

# Women's Psychology: Course Study Guide

## Unit One: A Feminist Psychology of Women

### What Is Feminism/Who Is A Feminist?

- **Feminism** is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. They all share the same goal of ending sex bias and the unequal treatment of girls and women.
- There are many different types of feminists but mainly, a **feminist** is someone who supports equal rights for women. You're a feminist if you're willing to FIGHT for women's rights mentally and physically. If you support it, it makes you **pro-feminist**.
  - You are a **feminist** if you believe that there is still work that needs to be done. You are willing to commit to causes larger than themselves and more likely to confront sexism. You're also less likely to believe negative stereotypes about feminists and have more positive views.
  - Some women prefer the term **womanists** and **mujerista** because it acknowledges racism and other forms of discrimination along with sexism.
- **Oppression** is the ways in which certain people experience degradation because of political, economic, or social realities.
- There are a lot of **stereotypes** of feminist women such as bra-burners, man-haters and general characteristics like being hairy, selfish, unattractive, angry, tense, and more.
- **Post-Feminism** is the idea that the women's movement has reached its goals and, therefore, feminism is no longer needed. One of their goals is to convince girls and women that identifying with feminism is problematic and that leads to confusion about what it means to be a feminist.
- **Empowerment:** capacity to attain power.

### Waves Of Feminism

- What is a **wave** though? It's suggested that there are direct connections between

movements and that activism peaks at certain points and retracts at others.

- **The First Wave:** People believe the first wave started in 1848 at the **Seneca Falls Convention** where people met to create priorities for advancing women's rights. The main importance was getting the right to vote which they gained in 1920 -- this was for white women only.
- **The Second Wave:** Emerged in the 1960s. It was mostly about changing the day-to-day lives of women, such as more access to the paid labor force, and redefining a women's role as wife and mother. This was also the time of the civil rights movement and the sexual revolution. Gained momentum at the Miss America pageant in 1968-1969. Feminists had a revolt burning stuff that represented female oppression like the bra and makeup to end unrealistic standards of beauty.
- **The Third Wave:** Emerged in the mid-1990s. This wave was about everyone's experience of being a woman and how it was NOT the same. Before this time, feminists focused mainly on white educated, rich women and ignored diversity. This introduced the idea of **intersectionality** where oppression tied in with feminism.
  - An example is that race ties greatly into feminist movements. This wave was the revival of feminine aesthetics such as lipstick and high heels. The first two waves considered these items as oppression by a male-dominated society while the third wave considered them as female empowerment.
- **The Fourth Wave:** Usage of social media to promote activism. Though, some people reject this wave because the fight for equity is a constant and continuous process.
- The first and second wave were more of fighting against the oppression of a male-dominated society while the third wave was about empowerment.

## **Intersectionality**

- Different types of oppression (racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sexism) are interconnected and cannot be examined separately.

- A woman is not just a woman. She has an age, identity, race-ethnicity, a religion, and other social identity characteristics.
- Racism played a huge deal for black women when fighting for rights.

## Types of Feminism

Type	Book Definition	Simple Definition
Liberal Feminism:	It focuses on gaining equal rights and prioritizes changing laws and promoting education.	Similarities to “we’re equal”; structural inequalities (class system)
Radical Feminism:	Focuses on transforming women’s thinking since women are conditioned to prioritize men and to deem heterosexuality as a social ideal.	Against patriarchy (only men have absolute authority)
Socialist Feminism:	Highlights the ways in which money and capitalism are interconnected with gender inequities.	Focuses on ending capitalism through socialist reforms
Cultural Feminism:	Perceives gender inequity as being related to a lack of appreciation for women’s unique feminine qualities.	Focusing on women’s inheritance difference from men.
Women of Color Feminism:	Connects gender inequity to other structures of oppression, especially, but not limited to, racism.	This movement is for women of color because they lacked representation.

Queer Feminism:	Eliminated binary gender categories since they are the main reason for gender inequality.	There were more genders; not just two.
Post-Colonial/ Transnational Feminism:	Connects women's inequity to the continued legal system of colonialism.	White women assumed women of color needed their help while ignoring women of color's culture. White savior.

## LGBTQ

- The term LGBTQ places all sexual minority individuals into one category, ignoring differences among them.
- The term places all people who are sexual minorities in comparison to heterosexual people which creates a bias in the research.
- **Androcentric:** male centered
- **Lesbian Feminism:** focuses on sexuality and reproduction as a central place of oppression.



## Unit Two: Power and Privilege

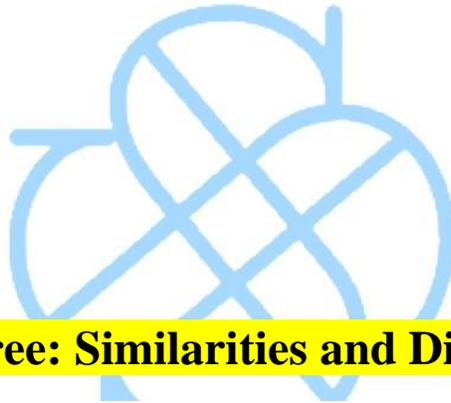
- **Privilege:** describes the social, economic, and/or political advantages that people enjoy because they are part of a specific group.
  - EXAMPLE: Dominant Group - Are seen as individuals
    - Subordinate Group - Are representing a group

- **Conferred Dominance:** one group is socially assumed to have more authority/power over another group.
  - EXAMPLE: Men are considered dominant; therefore, they are seen as more capable.
- **Legitimizing Myths:** attitudes, values, or beliefs that justify social hierarchies.
- **Social identities:** race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, social class, religion, etc.
- **Social identity:** a person's sense of self based on their affiliations with different social groups (determines how we experience and express ourselves).
  - EXAMPLE: Social Characteristic- Age
    - Power- Adults
    - Less Power- Children
- **Social Stratification:** the idea that people are ranked in hierarchy (some people and groups have more power and status than others)
  - EXAMPLE: Being white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, well educated, and middle-aged are all social categories that are deemed powerful.
- **Invisibility:** Dominant groups are considered normative so individuals with marginalized social characteristics are INVISIBLE.
  - EXAMPLE: White women in the second wave of feminism activism V.S black women doing the same thing
- **Scapegoating:** blame a group or person for things that aren't their fault
  - EXAMPLE - This can happen if people point out someone's privileges that are invisible to them and they feel like they're being criticized so they scapegoat others.
- **Stereotype:** a set of beliefs about the characteristics of a group that generalizes all members.
- **Backlash Effects:** when you violate gender stereotypes, you get social or economic penalties.
  - EXAMPLE: Women who act masculine get penalized
- **Gender stereotypes** can be influenced by racial/ethnic identity.
  - "Strong black woman"- Overlapping concepts of caregiving and strength where they are tough, strong, and communal

- Asian women as submissive, sexy, and in need of rescuing (china doll stereotype)
- **Gender Roles:** behaviors within a culture that are considered acceptable for an individual's perceived gender (could for stereotypes)
  - Men are considered AGENTIC (assertive and dominant) and women are considered COMMUNAL (warm and friendly) - This is seen as more applicable to white women than black women
  - FEMININE and MASCULINE
- **Sexism:** bias based on the belief that men are superior to women.
- **Prejudice:** negative attitude towards someone because of their perceived part in a group.
- **Overt Sexism:** unequal treatment of women that is easily identifiable (when people think of sexism, sexism is a form of prejudice this way).
  - EXAMPLE: Telling a girl at a job interview that companies don't hire young women cause they tend to have babies, and then proceeding to not hire them.
- **Discrimination:** a form of prejudice that occurs when someone is treated unfairly because of membership in a group not as powerful as dominant group.
- **Modern sexism:** gender bias that is communicated in indirect ways (subtle discrimination).
  - EXAMPLE: Not getting a job because of her gender. It's so unnoticeable you think it's normal.
  - **Explicit Bias** - conscious and deliberate
  - **Implicit Bias** - occurs outside of conscious awareness and can be unintentionally direct towards a group
  - **Denial of personal discrimination** : acknowledges but says it never happened to them
- **Benevolent sexism:** suggests women should be treated differently from men because they are special and in need of protection.
  - EXAMPLE: "Women are pure and should be put on a pedestal."
- **Ambivalent Sexism:** contemporary sexism includes two complementary components - hostility and benevolence
  - **Hostility Sexism:** negative and derogatory beliefs about women.
    - EXAMPLE: "Women are unintelligent"

- Punishing women for challenging traditional gender expectations
- Rewards women for keeping the gender status quo (but traps women into expectations)
- “Women are less than men because they need protection.
- **Paternalistic Chivalry:** the idea that women should be protected (as long as they keep gender roles).
- **Microaggressions**
  - **Gender microaggressions:** everyday acts of sexism (intentional or not) that insult a person based on their gender. (Usually the result of stereotyping).
  - People don’t notice microaggressions taking place because it can be given with good intentions and people usually don’t see the prejudice.
  - When not addressed, self esteem, anger, and frustrations are increased.
- **Bias in language**
  - Words like “huMANKind” and “freshMAN” use *man* to represent everyone.
  - People = male bias
    - EXAMPLE: People think of males with gender neutral words like policeman and salesman
  - Animal = male bias
    - Refers to animals using male pronouns
  - “They” is gender neutral compared to binary pronouns (he/she)
  - **Gender-fair language:** Refers to all people with symmetrical linguistic forms to promote gender equality.
    - EXAMPLE: “they” and “first-year student” instead of freshman
  - Nicknames reflect femininity (ex. Babe, Angel) and masculinity (ex. Champ, Stud)
  - Women (of color) get referred to as Ms. instead of Doctor and Professor like their colleagues.
  - **Degrading Language:** slang words to degrade women.
    - “Slut, bitch, whore, dishwasher” compared to men (tool, wallets) are more negative
  - Slang words that are used to describe women are disproportionately sexualized.

- **Name shifting:** strategy of using spouse's name/surname in situations.
  - Shows ambivalent qualities in social pressures (deciding between personal identity v.s role of wife)
- Women are more likely than men to use **tentative speech forms** such as hedges (ex: mostly), hesitations (ex: um), tag questions(ex: right?), and intensifiers(very).  
The reason for this is because women were taught to be polite and speak in ways that are unconfident and powerless.



## Unit Three: Similarities and Differences

### Gender Essentialism:

- A concept used to examine the attribution of fixed and innate qualities of women and men; differences between the two sexes.
- Sex and gender are two *different* things; however, they are *associated* in certain ways.
  - **Sex:** the biological label that is given to a person (Ex. male, female, intersex).
  - **Gender:** psychological characteristics of a person (a scale between masculinity and femininity).
- Sex/gender differences have served to justify sexism; however, sexism today is more subtle (nowhere do they describe women as explicitly inferior but more implicitly through advertisements, magazines, etc).
- A **similarities-perspective** emphasizes the ways in which men and women are similar and is aligned with liberal feminism.

- A **differences-perspective** emphasizes the ways in which they are different and is aligned with cultural feminism.
  - Relates to neurosexism (this strengthens and advocates for gender stereotypes)
    - **Neurosexism:** sexist assumption that gender differences perceived in character and behavior are caused by biological differences in brains.
- Sex/gender differences can change when other variables intersect— age, race, socioeconomic status.
  - Some may not experience the same (micro)aggressions as others.

### **Social Role Theory:**

- Emphasizes how gender roles are responses to different roles in society
- The theory holds that differences between the two sexes arise from roles they've traditionally held ( Ex. women as **CARETAKERS** and men as the **BREADWINNERS** )
- Cognitive and personality differences reflect **adaptation** to social roles (Ex. women having nurturing qualities and men have better spatial skills)
  - In other words, the theory asserts that being a caregiver causes someone to be nurturing not that nurturing causes someone to be a caregiver.

### **Expectancy Role Value Theory:**

- Focuses on how **environmental factors** and gender socialization promote sex/gender differences
- The theory centers around the idea that women and men garner internalized stereotypes regarding how they are supposed to act
- This is why men have difficult times in going into caretaking roles because if they do so, it goes against the internalized belief that a man should be **assertive** and a **breadwinner**.
- 2 factors on how people make decisions regarding what activities to pursue
  - Expectation that doing the activity will lead to success
  - The value the person puts on the activity

### **Differences in Cognitive Ability**

- **Mathematical Ability**

- In terms of cognitive ability, the stereotype is that women excel in **verbal** skills and men excel in **math** skills.
- Research shows that women receive much higher scores than men, however there were indications that at the highest levels of math skills men did outperform women (like getting into better colleges, better benefits)
- Although, men are **more privileged** and **over-represented**
- Supports **Gender Stratification Hypothesis**
  - Gender Stratification Hypothesis: the differences found between women and men relate to the level of gender equality in the country
- **Verbal Ability**
  - Explains how women generally have higher verbal abilities than men according to data
- **STEM**
  - Many women are wanting to pursue STEM fields; however, they are being taken advantage of despite having skills that are much higher than men
  - Struggle to pursue due to barriers such as difference in race, gender, or sexuality
  - Discrimination persists as well
  - Stereotypes can influence expectations (lower or higher)
  - Expectations depend on certain groups
- **Stereotype Threat:** accepting and confirming into stereotypes
  - Ex: Conforming into the stereotype that Asians are bad at driving or is good at math)

## Unit Four: Beyond the Sex/Gender Binary

### Gender Binary Systems

- The existence of **intersex** refutes the **SEX/GENDER BINARY** that argues that there are only two sexes
- Usually those who are intersex are seen as ill (believed that being intersex is a disease and that you need to get fixed)
- **Gender Identity:** refers to a person's understanding of oneself as gendered; fundamental sense of belonging to sex/gender category regardless of assignment at birth
  - Instead of referring to ourselves as only boy or only girl we can be called as **cisgender** which describes those whose gender identity conforms into societal standards for the sex they are assigned at birth
- **Gender Expression:** a person's behavior, mannerisms, interests, and appearance that is associated with gender (masculinity or femininity)
- **Intersex:** not fitting into male or female categories
- **Klinefelter's syndrome**
  - Assigned male but has more than one X chromosome
  - Some identify as female, some as intersex
- **Turner's syndrome**
  - Affects only females
  - Results when one of the X chromosomes are missing or partially missing

## Sexual Attraction/Orientation

- **Sexuality:** who the person is attracted to and wants to have relationships with (**GAY, LESBIAN, HETERO, BISEXUAL, ASEXUAL**)
- Within these sexualities there are standards as well

## Transgender

- **Transgender:** transitioning from one sex to another (many trans always say that they felt like they're in the wrong bodies)

Identity Label	Definition
Genderqueer	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity is outside of or beyond the binary of female and male.
Gender non-conforming	A term used to refer to individuals or communities who may not identify as transgender but who do not conform to traditional gender norms.
Transwoman, Transfeminine individual	A transgender individual who identifies as a woman and/or has a feminine gender expression.
Transman, Transmasculine individual	A transgender individual who identifies as a man/or has a masculine gender expression.
Gender bender, Pangender, Polygender	Terms used to refer to individuals who are non-binary; they may identify with all genders.
Androgynous	A term used to refer to individuals who have complete gender neutrality; they may be people whose gender identity is both female

	and male or neither female nor male.
Two-spirited	The term comes from the traditions of some Native North American cultures to describe Native people who display characteristics of both male and female genders; this is often associated with having a third gender.

- **Complications of Living in a Heteronormative Society**

- Discrimination, prejudice, aggressions
- Being called “gay”, “alien”, etc
- Many assume the person’s sexuality is based on how they dress or act (there are standards)

## Gender Expectations

CHARACTERISTICS OF MALENESS	CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALENESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-assertive</li> <li>- aggressive</li> <li>- non expressive w/ emotions</li> <li>- strong</li> <li>- talkative</li> <li>- interruptive (showing superiority)</li> <li>- breadwinners</li> <li>- the ones who protect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fragile</li> <li>- weak/gentle</li> <li>- not very open (interactive)</li> <li>- the ones who needs to be protected</li> <li>- communal</li> <li>- emotional</li> <li>- supportive/ empathetic</li> <li>- passionate</li> <li>- resilient</li> </ul>

## Unit Five: Gender Socialization

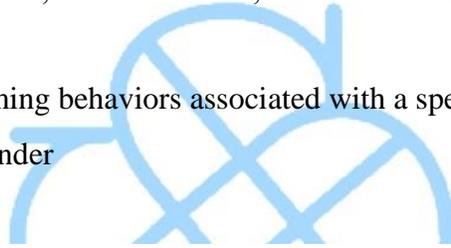
**Gender socialization:** a process when individuals internalize the social expectations and attitudes associated to their perceived gender

### Theories of Gender Development:

- **Psychoanalytic Theories:** suggest that gender development (and personality) is controlled by unconscious forces
  - **Oedipus complex:** Freud believed that boys develop hostile feelings towards their father due to their unconscious love for their mothers
  - **Electra complex:** blames mother for her inferior anatomy (penis envy)
  - **Penis envy:** girl realizes she doesn't have a penis for the rest of her life (connects to electra complex.)
  - **Castration anxiety:** central part of young boy's fear that father will cut of his penis
  - **Womb envy:** Karen Horney's belief that men get envious of a women's reproductive ability (they try to dominate women because of this)
- **Behavioral Theories:** aspects of the environment influence behavior (uses learning theory)
  - **Operant Conditioning:** suggests that gender develops when certain behaviors are reinforced or rewarded, and other behaviors are punished (apparently this is how gender development occurs)
  - **Social Learning Theories:** suggests that learning takes place in a social setting even if they aren't being punished or reinforced (goes AGAINST behavioral)
  - **Observational learning:** children watch what others do
- **Cognitive Developmental Theories:** emphasize that children's understanding of gender

goes through stages corresponding to development of cognitive skills (CHILDREN ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS OF FIGURING OUT GENDER ROLES)

- **Gender Labeling:** ability to say whether someone is male or female (tested by having young children sort photographs of different people into categories)
  - **Gender schema theory:** how children integrate network of assumptions about gender with how they understand himself
- **Gender constancy:** understanding that even if they change their physical appearance, a girl is always a girl and a boy is always a boy
- **Social construction theories:** cultural beliefs about gender that exist to uphold specific social and economic systems and inequalities
- **Postmodern Perspective:** (This is what social construction theories are based on) Knowledge isn't objective, but constructed, where it can change as a function of time, place, and culture
- **Doing gender:** performing behaviors associated with a specific gender in daily life, rather than having a gender



## Books

- Many lead male characters (Winnie the Pooh, Harry Potter)
- Equal representation in gender for children books, but not for animals
- Few books for children with people of color, disabilities, and LGBTQ+
- Gender roles are established within the book (Women indoors and Men outdoors)
  - EXAMPLES: Harry Potter (boys having adventures while girls are studious), Twilight (glorifying powerful man, dependent women relationship), BUT the Hunger Games (POWERFUL FEMALE LEAD)

## Toys and Gender Socialization

- **Girl Toys:** Domestic and nurturing tasks or to emphasize physical attractiveness (makeup, Easy Bake ovens, doll houses)
- **Boy Toys:** Violent, dangerous, and involves competition (footballs, guns, action figures)
- **How parents affect gender socialization:**
  - Parents encourage gender-typed activities and okay (like in chores or emotional

and aggressive emotions). Less seen with children of LGBTQ parents

## **Related Vocabulary**

- **Gender segregation:** segregate on the basis of perceived gender identity. Gender variant kids are often excluded.
- **Borderwork:** reinforces an invisible border between girls and boys
- **Hidden Curriculum:** school environment indirectly teaches norms, beliefs, and values
  - EXAMPLES: Dress Code, Disciplinary Code- Black girls more in trouble than Black boys
- **Gender rigidity:** strict gender typing (NOT FLEXIBLE)
  - EXAMPLE: Happens with transgender and cisgender kids a lot where they correspond to their gender identity rather than their sex assignment at birth
- **Gender Intensification:** girls and boys act more like their gender roles
- **Self-socialization:** the process where we actively influence our own social development and outcomes. The process of learning new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

## Unit Six: Women's Bodies

### Beauty Norms and their Effects on Women

- Standards influenced through media (advertisements, tv shows, movies)
- Women with slim and “proportionate” bodies are displayed
  - Sets the ideology that you must have a slim body to be deemed beautiful
  - Must fit this standard in order to have worth
- Women often sexualized (by men) since industries are very male-dominated
  - Causes women to question their worth/ identity (Example: Marilyn Monroe)

### Objectification/Self-objectification

- **Definition:** viewing bodies as objects to be gazed at and enjoyed by others
  - Internal qualities that make a female unique becomes neglected, making appearance a priority
- **Male gaze** is central in understanding objectification
  - Although males can be objectified, it's more common within women
  - Men would always “check” the woman out or catcall her
- **Objectification Theory:** Addresses how living in a culture that objectifies women is harmful to women
  - They run the objectifying gaze on themselves in order to evaluate the extent to which they conform to societal standards of beauty
- **Self- objectification:** conforming to beauty standards
- **Body Surveillance:** women report viewing their bodies from an observer's perspective and evaluating their physical appearance; checking in on their appearance (through mirrors)
- **Body Dissatisfaction:** Not feeling comfortable or satisfied with their physical appearance
  - Potential to be a lifelong issue for women
- **Normative Discontent:** The normal state for girls and women with respect to their bodies is to feel unhappy or dissatisfied
- **Body Shame:** when judging other's bodies as undesirable; negative outcome of self-objectification

- **Process:**

Experiences of objectification	Internalization of Beauty Norms	Self-objectification	Body Surveillance	Body Shame	Negative Outcomes (decreased performance, depression, disordered eating)
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## Menstruation

- **Menstrual cycle** is the interaction between female reproductive organs and the endocrine system, which regulates hormone production
- Periods often presented negatively (girls would censor it and refer to it as “leak” or “down there”)
- **Menarche:** First menstrual period
  - Some girls would learn about it from this period (often would get surprised or scared)
  - Average age to get it is between 12-13

## Internalization of Beauty Norms:

- The process of taking on the standards and norms of the dominant society as one’s own and then striving to meet those standards
- Key factor of body dissatisfaction and disordered eating

## How Race, Body Size, Symmetry, Hair, etc. Affect Views of Whether a Woman is Beautiful

- **Colorism:** Preference for lighter skin
  - The darker your skin is, the more body shame you’ll receive or the more you are subjected to it
- **Current beauty norms** of this generation are light skin, straight hair, hairlessness, slim/

thin body, big eyes, cisgender (hetero)

- Face has to be symmetric
- Asians were reported to have greater dissatisfaction with their facial features
  - Self-conscious about their eyes
- Disabled women were met with dissatisfaction with their bodies as well
- Transgenders were discriminated due to not fulfilling beauty standards

## **The Role that Parents, Peers and Media Influence Women's Views of their Bodies**

- Thoughts on one's body are related to the relationship they have with their parents
  - Parents would tend to encourage their children to lose weight resulting in the desire to become thinner
  - Parents can positively influence their child's body image as well
- Many teenage girls/ women would compare their bodies to others, often judging themselves as less attractive than those around them
- **Expectations displayed everywhere**, from social media to everyday objects we use
  - Ex: Barbie dolls
- Digital editing/ photoshop is often used to improve appearances
- Telling females that you are normal if you meet the standards of being thin, symmetric, having light skin, having straight hair, having big eyes; out of those standards you are deemed abnormal or odd or ugly
- Body standards aren't healthy to conceive either (cause you have to eat less to do so)
- Quick note: Although there should be body acceptance, you shouldn't encourage fatness. Body acceptance has its limits, healthwise. Don't follow the beauty standards, but also look after your health.
- **Body esteem**: the degree to which people view their bodies positively
- **Body dissatisfaction**: not feeling comfortable with physical appearance
  - Beauty standards can encourage insecurities
  - Reason why many women are seen undergoing plastic surgery

## **Unit Seven: Sexuality and Sexualization**

### **Sexual Scripts**

- **Sexual scripts**
  - Descriptions of behaviors that reflect beliefs about what is “normal;” sexual behavior in a given culture
- **How sexual scripts influence the types of sexual behaviors we deem normal,**

### **acceptable, and okay**

- Because it is represented most commonly, people come to understand it as typical, and even expected.
- The script as a whole has a powerful effect because they convey information about what counts as sex, how to act in the context of a sexual encounter, who can be sexual, and when one can engage in sexual activity.
- One key assumption is that heterosexuality is the default sexual identity and that all other sexual identities are “other”.
- According to **compulsory heterosexuality**, the only “appropriate” or “normal” romantic and sexual behaviors are heterosexual.
- **Performative bisexuality** has surfaced as one non-heterosexual script. In this script, heterosexual women make out and engage in sexual activities with other women for the enjoyment of men who are watching them.
- **“Sex”** is described as penis into vagina and penis ejaculates indicating sex-end.
- The **heterosexual sexual script** centers on the idea that men are focused on sex and are likely to initiate sexual encounters, whereas women are supposed to ward off sexual attention from men and keep their “purity”.
  - When women have sex, they’re supposed to be more focused on making their partner satisfied.
  - Compulsory heterosexuality contributes to the oppression of girls and women by reinforcing beliefs that boys and men should prioritize their sexual desires and act on their sexual needs and that hormones are the primary factors driving male sexual urges.
  - Girls and women are expected to manage male sexual urges by being the gatekeepers of sex.
- Women are described as **sluts** when they are desiring and initiating sex
  - This reflects a **sexual double standard** by which women are judged more harshly than men for engaging in comparable sexual behaviors.
    - This negatively impacts women in several ways.
      - Example: teen girls with many sexual partners were less likely to be accepted by their peers than were boys with

- many partners.
  - Women who are--or are perceived to be--more sexually active are explicitly targeted through **slut-shaming**.
- The heterosexual sexual script doesn't focus on women actively wanting, enjoying, and initiating sex, but if a woman doesn't want sex enough to please her partner, that's also considered problematic.
- **Sexual socialization:** the process of learning about sexuality
  - Technically begins far earlier than adolescence. It starts with people talking to young children about their body parts, romantic and sexual relationships, and so on. Many parents take the approach of answering questions when asked but not initiating discussions about sex and sexuality. This approach results in less information being shared.
  - Media contributes to the sexual scripts that people develop. The sexual script that dominates popular media reinforces heteronormativity and largely ignores the sexual desires of girls and women.

## Types of Programs that Teach about Sex

- **Abstinence-only sex education:** focuses on teaching that abstaining until marriage is the only way to avoid pregnancy, STIs, and negative psychological consequences
  - This program has received significant funding from the federal government
- **Talking About Sex**
  - “Private parts”, “pee-pees”, “down there”, “coochies”, “down there”.
  - **Vulva:** Women's external genitals. This includes hair, folds of skin, and the openings of the urethra, and the vagina.
  - **Labia Majora:** Outer lips of the vulva. Made up of fatty tissue covered in pubic hair, they begin next to the thigh and extend inward to surround the **labia minora** as well as the urethral and vaginal openings
  - **Labia Minora:** Sometimes referred to as the inner lips of the vulva. Hairless and sensitive folds of skin that extend from the clitoris past the urinary and vaginal openings
  - **Clitoris:** A highly sensitive genital structure that has the sole function of

providing sexual pleasure

- **Birth Control and other contraceptives**

- **Hormonal contraceptives** include birth control pills, rings, patches, injections, implants, and intrauterine devices
- **Barrier methods** include female and male condoms, vaginal spermicides, diaphragms, and sponges
- **Fertility awareness methods** involve tracking menstrual cycles, tracking body temperature, and monitoring for changes in cervical mucus
- **Non-hormonal IUDS** and sterilization
- Abstaining from penetrative sex or engaging in outercourse
- **Emergency contraceptives** (Plan B) after a sexual encounter
- **Commonly adopted forms of contraception** are birth control pills, female sterilization, male condoms, and long-acting reversible contraceptive.
- Birth control and other contraception options

- Birth Control
- Condoms
- Sponge
- Patch
- IUD
- Barrier options vs. hormonal options



- **Virginity: “Losing it”**

- Vaginal-penile intercourse for the first time would constitute losing virginity
- Women reported lower levels of satisfaction with their first experiences of vaginal intercourse than did men.
- Virginity loss was experienced differently for women and men.
  - For men: achieving status
  - For women: managing loss
- **Casual Sex:** Sex outside of the context of a committed relationship.
  - “Hooking up”: Involves sexual activity between two people with no expectation of commitment.

- **Masturbation**

- **Masturbation:** Involves stimulating oneself sexually, usually through touching one's genitals, to result in sexual pleasure.
- **Orgasm:** Many people regard orgasm as the ultimate sign of sexual pleasure.
  - Men do report higher rates of orgasm when engaging in sexual activity with partners than women do.
  - Experiencing emotional closeness, bonding, love, affection, and acceptance are also reasons women may enjoy sexual activity with a partner, even without an orgasm.
- Women report being less satisfied with their sexual encounters than men are mainly due to expectations.
  - If women believe that satisfaction in sexual relationships result from pleasing one's partner sexually, they would likely report sexual satisfaction whether or not they orgasm. However if women expect to have an orgasm, they'll be dissatisfied if they don't.
- **Types of Sexual Dysfunction**
  - **Hypoactive sexual desire disorder:** Consists of a lack of interest in sexual activity or the complete absence of sexual desire, including thoughts and fantasies, prior to and/or during sexual experiences.
  - Dissatisfaction with levels of sexual desire may also reflect a **desire discrepancy** between oneself and a partner.
  - **Sexual Arousal Disorder:** Occurs when the desire for sex is normal but women have difficulty achieving or maintaining physiological sexual arousal. This is typically experienced as low levels of vaginal lubrication, but it can also include decreased engorgement and/or sensation in the clitoris and labia. These symptoms can cause pain during intercourse and a difficulty achieving orgasm.
  - **Female Orgasmic Disorder:** Absence, delay, or decreased intensity of orgasm after experiencing "sufficient" sexual stimulation and arousal.
  - Women may fake an orgasm for several reasons:
    - Want sexual encounter to end
    - Want to validate their partner's sexual skills
    - Want to appear "normal"

- **Dyspareunia (painful intercourse)** is the third category for women's sexual dysfunction. The specific experiences of pain can differ but individuals with this dysfunction all report pain during at least some instances of vaginal penetration.
- Many studies on women's sexual dysfunction of heterosexual but little on homosexuals.

## Body Concerns

- **Body dissatisfaction** is very common among women. When they're concentrating on how their bodies look rather than on how sex feels, it's hard to enjoy sex.
- **Body image self-consciousness:** Engaging in body surveillance during sex
- **Cognitive Distraction** occurs when a person shifts to a secondary focus, which then interferes with the ability to focus on the primary task, experience, or goal.
  - Leads to **spectatoring** or an "out of body" experience in which a women's focus is on things other than the sexual encounter.
- **Sexualization: Selling Women's Bodies**
  - **Sexualization** occurs when sexuality is imposed on others, when people are regarded as sex objects, and/or when their value is reduced to their sexual appeal or sexual behavior.
  - **Objectification** is understood as one component of sexualization .
  - **Sex Work:** Umbrella term that refers to the exchange of sexual services, performances, or products for compensation (pornography, prostitution).
    - Pervasive workplace discrimination can make sex work the most viable option for transgender women to support themselves.
    - Sex work is often illegal because it's very dangerous; it exposes people to sexually transmitted diseases, drug use, and incarceration.
    - Transwomen report a high level of physical abuse from law enforcement as a result of working in the sex industry.
  - **Self-sexualization:** women embrace sexualization and use their sexuality to gain male attention and/or power. Unclear whether it is empowering.
  - **Sexual agency:** Being comfortable with and in control of one's own sexuality.
  - **Sexual assertiveness:** The ability to ask for what one wants and to refuse what

one doesn't want within a sexual encounter.

## Unit Eight: Relationships

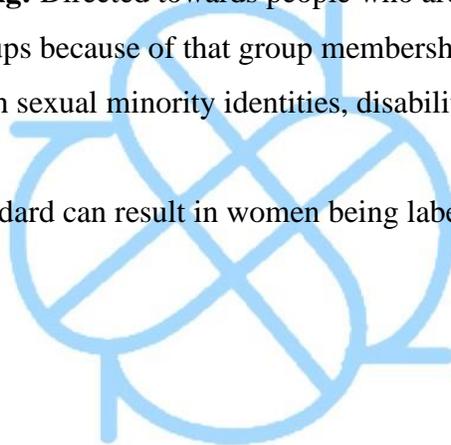
### Social Support

- A feeling of being cared for and having support and assistance from people around us such as family, friends, and partners.
- **Informational social support:** Giving others advice or ideas to help people find strategies or resources to better cope with life events.
- **Instrumental social support:** Involves others providing assistance in terms of money, goods, or services.
- **Emotional social support:** Occurs when we feel nurtured and/or cared for by others.
- Social support has been linked to decreased psychological distress such as depression and anxiety.
- **Tend-and-befriend coping strategy:** Involves nurturing and protecting others in times of stress and developing social networks that facilitate these patterns.
- **Active constructive responding:** Reacting enthusiastically and asking follow-up questions to prolong the conversation and sense of excitement.
- Can lead to **co-rumination** which involves discussing problems and dwelling on negatives in conversation with another person.

- Women provide more social support than do men; same-gender friendships can be particularly important for women.

## Enemies and Frenemies

- Boys and men tend to engage in physical aggression, while girls and women are more likely to engage in indirect forms of aggression
- **Relational aggression:** Involves damaging others’ existing or potential relationships and/or social status.
  - Verbal or non-verbal and can be done behind the individual's back or directly aimed
    - Friends can turn into enemies
- **Identity-based bullying:** Directed towards people who are actual or perceived members of devalued social groups because of that group membership.
  - Individuals with sexual minority identities, disabilities, and transgender individuals.
- The sexual double standard can result in women being labeled as sluts for engaging in sexual activity
  - Slut shaming



## Romance

- Idealized and unrealistic beliefs about love and romance are common and are perpetuated through the media.

Belief	Example
Partner is predestined	Your ideal partner is out there.
Right away, you know	Love happens at first sight
Expression not necessary	Your ideal partner will just know what you’re thinking/feeling

Sexual perfection	Sex with your soul mate is always easy and satisfying
Centerfolds preferred	Women should look like models to attract their (male) partners
Role of gender	Men should always be taller, more powerful, richer, and older than their (female) partners
Into a prince	Love can change a man into an ideal partner
Pugilism/passion	Fighting is a sign of love and passion
Totally opposite values	Love will overcome differences in values
Incomplete without mate	Your ideal partner completes you and fulfills your needs
Often, actors - roles	Actors are just like the characters they portray
Not real/no effect	You're not affected by media portrayals of romance because you know they're not "real"

- **Dating scripts** continue to reflect traditional, gendered, heterosexual standards. The scripts don't follow/reflect the experiences of women who date other women.
- Men are attracted to **young, physically attractive** partners because these partners had the best chance of producing healthy offspring (carrying on the man's genetics).
- Women, on the other hand, are attracted to **slightly older partners who have status** and access to resources because these partners were more likely to help both the woman and her offspring to survive (carrying on the woman's genetics).
- Both women and men desire attractive and successful partners. The traits desired in short-term partners can differ from long-term partners.
- **Online dating** is becoming popular
- Dating hasn't been replaced by hooking up, and studies show that women, young adults,

and Latinx students prefer that more.

- While some people have success connecting with long-term partners through online dating websites and apps, some don't.

## **Division of Labor**

- Women do more household labor than men in heterosexual relationships and are more likely to manage what needs to be done around the house and to engage in emotion work.
  - Women are likely to have been socialized into doing household labor and are viewed negatively if not done.
- **Relative resources theory** states that the person who brings more resources to the relationship gets to use those resources in order to avoid doing chores.
- People viewed relationships as a **social exchange** between partners--one provided the bulk of the financial resources while the other does the bulk of the domestic labor.
- **Time availability**: this theory holds that the person with the most available time should do the larger proportion of housework.
- **Inequality** in the division of labor has negative consequences for relationships. Women with more liberal gender attitudes, greater income, and higher levels of education perceived an unequal division of labor as unfair.
  - Marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction are lower when women perceive the division of labor as unfair.
  - Open communication between partners can make achieving equity more likely.

## **Works Cited**

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