

ENGLISH
Faculty of Development and Society

Language and Gender

20 Credits

MODULE HANDBOOK 2013-14

Module Leader:

Dr Jodie Clark

Room 1122, Owen Building

Tel: 0114 225 6095

E-mail: jodie.clark@shu.ac.uk

Office Hours: e-mail for appointments

MODULE TITLE	Gender and Language
Module Code	14-6025-0
Semester of Delivery	S1
Module Type	Option
Level	6
Credit Points	20
Assessment Modes & Weighting	One essay of 4000 words 100%; optional essay plan and bibliography to be handed in by week 9
Pre-Requisite Modules (<i>if applicable</i>)	Normally Level 5 Language and Literature and Level 4 Describing Language
Breakdown of Student Learning Hours by Type*	Supported Learning 18 hours Independent Study 60 hours
Module Leader & School	Sara Mills, Development and Society
Module Banding	Band A
MODULE APPROVAL STATUS⁺	In approval
Host Programme	<i>BAES</i>
Date of Original Approval	
Date of Next Review	

RATIONALE

The module interrogates the notion of gender and its relation to language. The module analyses conversations together with literary and non-literary texts. The module investigates the difference gender does or does not make in relation to a number of elements: for example, the use of prestige forms, the use of politeness and so on. The aim is not to investigate the way that women and men speak, but rather to interrogate the notion of ‘women’s’ and ‘men’s’ speech and text production and reception. The module aims to question the difference that gender makes, rather than assuming that gender does necessarily make a difference. Text specific and analytical skills bases established in Level 4 Describing Language and Level 5 Language and Literature, focusing overtly on the functioning and construction of gender.

SUMMARY OF AIMS

- To apply descriptive linguistic skills to a wide range of texts and conversations.
- To interrogate the notion of gender.
- To investigate the language of a range of different texts and conversations

ANTICIPATED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- Articulate the form and function of a range of linguistic features.
- Apply discourse- analytical methods in the analysis of texts and conversations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the linguistic features in texts and conversations.
- Think critically about gender.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY AND METHODS, INCLUDING RESOURCES

The sessions will be a lecture of 1 hour and a seminar of 1 1/2 hours. The session programme focuses on the role that gender plays in the production and reception of texts/conversations and the way that gender itself is constituted in texts and conversations. Drawing on third-wave feminist analysis we will be questioning that gender exists as a material object in its own right, and instead we will examine the way that gender is constructed and contested in texts and conversations. We will explore the way that within conversations participants orient to gender and construct different notions of gender according to the context. We will examine the role that stereotypes of gender (masculinity and femininity) play in these negotiations over gender identity. Rather than assuming that these stereotypes straightforwardly influence the way that individuals see themselves as males and females, we will examine the way that people draw on these stereotypes in order to contest them and to parody them. Nevertheless, the stereotypes are still kept in play even when they are being contested. Within the seminar work, students will be asked to bring in examples of materials (advertisements, news articles) which they see as relevant to the study of gender to examine the way that gender is currently played out.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK STRATEGY AND METHODS

The module is assessed by a 4000-word essay. This assignment involves either an analysis of some conversational data or an analysis of a written text. The topic of your essay will need to be agreed with the tutor. You will have to focus on one aspect of the text/conversation, for example, politeness, humour, transitivity, collocation, and so on. The essay must contain a critical review of the literature on the topic, and display evidence of reading and be followed by an analysis of the text/conversation which engages with this reading. This analysis must be entirely your own work, and must not draw on work that you have used in other modules. It will end with some conclusions and implications of your work, and be accompanied by a plan of the essay and a full bibliography. The essay must address both the key concepts within this module, language and gender, and the relationship between them.

The essay must be submitted electronically as a pdf or Word file to the 'Assessment' section of the module Blackboard site. You do not have to submit a paper copy. Check the assignment scheduler for the definitive hand-in date.

You will have the option of submitting an essay plan and bibliography (as pdf or Word files) before week 9 to the 'Assessment' section of the module Blackboard site. If you submit a plan, you will be assigned an appointment with your tutor in week 10 for one-to-one feedback.

SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The assignment is marked in terms of achievement in the following areas:

- understanding and analysis of individual texts/conversations
- application of appropriate methodologies in analysis
- engagement with theoretical work in this area
- understanding and analysis of specific linguistic features

SESSION PLAN

Sessions will include some of the following depending on the interests of students:

1. Introduction: Gender, feminism and language
2. Gender and essentialism
3. Sexuality and heteronormativity
4. Analysing gender in interaction
5. Masculinities
6. Sexism and representation
7. Revision Week
8. Text address, positioning and readership
9. Transitivity and agency
(Hand in date for essay plan and bibliography)
10. One-to-one feedback on essay plans
11. Gender and prestige forms
12. Gender and politeness

INDICATIVE READING

Recommended Reading

- Baker, P. 2008 *Sexed Texts*, Equinox, London
- Bergvall, V. Bing, J. Freed, A. eds (1996) *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*, Longman, London.
- Cameron, D. ed (1997) *The Feminist Critique of Language*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London
- Coates, J. and Cameron, D. eds. (1988) *Women in their Speech Communities*, Longman, London
- Coates, J. ed. (1998) *Language and Gender: A Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford
- Eckert, P and McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003) *Language and Gender*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Harrington, K. Litoselliti, L., Sauntson, H., and Sunderland, J. eds.(2008) *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan
- Holmes, J and Meyerhoff, M (2003) *Handbook of Language and Gender*, Oxford, Blackwell
- Mills S and Mullany L (2011) *Language Gender and Feminism*, Routledge, London
- Mills, S. (2008) *Language and Sexism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Pauwels, A. (1998) *Women Changing Language*, Addison Wesley Longman, Harlow
- Wodak, R.(1997) *Gender and Discourse*, Routledge

See also special issue of Language and Literature on feminist text analysis, 1999 and the issue of Working Papers on the Web on feminist practice:

<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/previousissues.html>

Also see special issue on Chicklit edited by Sarah Gormley

<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/chicklit/index.html>

<http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/2827>

This website gives a wide range of resources in the study of gender and language.

Further Reading

- Butler, J.(1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, Routledge, London
- Butler, J. (1999) *Gender trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, London
- Cameron, D. (2007) *The Myth of Mars and Venus*, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- Cameron, D. and Kulick, D.(2003) *Language and Sexuality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Cameron, D. (1985) *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*, Macmillan, London
- Cameron, D. (1995) *Verbal Hygiene*, Routledge, London
- Campbell-Kibler, K., Podesva, R., Roberts, S. and Wong, A., eds (2002) *Language and sexuality: Contesting meaning in theory and practice*, CSLI Publications, Stanford
- Clark, J. (2012) *Language, Sex and Social Structure*, Palgrave, Basingstoke
- Coates, J.(2003) *Men Talk*, Blackwell, Oxford
- Coates, J. ed.(1998) *Language and Gender: A Reader*, Blackwell, Oxford
- Coates, J. (1986) *Women, Men and Language*, Longman, London
- Coates, J. (1998) *Women Talk*, Blackwell
- Dunant, S. ed. *The War of the Words: The Political Correctness Debate*, London, Virago
- Eckert, P.(2000) *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*, Blackwell, Oxford
- Eckert, P. and McConnell-Ginet, S.(2003) *Language and Gender*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality*, Penguin, London
- Goodwin, Marjorie Harness, (2006) *The Hidden Life of Girls: Games of Stance, Status and Exclusion*, Oxford, Blackwell.
- Graddol. D and Swann, J. (1989) *Gender Voices*, Blackwell, Oxford
- Gray, F. (1994) *Women and Laughter*, Macmillan, Houndsmill
- Hall, K. and Bucholtz, M., eds. (1995) *Gender Articulated: Language and the Socially Constructed Self*, Routledge, London
- Holmes, J.(1995) *Women, Men and Politeness*, Longman, London
- Johnson, S and Meinhof, U. eds. (1997) *Language and Masculinity*, Blackwell, Oxford
- Lakoff, R. (1975) *Language and Women's Place*, Harper Colophon, New York
- Litosseliti, L. and Sunderland, J., (2002) eds *Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam
- Livia, A. and Hall, K., eds (1997) *Queerly Phrased: Language, Gender and Sexuality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford
- McIlvenny, P., (2002) ed. *Talking Gender and Sexuality*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam
- Mills, J. (1989) *Womanwords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Patriarchal Society*, Longman, London
- Mills, S. (2004) *Discourse*, 2nd edition, Routledge, London
- Mills, S. (2003) *Gender and Politeness*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- Mills, S. (1996) *Feminist Stylistics*, Routledge, London
- Mills, S. ed (1994) *Gendering the Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead
- Mills, S. ed. (1994) *Language and Gender: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Longman
- Mills, S. and Mullany, L. (2010) *Language, Gender and Feminism: Theory and Methodology*, Routledge, London
- Mullany, L. (2007) *Gendered Discourse in the Professional Workplace*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan
- Pearce, L. *Woman/Image/Text*, Harvester, Hemel Hempstead, 1991
- Pearce, L. *Feminism and the Politics of Reading*, Arnold, London, 1997
- Skeggs, B.(1997) *Formations of Class and Gender*, Sage, London
- Spender, D.(1980) *Man Made Language*, RKP, London
- Tannen, D., ed. *Gender and Conversational Interaction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993
- Tannen, D. (1991) *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, Virago, London

Thornborrow, J. (2002) *Power Talk*, Harlow, Longman
Vetterling-Braggin, M ed. (1981) *Sexist Language: A Modern Philosophical Analysis*, Littlefield Adams, New York
Wales, K., ed. *Feminist Linguistics in Literary Criticism*, D. S. Brewer, Woodbridge, 1994
Weatherall, A. *Gender, Language and Discourse*, Routledge, London, 2002
Weedon, C. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* Blackwell, Oxford, 1997
Wilkinson, S and Kitzinger, C. eds: (1995) *Feminism and Discourse: Psychological Perspectives*, Sage, London

POSSIBLE ESSAY QUESTIONS

These should be seen as only possible essay questions; you will need to clear your essay question with your seminar tutor before starting to write.

Ensure that you do not take on essentialist views of gender. The aim of this essay is to test out the effect of notions of gender and not to prove that males and females speak differently.

- How is gender contested in conversation? Analyse the way interactants contest conventional gender roles.
- Is 'gossip' gendered? Compare and contrast the interactional strategies amongst male and female friendship groups in conversation
- Indexing 'gayness': Analyse the linguistic features of 'out-of-the-closet' celebrities
- Is swearing a masculine form of speech? What effect does this have for women swearing?
- Elicit narratives from both male and female speakers and discuss their structure, style and content
- Are women students always more polite than men?
- Are there feminine and masculine styles of speech?
- Are there more differences amongst women as a group linguistically than there are similarities, with particular reference to a friendship group of students ?
- Research tends to show that women use prestige forms more than men. Problematised that assumption, drawing on your own analysis of a particular community of practice.
- In what ways is public speaking masculine? Problematised this notion with an analysis of a community of practice.
- Analyse the linguistic differences and similarities between male and female stand-up comedians

The essay must contain the following:

- A critical engagement with the research on the subject you have chosen (a review of the literature)
- An original analysis of data that you have collected
- Conclusions from this data
- A bibliography
- An ethics self-assessment sheet (including an information sheet/consent forms if necessary)

Your role within the module

The University regulations on attendance state, ‘We assume that you will take responsibility for your own learning and we expect you to attend all classes, as learning is a shared experience and you have a part to play in promoting collective understanding.’ You need to attend lectures and seminars in order to participate fully in the course, to take advantage of the opportunity to learn from your tutors and your peers, and to make your own contribution to their learning. It is also in seminars that assessment feedback will normally be distributed.

You are expected to participate in classes in a way that helps foster a constructive learning environment. This includes arriving on time, reading any set texts in advance of seminars, taking part in class discussions, and treating your colleagues with politeness and consideration. If you are having problems attending lectures and seminars, you should talk to your module tutor, the module leader, or the course leader.

Make sure you keep up to date with news about the module through the Blackboard site, and that the information in your Student Record is current. Staff will usually try to get in touch with you through your shu.ac.uk email address, so it is important to check this regularly.

Details of penalties

- Word counts: questions for coursework assignments will usually specify maximum and minimum word counts. If your essay falls much below the minimum, it may be that you haven’t answered the question fully enough to meet the assessment criteria. If you submit an excessively long piece of work, you should be aware that the examiner is not obliged to carry on reading past the word limit.
- Missing coursework deadlines: the University assessment regulations state, ‘If you do not submit your coursework by the specified deadline this will be treated as non-submission and you will receive a mark of zero for the piece of work. This may result in you failing the module.’ If you have exceptional circumstances that you think may prevent you from being able to submit a piece of work on time, you need to submit an Exceptional Extension Request Form or an Extenuating Circumstances Form; for details, click the Support & Information tab on shuspace and go to Rules and Regulations.

Assessment regulations

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the University’s assessment regulations. To obtain these, click the Support & Information tab on shuspace and go to Rules and Regulations.

You should be particularly aware of the University regulations regarding cheating and plagiarism. These state that plagiarism is ‘where someone tries to pass off another’s work, thoughts or ideas as their own, whether deliberately or unintentionally, without appropriate acknowledgement’. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will be punished as such.

Student Services Team

If you wish to talk to someone about your course, life at the University or any issues which may be affecting your studies then please contact the Student Services Team via the D&S Faculty Helpdesk based on Level 11 of the Owen Building, City campus.

Your student services team are:

Student Support Officer Angela Cox Tel: 0114 225 3226 Email: owen11and9@shu.ac.uk	Senior Administrator Rachel Walker Tel: 0114 225 6194 Email: owen11and9@shu.ac.uk
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Your student services team can offer help and advice on:

- ❖ What to do if you are unable to attend
- ❖ What to do if you are unable to submit assignments and/or attend examinations
- ❖ Progression through the course
- ❖ Queries relating to Blackboard
- ❖ University Regulations and procedures (eg extensions and extenuating circumstances)

For general queries:

Faculty Helpdesk Telephone: 0114 225 3113 fdsenquiries@shu.ac.uk
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