

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A COURSE IN THE
GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:
EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: COMMUNICATION AND THEATRE ARTS

COLLEGE: ARTS AND SCIENCES

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1. Subject Code, Number, and Title: CTAC 260 Gender Communication

2. Credit Hours 3

3. Course Description

(From undergraduate course catalogue) Exploration of the multifaceted ways communication, culture, and gender are interconnected and the influences of each. Critical analysis of gender communication “differences” as they are influenced by our culture and our everyday communication.

4. This course is (check one):

an existing course with no revisions (need not go through the input system)

an existing course with revisions (attach this form to Request for Course Revision form)

a new course (attach this form to Request for New Course form)

5. Check the General Education requirement this course is intended to meet. If the course is to be proposed for more than one requirement, submit a separate form for each one.

Effective Communication

Quantitative Reasoning (*QR designation*)

Writing Intensive (*WI designation*)

Perspectives on a Diverse World

Global Awareness

*U.S. Diversity

Knowledge of the Disciplines

Arts

Humanities

Science

Social Science

Learning Beyond the Classroom (*LBC designation*)

- Self and Well Being
- Community Service, Citizenship, and Leadership
- Cultural and Academic Activities and Events
- Career and Professional Development
- International and Multicultural Experience
- Undergraduate Research

6. Rationale. Provide a concise, clear, jargon-free explanation of why this is a General Education course and how it fits into this specific area of the program. (The rationale should explain to students why they are taking the course. It should address both why it is part of the General Education program and why it fits into the particular category.) This rationale should appear on the general course syllabus provided here and should be included in specific course syllabi given to students.

Rationale for inclusion of CTAC 260 in the General Education Program and as a “Perspectives on a Diverse World” (U.S. Diversity) course:

Gender Communication is communication *about* and *between* men and women. It is communication *about* men and women because gender communication is reflected in everything around us. From the time we are born important people in our life communicate our society’s gender expectations to us. While individuals vary in the extent to which they accept or reject those messages, we all “do gender” by expressing our views about what we believe is normal or natural for a member of our sex. Since gender is a social construction that changes over time, it is important that we systematically study it to determine how it affects us, the people with whom we interact, and the world in which we live. Gender communication is also communication *between* men and women. In the United States interactions between women and men occur every hour of every day. The sheer number of contacts we have with the opposite sex heightens the need to study the effects of gender on the communication process.

CTAC 260 meets the U.S. diversity requirement of general education because it allows students to examine their gender identity and relate it to the gender identity of others. This ultimately leads to an understanding of the many different ways people view gender and communication in the United States. Attention is also focused on the communication-related causes and consequences of social intolerance toward individuals who deviate from normative sex and gender roles, and how that intolerance relates to racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion in the United States. Last but not least, students explore the association between gender and income distribution, economic opportunities, political participation, and the U.S. democratic process, and how those variables impact communication between and within the sexes.

7. Clearly and concisely explain how this course meets each of the General Education outcomes for the requirement checked in number five (all outcomes should be addressed). To do this, (a) list the General Education outcomes for the requirement and explain how the course meets each outcome; and (b) explain, in general terms, the method(s) of evaluation to be used in the course and how these methods assess the degree to which students have met the General Education outcomes for this requirement.

In CTAC 260 Gender Communication students will:

Outcome 1—Examine the complexity of their own cultural identities and how these relate to the cultural identities of others in the United States.

a). How course meets Outcome 1:

In CTAC 260 students learn that beliefs about gender depend upon the way various cultures define masculinity and femininity, and that every culture promotes an ideology that specifies appropriate gender roles for males and females. This leads to an analysis of gender definitions and roles in the United States. Although individuals vary in the extent to which they accept or reject culturally prescribed gender roles, every person ultimately develops a gender identity, or an inner sense one has of being female or male. Various theories of communication and gender identity are discussed, including biological theory, social learning theory, and symbolic interactionism. Students analyze the role communication played in the development of their own gender identity and how their identity influences the way they communicate with others. Students expect to be similar to their classmates in this respect, since a majority of them have been born and raised in the United States. They are often surprised, however, by the variety of gender identities and beliefs held by other students. Students are encouraged to learn from people who have different identities, experiences, and perspectives. Guest speakers are also invited to the class to further expose students to gender identities that may differ from their own.

b). Method of Assessment for Outcome 1 (Note: A more detailed description and overview of all assessment methods can be found on the syllabus):

Exams, assignments, class discussion

The following is a sample essay question from an exam relevant to this outcome:

Of the various socialization agents discussed in Chapter two—family, clothing, toys, peers, and schools—which one has had the greatest impact on your gender identity? Explain. Do you typically adhere to the masculine or feminine traits you learned from this socializing agent, or has your gender identity transcended the gendered messages you received? Explain.

The following is a sample assignment relevant to this outcome:

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students from the EMU LGBT Resource Center are invited as guest speakers to the class. Panelists share their coming out stories and discussion how their sexual orientation influences their gender identity and expression. Students are then asked to write a response in which they relate their own experiences with gender identity to what was discussed by the panel.

The following is a sample class discussion relevant to this outcome:

On the first day of class students are asked to think of the items they currently have on them (clothing, jewelry, hats, tattoos, etc.) and search through the items they have with them (in their pockets, purses, backpacks, etc.). They are asked to select one item that best represents them and to use that item to introduce themselves to the rest of the class. After the introductions are complete students are asked if they would or would not have chosen the same item if they were a member of the opposite sex. This leads to an initial class discussion of gender identity.

Outcome 2—Explore the causes and consequences of social intolerance in the United States.**a). How course meets Outcome 2:**

This course is based on the premise that social intolerance is created and maintained through communication. Students learn that their personal and professional lives are shaped to the extent they fit what our society arbitrarily designates as normal and superior in terms of sex, gender, race, sexual orientation, and class. For example, we discuss how many African American women shift their communication style and the content of their message to accommodate the social and behavioral norms of White, middle-class America. If they choose not to engage in such shifting, these women are often diminished, discounted or distrusted because of what they say and how they say it. By examining the communication-related causes of social intolerance students learn the process through which our society designates what is “normal” and what is not. The consequences of that intolerance—for those who are the minority (as a result of their sex, gender, sexual orientation) and/or for those who deviate from traditional sex and gender roles—are identified and analyzed. Students are ultimately encouraged to challenge social views that arbitrarily designate unequal value to people and that limit human opportunities.

b). Methods of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Homework assignments, class discussions

The following is a sample assignment relevant to this outcome:

Transgendered individuals representing the statewide nonprofit organization *TransGender Michigan* are invited as guest speakers to the class. Speakers discuss gender identity and expression and share their stories of the discrimination and consequences faced by transgendered individuals in the state. Students are then asked to write a response in which they reflect upon and analyze the content of the presentation.

The following is another assignment relevant to this outcome:

Students are asked to read Perry and Ballard-Reisch’s essay *There’s a Rainbow in the Closet* in which they present real life stories of social intolerance against three individuals as a result of their sex and/or gender. Students then answer a list of open-ended questions based on their understanding and evaluation of the assigned reading.

The following is a sample class discussion relevant to this outcome:

At least once a week a gender-related quote is used to begin class discussion, and many of these quotes focus on potential causes and/or consequences of social intolerance (for example, Gavin De Becker’s assertion that “At core, men are afraid women will laugh at them, while at core, women are afraid men will kill them.”).

Outcome 3—Examine the differences between social intolerance and institutionalized racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion in the U.S.**a). How course meets Outcome 3:**

It is impossible to fully understand gender communication in the United States without an ongoing discussion of racism, ethnocentrism, and social class. In CTAC 260 students learn the differences between social intolerance and institutionally based racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion. Emphasis is placed on the intersection between gender, race, ethnicity, and social class; and how those variables influence both the opportunities and oppression individuals experience. For instance, CTAC 260 students read a chapter on “Black women in the world of work” from the book *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America*. In this chapter the authors discuss the challenges for black women seeking employment. The women who are successfully hired often stand out in the workplace because of their minority status. Ironically, despite

being overly scrutinized as a result of their sex and their race, these variables are often ignored in workplace conversations and these women are subjected to openly sexist, racist and insensitive comments from co-workers.

b). Methods of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Homework assignments, class discussions

The following is a sample homework assignment relevant to this outcome:

Students read the aforementioned chapter from *Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America* and answer a series of open-ended questions to assess their understanding and evaluation of what they read.

The following is a sample class discussion relevant to this outcome:

One of the topics covered in class is gender and mass media, with a particular emphasis on how gender, race, and social class are portrayed in popular culture. We discuss who is visible in the media, who is excluded, and how minority groups are depicted. For example, I have used the videos *Killing Me Softly* and *Dream Worlds* to generate discussion of the stereotypical portrayals of all women and the racist portrayals of women of color in advertising and music videos.

Outcome 4—Explore how diversity has affected and continues to affect income distribution, economic mobility, political access, and the democratic process in the U.S.

a). How course meets Outcome 4:

Class lecture and discussion focus on the correlation between gender and income distribution, economic mobility, political access, and the U. S. democratic process. For instance, students learn that Department of Labor statistics indicate that a woman working full time makes an average weekly wage of about 76 cents for every dollar a man makes, and that the representation of women in the U.S. Congress does not reflect their representation in the population. However, since this is a communication course, we focus on how these outcomes affect the way we talk about gender, and how that talk influences our gender beliefs and attitudes. For example, during election years we analyze the campaign communication of women seeking political office both statewide and nationally, and ponder questions such as “Does a female politician have to adopt a masculine communication style in order to be elected?”

b). Methods of Assessment for Outcome 4:

Exams, homework assignments, class discussion

The following is a sample essay question from an exam relevant to this outcome:

In chapter 9 of your textbook the authors discuss a “double bind” for professional women—how they are “damned if they do” and “damned if they don’t” act like men. Is there a corresponding double bind for male managers? Why or why not?

The following is a sample homework assignment relevant to this outcome:

In election years students are asked to find political ads promoting and/or attacking male and female candidates on television and/or on the Internet. Student then do a textual analysis of ads on the basis of the sex of the candidate featured in the ad. Implications for the democratic process are discussed.

The following is a sample class discussion relevant to this outcome:

We examine high paying occupations traditionally associated with men (i.e.—airline pilot) and low paying occupations traditionally associated with women (i.e.—social worker). Discussion topics range from

messages sent to boys and girls about what they want to be when they grow up to how we talk about men and women who are in positions that are traditionally associated with the opposite sex (for example, I have invited a male elementary school teacher and a female construction worker to come to class and share their experiences).

Outcome 5—Develop an awareness of alternative values, views, and communication styles in the U.S.

a). How course meets Outcome 5:

A re-occurring topic in the course is the range of values and views people hold relevant to sex, gender, and sexual orientation, and how those affect the way men and women communicate. Students are encouraged to analyze their own values and views as well as those of others. For instance, we discuss what students consider to be appropriate roles for men and women in our society, as well as their feelings toward individuals who act in ways that deviate from traditional gender roles. Students ponder the extent to which they believe there is a “right” way to be a woman or a man in the United States. In addition to developing an understanding of alternative values and views, emphasis is placed on diverse communication styles relevant to gender. Not surprisingly, a primary goal of the course is to understand the many ways gender influences communication and how communication influences the many ways we think about gender.

b). Methods of Assessment for Outcome 5:

Homework assignments, book review, class discussions

The following is a sample homework assignment relevant to this outcome:

Students read a literature review summarizing the different ways men and women think about communication in cross gender friendships. Students then respond to and evaluate a series of excerpts taken from the article.

The following is a book review assignment relevant to this outcome:

Students are asked to select a book from an assigned list or suggest one of their own that focuses on alternative views of gender communication (for example, Deborah Tannen’s book *You Just Don’t Understand: Men and Women in Conversation*). After reading the book students write a chapter-by-chapter summary and a review of the book.

The following is a sample class discussion relevant to this outcome:

In class students read a brief essay entitled *Manly Man?* that appeared in a recent issue of *Time* magazine. Class discussion then explores students’ views of what it means to be a man in the United States.

8. Attach a syllabus (1-inch margins and 10-12 pt. font). The syllabus must include the rationale from #6 above and clearly reflect the outcomes and methods of evaluation detailed in #7 above.

See next page for syllabus.

Course outcomes:

In this U.S. Diversity Course students will...

1. Explore how gender is socially constructed through communication;
2. Examine how gender influences the way we communicate and how communication influences the ways we view gender;
3. Examine the complexities of their own gender identity and how these relate to the gender identities of others in the United States;
4. Explore the causes and consequences of gender-based social intolerance in the United States;
5. Examine the differences between gender-based social intolerance and institutionalized racism, ethnocentrism, and exclusion in the U.S.;
6. Explore how gender and diversity has affected and continues to affect income distribution, economic mobility, political access, and the democratic process in the U.S./
7. Develop an awareness of alternative values, views, and communication styles in the U.S. as they relate to sex, gender, and sexual orientation.

Course Policies:

1. The course calendar is subject to change upon notice. You are responsible for knowing any changes announced in class.
2. Please turn off all electronic devices while class is in session.
3. University standards regarding academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Students are not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to: plagiarism; alteration of records; substitution of another's work and representing it as your own; cheating; or knowingly assisting another student engaged in such an activity. The penalty for academic dishonesty will be a zero for the assignment and a potential failing grade for the course.
4. My office hours are set aside to give you an opportunity to talk with me about problems or concerns you are having with this class, but they can also be used to: clarify ideas; to get additional readings and/or materials; to go over work in progress; and to get advising. In other words, you do not need to have a problem to visit me during office hours.

Grading and Evaluation:

Gender assignments

Class assignments will be given weekly. These will typically be "hands on" and experiential. Some assignments will be done in-class. Many will require you to read an article or do an observation or activity outside of class and share what you learned from that reading or experience in class. For each assignment you successfully complete you will earn points toward your final grade. Points will vary from one assignment to the next but will typically range anywhere from 5-15 points each. Specific information regarding each assignment will be given in class. In-class assignments will be hand written, all other assignments must be typed.

In order to receive any credit for most assignments you need to: 1). Complete the observation, experience, reading or activity; 2). Complete the written assignment corresponding to that observation, experience, reading, or activity; AND 3). Be present for the class discussion and analysis of that assignment. If you complete the written assignment but are not in class to discuss it, or if you are present for our class discussion but have not completed the written assignment, you will not receive ANY points for the assignment.

If you miss class you are encouraged to check the electronic reserve page for assignments.

There are three general policies governing the assignments in this class: 1). **All assignments are due in class.** 2). **Late assignments will not be accepted for any reason.** 3). **Missed or incomplete assignments cannot be made up for any reason.** Please do not ask for any exceptions to these policies. Although I do not have a formal attendance policy, it is hard to do well in this class if you are consistently absent.

A maximum of 150 assignment points will count toward your final grade. There will be more than 150 points offered during the course of the term, which allows you to miss some assignments without hurting your final grade.

Book Review

During the semester you will read a book relevant to the field of gender communication. Your written review of the book will consist of a chapter-by-chapter summary and a critique. Additional information regarding this assignment will be given in class. Reviews will be accepted up to one week after the original due date, with a 10% late penalty in your grade for the assignment.

Exams

There will be a midterm and a final exam in this class. The exams will consist of a series of short essay questions and a limited number of multiple choice questions. The final exam will not be comprehensive. Study guides and further information regarding the exams will be given in class.

Class Participation

Receiving points for class participation reflects my belief that students can learn from one another as well as from the instructor. I begin the semester with the assumption that most students will have at least average participation (corresponding to approximately 14 or 15 out of 20 points).

You can **increase** your participation points by consistently doing the following:

- asking questions
- answering questions
- providing examples
- providing constructive criticism
- responding to other students' comments

Remember that simply talking in class is not enough to earn you participation points if what you have to say is irrelevant or uninformed.

If you have had the chance to participate at least three times in class on a particular day please refrain yourself from further participation to give other students the same opportunity. If no students take advantage of that opportunity, you are always welcome to participate more.

You can **decrease** your participation grade by disrupting the class. This consists of, but is not limited to:

- consistently arriving late for and/or leaving early from class;
- having your cell phones or other technological devices go off in class;
- having side conversations with other students; and
- reading, sleeping, or working on other assignments in class.

Grading scale:

Throughout the course of the semester you will have an opportunity to earn a total of 200 points. There may be opportunities for extra credit and final grades may be curved, but there are no guarantees or promises of either.

150 points	Gender assignments
30 points	Book review
50 points	Exams (two exams worth 25 points each)
<u>20 points</u>	<u>Class participation</u>
250 points	TOTAL

The following scale will be used to determine your final grade:

230-250=A	200-204=B-	170-174=D+
225-229=A-	195-199=C+	155-169=D
220-224=B+	180-194=C	150-154=D-
205-219=B	175-179=C-	149 or less=E

Course outline:

The following topics will be covered in this course during the semester:

Introduction to Gender Communication

- what is gender communication
- why study gender communication
- sex versus gender
- the social construction of gender identity
- the social construction of inequality
- gender identity, androgyny, and sexual orientation
- communication and gender

Biological and Social Influences on Gender Identity and Communication

- stereotyping men and women
- biological sex and social interpretations of gender
- physical differences and social interpretations of gender
- social influences on psychological gender
- theories of gender identity development
- the effects of socialization on gender identity development
- social intolerance and gender deviance

Gender and Media

- the power of mediated communication
- gender and advertising (*Killing Us Softly*)
- gender and television
- gender and film (*Tough Guise*)
- gender and music (*Dream Worlds*)
- media effects of gender stereotyping
- gender, racism, and ethnocentrism in the media
- gender and mediated/online communication

Gendered Language

- the power of language
- forms and practices of sexist language
- consequences of sexist language and reasons for using nonsexist language
- alternatives to sexist language use
- language similarities and differences between men and women
- masculine and feminine styles of communication
- gender based interpretations in communication
- campaign communication and the political talk of men and women

Gender Communication in the Family

- identification and internalization
- parental communication about gender
- parental modeling

Gender Communication in Friendships

- functions/characteristics of communication in male-male friendships
- functions/characteristics of communication in female-female friendships
- functions/characteristics of communication in cross-sex friendships

Gender Communication in Romantic Relationships

- stereotypical notions of romance
- gendered patterns in committed relationships
- talking about communication in romantic relationships
- gender and conflict in romantic relationships
- women, men, communication, and sex

Power Abuses in Human Relationships

- communicating power
- the basics of sexual harassment
- reactions and responses to sexual harassment
- reporting sexually harassing communication
- communication and the abuse of power in sexual assault
- the social construction of gender violence
- date rape prevention programs
- communication and partner violence

Gender Communication in the Workplace

- decisions about career and families
- women and men working together
- the affirmative action debate
- gender issues and the employment interview
- women and men communicating in leadership positions
- gendered patterns in organizations
- income distribution and economic mobility
- gender stereotypes in the workplace
- communication and the "second shift"
- communication in the division of labor at home

Gender Communication in Educational Settings

