COURSE OUTLINE

Course Code / Title : HS3018 Sociology of Gender

Pre-requisites : Any two of the following 2000 level core courses:
- HS2001 Classical Social Theory,
- HS2002 Doing Social Research,
- HS2003 Economy and Society,
- HS2004 Culture, Self and Identity,
- HS2005 Organisations and Organisational Change

No. of AUs. : 3 AUs

Contact Hours : 39

Course Aims

This course challenges some common-sense understandings and stereotypes around gender. Looking beyond individual, biological and psychological presumptions about male and female behavior, we use our sociological lenses to see how gender is constructed, regulated, and reproduced through everyday social mechanisms and institutions. We scrutinize the ways in which inequalities are produced and justified.

The course is organized around three sets of intertwined questions:
First, to what extent do gender differences reflect biological variations, and to what extent are they the product of societal constructs? How do gender differences and inequalities come about? We will explore important classical perspectives in the feminist literature that grapple with these questions.

Second, what shapes our perspectives on and practices around gender? We discuss the mechanisms and the institutions through which gendered differences and inequalities are produced in contemporary societies. Here, we hone our analytical lenses for understanding how gender works in specific contexts—in schools, at the intersection of work and home, and through state actions. We also examine how gender as a principle of vision and division works in tandem with other principles of difference, focusing in particular on sexuality, ethnicity and class.

Finally, we ask directly: how do gender differentiation and inequalities matter? What costs do they exert and for whom? What can be done to reduce inequalities and injustices? We discuss the achievements and limitations of feminist movements and reflect on the way forward.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Evaluate the different ways sociologists have approached the study of gender.
2. Describe the key theories that account for the reproduction of gender inequalities.
3. Articulate connections between micro-everyday experiences and macro-structural phenomenon.
4. Apply critical lenses to contemporary manifestations of various types of inequalities.

Course Content

Week 1  Introduction to the course
Key concepts: Gender: what it is and why we should care
The craft of everyday observations

Week 2  Accounting for gender differences: destabilizing biological explanations
Key concepts: Common sense
Sociology of knowledge/science

Week 3  Accounting for gender differences: the centrality of economics and kinship
Key concepts: Capitalism
Patriarchy

Week 4  Social construction: everyday “doing” of gender
Key concepts: Doing gender
Gender performativity

Week 5  Gendered sexuality as social control
Key concepts: Sexuality and nationalism
Heteronormativity

Week 6  Intersecting principles of vision and division
Key concepts: Intersectionality
Masculinity

Week 7  Schools as gendered spaces
Key concepts: Gendered play
Gender disciplining

Week 8  Gender at the intersection of work and home I: big picture
Key concepts: Work-life balance
Stalled revolution
Work-care regimes
Week 9  Gender at the intersection of work and home II: complexities
Key concepts:  Class inequalities
             Paid care labor

Week 10  The gendered state
Key concepts:  State
             Welfare

Week 11  Gender and popular culture
Key concepts:  Enlightened sexism
             The body

Week 12  Feminism today
Key concepts:  Politics
             Activism
             Neoliberalism

Week 13  Semester-end review/revision

Course Assessment

CA1  3 Field Notes : 20%
CA2  1 Team research report : 20%
CA3  1 research brief : 20%
CA4  Class participation : 10%
Final Examination : 30%

Total  100%