



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Meriem Ouahidi

Sultan Moulay Slimane University

2017

Gender Studies Curriculum: A Step For Democracy and Peace
in EU-Neighbouring Countries with Different Traditions (GeSt)

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MA TITLE: Gender Studies

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Course code	Course title	Number of hours or number of credits	Study Form (face-to-face or online)	Course valid from*	Course valid to*	Course type (Obligatory /Optional)	Semester
Module 16	Gender Issues in language	2 hours/ week	Face to face	October	January	Obligatory	3

1. A brief description of the course

The course is designed to semester 3 students. It is an introduction to the large body of literature on Language and Gender within Sociolinguistics and within studies of language in social context more generally. Students will investigate how language in use mediates, and is mediated by, social constructions of gender. An emphasis on the history of research in language and gender, which contains distinct phases and movements in the field, will culminate in a current description of the state of language and gender research today. Particular attention will be paid to the evolution of feminist theory, ideology, hegemony, performativity, and the “borders” of gender identities.

2- Objectives of the course

The course aims to explore different perspectives of the Gender Issues in Language. This course is divided in two main parts:

* make students aware of the role of language in defining people relative to each other so that they will then be able to use language to position themselves and each other more equitably. To accomplish this, I wanted to encourage students to look critically at contexts they were involved in on a regular basis.

- * give students an idea of major issues in the field including a critical look at
- representations of women (and other underrepresented groups) in a variety of contexts, traditionally by men, more recently by feminists as a reaction against traditional patriarchal representations, and even more recently by underrepresented feminists as a reaction against traditional feminist representations;

- binary categorizations, how else might we talk about gender, i.e. as a continuum?;
- language in interaction: difference and/or dominance: e.g. men and women in conversation, women's/men's language, powerful/powerless language, women in conversation with women,
- strategies for individual and social change. This list is by no means exhaustive.

3- Learning outcomes

After completion of the course, students would be able to:

- understand the many complex current approaches which have contributed to the debates over language and gender
- understand and appreciate the past history of the subject as well as the present issues and controversies which dominate the field.
- Conduct fieldwork research on the representations of women at the linguistic level.

1- Teaching method

The course will be taught mostly in the form of lectures and seminars based on readings done at home and the discussions in class. Students are expected to regularly get involved in discussions and deliver presentations. Thus, each student is expected to give at least one presentation. Thereby, the students will be exposed to different case studies and research findings related to the themes addressed by the course. Some seminars will be delivered by experts from different fields related to gender and language.

2- Distribution of workload for students (i.e. lectures, seminars, individual work in hours, and total)

Workload for studies:

Attendance will be taken to “participation ”grade. 15%

- Lectures 30%
- Seminars 20%
- Assignments 20%
- Final Exam 30%

3- Assessment

Methods of assessment

- Presentations
- Participation in class
- Weekly reports on readings
- End term exam

Percentage allocated to each method of assessment

- Presentations (20%)
- Weekly reports on readings (20%)
- Participation in class (20%)
- End term exam (40%)

7- Course schedule

Week 1: Introductions: The study of language and gender:

In this session after introducing ourselves, the teacher will introduce the course and go over it describing its content. Then the whole class will discuss the importance of studying gender and language issues.

Your preparation for this class: You should come with your own written answers to these questions:

What is gender? What is language? What is discourse?

Required readings:

- Talbot, M. (1998). *An introduction to language and gender*. London: Blackwell

Chapter 1

Bergvall, V., Bing, J., Freed, A. (1996). *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice*. London: Longman.

Introduction by Bing and Bergvall, pp. 1-30

Week 2: Historical background - The study of Gender & Language

In this session, *Language and gender* as an interdisciplinary field of research that studies varieties of speech (and, to a lesser extent, writing) in terms of gender, gender relations, and gendered practices will be discussed and debated in class.

the theoretical background of gender and language issued will be presented to the students in order to reflect on and debate in the light of the coming sessions

Your preparation for this class: You should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: When did the study of gender and language begin? Why was Lakoff's study labeled the "deficit approach"?

Required readings:

- Bergvall, V., Bing, J., Freed, A. (1996). *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice*. London: Longman. (Chapters 2)

Week 3 &4: Theories of Gender and Language:

Feminism.
Linguistic theory.

In these sessions, the discussion will revolve around the problem whether women are discriminated through a more powerful "male" language use and how sexist language might be avoided. Within the subject, different theories arose, but the focus will be on feminist linguistics (FL).

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What are the main theories that studied gender and language? What is FL? What are the three aspects that distinguish FL from all other disciplines?

Required readings:

- Cameron, D. (1985). *Feminism and linguistic theory*. MacMillan: London. Chapter 2. Pp. 91-173.
- Nilsen, Alleen Pace, Haig Bosmajian, H. Lee Gershuny, and Julia P. Stanley. (1977) *Sexism and Language*. Urbana, IL: NCTE. (Chapters 2 &3)

Week 5: Gender and discourse.

In this session, the relationship between gender and language is going to be addressed. First, the session will cover the ways language describes and represents different genders at the linguistic, social and cultural levels. Second, the session will also cover the ways males and females use language.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: what are some of the features that characterize males' speech and females' speech? Are there any rules that govern males and females' use of language? What are the approaches that Coates outlined?

Required readings:

- Bergvall, V., Bing, J., Freed, A. (1996). *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice*. London: Longman.
- Coates, Jennifer, ed.(1998). *Language and Gender: A Reader*. Blackwell (Chapter3)

- Talbot, M. (1998). *An introduction to language and gender*. London: Blackwell.
Chapters 2 & 3.

Week 6: Women, men, and language: Dominance and difference

The focus will be on the development process of two main theories dealing with gender and language (the so called *dominance* and the *difference* -theory) and afterwards assess their adequacy in explaining linguistic behaviour in gender interaction.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What is dominance and what is difference. How can they explain linguistic behavior in gender daily interactions.

Required readings:

- Spender, D. (1985). *Man-made language*. Routledge: Boston

Week7&8 : Acquisition: Language, Gender, and Children/Adolescents.

The peculiarities and distinctive features that characterizes the speech of young boys and girls when acquiring their mother tongues will be discussed. The sessions will also cover how the input (or the so-called child directed speech CDS) is claimed to shape a child language. Some examples from different linguistic contexts will be discussed.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What characteristics distinguish the speech of boys and girls when acquiring their mother tongues. What is the input? And how does it shape the speech of children, males and females? Why do girls outperform boys in language acquisition?

Required readings:

Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand*. Morrow: New York.
"Tactical...Boys' and Girls' Disputes" / "Pickle Fights" / "Cooperative Competition" / "Go Get Ya a French!" (Tannen).

Week 9: Language and ideology:

This session explains the term “language ideologies” and goes on to examine gender differences in language use as one area in which ideological representations are common. After pointing out that these representations can differ significantly across cultures and through time, it will cover the emergence in contemporary societies of a specific representation of male–female difference and the subsequent rise of new representations which place particular emphasis on biological differences. It concludes by considering the relationship between language ideologies and real-world linguistic practices.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What does the term “language ideologies” mean? What are the most common ideological representations? Do they differ across cultures? If yes, how?

Required readings:

- Cameron, D. (1990). *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*. New York: Routledge. Chapters (4& 5 &6.)

Week 10: Public Talk: The institutionalization of gender.

The session will start by defining institutionalized gender inequality. It will also cover how this process takes place by outlining the objectives and activities of organizations and the set of formal and informal rules followed and their execution mechanisms

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What is “the institutionalization of gender” How does the process take place? What are its formal and informal rules.

Required readings:

- Talbot, M. (1998). *An introduction to language and gender*. London: Blackwell. Talbot, Chapters 6 & 10.

- Bergvall, V., Bing, J., Freed, A. (1996). *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice*. London: Longman.
Article by Erlich & King.

Week 11 : Making challenges and changes: Creating awareness, reclaiming language.

This session will discuss new approaches to explaining gender differentiated patterns of sound change and language shift, the success or failure of planned linguistic reforms, and changes in the social evaluation of gendered speech styles.

Your preparation for this class: In addition to the assigned readings, you should come to class with your own written answers to these questions: What are the new approaches that deal with gender differentiated patterns? Have they been successful to bring about some changes? If yes, how? What are the challenges that hinder the change? And why?

Required readings:

- Cameron, D. (1990). *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 10.

- Talbot, M. (1998). *An introduction to language and gender*. London: Blackwell
Chapter 11.

Week 12: Final Written Exam.

Required readings

- Bergvall, V., Bing, J., Freed, A. (1996). *Rethinking language and gender research: Theory and practice*. London: Longman.
- Cameron, D. (1990). *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Cameron, D. (1985). *Feminism and linguistic theory*. MacMillan: London
- Coates, Jennifer and Deborah Cameron (1988) *Women in Their Speech Communities*. London: Longman. (WITSC)
- Coates, Jennifer, ed. (1998). *Language and Gender: A Reader*. Blackwell
- Graddol, D. and Swann, J. (1989). *Language, Communication, and Consciousness*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Lakoff, R. (1975). *Language and Woman's Place*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Nilsen, Alleen Pace, Haig Bosmajian, H. Lee Gershuny, and Julia P. Stanley. (1977) *Sexism and Language*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Philips, S. U., Steele, S., &Tanz, C. (1987).*Language, Gender & Sex in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Spender, D. (1985). *Man-made language*. Routledge: Boston
- Talbot, M. (1998). *An introduction to language and gender*. London: Blackwell
- Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand*. Morrow: New York
- Tannen, D. (1994). *Gender and discourse*. Oxford University Press: New York.