

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Language, Gender and Sexuality
Course Code	: ENG3003
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per week 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Language Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

The field of Language and Gender has seen dynamic changes since the publication of Robin Lakoff's seminal work, *Language and Woman's Place*, in 1975. Attention to language as a means of differentiating social groups has repeatedly highlighted the lower status of women in many societies and the close relationship between language and power overall. We will discuss different approaches to and historical perspectives on the study of language and gender, reviewing both qualitative and quantitative studies. We will consider gender as one of many social categories that interact with other categories such as age, race, class, ethnicity, profession, sexuality, and others.

In addition, we will examine how language shapes the way we think about social categories, including gender and sexuality. What role does language play in the empowerment or marginalization of certain groups in society? Stereotypes and biases about the sexes, standard and vernacular norms, and power and authority will also be examined in the course. Beyond gender differentiation in language structure, we also examine the role of discourse in identifying gender and sexuality as relevant social categories and how we can move away from essentialist views of these categories.

Aims

This course has several objectives. First, it will introduce students to the dynamic field of language and gender studies and present an historical overview of the early research in the field. It also aims to identify key debates in the field and how sociolinguistic research has engaged in these debates. The course surveys several approaches to the study of gender and sexuality using discourse analysis as a methodological tool. We will explore the theoretical issues addressed by current research in the field, including research on Hong Kong where available. Different methodologies and perspectives will be introduced, and students will be expected to conduct original research, applying the concepts discussed to their own sociolinguistic context. The course also aims to increase awareness of gender- and sexuality-related issues, how these can be investigated through discourse analysis, and encourage students to develop a specialized vocabulary in discussing these issues.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe and compare different approaches to the study of language, gender, and sexuality;
2. Identify linguistic features that have been associated with ‘men’s language’ and ‘women’s language’;
3. Explain the notions of “social construction of gender” and “heteronormativity” and how these ideas affect the research in the field;
4. Analyze the use of spoken and/or written language data in order to apply theoretical concepts to the study of gender.

Indicative Contents

- Foundations of Language and Gender Research
- Reflecting gender in language: pronunciation and grammar
- Gender and Power in Mixed Sex Interactions
- Gender and Same Sex Interactions
- Performativity and Identity
- The Discursive Turn and Gender Research
- Discourse and Masculinities
- Discourse and Femininities
- Gender in the Public Domain
- Leadership and Gender
- Gender in Media and New Media
- Gender and Sexuality

Teaching Method

The course will consist of a lecture in which the key concepts and readings are introduced and a one-hour tutorial in which the students will lead discussions on the readings and lectures. Students will lead discussions in small groups, demonstrating their understanding of the material, creativity in organizing a discussion, and ability to bring out relevant and insightful aspects of the topic discussed.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. A midterm test will measure students’ learning in the first half of the course, focusing on content and main theoretical debates (learning outcomes 1-3). **[30%]**;
2. An e-portfolio of short writing assignments throughout the course will measure the extent to which students are understanding the course materials and encourage them to express their own ideas and process their own reactions to the course materials (learning outcomes 1-4). **[20%]**;
3. One course paper will give students the opportunity to develop one topic in gender and sexuality presented in the second half of the course, and apply it to data in their own sociocultural context (learning outcomes 2-4). **[30%]**;
4. A course project in small groups will demonstrate students’ understanding of the concepts, ability to organize information, creativity and collaborative

communication skills, as well as the ability to critically engage with theoretical debates. (learning outcomes 1-4). [20%].

Assessment

Continuous Assessment: 100%

No.	Assessment	Type	Percentage
1.	Midterm test	Individual	30%
2.	E-Portfolio	Individual	20 %
3.	Course paper	Individual	30%
4.	Course project	Group	20%

Required Readings

- Cameron, Deborah. *Verbal Hygiene: The Politics of Language* (Chapter 5). London/New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Cameron, Deborah. "Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity." In *Language and Masculinity*, edited by Sally Johnson and Ulrike Meinhof, 47-64. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.
- Cameron, Deborah. "Language, Gender and Sexuality: Current Issues and New Directions." *Applied Linguistics* 26/4 (2005): 482-502.
- Cheshire, Jenny. "The Relationship Between Language and Sex in English." In *Applied Sociolinguistics*, edited by Peter Trudgill, 33-49. New York: Academic Press, 1989.
- Hall, Kira. "Boys' Talk: Hindi, Moustaches and Masculinity in New Delhi." In *Gender: A Reader* (2nd Edition), edited by Jennifer Coates and Pia Pichler, 384-400. Oxford [UK]/Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- Holmes, Janet. "Leadership Talk: How Do Leaders 'Do Mentoring' and Is Gender Relevant?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 37 (2005): 1779-1800. Kendall, Shari. "Framing Authority: Gender, Face, and Mitigation at a Radio Network." *Discourse & Society* 15/1 (2004): 55-79.
- Lakoff, Robin. "An Extract from *Language and Woman's Place*." In *The Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader*, edited by Deborah Cameron, 221-233. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Lazar, M.M. 2006. "Discover the power of femininity!" *Feminist Media Studies*, 6(4), pp.505–517.
- O'Barr, William and Bowman K. Atkins. "'Women's' Language or 'Powerless' Language?" In *Women and Language in Literature and Society*, edited by Sally McConnell-Ginet, Ruth Borker, and Nelly Furman, 93-110. New York: Praeger, 1980.
- Ochs, Elinor and Carolyn Taylor. "The 'Father Knows Best' Dynamic in Dinnertime Narratives." In *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*, edited by Kira Hall and Mary Bucholtz, 97-120. New York and London: Routledge, 1995.
- Trudgill, Peter. "Sex, Covert Prestige, and Linguistic Change in the Urban British English of Norwich." *Language in Society* 1 (1972): 179-195.

Recommended Readings

- Abe, Hideko. "Lesbian Bar Talk in Shinjuku, Tokyo." In *Language & Gender: A Reader* (2nd Edition), edited by Jennifer Coates and Pia Pichler, 375-383. Oxford [UK]/Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- Coates, Jennifer. "Gossip Revisited: Language in All-Female Groups." In *Women in Their Speech Communities*, edited by Jennifer Coates and Deborah Cameron, 94-122. London: Longman, 1989.
- Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet. "Communities of Practice: Where Language, Gender, and Power all Live." In *Locating Power: Proceedings of the 2nd Berkeley Women and Language Conference*, edited by Kira Hall, Mary Bucholtz, and Birch Moonwoman, 89-99. Berkeley: BWLG, 1992.
- Holmes, Janet. *Gendered Talk at Work: Constructing Gender Identity Through Workplace Discourse* (Chapter 1). Malden, Mass./Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Nichols, Patricia C. "Linguistic Options and Choices for Black Women in the Rural South." In *Language, Gender and Society*, edited by B. Thorne et al., 54-68. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1983.
- Reynolds, Katsue Akiba. "Female Speakers of Japanese in Transition." In *Language & Gender: A Reader* (2nd Edition), edited by Jennifer Coates and Pia Pichler, 291-299. Oxford [UK]/Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. "Women's Place in Everyday Talk: Reflections on Parent-Child Interaction." *Social Problems* 24/5 (1977), 521-529.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.