

**HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**of THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

**Gender in the Workplace**

WST 101 WI (3 credits)

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**Course Overview:**

In this interdisciplinary course, we will investigate theoretical and experience-based readings to understand why and how subordination of women still exists in the workplace and the issues men face regarding working conditions and employment possibilities pertaining to gender. Additionally, the course will involve students in community activity through work experiences and e-mentoring with a professional woman or man interested in gender issues: the requirement to serve the community will engage students civically, expose them to “real world” traditional (profit and not-for profit) or explicitly feminist work sites, an experience they will reflect on and analyze during class discussion.

**Course Description for College Catalogue:**

This interdisciplinary liberal arts course will examine issues, both historical and contemporary, concerning gender equity and gender dynamics in the workplace. Readings and assignments will consider feminist theory/gender studies, literature, sociology, communication, psychology, legal studies, and visual imagery within popular culture. In addition, students will volunteer in either a traditional or feminist work site relevant to their professional aspirations. Civic participation will enable students to put theory to practice while contributing to their community, gaining exposure to gender-based workplace issues, and networking for their future careers.

**Objectives:**

- To understand the origin of practices and attitudes that affect gender equity in the workplace by examining texts that chronicle gender bias, and gender-based assumptions which affect women’s and men’s career and earning potential;
- To gain knowledge about historical conditions determining gender roles at work by studying interdisciplinary feminist analyses, social documents, fiction and poetry, court cases, and first person accounts by working women and men, within their historical context;
- To learn about gendered politics in the workplace (e.g., “Who makes the coffee?”) by networking with women or men established in their careers

- To apply theory to practical experience by writing about the relationship between readings and students' volunteer, community-based experiences that will take place during the semester;
- To learn communication skills (writing, speaking) that will enhance women's and men's effectiveness in the workplace by practicing effective techniques in small and large groups in class;
- To conduct research about women's status in the public sphere (considering topics such as day care, sexual harassment, equal pay, family leave, dual career families) through completion of a project about an issue currently affecting women and men at work and as family members

### **General Education:**

This course has been designed to reflect and support the goals of General Education. Readings and assignments have been chosen and developed to **foster citizenship, encourage reasoning, and improve communication and literacy skills.** As an interdisciplinary course, this course contributes to the acquisition of Life-Long Learning and General Education Core Competencies by addressing: the value of writing, oral communications and aesthetic literacy; the process of writing effectively and acquiring a precise vocabulary; the demonstration of critical and analytical reading skills, technology and computer skills, an appreciation, understanding, acceptance and respect for human differences in ethnic and cultural perspectives, race, class, gender, sexual orientation and ability and the location and evaluation of scholarly opinion.

### **What is a writing intensive (WI) course?**

In Writing Intensive (WI) courses, writing plays an integral part in the curriculum. The purposes of a WI course are to maximize opportunities for meaningful writing experiences and to utilize writing as a tool for teaching the subject matter in a way that allows students to process what they know by putting new knowledge into their own words. WI courses require writing activities both inside and outside the classroom. Requirements include both formal (graded) writing and informal (non-graded) writing assignments; thus, students' writing becomes a major course component. Prior to professor's evaluation of essays, students will receive feedback from peers and/or from the professor on work-in-progress.

NOTE: In this WI course, all formal assignments will require a draft before submission of the final essay.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

*(See pages 158-162 of the 2007/2008 Hostos Community College Catalog.)*

Services for Students with Disabilities Office: Savoy Building, Room D-101P  
<http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/sswd/Index.html>

Telephone: (718) 518-4454  
 Email: Prof. Michael R. Stimola, Director; mstimola@hostos.cuny.edu  
 Hours: Mondays through Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Evening appointments and accommodations can be arranged.

**Pre-requisites and/or co-requisites:**

- Successful completion of ENG 110

**Assignments and Grading:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Percentage of final grade</b>
1 Personal Response to Readings (journal entry format), 1 Personal Response to work experience; online discussion via Blackboard, in-class five-minute reflections about civic experience, and focused free-writing	10%
Media Representation Assignment	30%
Collaborative Interview Assignment	40%
Fictional Diary Entry Assignment	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

- A 93-100%
- A- 90 – 92%
- B+ 87 – 89%
- B 83 – 86%
- B- 80 – 82%
- C+ 77 – 79%
- C 70 - 76%
- D 60 - 69%
- F below 60%

**Required Books:**

Students will be expected to purchase a course pack, which will be drawn from the readings listed below. **[NOTE: The following list of readings and films is purposefully exhaustive. To keep interdisciplinary readings and media showings current and appropriately manageable, the final selections for instruction will be made just prior to the semester when this course is taught and made by the faculty member(s) who will teach it.]**

## Weekly Plan for Gender in the Workplace:

### **Weeks 1-3: Patriarchal Principles in Historical Perspective (Readings and films will be selected from among these)**

“Feminist Education for Critical Consciousness,” bell hooks. *Feminism is for Everybody*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000, 19-24.

“A Brief History of Working Women,” Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Gregg Lee Carter (*Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions*, eds. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee, Boston: McGraw Hill, 2007. 452-464)

Excerpt from *Women and Economics*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman. (*Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions*. 451)

Bradwell vs. Illinois (1873) in *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. Ed. Paula Rothenberg. NY: St Martin’s Press, 1992. Second edition. 291-293.

The Declaration of Sentiments. In *Race, Class and Gender in the United States*. Ed. Paula Rothenberg. NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1992. Second Edition. 266-69.

The Equal Rights Amendment (Defeated). In *Race, Class and Gender*, p. 310

“Colored Women as Wage Earners,” Anna Julia Cooper. " *The Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* ( 28 Aug. 1899): 295-98.

<http://www.huarchivesnet.howard.edu/9908huarnet/cooper7.htm>

“From Separate Spheres to Sexual Equality: Men’s Responses to Feminism at the Turn of the Century,” Michael S. Kimmel. *The Sociology of Gender*. Ed. Laura Kramer, NY: St. Martin’s, 1991, 301-322

“The Problem That Has No Name.” Betty Friedan. *The Feminine Mystique*. NY: Dell, 1963. 11-24.

Poetry: “ I Sit and Sew,” poem by Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1920)

[http://www.coreknowledge.org/bookstore/images/GA\\_3poets\\_pp98\\_99.pdf](http://www.coreknowledge.org/bookstore/images/GA_3poets_pp98_99.pdf)

“To Be of Use,” poem by Marge Piercy in *Women in Literature*. Ed. Sandra Eagleton. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998, 175.

Fiction: “Tom’s Husband,” Sarah Orne Jewett. (1882). 130; “Sweat” Zora Neale Hurston, (1926). 121. *Women in Literature*. Ed. Sandra Eagleton. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. 1998.

“The Politics of Housework,” Pat Mainardi *Women: Images and Realities*. Eds. Kesselman, McNair and Schniedewind. Boston: McGraw Hill, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. 188-91.

“Studying Masculinities as Superordinate Studies.” Harry Brod. *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory*. Ed. Judith Kegan Gardiner. NY: Columbia UP. 2002, 161-175.

Films: *The Life and Times of Rose the Riveter*. (1980). Powerful NEH funded film about women workers during World War II including their unfulfilled aspirations after the men came home to take back their jobs.

*The Issue at Hand: Where are Women Going?* A film about the impact of the women’s movement on employment for both women and men. –[links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00182745\(197902\)12%3A2%3C292%3ATDD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E](https://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00182745(197902)12%3A2%3C292%3ATDD%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E)

### **Week 3: Practical Concerns--What Women and Men Need to Know about Interview Skills, Resume Writing, and the Job Search**

Presentations by Rebecca Hoda and Lisanette Rosario of the HCC Career Development and Co-op Education Center.

### **Weeks 4-5: Gender and the Structure of Work Places**

“Women and Power in the Workplace.” Hilary M. Lips. *Gender Images*. Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1992. 500-511. (psychologist’s overview of workplace gender issues)

“Coalition Politics,” Bernice Johnson Reagon *Race, Class and Gender*. 3<sup>rd</sup>. edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. 1998. 518-523.

“The Tyranny of Structurelessness,” Jo Freeman  
<http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/structurelessness.htm>

“Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women’s Work.” Barbara Ehrenreich. *Women’s Voices, Women’s Visions*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2007. 468-473.

Fiction: “The Pocketbook Game.” Alice Childress. *The World Outside: Collected Short Fiction about Women at Work*. Ed. Ann Reit. NY: Four Winds Press, 1977, 110-111.

### **Week 6-7: Issues of Equity**

“The Glass Elevator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the ‘Female’ Professions”. Christine L. Williams. *Gender Basics*. Ed. Anne Minos. NY: Wadsworth, 2000. 158-163.

AAUW Equity Resource Kit

[http://www.aauw.org/advocacy/issue\\_advocacy/actionpages/upload/payequityResourceKit.pdf](http://www.aauw.org/advocacy/issue_advocacy/actionpages/upload/payequityResourceKit.pdf)

“Undocumented Latinas: The New ‘Employable Mothers’” in *Gender Basics*. Ed. Anne Minos. NY: Wadsworth, 2000. 166-172.

“My Life in the Locker Room.” Jennifer Briggs. In *Gendered Voices*. NY: Harcourt, 1996. pp. 621-630.

“Exploding the Stereotypes: Welfare.” Rita Henley Jensen. *Women: Images and Realities*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: McGraw Hill. 2008. 226-230.

Poetry: “the cleaning woman/labor relations #4.” Poem by Hattie Gossett. In *Women’s Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. Eds. Kirk and Okazawa-Rey. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, CA. 2001. 329-330.

“The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued.” Ann Crittendon. *Women: Images and Realities*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. 2008. 191-193.

Activist Profile: Dolores Huerta. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee. *Women’s Voices, Women’s Visions*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. McGraw-Hill. Boston: 2007. 445.

### **Weeks 8: The Leadership Debate: Do Women and Men Lead Differently?**

“Women and Authority: Why Women Have Difficulties.” Aileen Jacobson. *Women in Charge: Dilemmas of Women in Authority*. NY: Van Nostrand, 1985.

“What Would it be Like if Women Win?” Gloria Steinem. *Gendered Voices*. NY: Harcourt Brace, 1996. 108-112.

“Voces Abriendo Caminos (Voices Forging Paths): A Qualitative Study of the Career Development of Notable Latinas”. Maria J. Gomez, Ruthe E Fassinger, Joann Prosser, et. al. *Workplace/Women’s Place*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Ed. Paula J. Dubeck and Dana Dunn. Roxbury Publishing Co., Los Angeles: 2006. 216-232.

“Being Good Girls and Boys.” Gary N. Powell. *Women and Men in Management*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. NY: Sage Publication, 1993. 33-67.

“Working with People.” *Ibid*. 101-121.

### **Week 9-10: Gender and Communication: Do Women and Men Speak Differently?**

“The Sexual Politics of Interpersonal Behavior.” Nancy Henley and Jo Freeman. *Women: A Feminist Perspective*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Ed. Jo Freeman. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. 1989. 457-469.

“The Power to Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why.” Deborah Tannen. *Harvard Business Review* Sept-Oct. 1995. (Reprint)

“Nice Girls Don’t Ask.” Linda Babcock, Sara Lashever, Michele Gelfand, and Deborah Small. *Harvard Business Review*. October 2003. (Reprint)

“The Inexpressive Male: Tragedy of Sexual Politics?” Jack W. Sattel. *Social Problems* 23 1976. 469-77.

“Interaction: The Work Women Do,” Pamela Fishman –  
<http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~salaff/Fishman.pdf>

### **Week 11: Sexuality in the Workplace**

“Prostitution, Humanism, and a Woman’s Choice.” *Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions*.

“My Life in the Military Closet.” Jose Zuniga. *Gendered Voices*. Karin Bergstrom Costello. Harcourt Brace, Fort Worth, Texas: 1995. 151-159.

“Sexual Harassment.” Ellen Bravo. In *Women: Images and Realities*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds. Kesselman, McNair and Schniedewind. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008. 202-204.

“Sexual Harassment and the Law.” Arlene Foy Reynolds. In *Women: Images and Realities*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds. Kesselman, McNair and Schniedewind. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2008. 204-206.

“Preventing Sexual Harassment” --online course and mastery test. Please print the certificate of completion for attachment to resume. [www.cuny.edu/sexualharassment](http://www.cuny.edu/sexualharassment)

Summary of court case Meritor v. Vinson, a case which created the cause for legal action of sexual harassment--found in course documents in Meritor v. Vinson folder

“Sexual Harassment” in *Gender and Law: Theory, Doctrine, Commentary*. Eds. Katharine T. Bartlett and Deborah L. Rhode. New York: Aspen Publishers, 4th ed. 2006.

### **Weeks 12: Balancing Family and Work**

“The Time Bind.” Arlie Hochschild. *Workplace/Women’s Place*. Eds. Paula Dubeck and Dana Dunn. 3<sup>rd</sup>. edition. LA: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2006. 134-141.

“Only Daughter.” Sandra Cisneros. *Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007.

“Reflections of a Feminist Mom.” Jeanine Ouellette Horwitz. In *Women’s Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield. 2001. 346-48.

“I Stand Here Ironing,” Tillie Olsen. *Women and Fiction*. Ed. Susan Cahill. NY: NAL, 1975. 162-171.

Fiction: “Marital Relations” plus excerpt from her novel, *The Homemaker*. Dorothy Canfield Fisher. NY: Harcourt Brace. 1924/1983, iii-ix; 219-231.

“The Uneasy Balance.” by Virginia Sapiro in *Women in American Society*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1996. 385-86.

“Friendly for Whose Family?” Betty Holcomb. In *Women: Images and Realities*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Boston: McGraw Hill., 2008. 194-7.

## **Weeks 13- 14: Presentations of Cooperative Work—Interviews and Analyses**

### **Writing Assignments:**

#### **Formal Writing Assignments**

##### **1. Media Representations of Gender and Work (short essay--3 pages):**

The goal of this assignment is to prompt students to reflect critically on how the media represents gender (images of women and men) in the work place.

Directions to Follow in Carrying Out this Assignment—(1) **Selection:** Collect 3-5 representations of women and men at work (for example: advertisements in magazines, newspapers, songs, television programs or movies about working women or men).

(2) **Description of Images:** Describe, with attention to detail, how each woman or man is portrayed in the images you’ve collected.

(3) **Questions that will lead to your Analysis:** What patterns do you notice in the media sampling of male/female images you’ve collected? (For example: With what are women or men repeatedly associated? How are they dressed or posed? With whom and how do they interact (with both co-workers and managers/employers)? How are women and men similarly portrayed and in what ways are men and women differently represented?

(4) **Critical Thinking:** What assumptions are being made in these commercial/cultural “products” about women and/or men? Looking at the several representations you’ve found, what do you think most viewers would come away having concluded about: (a) the kinds of work that women and men do; (b) how they dress for and are regarded at work; and (c) what their concerns are in the workplace? Finally, your own view: (d) To what extent do you consider these images realistic or biased?

In class, using an advertisement from a magazine, we will discuss one example to clarify how to carry out this assignment.

##### **2. Cooperative Research Project: (8-10 pages, plus one page of annotated bibliography)**

The goal of this assignment is to apply classroom concepts to the reported experiences of “real-life” professional women and men working on gender issues in their employment setting. The task involves each student in conducting one half-hour interview and then, working in a structured cooperative work group of four to five, students will share and discuss their findings. At the end of the assignment, each student will reflect on what each has learned about “teamwork” through the group experience.



Contents of the interviews will serve as the basis for each student to write a formal essay about gender issues in the workplace. The essay will identify and examine thoroughly the most prevalent issues that emerged from the interview(s). Demographic information about the interviewees must be included in the report: for example, whether the person interviewed has in a “traditional” or “non-traditional” job, her/his sex, age, and race/ethnicity.

Ultimately, each student will submit first a draft and then a final essay of 8-10 pages, which will benefit from both faculty and peer review before its submission for a grade. Essays will be written in conventional essay format, with a thesis and coherent paragraphs that use supporting evidence from the interviews themselves as well as two texts from the syllabus and one from a website approved by the professor. In class, we’ll look at models of thesis statements and topic sentences to ensure that students have the tools they need to write an organized essay.

Each student’s final essay will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography consisting of at least three entries and totaling approximating one page.

While the essays will be done individually, the whole assignment will be done in stages that require both team and personal work.

*Working stages of the Cooperative Research Project:* (Needless to say, students will not be asked to complete all the stages at once. Each step will be dealt with separately. This assignment will start early in the semester.)

*To begin:* Each student will arrange one interview after having received the interview subject’s permission to engage in this discussion.

*Stage 1:* In teams of four and with a range of possibilities provided them, students will develop a series of interview questions. These will be shared, discussed and revised in class, then used to conduct the individual interviews.

*Stage 2:* Each student will hold one interview—lasting as long as one half hour, using tape to record or handwritten notes. Each student is responsible for producing a typed rendition of their interviews, recording as closely as possible the content of the discussion. Each student will make 3 copies of their interview “transcript” for distribution to her/his team members.

*Stage 3:* Teams will meet to share the findings of their interviews. The goal of this meeting is that by sharing the findings of their own interviews, students are able to identify several (4-6) salient topics related to gender in the workplace that came up in their interviews. These topics could be: gendered hierarchies; leadership and gender; sexual harassment; rewards of work; discrepancies in wages/promotions; how men feel when women earn more; daycare at the workplace; “who makes the coffee?”; combining wage work and family. By the end of the meeting, each team member will have chosen

two or three topics about gender in the workplace that will become the focus of their individual essays. Ideally, topics will not overlap.

*Stage 4:* Each student's task will be to return to her/his interview to analyze its contents focusing on two or three of the topics previously identified. To draft their essays, students will examine principally their own interviews; where a topic comes up in a teammate's interview, students can also draw from transcripts written up by other team members. In other words, this draft will develop the chosen themes on gender in the workplace using interview material from the group as supporting evidence. Some questions that students could take into consideration to begin their analysis are: How does the interviewee talk about "topic x"—as a challenge, as a problem, as a fact of life? What kind of experiences does the interviewee talk about that relate to "topic x"?

*Stage 5:* Each student will select two readings from the syllabus and one from outside the syllabus that speak to, complement, or explain the issue that she/he explores in the draft—two print and one approved web source. Readings will be discussed among team members to ensure and then explore their relevance to the topics under discussion. Students will reference and discuss these 3 sources in their essays to support their students' analyses of the interviews.

*Stage 6:* Each student will then write an annotated bibliographic entry for each of the three readings; that is, each student will have two peer reviewed journals or books and one reliable, authoritative website on his/her annotated bibliography. (An annotated bibliography consists of a short summary of the reference material plus several sentences offering the student's opinion of its usefulness in discussing gender issues in the workplace.) A sample annotated bibliography will be provided and discussed in class.

*Stage 7:* Each student will write an 8-10 page draft. Although this draft will not be graded, its submission is requisite to receiving a final grade for the project.

*Stage 8:* Students will read each other's drafts and make constructive comments toward improvement. This will be done in class. Guidelines for peer review will be provided.

*Stage 9:* Having received the professor's feedback as well as peers' comments on their drafts, students will begin to revise/re-write their essays.

*Stage 10:* Each student will write her/his own reflective paragraph (submitted separately) about what it was like to work collaboratively, what problems were encountered and how they were resolved, and what group members have learned about working as a team that might be applied to the workplace. This paragraph should be appended to the end of each student's essay.

**Oral Presentation:** After submission and return of final report, each group will give one report, lasting ten minutes, about their team's work. This class presentation should focus on the basic demographic information about the group's interviewees, some of the topics discussed, and some of the responses. (See syllabus for presentation dates.)

### 3. Fictional Diary--Diary entry of a woman or man at work (3 pages):

The goal of this assignment is for students to examine a fictional character focusing on issues that the author raises about gender and work. Students will be attentive to and will make reference to the historical setting and the time period in which the text was written.

Prompt: Drawing on the any one of the several short stories or personal essays in our syllabus, write a detailed diary entry that reflects “a day in the life” of the man or woman characterized in the piece of fiction you’ve chosen. As with all other formal assignments, a model will be shared in class.

Diary entries should reflect the student’s ability to examine the essential conflict in the story, the main character’s motivation and traits, as well as overarching themes that pertain to gender and work.

### **Informal Writing Assignments**

#### 1. Personal Responses:

Two times during the semester students will submit a personal response. One of these will include substantive, personal responses to a reading from the syllabus. For the other response, students will write reflectively about an experience in civic/community engagement: for instance, a situation encountered at the workplace, observations about the particular workplace or job, etc. In a personal response about the class texts, the student should explain first what is the main point of the text and then add her/his own opinion; for the experiential response, the student should explain the setting and describe the worksite in which s/he has been placed and then give their observations about what s/he has encountered or learned by being exposed to this organization/agency, keeping the primary focus of their observations on gender issues. (Each personal response should be 1.5-2 double-spaced, typed pages.)

#### 2. Online Discussion:

In addition to class discussion, students will respond to eight different prepared questions to be found under Blackboard Discussion forums or in class blogs. Contributions will be counted. Students will be encouraged to respond to one another as well as to begin new threads. Students’ contributions will consider both readings and students’ “real world” civic experiences within the community.

#### 3. Analysis and reactions to essays, documents, stories and poems:

This writing activity will be done in class at various times during the semester. Texts to be discussed will include, for example, those by bell hooks, Betty Friedan, Pat Mainardi, Michael Kimmel, Alice Childress, Sandra Cisneros, Harry Brod, Deborah Tannen, Jack Sattel.

Students will meet in groups to identify the essence of the reading under discussion. Then, on their own, after talking in groups, students will: (1) Write out the central point each author makes directly or implies; (2) Choose an important passage and explain its meaning; (3) Offer their own view of the passage chosen. Students are asked to write up to 2 pages in class.

#### 4. Five minute responses to questions about their civic experiences:

Twice each month, the beginning of class, students will be asked to do free writing about their experiences with their E-mentor or about their experiences at the workplace to which they've been assigned. The focus of this writing will be to identify observations, concerns, or new interests that stem from either the mentoring experience or "real time" supervision at the workplace. Students are asked to write about 1 page.

#### 5. Focused free-writing:

At various times during the semester students' free writing will be used as a way to engage all students to give voice to their experiences, concerns, or questions at the worksite. Individuals will be invited to read aloud from their responses as a point of departure for class discussion.