We usually think of gender as a trait, a noun. People have a gender. Someone is a woman or a man. During this course, we will work to see gender as a verb as well. To gender something is to make it feminine or masculine. And actions, unlike objects, are not fixed. They can happen in unexpected ways. They can fail. Over the course of the semester, we will investigate gender, not only as an element of individual personhood, but as a changeable process which forms both individuals and the social world more broadly. As we do this, we will also note the ways that gender is always already inflected and shaped by other structures of inequality and difference such as race, class, and sexuality.

During the first half of the course, we will look at the multiple ways in which both gender and sex are produced, in thought and in action, in formal edicts and intimate relations, symbolically and on the body itself. In the second half of the course, we will look at work and family – to trace the ways gendered selves are shaped in daily practice within these sites and to trace the consequences of these emergent selves for the institutions in which they are formed. In the last week of the course we will turn to the realm of international relations, to investigate how macro processes are structured with reference to gendered understandings. Throughout the semester, we will be attentive to the links between power, inequality, meaning and selfhood, noting where particular gendered selves produce domination and constraint and where they make change imaginable.

It is no accident that one of the most enduring feminist slogans is “the personal is political.” Gender’s causes and consequences range from major social structures to intimate personal quirks. In studying such a phenomenon, the goal is to make the connections between these levels of meaning, experience and action. Thus, throughout the semester, I invite you to read your daily life within, and against, the terms we develop in class. The personal is indeed political, and for that matter the political is personal as well. I hope you can use your writing over the course of the semester to find those moments where, as C. Wright Mills suggested, biography meets history and both are illuminated in the process.
CLASS MECHANICS:

Course Website: There is a Blackboard Vista site for this course. This site includes a link to online course reserves, a copy of the syllabus, and a site for posting thought pieces.

Readings: Readings for this course are available online. They may be accessed through the course Blackboard site or directly from the O’Neill library course reserves website. In addition, the two books listed below are on sale at the BC Bookstore. These will also be available on two hour reserve at O’Neill.


*White Weddings: Romancing Heterosexuality in Popular Culture* by Chrys Ingraham (Routledge, 2008).

Requirements:
1. Consistent attendance in class.
2. Active, serious and respectful participation in class and small group discussions.
3. Thorough reading of course materials, including note-taking and/or response writing to be referenced in class discussion.
4. On-time, thoughtful completion of all assignments.
5. Strict adherence to campus policies regarding plagiarism and intellectual integrity.

Assessments:
1. Class attendance and participation. **5% final grade**
2. 6 thought pieces. **15% final grade**
2. Midterm exam. **25% final grade**
3. Final paper (5-6 pages). **30% final grade**
4. Final exam. **25% final grade**

Thought pieces: This class deals with complex ideas that require regular completion of the readings and regular lecture attendance. To help you actively process the readings and relate them to the world around you, you are required to write six 400-500 word thought-pieces over the course of the semester (see below for due dates and course website for specific prompts). These writings should respond to posted questions and deal explicitly with the readings they reference. They can be informal or unconventional in style, but *thoughtless, cursory or late pieces will not receive credit*. Thought-pieces should be posted on the Blackboard website in the Assignments section. These pieces will be contract graded. Each missing piece will cost you a half grade on this part of your final grade.
Class attendance is mandatory. Since I don’t want to waste too much time taking attendance, I will not take roll every day. Instead, I will take attendance at random intervals during the semester. If you are not there for one of those classes, you will not be penalized, but after that, unexcused absences will impact your final grade.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to comply with the standards for academic honesty outlined by the University’s Academic Policies and Procedures at http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity. Any plagiarism or cheating – including on thought pieces – will result at a minimum in an F on that piece of work and notification of the academic dean.

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 7:
Introduction

1. WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

September 9:


Due in class:
List one thing that surprised you, one that disturbed you, and one that heartened you in the Atlas or Fact Sheet and elaborate on at least one of these.

2. STANDARDS OF COMPARISON

Sept 14:

Sept 16:


3. MAKING SELVES

Sept 21:


Sept 23

Sept 28:


Sept 30:


Post to Blackboard by Sept. 29, 11 pm:
Discuss some of the ways genders are produced, referencing at least three essays read in Section 3 of the class.

4. MAKING BODIES

October 5:

October 7:


October 12:

“How to Build a Man” by Anne Fausto-Sterling in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader* edited by Roger Lancaster and Micaela di Leonardo (Routledge, 1997).


October 14:


Post to Blackboard by Oct. 13, 11 pm:
Discuss the claim that gender leads to sex with reference to at least 4 of the readings from Section 4 of the course.

October 19:

**TAKING OUR BEARINGS**

October 21:
Review

October 26:
In-class midterm

**PART II: GENDER AT WORK**
October 28:
“The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” by Heidi Hartmann in *Women and Revolution* edited by Lydia Sargent (South End Press, 1981).

November 2:


November 4:

Post to Blackboard by Nov. 3, 11 pm:
Discuss some of the ways in which gender operates in the workplace using at least two of the readings since the midterm.

November 9:


November 11:


November 16:

“Manufacturing Motherhood: The Shadow Work of Nannies and Au Pairs” by Cameron


**Post to Blackboard by Nov. 15, 11 pm:**
Discuss some of the ways in which paid and unpaid labor are linked through inequalities of gender, race, class and nation. Please discuss using at least four of the readings assigned since Nov. 9.

**November 18:**

**November 23:**
*White Weddings*. Chapter 2.

**November 30:**


**Post to Blackboard by Nov. 29, 11 pm:**
Is same-sex marriage something feminists should fight for? Please discuss with reference to Ingraham and at least two of the readings for Nov. 30.

**December 2:**


“Feminism, The Taliban, and Politics of Counter-Insurgency” by Charles Hirschkind and Saba

**December 7:**
“Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Committee (July 19, 1848).
[http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html](http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html)

“Redstockings Manifesto” (July 7, 1969).


[http://www.beyondmarriage.org/BeyondMarriage.pdf](http://www.beyondmarriage.org/BeyondMarriage.pdf)

**Dec 9:**
In-class final.