

**Psychology of Women
Psychology 255**

Time: 2:00 – 3:15 PM Tu & Th Place: Wister 303
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Office hours: Tuesday, 3:30 – 5:30 PM; Wednesdays: 3:30-5:30 PM and by appointment. **Please note:** I am on campus at other times as well. If you stop by during office hours and I am not seated in my chair, I may have gone to get coffee, may be in the copy room, etc., and will be back soon. Students who come to my office take precedence over concurrent incoming phone calls (I won't pick up the phone if I already have a student in my office, but will return the call later). I respond quickly to e-mail messages, unless you ask me a relatively complex question.

In case of instructor illness or bad weather: If illness or bad weather results in class being cancelled, I will post a narrated outline online via Blackboard sometime that week. *Individual students who miss class due to illness, etc., should get copies of the notes from two students to help ensure sufficient coverage.*

Text: Matlin, M. (2007). *The Psychology of Women* (6th ed.). New York: Wadsworth Publishing. ISBN-10: 0495091545. This book is available in the bookstore. There will be additional readings on reserve.

Reserve Readings:

- Various articles & chapters as noted in assignments section.

Course Description: This course provides an overview of psychological theory and research related to the study of women, including research on gender, gender role socialization, and sex differences. It will evaluate traditional views and feminist perspectives. The class will learn how gender and sexism interact with ethnicity, class, age, and abledness across the lifespan to influence women's lives and understandings. Topics include women's physiological, cognitive, and personality characteristics, as well as media images of women, motherhood, and violence against women. Mental health issues and clinical interventions specifically developed for women will be described.

Course Objectives:

1. To expose students to current perspectives on the psychology of women.
2. To encourage students to critically evaluate the research and theory associated with the study of women.
3. Facilitate students' learning of key terms and findings related to psychology of women
4. Provide students with hands-on research experience in order to develop the skills to become more knowledgeable consumers of psychological research reported in popular and scholarly articles.
5. Encourage students to apply course content to their own lives.

Very important: To get a better grade in ANY class, do these things.

1. Outline the chapters. Split up the chapters among classmates or do it on your own.
2. Always check to make sure the outlines are complete yourself.
3. Make vocabulary lists, paying close attention to words in the text that are in bold or italicized print.
4. Devise ways to remember the concepts (“mnemonic devices”).
5. Later, when you study for tests, review both the class notes (which some students also outline) AND your chapter outlines.
6. Team up with other classmates for study sessions and quiz each other. Better to find out what you don't know BEFORE the test than after it.

Although I can't offer any guarantees, some students have raised their test scores 20-30 points by using these techniques, and have been known to go from a D- to a B+ in the class. One student started using these techniques in all of her classes and went from barely making it in college to graduating with honors. These things, when done in earnest, can potentially make a huge difference in any class.

Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance AND participation in class discussion.** This is a discussion class and your input and ideas are important.
2. **Completion of three exams.** The exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions based on the text and lectures. I recommend banding together with other students to study and share the outlining of chapters. Studying with other students (even over the phone!) is also a good idea. It is better to get that uncomfortable feeling when a peer asks a question you can't answer than during the exam. The more ways your peers ask you questions, the more likely it is that you will come across an item that will be on the exam.
3. **Optional final:** During final exam week an optional, comprehensive exam will be given. If you do better on this exam than on one of the tests, it will replace that grade. It will only replace one test grade, however. This exam cannot hurt your grade - it can only help. Students who are satisfied with their grades are not required to take it.
4. **Projects:**
 - a. **In-class assignments.** The assignments will vary but will consist of things like very short reaction papers to lectures, discussions, or videos; in class small group assignments; and in-class small group discussions of data collection or reading assignments. They are worth five points each and together count for 14% of your grade. A point will be taken off for substandard performance on these assignments. This is difficult to define but would include writing a reaction paper that has very little content (e.g., one sentence) or obvious nonparticipation in a small group assignment. **You cannot make up points for in-class assignments that you miss.**
 - b. **Data collection assignments:** There are three data collection assignments due throughout the semester. Assignments are worth 10 points each and together count for 36% of your grade. Further details are provided at the end of the syllabus. **Late data collection assignments will not be accepted.**
5. **Extra credit.** Students can earn extra credit by:
 - a. **Critiquing (summarizing, then giving their own opinion) on an article from a professional journal in psychology.** The critique should be 3-4 pages long, 12-point times roman or 11 point Arial, and double-spaced. The reference (authors, date, title of article, journal, volume,

pages) for the article must be included. The journal must be a journal listed in PsycInfo, an online database used by the university. Journals that are not listed in PsycInfo are NOT acceptable. The librarian can help you use PsycInfo if you have trouble. One summary can be used for each test and counts for a maximum of 4 points (range is 0 to 4), for a total maximum of 12 points for the semester. Critiques are due one week after each exam.

b. Participating in ongoing psychology research projects. Students can earn 4 points by participating in ongoing research projects. Students or faculty will visit the class to describing opportunities for participation. One experiment or study can be used for each test and counts for as 4 points for a total maximum of 12 points for the semester.

c. Attend Grimes Lecture (write 3 page summary) and/or Eastern Psychological Association meeting (bring back name tag) for 4 bonus points each, for a maximum of 12 points this semester.

Grading:

Exam I	15%
Exam II	15%
Exam III	15%
In class assignments	14%
Data collection assignments	36%
Attendance & discussion	5%
Total	100%

Grades:

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

Psychology of Women

Day:	*Chapters:	*Topic:
1/20 & 1/22	1	Introduction & Research Methods <u>Data Collection Assignment #1:</u> Gender Training. Due: 2/5
1/27 & 1/29	2	Gender Stereotypes Video: Still Killing Us Softly 3, 2000, 34 minutes
2/3 & 2/5	3	Infancy and Childhood Video: The pinks and the blues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Collins, L. H. (2002). Self-Esteem Inoculation: Protecting Girls from the Effects of Sexism. <i>In Charting a New Course.</i>
2/10 & 2/12	4	Adolescence
2/17 & 2/19	5	Cognitive abilities and achievement motivation <u>Data Collection Assignment #2:</u> Women and Men at Work. Due: 3/19
2/24		Catch up
2/26		Exam I (on Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4)
3/3 & 3/5	6	Gender comparisons in social and personality characteristics Film: Silent Rage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chrisler, J. C. (2002) Hormone Hostages: The Cultural Legacy of PMS as a Legal Defense. <i>In Charting a New Course.</i>

The 30th Annual Grimes Lecture on March 5, 2009. *"The Theory of Multiple Intelligences: Past, Present, and Future"* by Howard Gardner. Write a 3 page summary for a possible 4 extra credit points!

3/10 & 3/12		SPRING BREAK
3/17 & 3/19	7	Women and Work <u>Data Collection Assignment #3:</u> Women, men, and relationships. Due: 3/31.
3/24 & 3/26	8	Love Relationships
3/31	9	Sexuality
4/2		EXAM II (Ch. 5, 6, 7, & 8)
4/7 & 4/9	10	Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Motherhood Reading
4/14 & 4/16	11	Violence Against Women <ul style="list-style-type: none">West, C. M. (2002). Black Battered Women: New Directions for Research and Black Feminist Theory. <i>In Charting a New Course.</i>
4/21 & 4/23	12	Women and psychological disorders Video: Dying to be Thin (2001, 54 minutes) with Larkin McPhee, Writer, Director and Producer <ul style="list-style-type: none">Murphy, E. (2003). Being born female is dangerous to your health. <i>American Psychologist</i>, 58, 205-210.Collins, L. H. (2002). Alcohol and drug addiction in women: Phenomenology and prevention. In M. Ballou & L. S. Brown (Eds.), <i>Rethinking mental health and disorder: Feminist perspectives</i>. New York: Guilford Press.
4/28		Activism <ul style="list-style-type: none">Cogan, C., & Preston, C. (2002). Women, Federal Policy, and Social Change: Bringing a Feminist Presence to Capitol Hill by <i>Jeanine C. Cogan and Camille Preston</i>. <i>In Charting a New Course.</i>
4/30		Exam III (on Ch. 9, 10, 11, 12)
Week of May 3		Optional final, date and time to be announced

Note: Syllabus may be changed at discretion of professor - changes will be announced in class.

Data Collection Assignments

These data collection assignments have two purposes. They are designed to (1) give you firsthand experience with some important issues in the psychology of women and (2) provide you with experience conducting and describing psychological research. Please complete alone or with no more than 2 other students.

Data Collection Assignment #1: Gender Training Due: Thursday February 5, 2009

Choose Option A, B, or C.

Option A - Children's stories: Choose 2-3 children's stories and describe the process by which you chose them. They can be storybooks, children's novels, or fairy tales. Describe how girls/women and boys/men are portrayed in these stories. Do these portrayals convey a stereotyped image of girls/women or boys/men? Why or why not? For one of the stories, switch the gender of the characters and record the effect of that switch on the story. For example, is the story still plausible? What did you learn from this rewriting? Relate your findings to the research discussed in Chapter 3 of the Matlin textbook.

Option B: Children's toys: Go to a major toy store (e.g., Toys R Us). Spend about an hour examining the toys and packaging and making notes about the extent to which you observe evidence of stereotyping and gender specific messages. Describe the store and your results, answering the following questions. Is there a girls' and boys' section of the store? Does it vary by age? What kinds of toys are stocked in each section? In your analysis, consider colors (e.g., pastels, black, red), pictures of boys or girls on the packaging, and specific indications of gender. How would you characterize boys' toys? What were their most common attributes? How would you characterize girls' toys? What were their most common attributes? What percentage of toys would you consider "gender-neutral"? Which ones were they? If a clerk asks if you'd like help, does s/he ask the sex and age of the child? Relate your findings to the research discussed in Chapter 3 of the Matlin textbook.

Option C - Children's TV: Watch three hours of children's TV programming (e.g., Saturday morning cartoons). Record which shows you watch. You might want to compare different kinds of shows, such as those geared to different ages or network, public TV, and cable shows. What proportion of the characters are female? Keep track of what activities characters engage in and how these do or not fit with stereotypical gender roles. Are there differences between the male and female characters in their level of aggressiveness or prosocial acts (e.g., helping others)? Who narrates the program and the commercials? Who appears in the commercials and for what products? What are the themes of the commercials and programs (e.g., caring, adventure)? What is their pace (e.g., fast-action, slow and pretty)? Relate your findings to the research discussed in Chapter 3 of the Matlin textbook.

Data Collection Assignment #3: Women at work. Due: March 19, 2009

Each student will be interviewing one male and one female working at the same level at the same job to learn about their work experiences. A set of questions will be provided and customized by the class.

Data Collection Assignment #3: Women, Men, and Relationships. Due: March 31, 2009

Choose Option A or B.

Option A: Ask at least five men and five women between ages 16 and 65 to list the most important characteristics they look for in (a) a short term romantic partner and (b) a marriage partner. Be sure to interview each person separately. Record the responses of each person, noting their age, sex, and relationship status. What attributes were mentioned most often by men and women? Did they differ by gender? Did they differ by type of partner being rated? How do your results compare to those of Regan and Berscheid (1997) (see Matlin, p. 246-248).

Option B: Go to one of the many match-making services on the Web such as www.match.com, www.lovecity.com, or www.americansingles.com. Browse a sample of ads placed by women

looking for men and men looking for women (at least five each). Specify how you chose the ads, including characteristics of your sample (e.g., geographical, age ranges). For example, you might look at every fifth ad on match.com placed by 18-24 year old women from Tennessee. You might also want to compare across countries or compare people looking for same-sex vs. opposite sex partners. Record how the men and women describe themselves as well as what they are seeking in a partner. What attributes were mentioned most often? Did they differ by gender? How do your results compare to those described by Matlin (pp. 247-248)?

Guidelines:

Data collection assignments should be 3-5 typed double spaced (stapled) pages. The assignment should be written according to the following format: First, write a brief introduction (one or two paragraphs) that states the purpose of the assignment and some background material on the topic (i.e., research cited in the textbook or other sources). Next, specifically describe what you did (i.e., your method). Then, state what you found, focusing on the points mentioned in the description of the assignment. Again, be specific. Finally, draw some conclusions from your data. What are the implications of what you found? What did you learn? How does it relate to the research described in your textbook?

Grading:

The data collection assignments are worth 20 points each. The points are distributed as follows:

5 points: Introduction

5 points: Method (what you did)

5 points: Results (what you found)

5 points: Conclusion and implications

For each section:

5 points = outstanding 4 points = good 3 points = satisfactory 2 points = needs substantial revision 1 point = not present

Introduction:

Contains clear and concise summary of the purpose of the assignment Contains clear and concise summary of research on the topic Ideas are well organized. Statements are accurate Statements are adequately supported

Method:

Method is clearly described. Sufficient detail is provided about method Rationale for method is interesting and well thought out

Results:

Results are clearly described. All questions are answered fully with sufficient detail Observations are interesting, show thought

Conclusion and implications:

Answers to all three questions are clear and well-reasoned. Observations about results are interesting Statements are well documented Statements are accurate. Points will be deducted for lack of clarity in writing, grammatical errors, misspellings, typos, sentence fragments, etc.