chapters, will be provided at the lecture.

Lecture 12. Queer and Trans

Dr Marcin Smietana

In this lecture we discuss what queer and trans theories and practices contribute to our understanding of gender, sexuality, and other intimately related categories such as race and citizenship. We begin with an overview of the work that centered the meanings of ‘queer’ rather than ‘LGBT’ (e.g. De Lauretis 1991; Warner 1993). In this process we also briefly revisit Judith Butler’s (1991) work on performativity. We focus on some of the key contemporary debates on the meanings and politics of ‘queer’: decolonizing sexuality from perspectives such as ‘Queer’ Asia (Luther & Ung Loh 2019), ‘queer of colour’ and ‘mixed orientations’ (Ahmed 2006), critique of settler
sexualities (TallBear 2018), queer critiques of ‘homonationalism’ (Puar 2007, 2013) and the latter’s contestations ‘beyond the Western gaze’ (Mizielinska & Stasinska 2017). In the second part of the lecture, we introduce contemporary trans theorizing, and we consider what queer and trans approaches may have in common. We discuss what trans theories (Stryker 2007) contribute to feminisms, and how solidarities can be built between radical feminists and trans activists (Hines 2017).

**Supervision Essay Questions**

How can we ‘decolonise epistemological frameworks on queerness,’ to use Daniel Luther and Jennifer Ung Loh’s words?

How can links between feminist and trans projects be foregrounded as a social justice project, following Sally Hines’ and Susan Stryker’s invitation?

**Core Reading**


**Background Reading**


**Lecture 13. Black Feminisms**

Kathryn Medien

In this session we explore Black feminism, looking at some of the key concepts generated by Black feminist thought and asking how this diverse body of scholarship challenges accounts of gender, reproduction, political economy and knowledge production. Starting with the works of Hortense Spillers, Ida B. Wells, Angela Davis, and Sojourner Truth, we will examine how Black feminists have challenged and questioned the use of woman as a category and showed the gendered nature of slavery and racism. We will also consider how and why anti-imperialist and anti-colonial politics have been central to both North American and British Black feminisms.

**Supervision Essay Questions:**

Hazel Carby (1982) argues that 'most contemporary feminist theory does not begin to adequately account for the experience of black women'. What does she mean by this?

Is the category 'gender' universal?

**Core Reading:**


**Background Reading:**


Lecture 14: Gender and Agency
Dr Tiffany Page

In this lecture we will discuss the concept of agency and look at different models of how agency has been thought in relation to gender and activity. Often associated with binary of activity/passivity, and in opposition with victimhood and victimisation, we will consider different approaches to agency, its relationship to power and particular subjectivities and experiences and how these operate in cross-cultural contexts, and in connection to race, class, sexuality and gender. We will discuss the value of agency as a concept in understanding the complexity of human action, and the production of knowledge.

Supervision Essay Questions
Discuss the value of agency in addressing gender inequalities. Consider at least one example to illustrate your argument.

How does agency trouble ideas of resistance?

Core reading

Background reading

**Lecture 15. Gender, Nature and the Environment**
Dr Katie Dow

As previous lectures have shown, differences between women and men are often conceptualised in terms of an assumed binary difference between nature and culture. In this lecture we will take this idea and extend it in relation to current concerns about humans’ relationships to the natural world and particularly concerns about human effects on the environment. In the lecture, we will consider what humans’ relationships with the natural world can tell us about our own ideas of gender, as well as looking critically at how gender informs environmentalist campaigning. We will also discuss the concept of the Anthropocene and whether calls to consider human population numbers have a place in tackling environmental crises.

**Supervision Essay Questions**
Is the Anthropocene really the ‘White Manthropocene’?

Do you agree with Donna Haraway’s call to ‘make kin, not babies’ when addressing environmental concerns including climate change? Why (not)?

**Core Reading**

**Background Reading**
Davis, Heather and Zoe Todd. 2017. ‘On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene’. ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies16(4): 761-780
Dow, Katharine and Janelle Lamoreaux. Forthcoming. ‘Situated Kinmaking: Towards Environmental Reproductive Justice.’ Environmental Humanities.**
Ojeda, Diana, Jade S. Sasser & Elizabeth Lunstrum. 2019. ‘Malthus’s spectre and the anthropocene,’ Gender, Place & Culture, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2018.1553858
Lecture 16: Gender and Labour
Asiya Islam

The division of labour between women and men, whereby women are associated with domestic, private, and unpaid work while men are associated with public income-generating work, is commonly known as ‘gender division of labour’. This distinction, premised on the social roles assigned to women and men, is both complicated and reinforced through emerging forms and changing dynamics of work in modern societies. In this lecture, we will discuss whether the binary concepts of ‘productive’ and ‘reproductive’ labour, which emerged through feminist critique of Marxist theory, are still useful to explain contemporary gender divisions of labour. We will further engage with emotional, affective, and intimate labour in relation to the ‘feminisation’ of the service economy in various parts of the world. Finally, we will consider labour stratifications through the illustration of global care chains – the flow of migrant labour into rich countries for provision of care – paying attention to the intersections of gender, race, and class.

Supervision Essay Questions
Discuss the value of the concept of ‘reproductive labour’ in highlighting contemporary gender divisions of labour.

Do global care chains reinforce gender, race, and class inequalities?

Core Reading


Background Reading


Reproduction, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 78-102. (You can also see the Introduction by Ginsburg & Rapp, pp.1-17)


