

SOP77092/SOC40910 Gender and Social Change in Comparative Context

Module Information	
Module Code	SOP77092/SOC40910
Module Title	Gender and Social Change in Comparative Context
Department	Sociology
Year Group	MSc Comparative Social Change
Module Personnel	David Ralph
Academic Year	2026-27
Credit Weighting	10
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	2 hour weekly seminar

Module Content	
Module Description	This course takes a sociological lens to the question of gender, looking at the ways in which this significant social force shaping our lives varies across time and geographical context.
Module Learning Aims	Describe variations of gender relations over time and across cultures and analyse their potential causes; ● Assess empirical research on gender differences and dynamics and patterns of gender relations;
Learning Outcomes	● Evaluate normative theories of gender relations and consider their societal implications; ● Critically consider the question of gender and social change
Indicative Reading / Resources	Disch, L. and Hawkesworth, M. (eds) (2016) The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory. New York: Oxford University Press. Ember, C. R. and Ember, M. (eds) (2003) Encyclopaedia of Sex and Gender: Men and Women in the World's Cultures. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers. Gamble, S. (ed) (2006) The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism. London: Routledge.

Module Content

Over the last century or so, Western advanced societies have been undergoing a 'gender revolution' which is pushing social change in the direction of more egalitarian gender relations. This aspect of social transformation penetrates previously entrenched social relations to their core, bringing with it the potential for much wider and deeper societal transformation. In recent years, the transformation of gendered relations has also been accompanied with a transformation of the category of gender itself, the latter of which has given rise to an especially explosive politicized dynamic. This raises deeper questions, which deserve serious consideration today; principally: what are the extents of, and limits and blockages to, the gender revolution? This module explores the question of gender and social change from the perspective of empirical sociology and normative social theory. The former provides a basis to consider the nature/culture dynamic of sex/gender and explore the questions of gender roles and gender difference. It also considers the gendered division of labour across cultures and how transformations of gender relations are connected with ecological and technological aspects of society more generally. The latter explores the content of feminist theory and women's history, as well as connecting this with the women's movement more generally as itself a force of social change. It considers the theory of patriarchy, the diversity of feminisms, more recent theories of gender, gender movements, and contemporary masculinities.

Assessment

Assessment Components

Essay 70%; Presentation 30%

Assessment Details

Essay 3000 words; presentation 15 minutes in class

Additional Information

Prerequisites

None

Co-requisites

None

Any other information

None