



ENGE3690

GENDER & LANGUAGE



PROF. WILKINSON GONZALES

Course Outline

(Detailed version to be put on Blackboard)

Module code and title: ENGE3690 (Term 2, AY26-27) Gender and Language
Instructor: Prof. Wilkinson Daniel Wong Gonzales
Venue: Department of English, *The Chinese University of Hong Kong*

Course description

Ever wondered how the way we talk shapes who we are allowed to be? This course invites you to move beyond simple binaries and explore how language acts as a powerful site where gender and sexuality are performed, policed, and profoundly rethought. From the subtle politics of pronouns and conversational turn-taking to the complex worlds of queer linguistics, trans narratives, and institutional power, we will unpack how everyday speech activities can both reinforce dominant social orders and offer radical tools for resistance. Step into a space where we treat gender not as a fixed biological label, but as a dynamic social practice—and discover how analyzing everything from phonetic variation to digital media can give you the critical frameworks to decode the invisible rules of our social world.

你是否曾經想過，我們說話的方式如何影響我們能夠成為什麼樣的人？本課程將帶領你跳脫性別二元對立的框架，深入探索語言如何成為展演、規訓與重新思考性別與性／別認同的重要場域。從代名詞使用與日常對話輪替中的微妙政治，到酷兒語言學、跨性別敘事以及制度權力等複雜議題，我們將一起探討日常語言實踐如何一方面鞏固既有的社會秩序，另一方面又能成為挑戰與改變現狀的有力工具。在這門課中，我們不將性別視為固定不變的生物標籤，而是將其理解為一種動態的社會實踐。透過分析語音變異、語言風格、身份建構以及數位媒體中的語言使用，你將學習運用批判性的理論框架，理解語言如何塑造身份、權力與社會關係，並進一步解讀那些支配我們日常生活卻往往不易察覺的社會規範與價值觀。

Learning objectives

Upon completing this course, you will have developed the ability to:

1. Explain major concepts, theories, and debates in the study of language, gender, and sexuality, including feminist, poststructuralist, and social constructionist perspectives.
2. Analyze how language contributes to the construction, performance, negotiation, and contestation of gendered and sexual identities across diverse social and cultural contexts.
3. Critically evaluate the relationships among language, ideology, power, inequality, and social institutions, with particular attention to issues of inclusion, discrimination, and representation.
4. Apply theories and methods from language, gender, and sexuality research to interpret real-world discourse and communicate evidence-based insights about gendered and sexual meanings in society.

Class format

The main class format (lecture) will vary from session to session but will generally comprise a lecture and/or a discussion and a tutorial session every week.

Course activities & Assessments

Activities	Expectations & Assessment	Nature	%
<i>Gendered Discourse Profile Project</i>	Students will develop a profile of a selected discourse domain by examining its communicative context, gender ideologies, discourse patterns, and implications for equity and inclusion. Building on earlier Gender and Language Case Files, students will produce a 5 to 10 page report that integrates discourse analysis, empirical evidence, survey data, and course theories.	Group	20%
<i>Midterm Assessment</i>	Showcase your ability to analyze, interpret, and apply course concepts to demonstrate your mastery and critical thinking skills through a traditional pen-and-paper assessment	Individual	40%
<i>Final Assessment</i>	Put your knowledge into action by choosing an assessment that aligns with your <i>strengths and interests</i>. Select from several options, such as: <i>Final Exam</i> (<i>Individual only</i>) Apply, analyze, and critically interpret course concepts in an oral or written assessment (form to be determined) that evaluates your depth of understanding and ability to engage with the material. OR	Individual or Group	40%

	<i>Critical and Creative Gender Engagement Project</i> (Group only - at least 4 people) Apply concepts from Gender and Language studies through one of three pathways: <i>Critical Engagement</i> (analyzing, evaluating, or redesigning existing texts, practices, or policies), <i>Creative Engagement</i> (using artistic or multimodal forms such as songs, skits, stories, videos, or performances), or <i>Public Intervention</i> (developing practical resources, campaigns, or recommendations that address real-world gender-related issues). All projects conclude with an in-class presentation and defense connecting the project to key concepts and debates from the course.		
TOTAL			100%

Course grade descriptors

Grade	Descriptor	
A	Excellent	Outstanding performance on <u>ALL</u> learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would surpass the normal expectations at this level and typical of standards that may be common at higher levels of study. The 'A' grade is reserved for truly excellent work that exceeds the level expected for the majority of students and are expected to be achieved only by a small minority.
A-	Very Good	Generally outstanding performance on <u>ALMOST ALL</u> learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to synthesize and apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would fully fulfill the normal expectations.
B+	Good (Plus)	<u>HIGH</u> performance on all learning outcomes, OR <u>HIGH</u> performance on some learning outcomes which compensates <u>WELL</u> for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply <u>WELL</u> the principles or skills learned in the course in a comprehensive manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level <u>WELL</u> .
B	Good	<u>SUBSTANTIAL</u> performance on all learning outcomes, OR <u>SUBSTANTIAL</u> performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a <u>MORE COMPREHENSIVE</u> manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.
B-	Good (Minus)	<u>GOOD</u> performance on all learning outcomes, OR <u>GOOD</u> performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for slightly less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a <u>COMPREHENSIVE</u> manner that would sufficiently fulfill the normal expectations at this level.
C+	Adequate (Plus)	<u>VERY ADEQUATE</u> performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a <u>SOMEWHAT SUSTAINED</u> manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.
C	Adequate	<u>ADEQUATE</u> performance on the majority of learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to partially apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the basic requirement at this level.

C-	Adequate (Minus)	<u>SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE</u> performance on <u>A NUMBER OF</u> learning outcomes. Demonstrates the ability to <u>SOMEWHAT</u> apply the principles or skills learned in the course in a manner that would meet the <u>BARE</u> basic requirement at this level.
D+	Pass (Plus)	<u>BARELY SATISFACTORY</u> performance on <u>A FEW</u> learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in some areas while responding minimally with possibly tangential content in others.
D	Pass	<u>ALMOST BARELY SATISFACTORY</u> performance on <u>VERY FEW</u> learning outcomes. Addresses the task inadequately by meeting the basic requirement at this level only in <u>very few</u> areas while responding <u>very</u> minimally with possibly tangential content in others.
F	Failure	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. Fails to address the task and likely does not understand what the task requires. In other words, the work completely misses the point.

Timetable (tentative)

All readings are uploaded to Blackboard. Holidays and dates for UG courses have not yet been fixed as of 20 Jun 2026.

Wk	Date	Topic(s) & In-lecture Learning Activities	Readings and resources	Learning Activities
1		Sketching the field: Core concepts, feminism, essentialism, and poststructuralism	(Angouri & Baxter, 2021): The Routledge Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality; (Ehrlich, Meyerhoff & Holmes, 2014): The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality; (Kiesling, 2024): Language, Gender, and Sexuality: An Introduction	NO TUTORIALS Sign-up for tutorial groups
2		Ways of understanding gender and language: Theories, identities, meanings, and methodologies	(Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013): Language and Gender; (Sauntson, 2019): Researching Language, Gender and Sexuality: A Student Guide (Chandler, 2013): The Subjectivity of Habitus	NO TUTORIALS Sign-up for tutorial groups Gender and language case files
3		Gendered language: Grammatical gender, sexist language, pronouns, and normativity	(Coates, 2004): Women, Men and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language;	Tutorial 1: Sex gender sexuality and language Gender and language case files

			(Hall et al., 2020): Language and Gender; (Borba & Milani, 2019): Colonial Intertexts: Discourses, Bodies and Stranger Fetishism	
4		Languaged gender: Interaction, politeness, turn-taking, and doing gender	(Macaulay, 2001): Tough Talk: Indirectness and Gender in Requests for Information; (Wong, 2018): Saying No: An Investigation of Hong Kong Tertiary Students' English Refusal Strategies; (Gagné, 2008): Urban Princesses: Performance and "Women's Language" in Japan's Gothic/Lolita Subculture	Tutorial 2: Language as a resource Gender and language case files
5		Explaining language variation through gender and sexuality—and its limits: Variation, style, embodiment, and intersectionality	(Eckert, 1999): Language Variation as Social Practice (Gonzales et al, 2026): Gender and uptalk in Hong Kong English (Pratt, 2023): Affect in Sociolinguistic Style; (Hazenbergh, 2016): Walking the Straight and Narrow: Linguistic Choice and the (Straight) Presentation of Self	Tutorial 3: Variation and gender Gender and language case files
6		Narratives, Subjectivity, and Disclosure: Identity, agency, coming out, and self-presentation	(Maynes et al., 2011): Agency, Subjectivity, and Narratives of the Self;	Tutorial 4: Corpora, gender, and style-shifting

			(Zimman, 2009): ‘The Other Kind of Coming Out’: Transgender People and the Coming Out Narrative Genre; (Devlin et al., 2025): Understanding How Asexual Individuals Navigate Identity Disclosure and Concealment	Gender and language case files
7				
8		Beyond the “man” and “woman”: Masculinities and Femininities	(Kiesling, 2005): Homosocial Desire in Men's Talk: Balancing and Re-Creating Cultural Discourses of Masculinity; (Calder, 2024): ‘Harsh’ SoMa vs ‘Beige’ Castro: The Cross-Modal Construction of Contrasting Femininities in Queer San Francisco; (McDowell, 2015): Masculinity and Non-Traditional Occupations: Men's Talk in Women's Work	Tutorial 5: Gender and nationalism Gender and language case files
9		Queer Linguistics: Sexuality, desire, heteronormativity, and queer critique	(Cameron & Kulick, 2003): Language and Sexuality; (Kulick, 2000): Gay and Lesbian Language; (Milani, 2013): Are ‘Queers’ Really ‘Queer’? Language, Identity and Same-Sex Desire in a South African Online Community	Tutorial 6: Indexicality Gender and language case files

10		Breaking the Binary: Translinguistics, embodiment, sociophonetics, and gender diversity	(Gratton, 2016): Resisting the Gender Binary: The Use of (ING) in the Construction of Non-Binary Transgender Identities; (Calder & Steele, 2025): Interrogating the Cisgender Listening Subject in the Perception of Transmasculine Voices; (Kosse & Hall, 2025): Sissy Hypno in a Trans-Affirming Register: Shifting Orders of Pornography Online	Tutorial 7: Naturalization Gender and language case files
11		Ideologizing gender: Naturalization, stereotyping, ideology, and social construction	(Garner & Grazian, 2016): Naturalizing Gender Through Childhood Socialization Messages in a Zoo; (Kang & Chen, 2017): Gender Stereotype as a Vehicle for Social Change; (Vessey & Nicolai, 2023): The Language Ideologies of Multilingual Nannies in London	Tutorial 8: Stereotyping Gender and language case files
12		Regulating gender and sexuality through language: Institutions, media, law, and public discourse	(Ehrlich, 2007): Legal Discourse and the Cultural Intelligibility of Gendered Meanings; (Vickery & Everbach, 2018): Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology, and Harassment; (Eberhardt, 2021): Raucous Feminisms in Neoliberal Times: Disruptive	Tutorial 9: Disneyfication Gender and language case files

			Performances of Gender, Sexuality and Race	
13		Connecting the dots (Part 1)	Presentation of Critical and Creative Gender Engagement Project	Tutorial 10: Agency and subjectivity in Hong Kong Gender and language case files
14		Connecting the dots (Part 2)	Presentation of Critical and Creative Gender Engagement Project	
15		FINAL ASSESSMENT (For those who did not do Critical and Creative Gender Engagement project)		
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