

Gender Across Cultures

Anth 230 – Spring 2025

Teaching Team Information

Professor: Elizabeth Wirtz

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 12:00-1:00 pm and by appointment

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Teaching Assistant: Em Neyhart

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Course Description

This course explores biological sex, gender, and sexuality from an anthropological and global perspective. Drawing on studies of people around the world, we will explore the richness and diversity as well as the inequalities and privileges of people's lives and how these vary from culture to culture. We will study the contributions of feminist anthropology to raise questions concerning the gendered nature of power and the meaning of categories such as domestic, public, household, kinship, sexuality, woman and man. No prior knowledge of anthropology is expected.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand how culture influences concepts of biological sex and the complex interplay between sex and gendered behavior.
- Develop a theoretical understanding of the social construction of gender and sexuality.
- Gain a broad view of the diversity of genders and sexualities globally and over time.
- Understand how gender intersects with other social processes and institutions such as race, class, migration, economics, family, and politics.
- Appreciate the impact of power structures, violence, and inequality in the construction and maintenance of gender and gender subjectivities.

Required Texts

None – Readings are posted to Brightspace.

Course Expectations

1. Course Conduct

During the course, you may encounter ideas and concepts that conflict with your own beliefs. However, exploring challenging topics is a necessary component of studying human cultural diversity. You are not required to agree with all the material in this course. You must, however, demonstrate your understanding of the material. Discussions and assignments must be conducted with respect and humility. I hope that students will engage deeply with the material. You are expected to be familiar with its content. Please email Dr. Wirtz if you feel there are any issues with course conduct expectations.

2. Late Work

No late or make-up work accepted, not including excused absences.

3. Grade Issues

Any grade discrepancy needs to be brought to the attention of your TA and Dr. Wirtz via email within seven days of when the grades appeared in the Brightspace grade column.

4. Contacting the Professor

E-mail your TA FIRST, then Dr. Wirtz *and* your TA, with any issues or questions with 'ANTH 230' as the subject header. In general, e-mails will be answered within 12 business hours. Any student who sends their TA an email with their favorite song before January 26th will receive extra credit points. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, forward your original e-mail to Dr. Wirtz and both TAs.

5. Accommodations

If you would like to discuss any DRC or other Accommodations, please contact me within the first two weeks so that we can discuss how to best support your success in the class.

Grading Scheme

1. Attendance

You are expected to attend all lectures and be aware of all information presented during these sessions. I will be recording attendance in lectures using Purdue's iClicker. Instructions on how to use the iClicker will be posted to Brightspace. Students are allowed two 'free unexcused absences' for the semester. You do not need to inform your TA or Dr. Wirtz if you are using one of your two free absences or if you have an unexcused absence. However, we will not provide notes on the materials and/or participation activities you missed during these absences. Excused absences will not count against your grade, and you will have access to course materials and make-up work. If you need to miss a class for an excused absence, please email your TA. Examples of 'excused absences': Purdue or scholarship related activities – sports, clubs, etc., religious observances not recognized by the institution, Accommodations related absences, ...and others. If you are unsure of what might count as an excused absence, please contact me in advance so we can discuss it. Medical and Bereavement/Grief related absences should be managed through the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), which coordinates with all of your instructors.

2. Participation

A portion of the grade will be based on your participation during class. Participation includes: active listening and engagement with concepts, preparedness (read ahead of time and come with questions/comments), participation in group and class conversations, completion of individual and group activities, etc.

3. Hybrid Assignments

Each week you will watch videos available via Brightspace. After going through the material, you will write a response. In your first paragraph(s), you will summarize the hybrid video for the week, including specific examples and what important points they illustrate about medical anthropology. You should have at least one paragraph per video, depending on length. Your next paragraph(s) should tie the hybrid video to other course materials, such as: readings, lecture discussions, other hybrid videos, etc. These posts are due by **11:59 pm on Sunday** each week via Brightspace.

4. Exams

We will have a Midterm Exam (**Week 8**) and a Final Exam (**Week 17**). These exams are NOT cumulative. The exams may consist of the following types of questions: Multiple Choice, True/False, Matching, Short Answer, etc. Further instructions will be posted on Brightspace closer to the scheduled exam time.

5. UnEssay

You will create an UnEssay project. This consists of selecting a topic from class you are interested in learning more about, conducting a literature review, and producing a creative piece to explain your topic. Portions of the project will be due throughout the semester with due dates posted to Brightspace. The complete project is due *April 13th* at 11:59 PM via Brightspace. Prompts to guide your project will be posted on Brightspace.

6. Extra Credit

Extra Credit options are available. See guidelines on Brightspace.

Final Grading Scheme

| Grade | Percent |
|-------|---------|
| A+ | 97-100 |
| A | 93-96 |
| A- | 90-92 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 83-86 |
| B- | 80-82 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 73-76 |
| C- | 70-72 |
| D+ | 67-69 |
| D | 63-66 |
| D- | 60-62 |
| F | <60 |

Grading Scheme

| | |
|--|------|
| Attendance | 150 |
| Participation | 70 |
| Hybrid Assignments (15 x 12 points each) | 180 |
| Midterm Exam | 150 |
| Final Exam | 150 |
| UnEssay | 300 |
| | |
| Total | 1000 |

Class Schedule

Week 1

Introduction

Reading - None

Hybrid – BS Videos

Week 2

Anthropology 101

Reading - Brown et al 2020 - Introduction to Anthropology

Hybrid -

Week 3

Biological Sex: Part 1

Reading - Ainsworth 2015 - Sex Redefined

- Fuentes 2013 - Here's Why Human Sex Is Not Binary

Hybrid -

Week 4

Biological Sex: Part 2

Reading - Blithe and Hanchey 2015 - Gendered Physiological Discrimination

Hybrid -

Week 5

Gender 101

Reading - Guest 2017 - Chapter 8

Hybrid -

Week 6

Gender of/in Anthropology

Reading - Bjork-James 2020 - Racializing Misogyny

- Thangaraj 2022 - Masculinities

Hybrid -

Week 7

Prehistoric Genders: Part 1

Reading – Joyce – The Past is a Foreign Country
Hybrid -

Week 7

Prehistoric Genders: Part 2

Reading - Anderson et al 2023 - The Myth of Man the Hunter
- Response
Hybrid -

Week 8

Midterm Exam

Week 9

Gendered Spaces

Reading - Doan 2010 - Tyranny of Gendered Spaces
- Browne 2004 - Genderism and Bathrooms
Hybrid -

Week 10

Spring Break

Week 11

Feminist Theory

Reading - Abu-Lughod 2002 - Do Muslim Women Need Saving?
- Gruenbaum and Wirtz 2015 - Female Genital Cutting Debates
Hybrid -

Week 12

Sexuality

Reading - Guest 2017 - Chapter 9

Hybrid -

Week 13

Queer Theory

Reading - Wiess 2022 - Queer Theory From Elsewhere

Hybrid –

Week 14

Gender and Violence: Part 1

Reading –

Hybrid – The Hunting Grounds

Week 15

Gender and Violence: Part 2

Reading – Wirtz 2015 – Bureaucratic Bindings

Hybrid –

Week 16

Conclusion

Reading – None

Hybrid -

Week 17

Final Exam
