

Course Information-Spring 2025

Course Number: COMM/WGST 420
Course Title: Gender and Communication
Section: 900/500
Time: T/Th 2:20-3:35
Location: BLOC 134
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Sarah Beck, PhD
Email: s-beck@tamu.edu
Office: BOLT 302A

- Office Hours: In Person Drop In: M/W 9:30-11:00 and 2:00-3:00
- Schedule In Person or Zoom Appointment: <https://calendar.app.google/D6imxLbXyADU5rj48>

Course Description

All of our communications have a gendered component, and all gender performances are, by definition, communicative. In this course, we explore some of the many contexts, media and modalities through which communication and gender intersect. We examine both how we perform gender and how we become gendered through the processes of social interaction.

Course Prerequisites:

None

Special Course Designation

This is a Writing Intensive (W) Course. To pass this course, you must pass the writing component of the course.

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes

- Identify and analyze the foundational theories related to gender and communication
- Gain the tools to critically analyze the relationship between gender and communication
- Understand how gender is related to various cultural institutions, practices, and contexts
- Reflect on our own experiences with gender, as well as gender identity, expression, and socialization
- Write well-argued and rhetorically effective analyses centering theories and artifacts related to gender and communication

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

- Required readings and media will be posted as PDFs or links on Canvas
- iClicker account (free for students)
- Perusall (free for students, register through Canvas)

Grading Policy

1. Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

89.50-100.00=A 79.50-89.49=B 69.50-79.49=C 59.50-69.49=D 0-59.49=F

2. The Basis for the Final Course Grade is:

- iClicker: 15%
- Perusall: 10%
- Class Podcast: 10%
- Gender Credentials: 15%
- Media Criticism Article: 20%
- Literature Review: 25%
- Reflection Video: 5%

Grading Philosophy

“A” is an extremely good grade. It means you have demonstrated excellent mastery of the material; your work and performance were consistently better than nearly everyone else in the class.

“B” is a very good grade. It means you did all of the required work and performed in class at a level that is noticeably and demonstrably superior to many of your classmates.

“C” is a good grade. It means that you met all of the expectations for students noted in the syllabus, and you did all of the required work at a level that was competent.

Anything below “C,” means you did not master the material adequately. A grade below C should prompt you to assess your study/classroom habits and visit office hours so you can diagnose what you need to do differently in your studying, assignment preparation, etc.

Keep in mind that for grades to be meaningful (to you, me, or anyone else) they have to reflect differences in mastery. If an “A” means that you merely did what you were asked to do, it is no different than a “C,” and it therefore means nothing at all. I cannot make grading changes simply to help students avoid academic consequences such as delayed graduation, academic probation, etc.

Description of Graded Items

iClicker:

During class students will be asked questions to gauge understanding and deepen connection to course materials.

- The lowest three iClicker grades will be dropped
- iClicker questions cannot be made up

- If a student has an absence that falls under Student Rule 7 they will be excused from that day's questions

Please use the following form to submit documentation for excused absences:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfe-RnAFqVt-jhhhjQ0ABWMCWaAXr2-oNvH8VgyxVz3nurO5A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Perusall

As a means of encouraging students to come to class prepared to discuss assignment material, as well as provide an alternative means of class engagement we will be using Perusall to discuss and annotate course materials.

- Initial comments
 - Are due 2:20 pm on their assigned days
 - Students must contribute a minimum of **four high quality comments and/or replies**
 - The **lowest two** Perusall grades will be dropped

Class Podcast

Students will each have the opportunity to become experts on a topic or concept related to gender and communication. Students will “call in” to the Podcast via Zoom and I will interview student about their topic and chosen case study/example. A detailed assignment description will be made available on Canvas.

Gender Credentials (Writing Component)

In essay format you will be asked to reflect on your current gender identity, how you orient yourself to the world, intersecting identities, and other experiences that have influenced your current understanding of gender. A detailed prompt will be provided on Canvas.

Literature Review (Writing Component)

Students will choose a topic related to themes in the course and conduct research about the topic to formulate an argument. Details will be provided on Canvas

Media Criticism Article (Writing Component)

Students will choose a piece of media (such as a film, video game, TV show, social media account ect.) that has been released in the last year and write a popular publication style critique of their chosen artifact. The article should make clear connections to course themes and material but written in a style that would be appropriate for a popular publication. Details will be provided on Canvas.

Final Reflection Video

Students will create a video reflecting on their experiences and growth during the semester.

Late Work Policy

Work must be handed in on time to be given full credit.

Late work may be turned in within 5 days of original due date, with 10% deduction for each late day. Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from the late work policy. (See Student Rule 7.)

- **Exams will not be accepted late**
- **iClicker and Perusall grades cannot be made up**
- Please use the following form to submit documentation for excused absences and request an extension that falls under Student Rule 7: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfe-RnAFqVt-jhhhjQ0ABWMCWaAXr2-oNvH8VgyxVz3nurO5A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Course Information Items

Class Citizenship

Due to the subject matter of this course, students may encounter controversial topics. Therefore, students are expected to help create a supportive, respectful, safe classroom environment. Vulgar or hateful language, hate speech, and verbal harassment will never be tolerated.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty has the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, guide classroom discussion, and set reasonable limits on how they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important concerning individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities.

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning.

1. Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom discussing the subject which the faculty member teaches.
2. Texas A&M will not penalize or discipline members of the faculty because of their exercise of academic freedom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. It is the responsibility of faculty members to ensure that topics discussed are related to the classroom subject. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.
3. It is not the proper role of the university or any outside agency to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.
4. Engaging with new ideas and perspectives helps students grow intellectually and is beneficial to the educational process.

Classroom Discussion and Engagement Guidelines

This class embraces academic freedom to support learning objectives and promote educational excellence. Throughout this semester, we will explore new and sometimes controversial ideas. It is possible that discussions of these topics will reveal diverse but legitimate differences of opinion. Such differences are not only likely but can be desirable, as they can be essential to the promotion of a

dynamic and informative learning environment for us all. As we embark on a journey of learning with and from one another, it is important to remember that the introduction of challenging topics is not only a faculty responsibility but a crucial component of your education. Discussions that reveal divergence of opinion are not introduced in this course to influence your values and beliefs but to provoke thought and foster a deeper understanding of complex subjects.

Here are discussion guidelines embraced in this course to help us all engage one another respectfully and productively, honoring the Aggie Core Values of respect and excellence. These guidelines apply equally to students and the instructor:

1. **Listen Actively and Respectfully:** Understanding begins with listening. Whether it's a peer's comment or an instructor's lecture, strive to comprehend the rationale behind differing viewpoints. This mutual respect for dialogue enhances our collective learning.
2. **Engage One Another Constructively:** Focus your responses on the arguments, not the individuals presenting them, whether these ideas come from classmates or the instructor. This approach ensures our discussions remain respectful and centered on educational growth.
3. **Base Arguments on Evidence:** Support your viewpoints with reasoned analysis and be open to considering the validity of responses you receive. This practice not only deepens your grasp of the subjects but also upholds the academic integrity of our debates.
4. **Embrace Diversity of Thought and Experiences:** A variety of perspectives not only enriches our discussions but also deepens our collective understanding. Challenge your own preconceptions by engaging with the diverse ideas presented in this classroom and expect the same openness from others.
5. **Maintain Civility:** Respect, an Aggie Core Value, must anchor our interactions, especially during passionate debates. Upholding standards of civility and composure ensures that our class promotes a supportive environment for open and honest discourse.
6. **Embrace Challenge as a Learning Tool:** Encountering ideas that challenge your perspectives can be a crucial part of education. Respectful engagement with difficult concepts, whether they originate from you or others, can lead to significant personal and intellectual development. View these moments as opportunities to critically assess and refine your perspectives.

Addressing Each Other

Please address me as Dr. Beck, and I use the pronouns she/her/hers. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name; however, I will refer to you by the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class, on papers, exams, group projects, etc. Please advise me of any name or pronoun changes, so I can help create a learning environment in which you, your name, and your pronouns will be respected.

Communication with Instructor

I strive to be a resource throughout the learning process. That said, if you have questions about content, assignments, course standing, grades, or other concerns, it is imperative that you contact me sooner rather than later (i.e., not the night before an exam or due date). I work to respond to emails in a timely manner (within 24 hours), but please expect longer response times during evenings and weekends. Keep in mind that email is an official form of university communication, and emails to instructors should be written as carefully as professional emails.

Inclusive Excellence

Department of Communication & Journalism instructors are committed to inclusive teaching and learning. Our classrooms, virtual spaces, practices, and interactions provide learning experiences that respect diversity, enable participation, and consider a variety of learning needs and preferences. The Aggie Core Values of respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, integrity and selfless service in addition to civility, and the ability to listen and to observe others are the foundation of a welcoming instructional climate. Active, thoughtful and respectful participation in all aspects of the course supports a more inclusive classroom environment, as well as our mutual responsibilities to the campus community. In the event that discussion turns disrespectful or appears to be proceeding with questionable integrity, instructors will make every attempt to facilitate mutual understanding and inclusive excellence in the classroom space.

Classroom Technology Use

Technology should only be used for note taking and assigned classroom activities; violations of this rule will be sanctioned. There is very little evidence that note taking on a laptop/tablet improves learning; in fact, there is evidence technology use may even decrease retention of information. Moreover, recent research shows students who are not using technology experience lower learning when others around them are multitasking during class (Sana, Weston, & Cepeda, 2013). Please keep this in mind when you are using technology in this classroom.

Use of Generative AI

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. The use of Automated Writing Tools, including chatGPT and similar artificial intelligence (AI) tools, is strictly prohibited in this course, even when properly attributed. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

Public Sharing of Course Material

All course materials may be subject to intellectual property protections under applicable law and regulation and are for the sole use of students enrolled in this class. Students do not have permission to copy or record materials except for personal use in the context of this class and students do not have permission to share any class materials in any manner on any platform without the prior express permission of the faculty member teaching this course.

Children in the Classroom

Taking care of young children should not keep you from participating in class. If you are a parent/guardian of young children, those children are welcome when you cannot find or afford child care. I only require that (a) they do not disrupt class and (b) you are able to care for them while still participating in class. I may ask you to step outside to care for a child who is becoming noisy, or to sit near the door so you can easily do so. Otherwise, your children are welcome in my classroom. If they need food, quiet toys or breastfeeding, that is also acceptable.

Please be aware that I prepare and deliver my lectures for an adult audience. I will not change the topics I discuss or the language I use if children are in the room. Your fellow students are not required to do so, either. If you have questions about the material we will be covering on a given day, feel free to ask.

Technology Support – For technology support, contact helpdesk@tamu.edu and see, also: <https://it.tamu.edu/help/>

Learning Resources – For extra assistance with writing support, contact Writingcenter.tamu.edu

Course Schedule

Week One: Course Introduction

Tues, Jan 14

- **Reading:** Course Syllabus
- Set up Perusall
- Set up iClicker

Thurs, Jan 16

- **Optional Perusall:** Dow & Woods “The Evolution of Gender and Communication Research”

Week Two: Theories of Gender/Sex and Intersectionality

Tues, Jan 21

- **Perusall:** Palczewski et al. “Chapter Two: Theories of Gender/Sex”

Thurs, Jan 23

- **Perusall:** Crenshaw “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (TED Talk)

Week Three: The Rhetorical Shaping of Gender and Sexuality

Tues, Jan 28

- **Perusall:** American Hysteria “Gender Reveal Parties” (podcast)

Thurs, Jan 30

- **Perusall:** Katz: “The Invention of Heterosexuality”

Week Four: Femininity and Masculinity

Tues, Feb 4

- **Perusall:** Pomper “Femininity Matters”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 1

Thurs, Feb 6

- **Reading:** Miller “Masculinity”
- **Perusall:** Paliewicz “Of Markets, Masks, and (White) Men: Mimetic Performances of Parasitic Publicity During the COVID-19 Pandemic”
- **Reading:** Nicholas “Ken’s Rights”

Week Five: Gendered Bodies

Tues, Feb 11

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. "Gendered/Sexed Bodies"
- **Perusall:** Gailey "Undesirably Different"
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 2

Thurs, Feb 13

- **No in person class, instructor at conference, see Canvas for asynchronous assignment**

Week Six: Policing and Performing Gender

Tues, Feb 18

- **Perusall:** Tested "The Choice" and "Card Carrying Females" (podcast)

Thurs, Feb 20

- **Perusall:** Salih "On Judith Butler and Performativity" & Gilbert "My Life as a Man"
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 3
- **DUE by 11:59:** Gender Credentials

Week Seven: Gendered Voice & Language

Tues, Feb 24

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. "Gendered/Sexed Voices"
- **Perusall:** This American Life "Freedom Fries"
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 4

Thurs, Feb 26

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. "Gendered/Sexed Language"
- **Perusall:** Faliveno "Tomboy"
 - Pay attention to the author's relationship to language and terms rather than your emotional reaction to the narrative

Week Eight: Gender and Friendship

Tues, March 4

- **Perusall:** Selections from The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 5

Thur, March 6

- **Perusall:** Westhale "When Queer Girl Friendships Burn Too Brightly"

Week Nine: Gender and Romantic/Sexual Relationships

Tues, March 18

- **Perusall:** Byron et al “Hooking Up with Friends”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 6

Thurs, March 20

- **Perusall:** Jozkowski, Manning & Hunt “Sexual Consent In and Out of the Bedroom: Disjunctive Views of Heterosexual College students”

Week Ten: Gendered Families

Tues, March 25

- **Perusall:** Galvin “Gender and Family Interaction: Dress Rehearsal for an Improvisation”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 7

Thurs, March 27

- **Reading:** Young & Massey “Chapter 8: LGBTQ+ Relationships and Families” Part Two

Week Eleven: Gender and the Workplace

Tues, April 1

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. “Work”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 8

Thurs, April 3

- **Perusall:** Jenkins & Finneman “Gender Trouble in the Workplace: Applying Judith Butler’s Theory of Performativity to News Organizations”
- **Bring draft of literature review to class**

Week Twelve: Gender and Education

Tues, April 8

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. “Education”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 9

Thurs, April 9

- **Perusall:** Neville-Shepard “Disciplining the Female Student Body: Consequential Transference in Arguments for School Dress Codes”
- **DUE by 11:59 pm:** Literature Review

Week Thirteen: Gender and Media

Tues, April 15

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. “Media”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 10

Thurs, April 17

- **Perusaall:** Skyes & Hopner “Tradwives: Right Wing Social Media Influencers”

Week Fourteen: Gender and Religion

Tues, April 22

- **Reading:** Palczewski et al. “Religion”
- **Class Podcast:** Episode 11

Thurs, April 24

- **Perusall:** Struggle Care “How the Church Gaslights Women with Dr. Andrew Bauman” (podcast)

Week Fifteen: Course Wrap Up Tues, April 29

- No in class meeting
- **DUE** by 11:59 pm
 - Video Reflection
 - Media Criticism Article

There is no final exam in COMM/WGST 420

University Policies

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student’s grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor. Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor” ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

“The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence” ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)). *You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.*

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible. *Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.*

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University’s [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.