

**SOC U273: Women Working**  
Spring 2008  
M, W, Th 10:30-11:35  
Location: 102 West Village G

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### Course Description

This introductory-level course provides a sociological perspective on women's participation in paid and unpaid work in the United States. It considers the extent to which work is "gendered", and the ways in which this influences the jobs that women perform, the rewards they receive for their efforts, and their experiences in the workplace and at home.

The course is structured around several key questions:

- How do sociologists think about work and the role of gender in work?
- How and why has female participation in the paid labor force changed over time?
- Why are women underrepresented in certain occupations and jobs, and overrepresented in others?
- What is the "wage gap" between men and women, and what explanations have been given for its persistence?
- Why is work performed primarily by women said to be "undervalued"?
- To what extent do men and women share domestic responsibilities? How does this division of labor influence women's participation in the paid labor force?
- How do women make choices about the work-life balance? How do institutional factors affect those choices?
- How do women's work experiences – both in the home and the labor force – differ by class and race?
- How has welfare reform affected the work experiences of poor women (and their families)?

### Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the fundamental concepts, theories, and research underpinning the sociology of gender and work.
- To develop an understanding of how social and institutional processes affect the work and home lives of individual women.
- To provide students with a framework for understanding current debates about gender and work as portrayed in the media and popular culture.
- To expose students to the methodological approaches commonly employed in sociological research, and develop a basic understanding of how data is generated and interpreted.
- To encourage students to read and think critically, and to further develop clear, analytical writing skills.

### Course Requirements

1. **Class attendance and participation (10% of final grade):** Attendance and participation are critical to this course. You are expected to read all of the assigned

materials and come to class prepared to discuss them with me and your fellow classmates. At a couple of points during the semester, I will assign very brief homework tasks that will count towards your attendance and participation grade.

2. **Data exercise (10%):** I will give you a set of data tables (e.g., from the U.S. Census Bureau) to analyze. You will be asked to select two tables and to write a brief “press release” (approx. 600-800 words) for each one, highlighting what you think is the most important information contained in the table. Each press release will count for 5% of your grade. I will provide additional details on this assignment in class. **The data exercise will be due on January 24<sup>th</sup>.**
3. **Midterm exam (25%):** There will be an in-class midterm exam based on the course readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. All material presented to date will be fair game for the midterm. Exam questions will take a variety of formats, but most will be short answer or essay. I will hold an in-class review session on the day before the exam. Please note that make-up exams will not be permitted except in the case of an emergency (e.g., death in the family, serious illness). **The midterm exam will be held on February 21<sup>st</sup>.**
4. **Analytical paper (25%):** You will be asked to select an issue or a topic covered in the media or portrayed in popular culture (e.g., TV, movies, music) concerning women and work. You will write a 7- to 9-page paper (roughly 2500-3000 words, double spaced) analyzing the way in which a sociological perspective can help us understand or explain the phenomenon in question. You should select a topic that allows you to incorporate material from the course readings and lectures. It is expected that you reference a minimum of three books or articles from the syllabus, but you are welcome to draw on outside readings as well. I will provide additional details on this assignment in class. **A brief description of the paper topic (worth 5% of your grade) will be due on March 24<sup>th</sup>, and the final paper (worth 20%) will be due on April 7<sup>th</sup>.**
5. **Final exam (30%):** There will be a final exam based on the course readings, lectures, and classroom discussions. Material from the whole semester will be fair game for final exam, but questions will be weighted more heavily towards the second half of the semester. Exam questions will take a variety of formats, but most will be short answer or essay. I will hold an in-class review session on the day before the exam. Please note that make-up exams will not be permitted except in the case of an emergency (e.g., death in the family, serious illness). **The date of the final exam is TBD. It will take place during the exam period.**

### **Grading Scale**

The following scale will be used to calculate your final grade:

94-100 = A	80-83 = B-	67-69 = D+
90-93 = A-	77-79 = C+	64-66 = D
87-89 = B+	74-76 = C	60-63 = D-
84-86 = B	70-73 = C-	0-59 = F

## Incompletes

In order to be eligible to receive an incomplete in the course, students must have completed at least 2/3 of the class requirements and maintained a minimum of a C- average overall.

## Late / Missed Work

Grades will be reduced for any work that is turned in late, except in case of a documented emergency. The data assignment and analytical paper will be reduced by one half of a letter grade (e.g., from A to A-) for each day that the assignment is late. If you will not be able to make an exam due to an illness or other emergency, you must notify me prior to class, and the make-up exam must be taken within one week.

## Policies & Procedures

**Blackboard:** I will post all relevant course materials (including links to some of the reading material) on Blackboard. Please check the site regularly for announcements, homework assignments, or other pertinent information.

**Student Services & Special Needs:** Northeastern provides a number of academic resources to support students. These include the Writing Center, the Disability Resource Center, and the College of Arts and Sciences Tutoring Program. For more information on any of these resources, visit the MyNEU Academic Guide at <http://www.advising.neu.edu/>. If you have a learning disability, illness, or other condition that may affect your performance, please come talk with me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we can determine how best to help you in this class.

**Academic Honesty & Integrity Policy:** All students should familiarize themselves with Northeastern's policies concerning cheating, plagiarism, and other academically dishonest practices. (See <http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html>.) Any work that is taken from another student, or copied from printed material or the internet without proper citation is expressly prohibited. Any student who is found to have been academically dishonest in his or her work risks failing this course. We will discuss the accepted guidelines for citing references in sociological work in class. For additional information, see either of the following sites: <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/bi/rsalina/asa.styleguide.html> <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?section=Sociology+Depts&name=Quick+Style+Guide>

**Ground Rules:** To ensure a productive learning environment for all students, please adhere to the following ground rules. Repeated disruptions of any kind will be duly noted and will be reflected in your final grade:

- Arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class period.
- Turn off all electronic devices (cell phone, Blackberry, etc.) before entering the classroom.
- Do not engage in side conversations. This is disrespectful to the speaker (whether me or a classmate), and can affect the ability of others in the class to learn.
- Be respectful of your fellow classmates. Do not interrupt when someone is speaking, monopolize the conversation, or belittle the ideas or opinions of others.

- Complete the assigned reading for each class in advance, and come prepared to discuss.

**Required Reading Materials**

**Books:** There are four required books in this course. These are available for purchase at the NU bookstore, and are on reserve at Snell library.

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy and Gregg Lee Carter. 2005. *Working Women in America: Split Dreams*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2003. *The Second Shift*. New York: Penguin Books.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 2007. *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning & Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Padavic, Irene and Barbara Reskin. 2002. *Women and Men at Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

**Articles:** In order to minimize the cost to students, links to all other readings will be posted on Blackboard.

**Schedule of Readings & Assignments**

*Please note that all readings are due on the date for which they are assigned.*

BB = Material can be found on Blackboard

Date	Topic	Reading	Other
1/7	Course Introduction	None	
1/9	Sociological perspectives on women & work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Padavic &amp; Reskin, Chapter 1</li> <li>• Jacobs (2003): “Detours on the road to equality” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
1/10	Sociological perspectives on women & work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hesse-Biber &amp; Carter, Chapter 1</li> </ul>	
1/14	History of women’s work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Padavic &amp; Reskin, Chapter 2</li> <li>• Hesse-Biber &amp; Carter, Chapter 2</li> </ul>	
1/16	How is work gendered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Padavic &amp; Reskin, Chapters 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>	

Date	Topic	Reading	Other
1/17	Explaining gendered work: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hesse-Biber &amp; Carter, Chapter 3</li> </ul>	Data exercise handed out
1/21	NO CLASS	None	
1/23	The role of socialization & preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hesse-Biber &amp; Carter, Chapter 4</li> </ul>	
1/24	The role of socialization & preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correll (2004): "Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	Data exercise due
1/28	The role of human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becker: "Human Capital" <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>Bielby &amp; Bielby (1988): "She Works Hard for the Money" <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>Lewin (2006): "At Colleges, Women Are Leaving Men in the Dust" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
1/30	The role of social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drentea (1998): "Consequences of Women's Formal and Informal Job Search Methods..." <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>Huffman &amp; Torres (2002): "It's Not Only 'Who You Know' That Matters..." <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
1/31	The role of employer discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bielby &amp; Baron (1986): "Men and Women at Work: Sex Segregation..." <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>Correll, Benard &amp; Paik (2007): "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
2/4	The role of institutional practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reskin &amp; Padavic (1988): "Supervisors as Gatekeepers..." <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>Belkin (2007): "The Feminine Critique" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
2/6	Glass ceilings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Padavic &amp; Reskin, Chapter 5</li> <li>Cotter et al., (2001): "The Glass Ceiling Effect" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
2/7	The gendered workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welsh (1999): "Gender and Sexual Harassment" <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>Dellinger &amp; Williams (2002): "The Locker Room and the Dorm Room..." <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	

Date	Topic	Reading	Other
2/11	The wage gap & the value of women's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Padavic &amp; Reskin, Chapter 6</li> <li>• Petersen &amp; Morgan (1995): "Separate and Unequal: Occupation-Establishment Sex Segregation..." <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
2/13	The wage gap & the value of women's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baron &amp; Newman (1990): "For What It's Worth..." <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• England &amp; Dunn (1998): "Evaluating Work and Comparable Worth" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
2/14	The wage gap & the value of women's work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• England, Budig &amp; Folbre (2002): "Wages of Virtue: The Relative Pay of Care Work" <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
2/18	NO CLASS	None	
2/20	Midterm exam review	None	
2/21	EXAM	None	Exam
2/25	Work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hesse-Biber &amp; Carter, Chapter 7</li> <li>• Padavic &amp; Reskin, Chapter 7</li> </ul>	
2/27	Work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hochschild, Chapters 1 – 4</li> </ul>	
2/28	Work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hochschild, Chapters 5 – 7</li> </ul>	
3/3	SPRING BREAK	None	
3/5	SPRING BREAK	None	
3/6	SPRING BREAK	None	
3/10	Work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hochschild, Chapters 8 – 10</li> </ul>	
3/12	Work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hochschild, Chapters 11 – 15</li> </ul>	
3/13	Work at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hochschild, Chapters 16, 17 &amp; Introduction to Penguin edition (2003)</li> </ul>	Media paper assignment handed out

Date	Topic	Reading	Other
3/17	Life choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belkin (2003): “The Opt-Out Revolution” <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• Hirshman (2005): “Homeward Bound” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
3/19	Life choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hewlett &amp; Luce (2005): “Off-Ramps and On-Ramps...” <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• Cutler, England &amp; Hermsen (2007): “Moms and Jobs...” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
3/20	Race and gender at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• England, Garcia-Beaulieu &amp; Ross (2004): “Women’s Employment Among Blacks, Whites, and Three Groups of Latinas...” <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• Kennelly (1999): “That Single-Mother Element...” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
3/24	Race and gender at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reid &amp; Padavic (2005): “Employment Exits and the Race Gap...” <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• Reid (2002): “Occupational Segregation, Human Capital, and Motherhood...” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	Media paper topic due
3/26	Immigrants and domestic labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hondagneu-Sotelo, Chapters 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>	
3/27	Immigrants and domestic labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hondagneu-Sotelo, Chapters 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>	
3/31	Immigrants and domestic labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hondagneu-Sotelo, Chapters 5 &amp; 6</li> </ul>	
4/2	Immigrants and domestic labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hondagneu-Sotelo, Chapters 7 &amp; 8</li> </ul>	
4/3	Family structure, poverty, and welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cohen (2002): “Extended Households at Work...” <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• Tienda &amp; Glass (1985): “Household Structure and Labor Force Participation...” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	
4/7	Family structure, poverty, and welfare	None	Media paper due
4/9	Family structure, poverty, and welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edin &amp; Lein (1997): “Work, Welfare, and Single Mothers’ Economic Survival Strategies” <b>(BB)</b></li> <li>• DeParle (1997) “Getting Oral Caples to Work” <b>(BB)</b></li> </ul>	

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Other</b>
4/10	Family structure, poverty, and welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boo (2001): "After Welfare" (<b>BB</b>)</li></ul>	
4/14	Wrap up	None	
4/16	Final exam review	None	