

Syllabus
Women, Work, and Public Policy
Fall 2020
PSC 73901 / SOC 84700 / WSCP 81000
Tuesdays 4:15 to 6:15pm

Faculty: Janet Gornick
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Office Hours: By appointment. Email with questions at any time.

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of key issues affecting women in the workplace in the United States and in other high-income countries.

We will begin with an overview of basic economic principles of labor markets, specifically as they concern gender inequality. We will examine both theory and empirical research, taking a multidimensional approach to understanding gender inequality at work – covering gender gaps in employment rates, in working time, in occupation, and in earnings.

We then turn to a series of book-length studies of women’s experiences in paid work, both historically and in the contemporary United States. Throughout this section, we will take an intersectional approach – considering how women’s employment experiences have been shaped by race, class, nativity, sexuality, and place.

In the final section of the course, we will turn our attention to policies and institutions that shape women’s experiences in paid work, and gender inequality in the labor market more generally. We will assess the institutional landscape in the United States and compare that to policy configurations operating in other affluent countries.

Students will complete weekly reaction papers, and a semester-long research project which will culminate in a paper.

Comments on Course Structure and Plan:

Virtual Teaching Platform

The course will be taught using Zoom. The professor will serve as host and will provide links that enable joining. Students do not have to have their own Zoom accounts. Zoom (as most students know by now!) allows participants to activate both audio and video capacity. In general, students should utilize their video option so that they can be seen; if turning on the video creates any hardship or discomfort, please feel free to discuss with that with the professor. When not speaking, students should activate the mute function.

Assignments and grading

- attendance and participation in discussions 20% of grade
- weekly reaction papers (one per week, starting with Class 4)
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 20% of grade
- presentation of reading in one class session
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 10% of grade
- two presentations related to semester-long research project
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 10% of grade
- research project, culminating in final paper due on December 8, 2020
a handout describing this assignment will be distributed 40% of grade

Attendance

Weekly attendance is required but – of course – exceptions will be made to meet students' needs. If you need to miss a class (or to arrive late or leave early), please inform the professor before the session.

Learning Goals

- develop an understanding of the basic economic principles of labor markets, specifically as they concern gender inequality
- gain familiarity with the ways in which women's engagement in paid work is shaped not only by gender but also by race, class, nativity, sexuality, and place
- learn about a range of public policies that shape women's experiences in the labor market, and how those policies vary across affluent countries.

Course Reading:

The course will be based on eight books. Ideally, students will purchase, or otherwise acquire, all of them.

The entire set of books can be purchased for about \$200 – and for much less if you buy them used and/or in electronic formats. The prices below reflect those listed at Amazon for new copies; all are available in paperback except the Collins book. They have also been ordered via gc.textbookx.com. Some are also downloadable from the Graduate Center Library.

- Blau, Francine D., and Anne E. Winkler. 2017. *The Economics of Women, Men, and Work*. **Eighth Edition**. New York: Oxford University Press. (See note from instructor).
- Branch, Enobong Hannah. 2011. *Opportunity Denied: Limiting Black Women to Devalued Work*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. (\$31.95)
- Duffy, Mignon. 2011. *Making Care Count: A Century of Gender, Race, and Paid Care Work*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. (\$49.53)
- Schilt, Kristen. 2010. *Just One of the Guys? Transgender Men and the Persistence of Gender Inequality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (\$30.00)
- Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. NY: Knopf. (\$12.33)
- Ehrenreich, Barbara. 2011 (originally 2001). *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*. **Tenth Anniversary Edition**. New York: Picador Books. (\$10.29)
- Collins, Caitlyn. 2019. *Making Motherhood Work: How Women Manage Careers and Caregiving*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (\$24.54 – hardcover)
- Gornick, Janet C., and Marcia K. Meyers – with Erik Olin Wright. 2009. *Gender Equality: Transforming Family Divisions of Labor* (The Real Utopias Project, Vol. VI). New York: Verso Books. (\$38.87)

Course Overview:

Class 1 September 1 Introductions, Course Overview, and Logistics

Work, Work, and Inequality

Class 2 September 8 The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview 1

Class 3 September 15 The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview 2

Class 4 September 22 Gender and Race at Work – Taking the Long View

September 29 (no class)

Class 5 October 6 Paid Care Work – A Historical Look

Class 6 October 13 Gender, Sexuality, and the Social Construction of Work

Class 7 October 20 Women, Work, and Privilege

Class 8 October 27 Feminized Work “in Low-Wage America”

Student Presentations

Class 9 November 3 Student Presentations – Research Project Plans

Women and Work: Institutions and Public Policy

Class 10 November 10 Women, Work, and U.S. Public Policy - Overview

Class 11 November 17 Women, Work, and Public Policy: A Look at Other Affluent Countries

Class 12 November 24 “Real Utopias”

Student Presentations

Class 13 December 1 Student Presentations – Research Project Plans

Class 14 December 8 Student Presentations – Research Project Plans

Reading Assignments:

Class 2	September 8	<p>The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview 1 Francine Blau and Anne Winkler Chapter 3 The Family as An Economic Unit: Theory Chapter 4 The Family as an Economic Unit: Evidence Chapter 5 The Labor Force: Definitions and Trends Chapter 6 The Labor Supply Decision</p>
Class 3	September 15	<p>The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview 2 Francine Blau and Anne Winkler Chapter 7 Evidence on Gender Differences in LM Outcomes Chapter 9 Other Supply-Side Sources of Gender Differences Chapter 10 Supply Side Factors versus LM Discrimination Chapter 11 Labor Market Discrimination Theory</p>
Class 4	September 22	<p>Gender and Race at Work – Taking the Long View Enobong Hannah Branch, entire book.</p>
Class 5	October 6	<p>Paid Care Work – A Historical Look Mignon Duffy, entire book.</p>
Class 6	October 13	<p>Gender, Sexuality, and the Social Construction of Work Kristen Schilt, entire book.</p>
Class 7	October 20	<p>Women, Work, and Privilege Sheryl Sandberg, entire book.</p>
Class 8	October 27	<p>Feminized Work “in Low-Wage America” Barbara Ehrenreich, entire book.</p>
Class 10	November 10	<p>Women, Work, and U.S. Public Policy - Overview To be announced (TBA). Reading will be distributed to class in pdf.</p>
Class 11	November 17	<p>Women, Work, & Public Policy: A Look at Other Affluent Countries Caitlin Collins, entire book.</p>
Class 12	November 24	<p>“Real Utopias” Gornick, Meyers, et al, chapters 1 and 19.</p>