Sociology 137a: Gender and the Life Course
Brandeis University
Fall 2014
Schwartz 103
Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:50

Dr. Ruth Nemzoff
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:25-3:25 in Pearlman 208
or by appointment at Women’s Studies Research Center
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Course Description
There are no prerequisites for this course.

Life course studies is a relatively new field which seeks to understand how the forces of time, context and individual agency influence human development across the life span. After initially defining life course studies, this course will focus on the effects of gender assumptions on development at particular stages in the life course. Students will learn to use gender as one of the many lenses with which to analyze age groups and stages of life. Students will gain insight into some of the origins of gendered behavior and into their own behavior as well as methods of reflecting on their own behaviors and attitudes. In addition, students will explore how societal context influences both gender perceptions and the life course. They will become aware of the influences of various societal norms (unwritten rules) and social relationships.

Films, guest speakers, case studies, lectures, video clips, in-class exercises and class discussions in both large and small groups will be utilized to explore and discuss Gender Issues. Students will have the opportunity to critique any outside presentations and materials used in class.

In addition, this class fulfills the oral intensive requirement. Students will be given instruction in the art and design of good, articulate oral presentation. Class discussion will focus on both the content and form of the presentation. A high degree of
participation is required. The professor will model presentation skills in the first days of class. Students will also learn how to clearly argue and persuade in discussion. Moreover, students will be giving and receiving feedback from their peers as well as from the professor. Instruction will be given on the proper way to give and receive feedback. These critiques will discuss content, voice tone, and body language. Thus, students will have the opportunity to refine their presentation skills. If you are uncomfortable speaking publicly or wish to improve your public speaking skills, this is the class for you!

**Learning Goals**

1. A basic understanding of the field of life course studies
2. The ability to use gender as a tool of analysis
3. Insight into the impact of gender in the student’s own life course
4. Presentation skills including proper introductions, the structure of a presentation, and non-verbal aspects of communication.

**Grading and Course Requirements**

This class will be conducted as a seminar. A high degree of class participation is required. To facilitate discussion, students are expected to have completed all reading and written assignments by the date scheduled. This means that students must come to each session prepared with questions and comments on the readings.

**Attendance** is important in order to keep up with the discussion. More than 3 absences can result in a lower grade.

Students are responsible for keeping up to date with LATTE posts and readings and for checking their Brandeis emails on a timely and regular basis.

Class members must pass in a feedback note to the speaker at the end of each class presentation. Speakers should wait to talk with the professor right after class. Students will thus receive feedback from both the professor and the other students. Students are expected to incorporate the feedback from their first presentation into their second and
thus improve their presentation skills. All students are expected to give honest, constructive feedback to each other.

From time to time, the professor will interject questions in the midst of a presentation, much as a board of directors or boss might do during the course of a business presentation. Thus, presenters should be prepared to answer questions as well as present their material.

In addition, students will have numerous brief public speaking opportunities throughout the class.

Students will receive instruction in presentation skills and must give two formal presentations and one story. In advance of the 5-minute Story Slam, each student will log-in to a tool called "InterviewStream" to record his/her presentation (you can re-record as many times as you want using a laptop, tablet or iPhone), self-review it, and then send it to his/her partner for review and feedback. You will receive a separate email from the Hiatt Career Center with log-in instructions. (In addition to practicing classroom presentations, InterviewStream is a great tool to hone your professional interview skills to make sure you are prepared for your job and internship search.)

In advance of the 7-minute Final Presentation, each student will again log-in to "InterviewStream" to record his/her presentation, self-review it, and then send it to his/her partner for review and feedback.

**Each student will be responsible for giving three presentations in class (more information below):**

1. A personal story of how gender was the most salient feature at a particular time or event in your life (**September 30 and October 3**).
2. Students will give a five minute presentation on gender issues in a particular occupation (**October 23 and 28**).
3. Final presentation of seven minutes: in-depth analysis of one aspect of gender through the life course (**November 25 and December 2**).
You must also attend one out of class event concerning gender. I will send you frequent e-mails listing opportunities. (Please make sure whatever e-mail you use has e-mails sent to your brandeis.edu account forwarded as I will use that account. ) In this way you will learn that gender is a topic of much discussion in the Brandeis community. It is wise to do this early in the semester.

For the out-of-class events, you must write a two page paper which is due one week after the event you choose to attend. The first paragraph should summarize the event. The rest of the paper should explain its relevance to the gender and life course issues we have discussed in class and must refer to the readings.

**Grading**

Story Slam (2-3 minutes) .................................15%

Presentation 1 (5 minutes/workplace) ......................15%

Presentation 2 (7 minutes) ..................................15%

Final Paper Write-Up........................................15%

Event paper ...................................................15%

Paper on communication with parents ......................10%

Class Participation (including short responses and class reports on readings) 15%

**Oral Presentations:**

There are three presentations.

Speakers will be responsible for their three presentations: the first will be the story slam (September 30 and October 3), the second about gender and a particular a
career, and the third a research presentation on a gender issue across the life course. (Students will choose their own topic but must have professor’s approval by Nov 11). This topic will also be the subject for your final research paper which is due the last day of class (December 5).

In the first presentation you will tell a story (2-3 minutes). Begin by engaging your audience, and then telling a compelling story about how gender influenced you in a particular situation. The story may be serious or funny, but gender must play a salient role in the story.

Your second (5 minutes) due on October 23 and 28 and third (7 minutes) due on November 25 and December 2. Presentations must include an introduction in which you draw your audience in to listen to you. This can be accomplished with a joke, or a sweeping outrageous statement or a warm vignette. Follow this with an explanation of your purpose and a preview or agenda so the audience knows what to expect. The bulk of the report should be your main points. At the end of your presentation, summarize your main points and end with a conclusion. While you are encouraged to use visual aids, you must NOT look at the screen!

Students will be graded on how well they adhere to this report structure as well as the quality of their information. Students are expected to incorporate the feedback from their first presentation into their second and then their third, and thus improve their presentation skills. All students are expected to give honest, constructive feedback to each other. Students are required to preview themselves on interviewstream.

Final Paper

The final paper is the written and more detailed format of your seven minute presentation. Each student will select a topic to study in depth. It will be a more pinpointed look at one of the aspects of gender through the life course discussed in class. For example, if your interest is in preventing violence, you might decide to focus on violence prevention programs on college campuses. Or perhaps you might want to pick a specific religion and research gender and life course issues in that religion,

Remember to contact the professor for topic approval by Nov.11.
We will talk about this early in the semester in class so that you can begin your research well before the end of the semester.

**Course Materials**
In deference to your pocketbooks, I have put most of the readings on LATTE. The following books will be available on reserve or you can purchase them.


If for some reason one of the links has gone dead, you are required to find an alternative reading dealing with the same topic. All links were working when I put them on the syllabus.

**Course Outline and Readings (NOTE: Readings are due on the date they are listed under).** End of course topics subject to change depending on class interest and speaker availability. You will be informed.
Aug 28 Thursday

**Introduction and Course Overview**

Students will each give a 30 second introduction of themselves after instruction.

Sept 2 Tuesday

**Life Course Paradigm**

Hutchison, Elizabeth D. 2011. Excerpts from “Chapter One --A Life Course Perspective.”


[http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/36521_CLC_Chapter1.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/36521_CLC_Chapter1.pdf)


Sept 4 Thursday

**Gender and the Life Course as an Emerging Perspective**

Phyllis Moen: [Gender Disparities in Health: Strategic Selection, Careers, and Cycles of Control](http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu10we/uu10we05.htm)

Sept 9 Tuesday


In Our Studies, Ourselves: Sociologists’ Lives and Works, edited by Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz (pp.105-112). New York: Oxford University Press.


[http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu10we/uu10we05.htm](http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu10we/uu10we05.htm)

(Also: read p.65-68 which is the next chapter: “The Social Construction of Sexuality”)


http://www.sjsu.edu/people/lee.gilmore/courses/rels131/s1/WomenStudies.pdf


Link: http://www.jstor.org.resources.library.brandeis.edu/stable/3178416?seq=1

Sept 11 Thursday

**Gender and Infancy**

Gender at the Dawn of Life video;

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMldVZOxW64

"Gender Identity and Gender Confusion in Children" – HealthyChildren.org

"The Development of Sex Role Stereotypes in the Third Year" by Marsha Weinreb

Each student should find an article on early sex role development in the psychological, medical, or sociological literature and report to class.

Sept 16 Tuesday

**Gender in Infancy: Global Perspective**
Economic Effects of Sex Selection:
http://www.economist.com/node/15636231

http://ac.els-cdn.com/0277953694002321/1-s2.0-0277953694002321-main.pdf?_tid=19fbdb0c-aea6-11e3-8c71-00000aacb361&acdnat=1395151597_ac799dbf92d6b6b3f8805da11e0b76a4

http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095969

“Gendercide” (optional)
Case Study: Female Infanticide in China and India
http://www.gendercide.org/case_infanticide.html

Sept 18 Thursday
**Childhood and Schooling** (Note: Some of these will be for independent reading and some in class)

Watch Before Class:
TED Talks: Sheryl WuDunn: Our Century’s Greatest Injustice
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFgPtuzgw4o

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~uctpb21/Cpapers/Assessment_CD.pdf

“Stop the War on Pink…Toys for Boys” http://thesocietypages.org/girlwpen/2014/01/01/stop-the-war-on-pink-lets-take-a-look-at-toys-for-boys/

Africa


Example of NGO:
AGE Africa (Advancing Girls’ Education) http://ageafrica.org/

Chu, Judy. Salon.com. "Boyhood is a battlefield: The dangerous expectations of early masculinity"

“Girls, Boys, Feminism, Toys” (optional but short 😊) http://thesocietypages.org/girlwpen/2014/01/14/girls-boys-feminism-toys-deborah-siegel-and-rebecca-hains-discuss/


Girl with Pen Blog Posts by the former director of the Wellesley Centers for Research
“Thoughts on Toys, Kids, and Gender Stereotypes” (optional but short 😊)

Sept 23 Thursday

Adolescence and Puberty

www.jstor.org/stable/23086381

Half class tell a 2 or 3 minute story about their own lives where gender was the most salient factor:
The story must have a beginning which draws the audience in, a middle, and an end with some insight which illustrates why gender was the important variable in the story. The professor will model a story in advance.

Sept 25-26: No Thursday Class – Rosh Hashanah

Sept 30 Tuesday

Story Slam. Half of the alphabet tell a 2 or 3 minute story about their own lives where gender was the most salient factor.


World Health Organization Article
October 3 Thursday

Second half of alphabet present their stories

Sexualities in Adolescence

http://www.childpsych.theclinics.com/article/S1056-4993(11)00080-0/fulltext

Read this article to see the variety of gender variant issues, then pick one gender variant (i.e. intersex, lgbtq etc.) and read one of the articles cited or pick another article by that same author to read and report its content to class.

France
My Life In Pink/Ma Vie en Rose (Film)
Watch before class

Transgender
Solomon, Andrew. “Far From the Tree.” 2012. Chapter 11 (beginning from page 599)
“Transgender.”

LGBT Youth Government Resource Centers for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm

How to empower minorities to revolutionize the status-quo:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suu2R_646pY&list=PLUzuMGib9dW6vWgGyYDO
FwqAqKexZcjQG&index=4 by Afzal Raiaan Ullah, Brandeis Student
Higher Education

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/citedby/10.1080/03043797.2012.661702#tabModule


Resource: ACE stats on Higher Education

and UK Chart
http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/gender-breakdown-by-subject-area/2009177.article

Discussion on Campus Rape Issues, NYT:


Goldberg, Michelle. The Nation Magazine. Why the Campus Rape Crisis Confounds Colleges

Oct 9 No Class: Sukkot
October 13 Monday: Brandeis Thursday

**Relationship with Parents**


Introduction and Chapters 1-6, 9, and 11.

*Call your parents and discuss one of the issues that is troubling in your relationship with them. Then write a two-page paper on what you learned about communication and the topic.*

Oct 14 Tuesday

**Workplace**

Reminder: On Oct, 28th and 30th each student will research the gender issues in a field of their choice and give a 5 minute well-organized presentation. This report should include how gender attitudes throughout the life course maximize or minimize opportunities in the particular field. The following suggestions will help you begin your research: The US Department of Labor and the Women’s Bureau of the US Department of Labor websites will have statistics. The websites of professional organizations in each field also will have information. You might also want to check the licensing sites in each field and major companies in each profession.

Rivers, Carol and Barnett, Rosalind C. “Nine Similar Behaviors that Have Different Consequences for Men and Women.”


http://scrappywomen.biz/nine-similar-behaviors-different-consequences-men-women-caryl-rivers-ralind-c-barnett/


http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/10/17/the-new-soft-war-on-women.html

Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4. Employee benefits: What are the issues in gender based medical coverage? Maternity and paternity leave?  
Alternatives:  
• Video of Ms. Murphy Speaking: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygFFCUkHxbU  
• Claire Cain Miller, NY Times: "The Pay Gap Is Because of Gender, Not Jobs"

Oct 16 Thursday: No Class

Oct 21 Tuesday  
**Marriage**  
Chapter 7.

Oct 23 Thursday  
**Consciousness Raising Through the Life Course**  
Guest Speaker Janet Freedman  
**First half of class gives presentations on careers**

Oct 28 Tuesday
Second half of class give 5 minute presentations on careers. We will also discuss the reading.

**Religion’s Influence on the Life Course**

http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/507852

Oct 30 Thursday

**Particular Religions around the World**

Please read the article which has the first letter of your last name next to it. Be prepared to report on it in class:

A-G

Catholic:

http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037&context=rrgc

H-P

Jews:

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/nashim/v013/13.1plaskow.pdf
Q-Z

Muslims:
“What factors Determine the Changing Roles of Women in the Middle East and Islamic Societies?” PBS
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/questions/women/
(This article is a good introduction. Please choose another article of your choice to read and report on)

Nov 4 Tuesday
**No Class in exchange for 1 out of class event** (my suggestion: attend an event early in the semester)

Nov 6 Thursday
**Helen Berger: guest speaker on paganism**

Nov 11 Tuesday
**Childbearing**

This is a controversial article. Will women freezing eggs really end women's fertility worries. Please be sure to view the slideshow titled “10 Things You Should Absolutely Know” at the bottom of the page: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/20/egg-freezing-party-egg-banxx_n_5688461.html

**Topic approval for final paper due Friday**
Nov 13 Thursday

**Childrearing**


Nov 18 Tuesday

**Aging**
Sarah Lamb. “The Making and Unmaking of Persons: Notes on Aging and Gender in North India”

**Gender and Pensions**
Foster, Liam. “Gender, Pensions and The Life Course.” University of Sheffield

[http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.71411!/file/8foster.pdf](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.71411!/file/8foster.pdf)


Nov 20 Thursday

**Sexualities over the Life Course**
Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Chapter 6
Read resources posted on LATTE and:

Nov 25 Tuesday
Final presentations

Nov 27 Thursday: Thanksgiving No Class

Dec 2 Tuesday
Final presentations

Dec 4 Thursday
Final presentations continued

Wrap-up

Final paper due

Criteria for Evaluation of Your Paper

You will be graded on the quality of your research, your ideas, the coherence of your organization and your argument and your grammar.

1. Does the paper have an introduction that explains its aims and goals?
2. Does the paper accomplish what you say you will do?
3. Is your main point supported by facts?
4. Is your reasoning presented in a clear and coherent manner?
5. Has the writer used reputable sources? Has the writer cited those sources to support his/her arguments?
6. Has the writer referred to how life course and gender influence the issue?

The more specific you are the higher the grade.

Be sure to cite any and all references.

You may use footnotes or end notes. Both should have full titles, page numbers of books or articles and information about the publisher and year. Follow any consistent method of citation. For example, you may use the Chicago Manuel of Style or the Modern Language Association (MLA) Style.
Class Policies

Disability If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting academic accommodations you should contact Beth Rodgers-Kay, Director of Disabilities, Services and Support, in Academic Services at brodgers@brandeis.edu. Letters of accommodation should be presented at the start of the semester to ensure provision of the necessary adjustments.

Academic Integrity You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). The professor may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

Electronic Devices Please do not use any hand-held devices in class unless you are the designated recorder with permission from the classmate you are recording and the professor. Laptops may be used for note-taking only. Please do not use them for other purposes during class. I reserve the right to prohibit students’ use of laptops in the classroom if this policy is not respected. NO CELL PHONES PLEASE.

We will be discussing sensitive topics. If you are upset by the class content please feel free to contact me or counselling services at 781-736-3730.

The professor reserves the right to change the assignments in syllabus due to timing. NOTE the last 3 classes have no readings as yet, they will be reserved for readings relevant to classmates’ chosen topics.

Final Paper due date last day of class