Course Description: The gender division of labor is a key organizing principle in all known societies, but it takes a vast array of forms. It is both the product of (most often binary) gender categories and a set of arrangements that helps to constitute the categories of men, women, and, sometimes, people who are nonbinary.¹ In industrialized and post-industrial societies, women have increasingly taken up paid employment and moved into formerly-masculine fields, driven by employers’ demand for women workers as the economy shifts toward the service sector, and more recently by feminist movements. Yet even as different types of household arrangements — including various alternatives to the heterosexual housewife/breadwinner form -- become more common, and people increasingly question norms around gender identities and sexualities, women are still doing the majority of caring and household labor. In contrast, men’s take-up of traditionally feminine caring labor has been increasing but is still far more limited. Moreover, the segregation of occupations by gender and substantial gendered earnings gaps remain. Meanwhile, much of the work formerly done by housewives has been “outsourced” to paid service workers, many of whom migrate from the global South to the global North to take up this work. Scholars debate about whether and how these arrangements will change, and whether they may be influenced by political initiatives, either top-down (e.g., affirmative action to recruit

¹ Gender and sexuality studies has been grappling for some time with questions about how categories are constructed, the permeability of their boundaries and the content of normative injunctions associated with categories; we will encounter these debates in this class although they are not our principal focus.
women to STEM fields) or bottom-up (e.g., cultural and media campaigns to validate new norms).

In this course, we will investigate the ways in which work – paid and unpaid, in families and in places of employment – is organized by gender and other forms of power, difference and inequality, such as race, class, sexuality and migration/citizenship status. We will examine family divisions of labor across diverse households: how do men, women and others divide domestic work and care for children or others needing care? Where does non-familial provision come into play? What are the consequences for outcomes in paid employment and in terms of the distribution of time, respect, and power? We will learn about the development of the modern economy and occupational segregation by gender, as well as how gender interacts with race, class and other forms of power, inequality and difference to influence how different groups are treated at work. Finally, we will consider the role of government policy in sustaining or changing these arrangements. Although we concentrate on the US, I will try to bring in comparisons with other postindustrial countries where possible, and welcome students’ contributions about further comparative perspectives.

Learning objectives: By the end of the course, students should understand how gender influences the kinds of work we do and how it is rewarded, how gender interacts with other forms of difference and inequality in the workplace, how the economy is organized along gendered lines, and how public policies and political processes shape the gendered world of work.

Course Organization: The class features a combination of lectures and class discussions about the readings and films. Students help to shape the discussion agenda by contributing blog entries and replies on the readings, films and current events. Each week, we will have lead bloggers who will also serve as discussion panelists in class, meaning I will ask you questions and ask for your thoughts, and you can ask me questions about lectures, films, readings as well (more on the blogs below).

Our classroom will be a supportive and professional environment, in which we respect students of differing backgrounds and diverse opinions. I’m committed to facilitating an inclusive learning environment and believe that each student has something of value to contribute. In that spirit, I encourage everyone to participate. I recognize, however, that our varied perspectives and experiences can sometimes make open and honest dialogue difficult. We will read, watch and listen to stories that will challenge your views and tackle difficult and sensitive topics. As we explore this material, we must take care to respect the intellectual commitments, backgrounds, identifications that we each bring to our learning inside and outside the classroom. I encourage you to speak with me directly if you have any concerns. We will devote some time in the first week to how we
can create a safe and inclusive space for critical discussion on gender, race, class, sex, citizenship, discrimination, sexuality, violence.

**Gender Pronouns:** This course affirms all gender expressions and gender identities. When I collect contact information in the first week, you may provide the name and pronouns that you use, if you wish. I welcome you to correct me on your name or gender pronoun if a mistake is made. If you have concerns, please contact me in person or by email, whatever is most comfortable for you.

**Please, no cellphones in class**, as they distract you, your peers and me. I know many of you take notes on your laptops, but I’d like to encourage you to try taking notes by hand; research shows that this may be beneficial to your mastery of the materials: [https://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away](https://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away)

**Communication:** This course will use the Canvas course management system. You are responsible for logging in to Canvas, checking regularly for posted announcements, and obtaining readings and assignments from the site. You will receive course announcements that will be sent to the students’ registered campus email address. I usually communicate with you by email, so please check every weekday.

The easiest way to reach me – besides in class and during office hours – is via email at [a-orloff@northwestern.edu](mailto:a-orloff@northwestern.edu). I generally respond to emails within 48 hours (excepting weekends and university holidays/vacations). It’s helpful if you can put the name or number of the course in the subject line of your email.

**Course Readings:**

We will read most of two books, excerpts from other books, a number of articles (available online from the library with permalinks in the syllabus and on Canvas), and some other pieces at websites that you can access online. Full text of articles (preceded by an asterisk [*] in the syllabus) and links are available under the “Modules” section of the course website. Please note: all the books listed below are either available as e-books through the Northwestern library (see permalinks following the information on each book) or as PDFs of relevant chapters on the course Canvas website. To access the e-books, you will have to be logged in through your Northwestern account.

The following two books are required for all students and are available for purchase at Norris or online. I encourage you to support independent bookstores if you purchase books, using the website [https://bookshop.org/](https://bookshop.org/)
[https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma998151596530244](https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma998151596530244)


In addition, in weeks 6 and 7, you will have the opportunity to choose whether to do further reading in the Collins book, covering several non-US cases, or to select from one of two other books dealing with family and work relationships among different groups of parents. (And all students will read a short excerpt from the Dow book.) These books are also available at Norris as recommended books or as e-books through NU libraries.


[https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma9981516467002441](https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma9981516467002441)

Because the New York Times is an important source for up-to-date information on gender, work and care (among other things), I often make reference to articles in my lectures, and encourage you to subscribe. There is a digital subscription special for $1 per week for a year: [https://www.nytimes.com/subscription](https://www.nytimes.com/subscription). I’m happy to gift you a subscription if needed!

Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance** (10% of grade), including one meeting with me during office hours or by appointment during the first four weeks of class.
2. **Lead blog** (1, chosen from weeks 2-4, 6-9) and **participation in class panels** (15% of grade)
3. **Participation in class discussions and replies to the lead blogs** (15% of the grade)
4. **Quiz** will be given out in week 4, **October 13**, and will be due at the end of week 5, **October 21** (20% of grade).
5. **Final exam** will be given out in week 10, **November 22**, and will be due during exam week, Tuesday, **December 6** (40% of grade).

**1. Class attendance:** The lectures, discussions, readings, films and podcasts are the heart of the course and are intended to complement one another. During class, I may not cover all of the
material in the assigned readings, and I will certainly address additional material not found in the readings. On the quiz and exam, students will be responsible for all material covered in class and in the assigned readings. I post lecture notes on Canvas, and I will be happy to meet with you during office hours to go over any material you miss.

Absences: Please email me if you must miss class due to medical, athletic or work-related (e.g., job interview) reasons, and we can arrange for you to make up any coursework. Students are allowed two (2) unexcused absences, but I appreciate getting a heads up if you must miss class.

2. Lead blogs and class panels: Each week, starting with week 2 and ending with week 9 (but excluding week 5), selected students will serve as lead bloggers. Lead bloggers will write a blog entry – a reflection on that week’s readings/films/podcasts, about 2-3 pp. single-spaced -- to be posted by **10:00 am CDT/CST on Tuesdays**. You should cover all the readings and other materials for the week among the lead bloggers, and each of you may go into greater depth on one or two pieces. Your entries will first, re-express the author’s argument so clearly that the author would thank you, and briefly say what you learned. Then, you can discuss at least one thing you think the author got wrong or underplayed or ignored; say what difference this makes to their argument and to our understanding of the phenomenon in question. Finally, what is your own opinion about the topic or argument? Be sure to include at least one carefully constructed discussion question in your entry. If you’d like, I can meet with you the week before the readings for which you are responsible to go over your ideas.

*What is a carefully constructed discussion question? One with which your peers can easily engage. It should be prefaced with an insight from the required reading or film or podcast and include a specific page number or chapter (or moment in a film or podcast) to which people can refer. What is a carefully constructed response? One that links back to the original reading and/or makes a connection to other content raised in class discussions or earlier readings during the quarter.*

For the week in which you are a lead blogger, you’ll participate in the **class panel**, a group of students who will be prepared to ask me questions, and to answer questions that I pose. (Other students should also feel free to ask and answer questions, ranging from factual questions about the assigned readings to broader and more speculative questions about the themes of the course.)

3. Class participation and replies to lead blogs: You should come to class having read and thought about the assigned readings, and you should feel free to test out ideas and enter into conversations with your fellow students, in class and online. I want to encourage your participation in class, your thoughtfulness and your engagement with the materials, whether or not you agree with me, with other students or with the assigned materials. We will be discussing a number of sensitive topics in this course, about which we are almost sure to have divergent opinions. As long as we treat one another with respect, we’ll be fine.
When you are not a lead blogger, you will post a short response to one question posed by the lead essay on the discussion board by 10:00 am (CDT/CST) Thursday. You are not graded on your responses, but I do keep track of their completion. Everyone can take one week off.

I encourage you to bring your perspectives and your knowledge to wider communities beyond our classroom and Canvas discussion boards. You may want to post comments on relevant social media, or (especially considering the dearth of women and nonbinary editors and authors on Wikipedia) you might want to add new articles to Wikipedia, or to edit or add to existing articles.

4 & 5. Quiz and exam: Both the quiz and final are take-home exams, with the assignments to be posted to Canvas. The quiz and final exam will contain short-answer and essay questions; the final will cover the whole course and will be longer than the quiz.

DUE DATES: You do need to get your lead blogs, replies and exams in on time. If you anticipate difficulties in meeting deadlines for the take-home exams or other assignments, or if something unexpected comes up, please get in touch as soon as possible to discuss an extension. I am prepared to offer extensions if you have a good reason (e.g., illness) for needing one. Unexcused late assignments will be docked a half grade for lateness.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1:
Introduction: Gender and the Organization of Work
September 20 and 22, 2022

Required Reading for Tuesday:


Required Reading for Thursday:


Recommended:


**Week 2: The Historical Development of Gendered Work in the US**
**September 27 and 29, 2022**

**Required Reading:**

*Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Men and Women of the Corporation, part I, and select one chapter to read from part II


OR

*Nancy Maclean, Freedom is not enough (Harvard University Press, 2008), chapter 4: “Women challenge Jane Crow.”

**Recommended:**


Ruth Milkman, On Gender, Labor, and Inequality (University of Illinois Press, 2016).

**Required films:** [online streaming available through Course Reserves on Canvas]:

“Makers: Women Who Make America,” parts 1 and 2 (season 1)
Week 3: Gendered Organizations
October 4 and 6, 2022

Required Reading:


* Review Acker’s 1990 article from week 1

Required film [online streaming available through Course Reserves on Canvas]:

“Makers: Women Who Make America,” part 3 (season 1)

Week 4: Gendered wage gaps, motherhood penalty, discrimination
October 11 and 13, 2022

Required Reading:


OR


(While you’re there, please have a look around the IWPR website for up-to-date information on the wage gap, its sources and potential solutions.)


[Required videos on following page]
Required videos:

Shelley Correll on the motherhood penalty (19 minutes):  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljtyJSbuJEM

Shelley Correll on gender bias and how to overcome it (20 minutes):  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulAlmODosVU

Required Films: [online streaming available through Course Reserves on Canvas]:

“Makers: Women Who Make America” (season 2) – watch one or two of the episodes, which focus on women’s progress in different fields (politics, war, business, etc.)

Recommended:


Take-home exam given out October 13, due October 21
Week 5: Representation, Gender, and Work  
October 18 and 20, 2022

Required films [online streaming available through Course Reserves on Canvas]:

“This Changes Everything,” documentary with investigation and analysis of gender disparity in Hollywood, utilizing research from Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media and
“Tough Guise 2,” documentary by Jason Katz and Media Education Foundation

Recommended:

“Tropes versus Women in Video Games”  
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLn4ob_5_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61


Week 6: Families, Gender and Work I  
October 25 and 27, 2022

Required Reading:

https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma998151596530244.

In addition to the Collins reading, students will each read selections from one of these other books, and we will arrange to share knowledge in our discussion of the materials.

Dawn Marie Dow, *Mothering While Black: Boundaries and Burdens of Middle-Class Parenthood*  
(Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), Introduction, chapter 1 (pp.1-20, 23-54)  
https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma9981516467002441.


Week 7: Families, Gender and Work II
November 1 and 3, 2021

Required Podcast: *Hidden Brain* (NPR), “Can a Child Be Raised Free of Gender Stereotypes? This Family Tried”
https://www.npr.org/2017/10/02/555180786/can-a-child-be-raised-free-of-gender-stereotypes-this-family-tried

Required Reading:

Caitlyn Collins, *Making Motherhood Work*, chapters 6 (US) and 7.
https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma998151596530244.

Dawn Marie Dow, *Mothering While Black*), chapters 5 and 6 (pp.125-144, 145-163).
https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma9981516467002441.


Again, students will each read selections from one of these other books, or of the other country chapters in Collins, making sure all the readings are covered for our class discussion of the materials.

Caitlyn Collins, *Making Motherhood Work*, read one of chapters 3, 4, or 5 (East and West Germany, Italy)
https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/67g492/alma998151596530244.

Andrea Doucet, *Do Men Mother?* read one of chapters 4, 5, 6 and chapter 7 (Conclusion: Men Reconstructing Fathering, Care and Masculinities,” pp.213-242); skim her revisiting and revisioning chapters and the appendices if you are interested in learning more about how sociologists and gender studies scholars do their research and analysis.


Recommended:


**Week 8: Care Work, Paid and Unpaid**
**November 8 and 10, 2021**

**Required Reading:**


**Required Films:**

“**Chain of Love**” [online streaming available through Course Reserves on Canvas]

“**America Reframed: Care**” (season 5, episode 10, on elder care and the people who provide it) available at https://worldchannel.org/episode/care-dlrbek/

**Recommended:**

“The Shape of Care,” podcasts: https://theshapeofcare.org/episodes/


**Week 9: Prospects for the Future:**
**Politics, State Policies, Gender Equality and Work-family Balance**
**November 15 and 17, 2021**

**Required Podcast:**

*Hidden Brain, “The Double Bind for Women in Leadership”*
[https://www.npr.org/2018/03/05/590881966/-shes-shrill-but-hes-just-being-a-boss-the-double-bind-for-women-in-leadership](https://www.npr.org/2018/03/05/590881966/-shes-shrill-but-hes-just-being-a-boss-the-double-bind-for-women-in-leadership)

**Required video:**

*Women and Leadership,* Former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard and former Nigerian Foreign Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala discussed women and leadership with Professor Linda Zerilli, University of Chicago: [https://www.c-span.org/video/?508413-1/women-leadership](https://www.c-span.org/video/?508413-1/women-leadership)

**Recommended video:**

Julia Gillard (Prime Minister of Australia, 2010-2013), the “misogyny speech”:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCNuPcf8L00](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCNuPcf8L00)

**Required Reading:**


*David Pedulla and Sarah Thébaud, “Can we finish the revolution? Gender, work-family ideals, and institutional constraint,” American sociological review* 80, no. 1 (2015): 116-139.


**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 10: Summing Up**

**Tuesday, November 22, 2021**

**EXAM:**

A take-home exam will be given out in class on Tuesday *November 22*, and will be due Tuesday, *December 6, 2021*. 
NORTHEASTERN POLICIES:

**Academic integrity:** Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: [https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/index.html](https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/index.html)

**Accessibility:** Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university’s established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

**COVID-19 Classroom Expectations:** Students, faculty and staff must comply with University expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, including those outlined below and in the [COVID-19 Expectations for Students](#). With respect to classroom procedures, this includes:

- Policies regarding masking, social distancing and other public health measures evolve as the situation changes. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with current University, state and city requirements.
- In some classes, masking and/or social distancing may be required as a result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation for the instructor or a student in the class even when not generally required on campus. In such cases, the instructor will notify the class.

If a student fails to comply with the [COVID-19 Expectations for Students](#) or other University expectations related to COVID-19, the instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Community Standards for additional follow-up.

**Exceptions to in-person class modality:** Class sessions for this course will occur in person. Individual students will not be granted permission to attend remotely except as the result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU.

Maintaining the health of the community remains our priority. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID do not attend class and update your Symptom Tracker application right away to connect with Northwestern’s Case Management Team for guidance on next steps. Also contact me or the TA as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework.
Students who experience a personal emergency should contact me as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework.

Should public health recommendations prevent in person class from being held on a given day, I (or the university) will notify students.

**Recording of class sessions by students is not authorized.** Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](https://accessible.northwestern.edu). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University’s [Copyright Policy](https://www.northwestern.edu/policies/copyright/policy), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

**Support for Wellness and Mental Health:** Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here: [https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/](https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/)  
[https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/](https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/)  
[https://www.northwestern.edu/care/](https://www.northwestern.edu/care/)

Please know that I am happy to discuss any questions or problems you may have about student life, Northwestern, academia, sociology, or any of your other interests.