Women, Work, and Public Policy

Fall 2017
PSC 82503 / SOC 84700 / WSCP 81000
Tuesdays 4:15 to 6:15pm

Faculty: Janet Gornick
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Office Hours: By appointment.
Call or email with questions at any time.

Course Description:

This course will provide an overview of key issues affecting women in the contemporary workplace in the United States and other high-income countries. We will begin with an overview of women's position in the labor market. Here we will take a multidimensional approach to capturing gender inequality at work, covering gender gaps in employment rates, in working time, in occupation, and in earnings; one section of the course will focus on paid care workers. We will assess growing class inequalities among women, which have led to polarization in the labor market, especially between women with more and less education; we will consider divisions by race, ethnicity, nativity, and sexuality. We will analyze the ways in which public policies have addressed these concerns, and evaluate their impacts.

The course also examines the effects on women workers – of all classes, races, and ethnic groups, and on immigrants as well as natives – of persistent inequalities in divisions of labor within households. Despite the enormous increase in women's employment rates during the past half century, women continue to carry out the bulk of unpaid work in their homes. Altering these inequalities has proven even more challenging than transforming the structures that shape paid work. We will consider recent research on the effects of "work-family reconciliation policies"—that is, public policies aimed at supporting women (and men) as they balance the responsibilities of paid work and family care. The key question now under consideration is whether some of these policies – e.g., paid family leave, rights to part-time work and flexible scheduling – create new forms of gender inequality.

Students will complete weekly reaction papers and a semester-long research project.
Course Expectations, Requirements, and Grading (with details to be discussed in class):

- weekly reaction papers (one per week)  
  20% of grade
- attendance, class participation, and supervision of one class session  
  20% of grade
- oral presentation of final paper  
  10% of grade
- final paper (due December 12)  
  50% of grade

Course Reading:

The course will be based on eight books.

Ideally, students will purchase all of them. The books can be purchased for about $220 (less if you buy them used and/or in electronic formats). You might want to share (of course!) and, in addition, the instructor has requested that all eight be placed on reserve at the CUNY Graduate Center library.

**Course Overview:**

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<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>August 29</td>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Introductions, Course Overview and Logistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview I</td>
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<td>September 12</td>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview II</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Gender and Race at Work</td>
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<td>October 3</td>
<td>Class 5</td>
<td>Gender, Sexuality, and the Social Construction of Work</td>
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<td>October 10</td>
<td>Class 6</td>
<td>Gender Inequality at Work “At the Top”</td>
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<td>October 17</td>
<td>Class 7</td>
<td>Paid Care Work – A Historical Look</td>
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<td>October 24</td>
<td>Class 8</td>
<td>Migration and Domestic Work</td>
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<td>October 31</td>
<td>Class 9</td>
<td>Gender, Work, and Organized Labor</td>
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<td>November 7</td>
<td>Class 10</td>
<td>Women, Work, and U.S. Public Policy – Overview</td>
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<td>November 14</td>
<td>Class 11</td>
<td>Work-Family Policy in Other Affluent Countries – I</td>
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<td>November 21</td>
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<td>November 28</td>
<td>Class 12</td>
<td>Work-Family Policy in Other Affluent Countries – II</td>
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<td>December 5</td>
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**Institutions and Public Policy**

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<td><strong>Wrap up</strong></td>
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Course Reading:

Women, Work, and Inequality

September 5  Class 2  The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview I
Blau and Winkler
Chapter 3  The Family as An Economic Unit: Theory
Chapter 4  The Family as an Economic Unit: Evidence
Chapter 5  The Labor Force: Definitions and Trends
Chapter 6  The Labor Supply Decision

September 12  Class 3  The Economics of Women, Men, and Work – Overview II
Blau and Winkler
Chapter 7  Evidence on Gender Differences in LM Outcomes
Chapter 9  Other Supply-Side Sources of Gender Differences
Chapter 10  Supply Side Factors versus LM Discrimination
Chapter 11  Labor Market Discrimination Theory

September 26  Class 4  Gender and Race at Work
Katrinell Davis, entire book.

October 3  Class 5  Gender, Sexuality, and the Social Construction of Work
Kristen Schilt, entire book.

October 10  Class 6  Gender Inequality at Work “At the Top”
Sheryl Sandberg, entire book.

October 17  Class 7  Paid Care Work – A Historical Look
Mignon Duffy, entire book.

October 24  Class 8  Migration and Domestic Work
Rhacel Parrenas, entire book.

Institutions and Public Policy

October 31  Class 9  Gender, Work, and Organized Labor
Ruth Milkman:
Chapter 3  Organizing the Sexual Division of Labor
Chapter 4  Rosie the Riveter Revisited
Chapter 6  Gender and Trade Unionism
Chapter 7  Union Responses to Workforce Feminization
Chapter 8  Two Worlds of Unionism
November 7 Class 10  Women, Work, and U.S. Public Policy – Overview
    Blau and Winkler
    Chapter 12  Government Policies to Combat Discrimination
    Chapter 15  Government Policies Affecting Family Wellbeing
    Chapter 16  Balancing Competing Demands of Work and Family
    Chapter 18  Comparison of US to Other ... Countries

November 14 Class 11  Work-Family Policy in Other Affluent Countries – I
    Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers
    Chapter 1   Institutions that Support Gender Equality

November 28 Class 12  Work-Family Policy in Other Affluent Countries – II
    Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers
    Chapter 19  Further Thoughts
    And ... any other six chapters!