INSTRUCTOR'S RESOURCE MANUAL

FOR

JULIA T. WOOD'S

GENDERED LIVES: COMMUNICATION, GENDER, AND CULTURE

Tenth Edition

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Introduction

The purpose of this updated resource book is to assist you in teaching a course for which *Gendered Lives* is the primary textbook. Some instructors have taught courses in gender, communication, and culture for many years, while others are doing it for the first time. The amount of experience you have teaching in this area, however, may not determine the value of this resource book to you. Even though we have taught courses in communication, gender, and culture for a long time, we constantly gain insights from listening to other teachers describe their goals, instructional strategies, activities, and assignments. Regardless of whether you are a veteran or novice, we hope you’ll find ideas presented here helpful in enriching and extending material in *Gendered Lives*.

This guide consists of three sections. First, to establish a foundation, Section I explores issues that arise in teaching about communication, gender, and culture. Here, we include sample syllabi to help illustrate the various ways this course might be taught. In addition, three other resources address important issues: Managing the Unsympathetic Reader, Judgment Calls, and Suggestions for Online Instruction. Section II provides chapter-by-chapter suggestions for teaching *Gendered Lives*. For each chapter we offer a summary of the textbook’s content and a sample of exercises and assignments we have found useful in extending and applying conceptual material. Section III consists of sample test items, many newly created for this edition. To make these convenient for instructors with varying sequences of coverage and testing dates, we organize test items by chapters.
SECTION I

Special Issues in Teaching Communication, Gender and Culture

Courses in communication, gender, and culture are unique. Inherent in the focus of these courses are distinct opportunities and tensions. In addition, the effectiveness of classes hinges on creating a climate that is collaborative, open, supportive, and encouraging of risks in thought and discussion. Finally, courses in communication, gender, and culture adopt diverse teaching emphases in pursuit of distinctive pedagogical goals. In this section, we discuss what we have encountered regarding each of these topics and suggest sample teaching schedules.

Opportunities and Tensions
A course in communication, gender, and culture offers particular rewards, and it typically involves distinct dilemmas. More than other courses we teach, we find this one especially exciting and challenging. Instructors with experience teaching in this area have already encountered both the pleasures and perils of courses in communication, gender and culture; new instructors will quickly discover them. To help you prepare for teaching, particularly if you have limited experience in this area, we want to identify issues that persistently punctuate our own classes.

Opportunities
We believe that communication is an extraordinarily rich and exciting area of study, and this is especially true when classes probe how communication intersects with culture and gender. For us, as for many teachers, it’s exhilarating to be part of a process in which students learn about fundamental influences on their identities and self-concepts. The more they understand about how social values shape gender and, thus, their lives, the more they are empowered to choose who they will be and what they will do. One of the greatest opportunities of teaching this course is helping students discover the ways in which gender is constructed and sustained in cultural life. In a supportive learning environment, this insight enables many students to assume agency in sculpting their own identities and contributing to those legitimated in society as a whole.

Another exciting aspect of teaching in this area is the possibility of enlarging students’ range of communication competencies. Because our culture is so deeply gendered, most people are socialized primarily into a single gendered form of speech, thought, and knowledge—either masculine or feminine. The bias of western society cultivates respect for masculine modes of speech, thought, ambition, and so on and accords less recognition to the merits of that which is feminine. Courses in communication, gender, and culture help students realize how little grounding exists for cultural preferences for masculine modes over feminine ones. In turn, this encourages students to enlarge their own communication repertoires to incorporate styles historically associated with both genders. Neither masculine nor feminine communication is better; both have distinctive strengths, so students can grow by learning to understand, appreciate, and employ diverse modes of communicating.

A third special opportunity in teaching this course is the potential to enhance students’ abilities to participate critically in cultural life. Reading any daily newspaper or popular magazine quickly reveals a wealth of contemporary issues germane to communication, gender,
and culture. The material in *Gendered Lives* and class discussion help students understand how many topics entail issues usually not explicitly named in publications. For instance, media discussion of the Medical & Family Leave Act of 1993 has highlighted the need for workers to be given time to care for family members. Yet, media have not called attention to the gendered nature and implications of family care: Who is the caregiver in most families? Whose job prospects, opportunities, benefits, and so forth are affected by leave policies? Does the current legislation protect the professional lives of women, who are likely to be the greatest users of family leave? There are many issues like this one, with hidden gender dimensions that influence how we understand and respond to various positions and policies in public life. By increasing students’ awareness of hidden gender issues, the course heightens students’ abilities to be critical members of their society.

*Gendered Lives* and the courses it supports also encourage students to identify and take stands on issues that may not have been salient to them in the past. For example, when students realize that four women die daily from battering in the United States alone, gendered violence is no longer an issue removed from general life; when they learn that it’s estimated one in four women will be raped in her lifetime, rape ceases to be someone else’s problem; when they discover that men’s ways of expressing affection have been devalued, they have to rethink their own tendencies to judge partners in their personal relationships; when they discover mainstream feminism has historically neglected issues and experiences of women of color, they are compelled to reconsider whether feminism is “the women’s movement,” as well as whether women are a homogeneous or a diverse group. As students learn more about how gender pervades their social and personal lives, they become more alert and more critical participants in public life and in private relationships.

**Tensions**

We’ve also found that teaching in this area can be difficult, frustrating, and upsetting to our students and us. Because gender is central to social organization and individual identity, it’s not unusual for students to resist information that forces them to examine and question their own gendered values, thoughts, and actions. Not infrequently, our students tell us we are exaggerating gender inequities, their lives aren’t like those reported in research, or gender discrimination and oppression are history—that’s all behind us now. We’ve learned to expect initial resistance to and resentment of both us and material we present. This is almost inevitable, since the material unsettles students and erodes the comfort of not realizing the extent to which hierarchy and its cousin, oppression, permeate everyday life in Western society.

A number of our students are seriously shaken by the realization of how devalued women are in our society. Further, they are often disturbed and angry that they have not seen this before—often they report feeling duped. Upsetting as these feelings are, they may be productive in moving students toward more active postures regarding their personal identities and cultural practices. We have found that students experiencing anger and frustration appreciate hearing about the evolution of our own gender consciousness. We let them know that we too underwent stages of denial, anger, and disturbance on the path to change. In addition to this kind of conversation, we often suggest readings to help students realize they are not alone in feeling troubled, and they are likely to pass through the phase of overwhelming anger and upheaval and to arrive at a less unsettling and more constructive point. The text mentions a number of articles and books that may be recommended as further reading for interested students.
Study of communication, gender, and culture also demands attention to issues that will be personally painful to many students. For instance, *Gendered Lives* discusses how cultural prescriptions for gender foster grave problems such as anorexia, sexual harassment, rape, and battering. It’s predictable that in any contemporary college class a number of students will have suffered one or more of these problems, and some will be enmeshed in traumas while taking the course. The text and class discussion are likely to propel them to revisit and reflect on deeply disturbing experiences. Although the introduction to *Gendered Lives* warns students that personally upsetting topics will be covered and they may prefer not to deal with these, many students who remain enrolled will encounter difficulty and may need your assistance and/or referral to a professional counselor. In preparation for teaching this course, instructors should familiarize themselves with counseling resources and should find out which counselors have particular skills in dealing with issues surrounding sex and gender.

For us this tension does not diminish, but rather increases our commitment to teaching about communication, gender, and culture, for it reminds us of how relentlessly gendered values affect our lives. Teaching also allows us to offer students perspectives that are more enabling than those they may currently hold on the oppressions they have experienced in their own lives. Like many who teach in this area, we have found no other curricular focus offers as great an opportunity to engage students in thinking about their own identities and how those are formed by and formative of the culture in which they live. In our teaching we strive to encourage students to embrace their capacities for re-forming their own identities as women and men who may choose to resist some or all of society’s prescriptions for gender.

**Managing the Unsympathetic Reader**

A number of faculty members have told us they are unsure how to deal with students who are unsympathetic to the content of this course and book. We’d like to share our thinking about those students and some of the ways we attempt to encourage them to be active, constructive members of the class community.

Our experience has been that students who are unsympathetic to part or all of the course materials resist for various reasons. Some students resist ideas that are “new” simply because they may be unfamiliar to them. Other students resist because mainstream society—including some parents/guardians, friends, media, and institutions—has provided them with counter-information. Some students resist because they are uncomfortable acknowledging their own privileges. For these students, it may be particularly helpful to delve more deeply into standpoint theory (see Chapter 2 of Wood’s text). Finally, there are some students who resist particular points because they have had an experience (or more) leading them to believe in certain values.

Overall, though the reasons may vary, it is important to recognize that unsympathetic readers and listeners tend to have reasons. Do not be surprised if they bring in these alternative perspectives. In fact, we consider these students to be rising to the challenge of the text. Wood’s book invites every student to bring her/his whole self into the course. The main scenario you want to avoid is letting the student “shut down,” or feel unwilling to engage the course. Hopefully, if you have created an effective classroom climate (see next section), no one will shut down. Given the nature of a course on gender, communication, and culture, you should expect resistant readings.

After recognizing a student is resisting an idea for a reason, consider stepping back for a moment and allowing another student to respond. In our experience, this approach often has
proven effective because it helps reinforce the understanding that your goal is not to silence a student with a resistant view. In addition, there is usually at least one student willing to disagree; thus, this dialogue between peers may become an opportunity for them to practice critical thinking and to express those ideas. As we stated earlier, you should expect resistance. This is a sign that students find your course involving. Students who question some or all of the course ideas are engaging the material at some level. Consider these responses opportunities to clarify ideas and to build community—a community that models respectful disagreement and discussion about ideas. If you are uncomfortable with opening the classroom floor after a particular comment, consider the following three approaches. First, if you choose to be more direct, ask students how so much research can be wrong, what support they can find for their claim, or what it would take to persuade them otherwise. You may even choose to assign students a paper in which they summarize research that supports and does not support their position.

A second approach is to attempt to locate the student’s reasoning through questions. Simply ask: why do you believe that? Helping a student locate what informs her/his opinions can often be the first step in coming to a closer understanding between differences. Because refutation, argument, and discrediting students’ views tend to compel them to protect their positions, we find it more persuasive to rely on gentle, yet persistent questioning. Questions such as these model reflectiveness and openness on the teacher’s part and invite similar postures in students. This is not to suggest, however, that unpressured questioning will render all students open or will dissolve all students’ resistance: It won’t. Nonetheless, for us this approach has been more effective than others, and we are more comfortable with it than with methods that invoke the formal power of our positions as teachers.

The third approach we have found successful in teaching this course is to take on the most extreme interpretation of the student’s comment. For example, if a student states that she/he believes sociobiologists appear to have a strong case for claiming male rape of women is a biological imperative, ask that student: if someone raped a woman that student knew (her/his mother/guardian, sister, friend, etc.) that very night in her own bedroom, should that rapist be held responsible? By drawing an extreme, concrete scenario, we have been able to illustrate what is at stake in resistant values, attitudes, and behaviors. In addition, when the student addresses a scenario we have fabricated, she/he often ends up “correcting” us instead of vice versa.
Creating an Effective Classroom Climate

The climate, or psychological mood, of a classroom is a pivotal influence on students’ willingness to explore ideas. Because a course in communication, gender, and culture deals with personal identity and deeply held social values, reflection and exploration are risky. Creating a comfortable, safe climate makes it more possible for students to question themselves and each other and to inspect critically assumptions which they have taken for granted all of their lives. In our own teaching we have found openness, personal involvement, and a sense of community contribute to an effective classroom climate.

Openness

Openness creates room for students to take risks by letting them know their feelings, values, and beliefs will not be ridiculed or dismissed. Respect for diversity and the equal legitimacy of different identities and points of view is a key foundation of openness. Instructors have considerable influence in establishing a respectful attitude in classes. Your behaviors, especially communication, should model open attitudes by demonstrating your own respect for differences. An obvious part of this is using inclusive language: *She* and *he* instead of *he;* *first-year students* instead of freshmen; *partners* instead of spouses; *parent(s) or guardian(s)* instead of parents; and so forth. Language, however, is not the only way to model and foster an open climate in the classroom.

We make creating an open climate the primary focus of the first few class meetings, since those establish the tone for the rest of the term. Usually in introducing our course, we tell students some personal stories in order to expose ourselves before we invite them to reveal their private thoughts and feelings. We also make it a point to confess quite genuinely that we are confused and uncertain about some gender issues and that we find it unsettling to live in an era characterized by changing views of gender and relationships between the sexes. By divulging that we are perplexed about some issues, we communicate to students that uncertainty and confusion are normal and okay. In our opening conversation with a class, we usually mention ways in which our views have changed over time in order to indicate to students that change is also a natural part of the ongoing process of personal growth. Finally, in our initial meeting with a class we say explicitly that this course assumes that all opinions deserve respectful hearings, and we caution students that demeaning or dismissive responses to others’ ideas will not be tolerated. This “class rule” also appears on the printed syllabus.

As the class progresses, there are opportunities to build on the foundation for openness established at the outset. The first few times students disclose personal experiences or venture controversial opinions, we are especially careful both to recognize the risk they have taken and to respond generously to what they have said. After several instances in which students “test the waters” and find them safe, security and willingness to take risks become more settled in a course.

Teachers may also encourage respect for diversity by modeling interest in views different from their own. For instance, teachers may show curiosity and interest when students offer ideas different from those expressed in the text and the teacher’s remarks. In addition, the instructor may act as a foil by giving voice to perspectives not being heard in the classroom. Sometimes this means making sure feminist viewpoints are articulated competently. More often, however, students who take this course are already somewhat liberal politically and inclined toward feminism, whether or not they use that term. Thus, the teacher may have to make sure
conservative outlooks are represented fairly by identifying reservations and counterarguments to feminist views and proposals. Because many teachers of this course are deeply committed to nontraditional gender ideologies, it is sometimes difficult to give voice to traditional or even anti-feminist positions. Yet doing so is important in teaching students to consider alternate views and criticisms of their own views. One approach we have used in this course is sharing stories of our past students or our families. Often, telling a story of a conservative relative opens not only the possibility of discussing conservative views, but also the difficulties that arise when we try to negotiate our own views with the people we love who share these more conservative perspectives.

Finally, teachers should be alert to infractions of the “class rule” that insists on respecting diversity. Deliberately or inadvertently, students invariably break the rule at some point. It might be using allegedly generic male terms or commenting on race as if it pertains to people of color but not to European Americans; it might be actively disparaging another student’s ideas with verbal or nonverbal communication. If this happens, it’s important for the instructor to firmly and quickly remind the whole class of the need to respect differences and to struggle against deeply held racist, heterosexist, and androcentric biases that have been inculcated in all of us. By setting an inviting tone in early classes, modeling openness personally, and ensuring respectful processes in the classroom, an open climate can be created and sustained.

**Personal Involvement**

Involvement is a second quality of an effective classroom climate. Here the goal is to encourage students to interact directly with course material in order to discover how thoroughly intersections among communication, gender, and culture permeate their personal lives and the society in which they live. The content of the class as well as students’ experience invite personal involvement, so encouragement is usually all a teacher needs to provide. We recommend four specific pedagogical strategies for sparking students’ engagement.

First, we suggest it is important to kindle personal involvement at the beginning of the class. On the first day you might enlist individual students in conversation by asking them what they think about particular issues relevant to the course. For instance, after introducing the class, you might identify several topics and then call on a number of students for responses: If you marry, will you/your partner keep your/her name or take yours/your partner’s? Should women’s and men’s salaries be regulated by comparable worth legislation? Should laws be revised to allow marriage between gay men and between lesbians? Students are likely to feel awkward and on the spot since they don’t anticipate being asked to speak up at the first meeting of a class. Yet, they get beyond initial reticence with a bit of good-humored prompting. After one student responds to a question, the teacher may comment on the response. Then it’s a good idea to ask another student to respond to the first student in order to encourage interaction among students, not just between them and you. Pose additional questions and call on different students, always taking time to acknowledge and work with their ideas. Doing this in the opening class introduces the process as well as the content of the course by inviting participation and personal involvement from the beginning.

We’ve developed a second way to stimulate involvement that has become a favorite of ours and our students. “Class Business” is a period of 5 to 15 minutes set aside at the beginning of each class meeting. During that time members of the class share ideas about gender, communication, and culture based on observations, news items, films, television shows, and so
forth. This discussion period serves three goals: (1) it encourages students to notice issues of communication, gender, and culture all around them; (2) it allows us to extend the course beyond topics in the textbook and formal syllabus; and, (3) it energizes the classroom by relating theory and research to real-life happenings. For these reasons, we include questions related to class business on our exams.

Although our students invariably become highly committed to class business, getting this process rolling takes some groundwork. Few students have ever had a class in which time was set aside specifically for discussing how goings-on in everyday life pertain to what they are studying, so they are unsure of how to participate. Therefore, the teacher has to act as a model and fuel interest initially. To do this, at the start of each class we announce that it’s time for class business and ask if students have any items to contribute. Usually they don’t for the first few sessions, so we present articles on gender issues that we’ve clipped from current newspapers and magazines. For each, we call on students for responses and then suggest we should watch for further developments. Typically by the third or fourth class meeting, students are bringing their own clippings, as well as observations of the media and of everyday interaction. In fact, student interest tends to be so great and gender issues so pervasive that we’ve found it necessary to impose a time limit on class business so that it doesn’t consume the entire class each day we meet!

We also recommend two other ways to encourage students to personally engage material in the course. First, instruments and exercises allow students to test conceptual material in their own lives. Within this manual we describe a number of exercises and activities that we’ve developed for our classes, and we explain how to process each one. There are also many available instruments that students may find useful in measuring their own attitudes and communication styles. Second, we recommend a Gender Journal (or another writing exercise outside of the classroom) as a major assignment that allows students to reflect in an ongoing way on issues in the course and to explore how these fit into their own lives. Typically, during each class meeting we specify at least one journal assignment that pertains to the readings and class discussion for the day. In Section II of this manual we suggest items chapter by chapter for the Gender Journal, and you will doubtlessly generate others that you want your students to address. We usually have students turn in their Gender Journals at midterm so that we may respond to their entries and give them feedback on the quality of their work. Final journals are turned in toward the end of the course. One of the challenges of teaching this course is responding to students’ journals both as academic work and personal thinking. We recommend that instructors offer feedback that is both pedagogical (for example, praising good insights, calling for more analysis of an observation) and personal (for example, empathizing with anger or hurt, applauding constructive changes, sharing your own experiences). An alternative to a Gender Journal is choosing 4-6 shorter assignments, such as Reaction Papers on specific questions or Oral Position statements on the course readings, in order to have more focused writing/thinking.

Personal involvement with the course is promoted by engaging students in the first class meeting, reserving time for class business, and assigning activities and journal entries that encourage reflection. These teaching strategies, along with an instructor who embodies involvement, tend to generate personal excitement and participation in students.
Creating a Sense of Community

A third important dimension of an effective classroom climate is a sense of community. Teaching and learning are enhanced when members of a class feel collectively engaged with each other and issues. Creating a sense of community also supports openness and involvement, because a feeling of camaraderie encourages members of a class to take risks in their thinking and communication and to be respectful of each other.

One simple yet effective strategy for building a sense of community is taking time for people in a class to learn each other’s names. Many communication instructors routinely personalize their classes by devoting time in the first few periods to learning names. You can ask students to give straightforward introductions and then ask them to name each other, or you can rely on various activities or games to make getting acquainted more interesting. Whatever means you use, we believe the time spent in learning names is a sound investment in course climate. We’ve found that we and students learn everyone’s name more easily if students write their names on index cards and place those on their desks for the first week or two of classes. Relatedly, it’s valuable to encourage students to interact directly with each other instead of limiting exchanges to student-teacher dialogue. To promote direct student interaction, teachers may invite students to comment on each other’s ideas and identify connections among remarks offered by different students. Members of a class feel more personally involved and committed when their teacher and peers recognize them as individuals.

Another way to encourage a sense of community and commitment in students is to invite them to take a more active role in sculpting their course than is usual at colleges and universities. To do this, you might reserve one or several class period(s) for topics that students wish to discuss or on which they wish to have you present information. By inviting students to specify part of the course’s content, you share the power of defining and directing learning. We also sometimes invite students to propose items for their tests. This is a clear and material demonstration that we take them and their ideas seriously. However, if you invite students to submit questions, then you should be willing to include a reasonable number of their items on your examinations.

Feelings of good will and collective interest also are nourished by common interests. Class business promotes this sense of common interests, as do shared readings and discussion topics. We have also found students appreciate announcements regarding campus events pertinent to communication, gender, and culture so that they may collectively or individually attend. In addition, you may choose to define some specific topic or topics as ones a particular class will track throughout the term. Invariably there are issues pertinent to communication, gender, and culture that are under the media spotlight during any given academic term. These spotlighted issues offer an opportunity for classes to focus collectively and in some depth on a specific topic while still covering the broad range of topics in the text. When a particular issue involving communication, gender, and culture interests our students, we specify it as a class focus. Then after class business, which launches each meeting, we devote a few minutes to the focus topic, relying on articles, reports on television and radio, and students’ own evolving opinions.

To concretize this teaching strategy, we’ll offer a few examples of topics our students have chosen for a class focus. During the war in Iraq and America’s war against terrorism, our classes followed coverage of women’s roles in the military. Hillary Rodham Clinton was selected as the focus in another class, and throughout the term we traced how the media
represented her and her role and, by implication, women’s roles in public life. During the fall of 1991, our students designated the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings as their collective focus, and we analyzed news stories and television coverage to discover how gender, race, and sexual harassment were portrayed in media coverage.

Since there is never a shortage of issues involving communication, gender, and culture, designating a class focus is always an option for your classes. It allows students to probe one topic in greater depth than is possible with the gamut of issues covered in Gendered Lives. As stated earlier, because we see class business and class focus topics as integral to the content of our course, we include questions about them on our tests. This practice fortifies the point that engagement with issues on the current scene is an important facet of the course.

**Alternative Course Emphases and Content**

**Class Size**

*Gendered Lives* was written to accommodate diverse teaching situations, goals, and styles. Although perhaps most courses in this area are limited to enrollments of 20 to 35 students, substantially larger classes are possible and exciting. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, we have experimented with teaching communication, gender, and culture as a large-enrollment course with as many as 125 students. Even with this many students, we have been able to generate ample open discussion in our classes, and students have evaluated the course favorably. In addition to serving more students, which is important to many departments’ well-being, there are three special advantages to large-enrollment courses. First, more students are able to learn about communication, gender, and culture. At UNC-CH we found there was far greater interest from students than we could accommodate with small class sizes; this was the initial reason we decided to try teaching the course with a larger enrollment.

A second benefit of large classes is that increased perspectives are available. Expanded viewpoints are likely in larger classes for two reasons. First, more students generally yield a greater range of viewpoints, backgrounds, and so forth. Second, the very close community that sometimes develops in small sections often deters students from expressing ideas that diverge from those endorsed by the class as a whole. Larger classes, then, may facilitate the goal of respecting diversity in who we are and what we believe, because they avoid the problems of limited viewpoints and subtle conformity pressures that may be more present in small classes.

A third advantage of a large enrollment is that graduate students have opportunities to gain supervised experience in effectively handling the course content and classroom dynamics. The course may be organized so that some days are reserved for large group meetings with the senior faculty member lecturing or leading discussion, and other days are reserved for smaller recitation sections taught by graduate students. This format provides students with the opportunity both for small-group interaction and for exposure to senior faculty with experience and a broad command of research and theory in the area. We do, however, recommend the senior faculty member sit in on these sections periodically to not only legitimize and enhance these spaces, but also to learn more about the students.

**Pedagogical Approaches**

*Gendered Lives* may be used to support courses that emphasize any of three pedagogical approaches, or a combination of these: Mastery of theory and information about communication,
gender, and culture; application of conceptual ideas through experiential activities and reflection; and/or extension and augmentation of textbook material (“Springboard focus”). While some instructors tend to adopt one of these three orientations, many instructors combine teaching goals and strategies. We will discuss each of these approaches.

**Focus on Mastery of Theory and Information.** Some instructors think that the primary goal of higher education is to learn about theories, concepts, and research. This pedagogical focus emphasizes course content more than students’ feelings about content or their application of it. A persuasive rationale for this teaching focus is that students become more informed. Consequently, they have more sound bases for making choices about their own activities and for evaluating social practices.

A course that emphasizes theory and information from research maximizes the instructor’s control over what happens in a classroom. Because the instructor defines the class agenda and steers away from the uncertainties of students’ feelings, this teaching focus tends to yield relatively predictable, orderly classes. Instructors who prefer this approach also tend to think it allows greater objectivity in evaluating students’ work. Since students are tested in a straightforward manner on comprehension of information and theory, it’s not difficult to judge the rightness of answers. Further, focusing on theory and research lends itself to lectures and structured class discussions, so it’s feasible to enroll a greater number of students than can be accommodated in courses that rely on interaction, activities, and the like. One excellent online source for up-to-date information is Infotrac-College Edition (see “Using Technology for the Classroom” for more information).

For instructors who wish to emphasize theory and research, *Gendered Lives* is an effective textbook. The extensive and current research surveyed in the book provides a wealth of information both on theoretical viewpoints and on specific research about communication and gender as these are produced and enacted in various spheres of cultural life. Using *Gendered Lives* as a foundation, instructors may reinforce coverage by supplementing the textbook with additional studies and updates from research published since 2011, when the book went to press. Instructors may also reinforce and elaborate on the chapter material to highlight what they consider most important for students to learn. Through lectures and discussion, instructors should be able to facilitate students’ understanding of information and themes presented in the textbook.

To promote students’ attention to readings, instructors may wish to assign focus questions for some or all chapters. We have found these effective in encouraging students to be more active and critical readers. The assignment requires each student to generate a question based on designated readings. The student may pose a question about how a particular study was conducted, the implications of findings reported in the text, or issues beyond the text’s discussion that she or he considers pertinent. At the beginning of each class period for which focus questions were assigned, students may be invited to state their questions to the class, and then the class may discuss the questions. Alternatively, students may simply turn in their focus questions, and the teacher may respond by writing individual notes to students or by discussing the questions with the whole class.

For this pedagogical approach, we also recommend emphasizing the ability to develop and articulate informed positions. Therefore, essay questions on exams, short paper assignments, or brief oral statements might highlight how to construct thesis statements and supporting points to illustrate the theories and research taught regarding communication, gender, and culture.
Experiential Approach. A pedagogical focus on experiential learning and personal application is probably most widely employed by teachers of communication, gender, and culture. Perhaps this approach owes its popularity to the personal character and implications of course content. Because every student is gendered and lives in a gendered society, many teachers’ primary objective is providing a context and activities that allow students to explore how they embody or resist cultural prescriptions for gender and how cultural dicta influence both personal and public life.

Gendered Lives may be used to support instruction that emphasizes experiential learning. Because the text provides extensive information, less class time need be devoted to lecture and discussion of theory and research; the majority of class time may be dedicated to activities that encourage students to apply readings to their own lives and their thinking about cultural practices. Of course, this approach works only if students actually read the text in preparation for classes. Therefore, instructors who wish to devote substantial class time to discussion and experiential ventures need to stress the importance of doing the reading.

When personal engagement with issues surrounding communication, gender, and culture is the primary goal of a course, the majority of class time is usually devoted to activities that illuminate personal, pragmatic implications of material in the textbook. Instructors who adopt this focus generally talk with students during the opening days of the course to explain that an experiential focus is not “fun and games” and is not something removed from serious learning. Further, to underline this point and to help students appreciate the connections between class activities and theory and research covered in the textbook, it’s important to reserve ample time for discussing the students’ experiences. Discussing the questions at the end of each chapter in Gendered Lives is one activity that leads students to explore their own feelings about issues and to consider how gender surfaces in their personal lives. Other activities, such as role-playing, case studies, and structured experiences, should be processed in ways that highlight their relationship to readings. Similarly, films and movies should be analyzed to disclose how they illustrate themes in the text, and scores on instruments should be interpreted in light of theoretical and research findings.

Conceptually grounded activities are another valuable means of facilitating students’ discovery of how gender permeates the culture and how it affects them personally. Section II of this manual provides a number of exercises and activities that allow students to apply material covered in each chapter of Gendered Lives. Instructors who have experience teaching courses in communication, gender, and culture will also have a fund of activities they have developed or selected from other sources. If you are new at teaching this course and want additional activities or ones different from those we suggest, then we recommend networking with other instructors to share ideas and activities and to develop original ones that advance the particular themes of your course.

In addition to exercises, instruments, and class activities, educational and commercial films enhance an experiential approach to teaching. Among the more effective educational films we have discovered are these:

The Pinks and the Blues (also titled Secret of the Sexes) illustrates differences in parents’ and teachers’ expectations of and responses to girls and boys (Although somewhat dated now, the film’s basic content remains valid.).

Dreamworlds 2, narrated by Sut Jhally, dramatically depicts relationships between popular music videos and actual rapes. This film is disturbing to many students,
particularly ones who have been victims of sexual violence, and we recommend that students be given the option of leaving class if they find the film too disturbing. *Dreamworlds 3* © 2007 is now available.

*Killing Us Softly 3* is Jean Kilbourne’s videotaped presentation on ways in which commercial advertising portrays women as inadequate and victimizable and legitimizes violence against women. This is an updated version of her original presentation, *Killing Us Softly*, and its successor, *Still Killing Us Softly*, both of which still exist on videotape.

*Tough Guise* is an excellent video for helping students recognize how masculinity, in general, and violent masculinity, in particular, are constructed by popular media. *Tough Guise* includes extensive illustrations from popular culture, including films, the tragic school shootings, and hip-hop. **NOTE: This video is available in two versions. The abridged version is 57 minutes long and it does not include spoken obscenities and visible nudity.**

*You Don’t Know Dick: Courageous Hearts of Transsexual Men* presents interviews with six female-to-male transsexuals. Topics covered include the process of transitioning; coming out to parents, friends, and co-workers; relationships and sexuality; testosterone therapy and surgery. Also included are comments from the men’s friends, lovers, and children.

A number of commercial films also have strong potential for teaching about gender and communication. Following are descriptions of a few of our favorites, and new films directly germane to this course are constantly premiering.

*Tootsie* stars Dustin Hoffman in the role of a man who assumes the identity of a woman and learns a good deal about how women are treated in Western culture. Particularly relevant to communication courses is the transformation Hoffman effects in his verbal and nonverbal communication as he takes on the identity of a woman.

A more recent and troubling example of how individuals perform gender is found in Hilary Swank’s Oscar winning performance of Teena Brandon in *Boys Don’t Cry*. This film that is based upon a true story examines how societal expectations and cultural prescriptions for identity, gender, and sexuality often result in serious consequences when individuals do not conform to normative gender roles.

*In and Out* stars Kevin Kline and is inspired by the hypothetical question: if Tom Hank’s high school drama teacher wasn’t “out” when Hanks thanked him at the Oscar’s for inspiring his performance in *Philadelphia*, what would have happened to that teacher? This comedy is a wonderful way to bring levity into important issues regarding gender and sexual orientation.

*Dead Poets’ Society* is a story of a group of young European American men in a private boarding school. The film offers insights into men’s friendships, illustrating masculine modes of expressing closeness and need. This movie dramatically portrays the constraints on emotional expression dictated by cultural prescriptions for masculinity.

*Good Will Hunting* is a similar, more recent film that focuses more upon how being working class influences the standards and expectations of male friendships.

*Smoke Signals* is another more recent example of male friendship that highlights indigenous culture and relationships between fathers and sons.
Waiting to Exhale and Fried Green Tomatoes offer well-detailed studies of friendships between women and show how women support one another and create a sense of interdependence.

The Joy Luck Club provides multiple examples of interaction between genders (how women and men negotiate their own ego boundaries within romantic relationships), generations (the expectations between mothers and daughters), and culture (China and the U.S.).

Get On the Bus narrates the meaning and importance of the Million Man March from several different African American male standpoints (e.g., straight/gay; teenager/elder). The film lends well to focused clips of exchanges between men as to why they want to go to the March and what they feel it means to be an African American male in the United States.

Itty Bitty Titty Committee is a fictional story of a radical third-wave feminist activist group called the c(I)a (Clits in Action). It tells the story of 19-year-old lesbian Ana as she becomes aware of feminist issues and committed to feminist action. It is a great example of radical activist groups.

For the Bible Tells Me So is a documentary of several Christian families struggling and working to accept and understand their gay children. It is generally well-received by a broad audience and promotes challenging and good discussion.

Transgeneration is a miniseries documentary of four transgendered college students as they struggle with and live as trans people. The series covers important issues related to being transgendered and is particularly useful for talking about gendered educational settings.

Finally, the Gender Journal is a valuable vehicle for furthering experiential learning. By assigning topics that encourage reflection on personal implications of issues covered in Gendered Lives, instructors promote increased self-awareness in students. In Section II we suggest topics that we and our students have found useful in prompting personal reflection and learning related to each chapter in the textbook.

Springboard Focus. The springboard approach to teaching aims to extend coverage in the textbook by devoting substantial class time to topics that go beyond those considered in readings. The text works as a starting point, or a foundation on which the class builds. Typically, instructors using this approach set aside some time during each class meeting or use the first portion of a term to cover readings and make sure students understand relevant theory and research presented in Gendered Lives. The rest of the class time is then used to explore issues either underdeveloped or not addressed in the textbook. The instructor may assign topics for class extension and/or invite students to suggest ideas. One resource to brainstorm for topics and for up-to-date information is Infotrac-College Edition (see “Using Technology for the Classroom” for more information). Then students and the instructor may schedule panels of guest speakers, projects, observations, and so forth to supplement coverage in the textbook.

In our classes we and our students have learned a great deal from panel discussions that either we or they have arranged. Here are some sample topics and panelists:

A panel discussion of violence against women might include the sexual harassment officer if your campus has one, a rape counselor from a local women’s center,
a volunteer from a battered women’s shelter in your community, a staff person from a men’s resource center.

Different kinds of feminism may be represented by a panel of women and men who align themselves with different branches of feminism: a womanist, a feminist minister, a lesbian feminist, a liberal feminist, and a separatist.

A panel we often schedule that especially engages students, features partners in dual-career relationships. We invite partners in two to three couples to talk openly with the class about the pleasures and pitfalls of being a two-worker family and about ways they have recognized and dealt with gendered assumptions in their relationship.

Single guests are more effective than panels in addressing certain topics. For instance, we had the district attorney of our county visit the class to discuss current rape laws and trial procedures to inform the class of how gendered assumptions permeate legal proceedings. Another topic which a single guest might address is sexual harassment on your campus. If there is an institutional officer for sexual harassment, invite her or him to meet with the class to inform students of the incidence of sexual harassment, as well as procedures for redress. Also valuable is asking a counselor to talk with the class about different sources of stress and reactions to stress that are typical of men and women.

Another way to extend course coverage beyond content presented in *Gendered Lives* is to assign group and/or individual projects. Whether to make these assignments on an individual or group basis depends on preferences of instructors and students. Group work tends to be more frustrating for students, and there are often problems such as conflicting schedules and uneven contributions by group members. Yet group tasks also emphasize collaborative work and cooperation, interaction styles many instructors wish to highlight. Another difference between group and individual projects is that results of the former can usually be presented to the entire class, whereas there is seldom enough class time to allow presentation of every student’s individual project. Since group work is often challenging to coordinate, we recommend the use of peer evaluations. Therefore, each person in the group is asked to assign the percentage earned by every group member (including her/himself), with an explanation of why. This process raises a sense of accountability.

Although there are many valuable ways to focus projects, we favor ones that combine research and observation focused on a topic that received little or no coverage in the textbook. For instance, we have had projects on changes in images of and advice to women in bridal magazines from 1960 to 2000, gender images in commercial versus educational children’s television, coverage of women’s and men’s sports in national, state, and campus newspapers, and so on. Other topics that extend the coverage of *Gendered Lives* are global rape, differences in how men and women are treated by medical professionals, and comparing agendas of male and female legislators.

Observation projects allow individuals or groups to study “real life” versions of what they are learning about through readings and class discussion. For example, students concentrating on gender stereotyping in preschools might visit kindergarten and elementary classes and report on differences, if any, in how teachers treat boys and girls. One student replicated the research by Tavris and Baumgartner (Chapter 3, *GL*) and found the results of the 1982 study still held true more than a decade later with respect to how boys and girls think about the other sex. Other investigations that are reported in *Gendered Lives* could also be replicated.
by individuals or groups. During terms when we assign individual or group projects, we usually offer students a list of 10 to 15 suitable subjects for study and observation and also invite them to suggest additional topics.

**Using Technology for the Classroom**

You will notice that Wood’s textbook highlights web sites for every chapter. Technology is not a substitute for teachers, but it can assist us as a resource for learning about gender, communication, and culture. We encourage you to use the web yourselves (to prepare for classes, to update information, etc.) and to get your students involved in online work. Infotrac-College Edition is a particularly useful Internet source. It is a fully searchable online university library with a database of over 700 scholarly and popular publications. Infotrac is updated daily, so you and your students will continually have access to current material if so desired. Every article within the database can be printed for reading and reference purposes.

Another increasing practice at many colleges and universities is the use of class listserves to facilitate dialogue outside the classroom walls. One approach to structure this interaction is to assign weekly response questions for the readings. Then, ask everyone to post those reactions to the list, leaving enough time for all of the students to read the messages prior to the class meeting. In the classroom, ask a group of students or one student to summarize the reactions posted to the list. An exercise such as this provides students with more time to prepare for discussion and keeps them engaged with the course throughout the week. In addition, students sometimes feel more comfortable sharing their ideas when they have more time to respond and do not need to confront anyone face-to-face.

A third use of technology for the classroom is to assign “Judgment Calls,” a classroom resource we developed for *Gendered Lives*. Each *Judgment Call* describes a current controversy, issue, or dilemma related to gender and communication in society. Following each description are several prompts that may guide thought and discussion and that direct students to additional resources on the Net or Web. Instructors may assign *Judgment Calls* to individual students as journal entries or reaction papers; they may be used to structure class or small group discussions; or they may be topics for research papers. Key references are provided for each *Judgment Call*.

There are no right or wrong answers to the *Judgment Calls*. Rather, they are designed to highlight the pervasiveness of gender issues in society and to stimulate thought, discussion, and research on gender, communication, and culture. They aim not only to engage students in controversial issues, but also to guide students to recognize assumptions that lie behind positions and implications of adopting various stances.

The following is a brief index of the titles of each *Judgment Call* and suggested Chapters with which to assign these exercises:

- **Judgment Call #1: What is Feminism?**
  - Introduction and/or Ch.1
- **Judgment Call #2: Is Power Feminism Feminist?**
  - Chapter 3
- **Judgment Call #3: How Important Are Men’s Issues and Men’s Movements?**
  - Chapter 4
- **Judgment Call #4: Should the Equal Rights Amendment Be Passed?**
  - Chapter 3 or Epilogue
Judgment Call #5: Should Same Sex Education Be Allowed in Schools that Receive Federal Support?  Chapter 9

Judgment Call #6: Should All Work Places Be Required to Provide Family Leave to Male and Female Employees?  Chapter 10

Judgment Call #7: What’s A Fair Share of Housework and Child Care?  Chapter 8

Judgment Call #8: Were Media Portrayals of Brandi Chastain Sexist?  Chapter 11

Judgment Call #9: Who Can Use Men’s and Women’s Bathrooms?  Chapter 3 or Epilogue

Judgment Call #10: Should Pro-Choice Feminists Expand their Focus beyond Abortion and Toward Reproductive Rights?  Chapter 4

Judgment Call #11: Where Should Feminists’ Focus Be?  Introduction and/or Chapter 4
JUDGMENT CALL #1:

WHAT IS FEMINISM

Feminism is a very ambiguous word that means different things to different people. This has always been true. In the 1800s some people of both sexes saw the first wave of feminism as a movement for the rights women obviously deserved but had been denied in the United States. Other women and men saw feminism as an appalling movement that challenged both secular traditions and divine laws. The second wave of feminism in the United States, which began in the 1960s, was equally controversial and aroused equally disparate judgments—it was viewed as a virtuous liberatory movement and a contemptible affront to home, family, and the rightful roles of man and woman.

Opinions about feminists are every bit as divergent as those about feminism. Feminists are described as courageous crusaders for civil rights, man-hating bra burners, peace-loving people, and wreckers of tradition. They are viewed as confident and aggressive, brave and brazen, and moderate and extremist. There is probably no social movement in America about which opinions are more divided.

What do you think feminism is? Now that you’ve read about different branches of feminism, can you create an all-encompassing definition of what it is and what it stands for? The following web site and prompts may help you think about this issue.

To learn how NOW, the most prominent mainstream feminist organization, defines feminism and feminist issues, to: http://www.now.org/. Next, use a search engine to find terms such as “critiques of feminism” and “problems with feminism.”

♦ Identify recurrent criticisms of feminism.
♦ Do these criticisms seem valid in light of the information presented in Chapter Three of your textbook?
♦ Do feminists offer responses to the criticisms (for instance, does the NOW web site address any of them)? If so, how do feminists respond?
♦ Having read about many different kinds of feminism, can you identify any themes that weave through the range of feminisms? What, if anything, is common to the different branches of feminism in the United States?
♦ Is feminism needed as a movement in the United States today?
♦ Is feminism a social, intellectual, political, or philosophical movement, or is it a combination of these?

References


JUDGMENT CALL #2:

IS POWER FEMINISM FEMINIST?

Power feminists such as Naomi Wolf and Katie Roiphe (discussed in Chapter 3) claim that they are feminists and that the principles and goals they advance are feminist. At the same time, they criticize mainstream feminism and feminists for encouraging women to see themselves as victims and for not urging women to take charge of their lives and quit complaining about discrimination, violence against women, and other forms of oppression.

Critics of power feminism argue that the movement is both anti-woman and anti-feminist. They claim that the women who advocate it are financially very well off, attractive, college educated and otherwise privileged. Critics charge that power feminism may work for women who are advantaged, but it doesn’t speak for or about women who do not enjoy privileges such as wealth and education.

Do you think power feminism is feminist? To answer the question, reread the discussion in Chapter 3 and then consider the prompts for reflection:

♦ Who defines whether a movement is feminist or not? Do people such as Naomi Wolf and Katie Roiphe have the right to call themselves “power feminists” if they choose to?
♦ What makes a movement feminist?
♦ Must a movement represent all women to be feminist?
♦ Does mainstream feminism encourage women to see themselves as victims as some power feminists claim?
♦ Can all—or most—women take charge of their own lives with the resources they command and current social structures and practices?
♦ What entitles someone to speak for others, or to claim to represent the interests of others? Wolf and Roiphe, for example, claim to speak for “women,” yet Wolf and Roiphe are atypically privileged financially, educationally, and otherwise. Does their privileged status affect the credibility of their claim to speak for women?
♦ In what ways is power feminists’ assertion that women should quit complaining about discrimination similar to charges that racial minorities should quit complaining about discrimination?

References

Chapter 1: The Study of Communication, Gender, and Culture

Summary

I. Introduction
   A. Media regularly offers advice and commentary on this subject.
   B. Student demand for courses in gender and communication is high.
   C. Learning to better understand the relationship between gender, culture, and communication can be empowering for students.

II. Communication, Gender, and Culture as an Area of Study
   A. Research on Gender, Communication, and Culture
      1. Since the 1980s, gender, communication, and culture has been a growing area of interdisciplinary research; in 2006, the first handbook of gender and communication was published.
      2. Research on gender takes place in many academic fields.
      3. Researchers use a variety of methods and perspectives to study gender.
   B. Reasons to Learn about Communication, Gender, and Culture: Studying these topics serves important goals:
      1. Learning about gender helps you understand how culture influences our understandings of who we are and who others are.
      2. Studying gender and cultural communication patterns will help you gain insight about your own beliefs and communication patterns, so that you may make informed choices about whom you would like to be and how you would like to interact within society.
      3. Your effectiveness as a communicator will be increased as you learn to understand and adapt to a diverse variety of communication styles.

III. Gender in a Transitional Era
   A. The meaning of gender is in transition.
   B. We often struggle to combine new ideas about gender and equality with traditional notions of sex and gender.

IV. Differences between Men and Women
   A. Pop psychology suggests that men and women are inherently and distinctly different.
   B. The differences between men and women are not solely biological and natural. They may also be related to culture, experiences, social class, race, sexual and orientation.
   C. Essentializing occurs when we assume that all members of a group (e.g. all men, all women) are the same. It ignores individual variations and differences among members of the same sex. While this text discusses generalizations about women and men, it is important to remember that there are not essential qualities possessed by all members of a sex.
   D. The differences between sex and gender and the definitions of gender and culture are important to understanding gender, culture, and communication.

V. Relationships among Gender, Culture, and Communication
   A. Sex and gender are related concepts, but are not the same. Being classified as “male” or “female” is determined by biological characteristics.
1. Sex is based on external genitalia and internal sex organs. These are determined by chromosomes.
   a. Most people have two sex chromosomes, which produce female (XX) or male (XY) people.
   b. However, chromosomes can vary (e.g. XO, XXX, XXY, XYY), which means biologically, there are actually more than two sexes.
2. Intersexed individuals are born with male and female biological characteristics. These people used to be called hermaphrodites.
3. Hormones also influence sexual development of male and female sex organs and how our bodies develop throughout life.
4. Biology is a significant influence on sex, but it does not determine behaviors. Environment is also an important developmental factor.

B. Gender is a social, symbolic construction that varies across cultures, over time within a given culture, over the course of individuals’ life spans, and in relation to the other gender.
   1. Cultures create gender by giving social meanings to biological sex.
      a. Gender differs from culture to culture.
      b. Currently in the U.S., masculinity is associated with strength, ambition, rationality, and emotional control.
      c. Currently in the U.S., femininity is associated with physical attractiveness, deferential and nurturing behavior, emotional expression, and concern with people and relationships.
   2. Gender is learned.
      a. We are born with our sex (male, female), and we learn our gender (masculine, feminine).
      b. We learn and express our gender through interactions with others and with the media.
   3. We do not passively receive gender. Instead, we choose to accept and reject messages about gender.
   4. Gender is not stable.
      a. Cultural and individual meanings of gender can change over time and context.
      b. New identity labels such as queer and gender queer (people who reject traditional gender categories) challenge our ideas about gender.
      c. Androgynous people are those who possess and display both feminine and masculine qualities. This concept also helps challenge and change gender.
   5. Gender is a relational concept. We can only understand masculinity in relation to femininity, and vice versa. Changing ideas about one gender affect the other.

C. Beyond Sex and Gender
   1. Sexual orientation refers to the preference one has about romantic and sexual partners. Sexual orientation, sex, and gender often become conflated in the U.S., but not all gay men, for example, are feminine males. Also, sexual activity is viewed differently in different cultures. For example, in some
cultures, men have sex with other men as part of their social and biological development are not considered gay or homosexual.

2. Cisgendered refers to people for whom sex, gender, and gender identity are consistent.

3. People who believe the sex they were born is not accurate are called transgendered people.

4. If a transgendered person takes hormones and/or has surgery to reassign their sex, we call them transsexual. These people usually refer to themselves as MTF (male-to-female) or FTM (female-to-male). Most transsexual people have the same sexual preferences before and after the surgery (e.g. if they liked men before, they continue to like men). Recently, Thomas Beatie, an FTM transman, has been in the news because he decided to give birth to a baby after transitioning.

5. Transvestites or cross-dressers are people who wear clothing intended for the other sex. They may dress completely in drag or wear just one or two items. There are many reasons people cross-dress, and doing so can sometimes be but is not necessarily an indicator of one’s gender expression, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation.

D. Culture consists of institutions and practices that sustain a particular social order by normalizing certain expectations, values, meanings, and patterns of behavior.

1. Societal views of gender are communicated through interpersonal interactions, media, cultural traditions, gendered roles, and patterns of interaction within families, ideology, and practices of institutions.

2. Western culture is patriarchal, which means the dominant ideology, institutions, and practices were created by men and implicitly value masculine perspectives and priorities. This results in a pervasive and naturalized view of the appropriate roles and behaviors for men and women, which we tend to take for granted. Learning to question these cultural prescriptions for gender empowers you to choose your own courses of action and identity.

E. Communication is a dynamic process without clear beginnings and endings.

1. The dynamic nature of communication emphasizes its ongoing nature. Communication may influence how we think or feel and influence future interactions. Therefore, communication events do not have precise starting and ending points.

2. The systems in which communication occurs, such as the situation, time, participants, and culture, interact so that each part influences the other parts and what they mean.

3. Communication consists of two levels of meaning.
   a. The content level is the literal meaning of a message, which also implies an appropriate response.
   b. The relationship level defines the relationship between the individuals interacting. The relationship level of meaning is particularly important in reflecting and affecting how people feel about each other. It also tells how to interpret the content level of meaning.

4. Meanings are created in the process of human interaction with symbols.
a. **Humans are symbol-using creatures.**
b. **Symbols** are abstract, ambiguous, and arbitrary ways of representing phenomena, which do not have inherent qualities. Meaning does not exist in words or symbols themselves. We give symbols meaning.
c. Symbolic communication requires reflection and thought for interpretation.
d. Therefore, humans **create meanings through the process of communicating.**

**Journal Entries**

1. Do you think that your definitions of the genders differ from the expectations and roles that characterized the period in which your parents were raised? Comment on your perceptions of the meanings of gender in a transitional era.

2. Describe/reflect on: (a) One interaction with your parent(s) or guardian(s) (the earliest you can remember) that communicated expectations for your gender, and (b) the most recent interaction with someone who communicated expectations for your gender.

3. Analyze how current institutions sustain gender roles. For example, how have your experiences within our educational system worked to shape your perceptions of appropriate gender roles? What are some current judicial or cultural practices that enable gender inequalities? What are some actions that you and other individuals can take to begin to empower yourself within our current cultural framework?

4. What do you think you would do if your romantic partner of many years told you that s/he felt s/he was transgendered? Would you consider staying in the relationship? Would you consider leaving it? What challenges do you think you would face as a couple? How do you think your perception of him/her would change? How would your perception of yourself change? What negative and positive potential outcomes do you perceive would occur?

5. Reflect on cultural assumptions about gender as they affect your life. If you are a biological woman, do you conform to norms of femininity? If you are a biological man, do you conform to norms of masculinity? How do the people around you respond to the ways you enact your gender? How comfortable are you with the ways you enact your gender?

**InfoTrac Activities**
1. Choose the Advanced Search option using InfoTrac College Edition. Select title and type “Treatment of intersex needs open discussion.” What are some of the concerns expressed by Melissa Cull regarding normalizing surgery? What does she suggest as a solution?

2. Choose the Advanced Search option using InfoTrac College Edition. Select keyword and type “women and Citadel.” Read through a few of the news articles posted. What kinds of changes has the Citadel made to accommodate women? In your opinion, is this enough?

Suggested Activities

1. **Shopping for Gender**
   Consumer culture plays a central role in the construction of gender. This assignment is designed to help students begin to see and understand that role. Place students in small groups and either assign or ask groups to choose a store or set of stores to explore. The assignment works best if each group chooses a different venue: department stores, malls, boutiques, box stores, books stores, toy stores, sporting goods stores, grocery stories, card stores, etc. Groups should spend approximately 30 minutes at their assigned store looking for messages about gender. Ask students to take notes about the kinds of products available for boys, girls, women, and men. If they visit a clothing store, tell them to attend to the color, fabric, and construction of the clothes. For all stores, instruct students to pay attention to product displays, store layout and decorations, posters, and packaging. Devote a class period to discussing the groups’ findings. What messages about gender did the various stores communicate and how? Were there similarities and differences between the gendered messages communicated by the different stores? What might those similarities and differences suggest about gender and age, race, and/or socioeconomic status?

2. **Differences, Similarities and Essentializing**
   For many of our students, much of the “research” read and heard about gender and sex comes from pop psychology, and many come into the course expecting to learn about how men and women communicate as if they are from different planets. Provide the students with a brief excerpt from John Gray’s book *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. Chapter 1 of the book works nicely for this exercise, and the book is usually available at most college libraries. (Take care to abide by education fair use regulations for copyrighted work. Using only chapter 1 stays within these guidelines.) Lead a discussion around the following questions:

   - What of Gray’s claims do you agree with?
   - What do you disagree with?
   - Do you think Gray’s descriptions of men and women are consistent with you and those close to you?
   - Who do you know who challenges these notions?
   - Are there any ways in which thinking about men and women in these ways can be problematic?

   The concept of essentializing (i.e. assuming all members of a group are the same) should underlie this discussion, and if it is not raised by a student, you should introduce it during the
discussion. After examining the discussion questions, students should have an idea of how essentializing is seen as useful (it helps us organize the world neatly) but also very narrowing and confining.

3. **Exploring Trans Identity**
Show the film *Ma Vie En Rose (My Life in Pink)* about a boy who hopes and thinks he will group up to be a girl. The film shows the struggle for him, his family, and his community as he explores his gender and sexual identity. (The film is rated R, but there is no sex or violence enacted in the film.) Alternatively, the film *Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She*, explores similar issues and includes commentary on gender in many different cultures. Discuss students’ responses to the film, imagining what it would have been like to be the boy in the film, his parents, or his neighbor.

**NOTE: At the end of each chapter, Wood offers discussion questions and personal research and analysis activities.**
Introduction: Opening the Conversation

**Multiple Choice**

1. The Industrial Revolution transformed social views of the essence of masculinity from ____________ to ____________.
   - A. courage to strength
   - B. physical strength to ability to earn an income
   - C. intelligence to physical strength
   - D. ambition to attractiveness
   - E. none of the above

   ANS: b
   REF: p. 9

2. Wood argues that communication is the fulcrum for change because:
   - A. Change comes through communication.
   - B. Communication allows us to identify and challenge cultural views.
   - C. Communication allows us to define alternatives and persuade others.
   - D. Individuals may be powerful social agents for change through communication.
   - E. All of the above are valid reasons.

   ANS: e
   REF: p

3. Heterosexual men and women report being happier and more satisfied with their relationships when their partners:
   - A. Define themselves as feminists.
   - B. Define themselves as non-feminists.
   - C. Have the same attitudes toward feminism as they do.
   - D. Are unconcerned about feminism.
   - E. There is no research about relationship satisfaction and feminisms.

   ANS: a
   REF: p. 3

4. When was the term “feminism” first used?
   - A. The 1600s
   - B. 1920
   - C. The late 1800s
   - D. 1970
   - E. The early 1700s

   ANS: c
5. How many women in the U.S. are killed by their intimate partner each day?
   A. 1 in 20
   B. 1 in 100
   C. 1 in 2
   D. 1 in 4
   E. 1 in 250

   ANS: d
   REF: p. 8

True/False

1. Being feminist is in conflict with being feminine.

   ANS: F
   REF: p. 3

2. Because our perspectives are limited by our social positions (e.g., sex, class, race, sexual orientation) we can never fully understand the lives of people who differ from us.

   ANS: T
   REF: p. 2

3. If everyone could become aware of gender inequality, it would no longer exist.

   ANS: F
   REF: pp. 10

4. Sexism is the fault of men.

   ANS: F
   REF: p. 10

5. Terms such as “spouse,” “husband,” “wife,” and “marriage” are inclusive of all people.

   ANS: F
   REF: p. 5

6. Item based on class business
Identification

1. Socially constructed

ANS: Social construction means something is changeable. This concept allows us to question and resist its continuation. In the readings, inequality is offered as a prime example of a social construction that influences our lives.
REF: p. 2

2. Inclusive language

ANS: Inclusive language is more than simply “adding” women. Inclusive language is used to recognize individuals and groups marginalized in current society. For example, the word “partner” is more inclusive than “spouse” because the latter term excludes gays and lesbians and fails to acknowledge the intimate connection between people who cohabit without marriage.
REF: p. 5

3. Feminism

ANS: Feminism is a word that has different meanings for different people. It comes from a French word meaning “woman” and “political position.” Most feminists agree that it is a “a movement for social, political, and economic equality of women and men,” and many people go beyond this to work to increase rights for all disadvantaged groups.
REF: pp. 3-4

Essays

1. Identify and explain the stages people commonly undergo in the process of identifying with feminism.

ANS: Feminism is a process. The stages are denial, anger, abiding commitment to change.
REF: p. 4i

2. Explain what the author of *Gendered Lives* means when she writes that privilege and disadvantage are unearned.

ANS: The social disadvantages and privileges that accompany race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. are not earned. They do not reflect the achievements, efforts, or failings of individuals who enjoy or suffer them.
REF: pp. 1-2

3. The author of your textbook talks about privileges and disadvantages that are part of her social location (and standpoint) that she did not earn and explains how they shape how she sees the world. Choose one privilege and one disadvantage that is part of your social
location and explain how it shapes how you see the world.

ANS: Responses will vary depending on the social location selected. Students may choose to talk about their race, gender, sex, sexuality, religion or spirituality, class, geographic location, or other marker. They should be specific in their explanation.

4. The author of your textbook argues that U.S. society has undergone numerous changes that have led to greater gender equity; at the same time, she suggests additional changes are needed. What are some of the positive changes Wood discusses and what work still needs to be done?

ANS: Positive changes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include woman suffrage, women’s increased property rights, and women’s access to education and the professions. More recent changes include naming and deeming illegal sexual harassment, acquaintance rape, and marital rape. Other recent changes include men’s willingness and ability to be stay-at-home dads. Changes that still need to be made include securing equal pay for equal work as well as equal representation in the halls of Congress. REF: pp. 9-10

5. What reasons does the author of your textbook provide for preferring the term “partner” to terms such as “spouse,” “husband,” or “wife?”

ANS: Wood argues that terms such as “spouse,” “husband,” and “wife” exclude lesbians, gay men, transsexuals, transgendered, and intersexed people because many states prohibit these people from marrying. She uses “partners” to be inclusive of all people. REF: p. 5
Chapter 1: The Study of Communication, Gender, and Culture

Multiple Choice

1. Rick was born with male and female sex organs. Which of the following is the best term to describe Rick as a person with biological qualities of a male and a female?
   
   A. transsexuals  
   B. intersexed  
   C. transgendered  
   D. gender rebels  
   E. dualsexed

   ANS: b  
   REF: p. 20

2. Information about sex, gender, and communication is best gleaned through
   
   A. quantitative research methods  
   B. qualitative research methods  
   C. critical research methods  
   D. mixed research methods.  
   E. each of the methods above offers useful insights into sex, gender, and communication.

   ANS: e  
   REF: pp. 14-15

3. Which of the following persons would be accurately described as “cisgendered?”
   
   A. A person born as a biological female who embodies both masculine and feminine characteristics.  
   B. A biological male who prefers romantic and sexual relationships with biological males.  
   C. A biological female who identifies as female and feminine.  
   D. A biological female who enjoys dressing in men’s clothing.  
   E. A person whose biological sex is inconsistent with their gender identity.

   ANS: c  
   REF: p. 26

4. The meaning of masculinity and femininity in our lives is affected by
   
   A. our age  
   B. our race  
   C. our interactions with others  
   D. the historical time period in which we live  
   E. all of the above

   ANS: e  
   REF: pp. 22-25
5. Which of these chromosomal patterns has/have been found in people our society labels male?
   A. XXX
   B. XX0
   C. XYY
   D. X0
   E. none of these

   ANS: c
   REF: p. 20

6. The term *patriarchy* literally means ____________.
   A. oppression of females.
   B. from male standpoint.
   C. rule by the fathers.
   D. government by men.
   E. all of the above.

   ANS: c
   REF: p. 32

7. Your *Gendered Lives* book includes a text box outlining transgendered activism on college campuses. Students emphasized the connection between language and identity by creating ways of identifying themselves and others that did not specify gender. The word “ze” is:
   A. a pronoun representing masculine and feminine people.
   B. a verb representing transformation.
   C. a description of a person who is transgendered.
   D. a description of a person who is androgynous.
   E. a description of a person who is transsexual.

   ANS: a
   REF: p. 29

8. Yan Bing and Dianna are college students discussing how they each define “cheating” in a romantic relationship. Yan Bing considers flirting during an IM conversation cheating, but Dianna thinks cheating only involves physical contact. Later, they continue the discussion with friends over dinner. This scenario best describes which of the following?
   A. Communication is a dynamic and contextual.
   B. Communication is gendered.
   C. Yan Bing and Dianna are exhibiting feminine styles of communication.
   D. Content level of meaning and relationship level of meaning are not the same thing.
   E. All of the above.

   ANS: a
   REF: p. 33

9. A professor says to a student, “I will not accept your paper after 5 pm today.” The content level of meaning in this message is that
A. the professor is open to negotiation.
B. the professor feels s/he has to explain the policy to the student.
C. the professor can exercise power over the student.
D. the professor feels s/he has greater status than the student.
E. the professor won’t accept the paper after 5 pm today.

ANS: e
REF: pp. 34-35

10. Item drawn from class business

True/False

1. Researchers have found that views of gender generally remain consistent over the average person’s life-span.

    ANS: F
    REF: pp. 23-27

2. Society, family, and friends teach us what it means to be male and female.

    ANS: T
    REF: p. 20-26

3. The Industrial Revolution led to the redefinition of masculinity and femininity.

    ANS: T
    REF: pp. 24-25

4. Historically and in all cultures, women have been the primary caretakers of young children.

    ANS: F
    REF: p. 24

5. Hermaphrodite is the preferred word for people who have male and female sex organs.

    ANS: F
    REF: p. 20

6. Androgyny is a term describing individuals who “feel their biological sex is wrong—that they are really women trapped in men’s bodies or men trapped in women’s bodies.”

    ANS: F
    REF: p. 23
7. There are two distinct genders, female and male.

ANS: F
REF: pp. 20-26

8. Gender identity is the same thing as one’s biological sex.

ANS: F
REF: p. 21

9. Most transsexuals experience a change in their sexual orientation after transitioning.

ANS: F
REF: p. 28

Identification
1. Content and relational levels of meaning

ANS: Communication includes the content level of meaning, which is the literal or informational message, and the relational level of meaning, which defines the relationship between communicators. Both levels must be understood to interpret communication. Dimensions of the relational level are liking, responsiveness, and power. Example, C = “I’ll meet you at the thing over by the place.” R = liking/familiarity between communicators.
REF: pp. 34-35

2. Essentializing

ANS: Essentializing involves referring to all men as if they are the same, and as if that similarity reflects some fundamental essence that is maleness. In the same vein, essentializing involves referring to all women as if they are the same, and as if that similarity reflects some fundamental essence that is female-ness. Essentializing is problematic because it obscures differences between people of the same sex while also minimizing similarities between women and men.
REF: p. 19
3. Sex

ANS: Sex is an individual quality determined by biology (chromosomes and hormones). Sex is biological; gender is socially constructed. Sex is innate; gender is learned. Sex is unchanging, or stable (possible exception-sex change surgery.)
REF: pp. 19-20

4. Gender

ANS: Gender refers to the traits, behaviors, and assumptions linked to masculinity and femininity. Individuals perform gender roles, however, those roles are created and defined by society at large. Gender varies over time and between and within cultures.
REF: pp. 20-26

5. Androgyny

ANS: Coined in the 1970s, androgyny is the combinations of the Greek words aner/andros (man) and gyne (woman). Androgynous people reject rigid sex roles and embody dualities that the culture considers masculine and feminine. For example, an androgynous person may be both strong and sensitive.
REF: p. 23

6. Symbols

ANS: Symbols are what humans use to communicate. They include signs (i.e., “$” signifies dollar) and words. Symbols are abstract, arbitrary, and ambiguous. Symbols require mediation or interpretation of thought. Humans create meaning because symbols are not innate. People differ in how they perceive and interpret communication.
REF: pp. 35-36

7. Intersexed

ANS: Intersexed individuals are born with ambiguous genitals and may differ from most people in hormonal, chromosomal, and physiological ways. Intersexuals, for many years, routinely underwent “clarifying surgery,” which reconstructed genitals to appear more typically masculine or feminine. Concerning intersexed people, doctors have routinely decided which sex the child was “meant to be” and advised parents to authorize “clarifying surgery” that then allowed parents to bring the child up as the sex it was “meant to be.”
REF: p. 20

8. Transsexual
ANS: Transsexual is a term that usually refers to someone who has changed their physical sex to more closely align with their sexual identity. This is done through hormones and surgery. Transsexuals are often referred to as post-transitional males to females (MTF) or post-transitional females to males (FTM).
REF: p. 27

9. Cisgendered:

ANS: A person whose biological sex and gender identity are consistent. The term draws attention to the taken-for-granted assumption that all people experience consistency between sex, gender and social orientation.
REF: p. 26

10. Patriarchy

ANS: Patriarchy is a term that literally means “rule by fathers.” To say that a culture is patriarchal means that it is primarily focused on men’s goals, needs, and realities. Men are given preference over women as ideologies, structures, and practices are defined by and for men.
REF: p. 32

Essays

1. Popular psychology books often profile the behaviors and characteristics of the “opposite sexes.” Based on your understanding of material from chapter 1, how would you critique this labeling of men and women? Make sure your answer demonstrates your understanding of essentializing, androgyny, and sex and gender. The framework for the answer to this essay may be found throughout chapter 1.

ANS: Answers should:
- Explain the difference between the definitions of sex and gender (pages19-26)
- Explain the tendency of these books to essentialize or presume that all members of a sex are alike in certain respects (page 18) and focus on these as key opposing differences between sexes
- Reference that many men and women have androgynous characteristics, or qualities associated with both masculine and feminine ideals (page 23)

Students may also note that men and women have many similarities (page 18) and how societal definitions of gender are in a constant state of change.

REF: pp. 18-26
2. The author of your *Gendered Lives* text states, “Gender, culture, and communication are interlinked…. Because this is so, we cannot study any one of them without understanding a good deal about the other two.” Explain what Wood means by this statement. How do these elements mutually influence one another?

ANS: Our conceptions of masculine and feminine behaviors are influenced by culture and they change over time. Different cultures have differing expectations for masculine and feminine behaviors. We learn gendered identities through communication, which is dynamic and systemic. Context, culture, and history are systems that influence how we understand and construct gender. Therefore, gender is influenced by culture. Through communication, we both reinforce or challenge these ideals. Using communication as a dynamic process, we may change cultural meanings of gender. For instance, some challenge the traditional view of gender as dualities and consisting of only two possibilities and researchers have recognized androgynous characteristics in men and women. We may influence ideas about gender during personal interactions. By communicating these ideas, conceptions of gender change.

REF: pp. 19-36

3. Define levels of meaning in communication and provide a concrete example of each level of meaning.

ANS: Communication has two levels of meaning: content and relationship. Content level of meaning is the denotative, or literal, meaning of communication. Relationship level of meaning defines the relationship between communicators. Dimensions of relationship level meaning are power, liking, and responsiveness. Example: “You will do what I say.” Content level of meaning is that the receiver of this message will do what the sender says. Relationship level of meaning is that the sender has the power to tell the receiver what to do.

REF: pp. 33-36

4. Unlike sex, gender is a relational concept. Explain what this means and the implications of it, and give an example that illustrates your point.

ANS: Gender is a relational concept because we can only understand femininity compared and contrasted with masculinity. Likewise, we cannot understand masculinity without the concept of femininity. We socially construct these two to be opposites; for example, if we see masculinity as being about strength, then femininity is seen as weakness. This concept is important because it means that when we change our ideas about one gender, we necessarily change the way we think about another gender.

REF: p. 25

5. What is the difference between being transgendered and transsexual?

While some people may define these terms differently, generally a transgendered person is
someone who feels that his or her gender identity does not match his or her biological sex. For instance, a transgendered person may have been born female but feel male or very masculine. A transsexual person is someone who has taken hormones or had surgery to change one’s biological sex. Some transgendered people never want to have surgery to become a different biological sex.

REF: p. 27

6. What does it mean to say, “meanings are constructed through human interaction with symbols”? Why is this significant for our understanding of gender?

This statement means that the meaning of ideas, concepts, and things are not inherent. They are built culturally through interactions that produce a shared understanding. For example, red roses are not inherently connected to love, but in the U.S., we have decided that giving someone red roses is a gesture of romantic love. This idea is important for our understanding of gender because it points out that what we agree is masculine or male and feminine or female is socially agreed upon but not the inherent truth. It may change across cultures, over time, and in different contexts.

REF: pp. 35-36