ASSIGNMENTS

GENDER MOMENTS PAPER

Sociologists must be good observers of human behavior. This assignment is about observing behavior and drawing conclusions. Therefore, the purpose of this assignment is two-fold:

a) to demonstrate that you have learned to "see" individuals reinforce gender difference ideologies in daily interactions.

b) to demonstrate that you can analyze social interactions from a sociological point of view.

c) to demonstrate you understand the implications of your observations for the study of gender (e.g. how social interaction exaggerates differences between men and women and constructs an ideology of gender difference).

Gender moments arise in everyday situations when differences between men and women are reinforced and/or exaggerated or when gender rules are highly salient. These moments are as likely to occur in same-sex interactions as they are in opposite-sex interactions. By learning to recognize gender moments we are more able to see gender as a principle organizing element of social relations. This assignment asks you to observe and describe gender moments. In searching for gender moments, you are looking for examples of how interactions between people demonstrate the following:

1. Actors (individuals) are full participants in the creation and perpetuation of gender distinctions.

2. Both men and women are constrained by gender norms and expectations, although the consequences may be distinctly different.

3. Gender is more salient at some times than at others.

4. Gender is about more than a division of labor or definitions of masculinity and femininity. Gender is ultimately about the distribution of power and privilege.

5. Gender moments typically exaggerate the natural biological differences between men and women. As you become aware of gender moments, you will notice how much time is spent verbally reinforcing the notion that men and women are, indeed, different.

6. Enacting gender is frequently as much about sexuality as it is about biological difference. Not every gendered interaction is sexual in nature, but sexuality and gender are often linked.
EVALUATION CRITERIA:

1. The paper begins with a clear thesis statement that is well articulated. (15 pts).

2. The paper includes a definition of gender. As suggested by class lectures, gender can be defined in a number of different ways. Be sure you identify which of the many perspectives we have addressed in class drives your thinking about gender and gender moments (15 pts). Hint: Do not use a definition you have found on the internet; use definitions from class readings and discussions.

3. Description of gender moments (at least two) (20 pts.)

4. Brief discussion about what these gender moments suggest about how gender is constituted--created and reinforced on a daily basis (20 pts).

5. Concluding paragraph summarizes what you have learned about gender and describes how useful you feel gender moments are for understanding how gender is socially constructed (20 pts.).

6. Well organized essay, proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation (10 pts.)

SHORT PAPER ASSIGNMENT:

The purpose of this assignment is to give students the opportunity to

1) read and understand high quality social scientific writing (e.g. readings published in the best journals),

2) learn how to draw from a variety of perspectives and synthesize new ideas to form one's own thesis statement,

3) learn how to provide evidence and support for the thesis, and

4) learn how to work with a group and benefit from the opportunity to discuss readings and ideas with others.

I. Below is a list of readings. Some of these readings we have discussed in the class. Others readings are supplemental; you may find them highly useful in developing a thesis statement and drawing conclusions from the data. Please note, you are not required to draw from every article listed below. The assignment is to develop a thesis statement and then lend support to that thesis based on the appropriate readings. However, a paper that draws from only two articles will receive not more than a C grade and a paper that draws from three articles will receive not more than a
B grade. An “A” paper will draw from a minimum of four articles.


II. You should organize with a group of no more than five students. You should meet with these students at least once and use the various members of the group as a resource for understanding the articles. For example, you might want to assign each student to read two or three of the articles (make assignments so that two people read the same article and can work together to identify what the article is about). Report group membership to the TA so we can be sure everyone is assigned a group.

III. After meeting with your group and after you have a grasp of the articles at hand, identify a thesis statement that you wish to pursue. One way to devise your thesis statement is to create a matrix of ideas and their sources. Once you identify a pattern of ideas, write down your thesis and begin to develop the ideas by outlining the
information you have available to you.

IV. Finally, write your paper. You may meet with the TA or with the Professor for help in completing this assignment.

**Your paper is to be no longer than six pages (this requirement will keep you from filling up your paper with statements like: "I am going to tell you this about that"). The six page limit does not include references. You are expected to reference appropriately. This means you should use the same reference style that is used in the papers listed above.**

**EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

1. The paper begins with a clear thesis statement that is well articulated (15 pts).

2. The paper draws appropriately from the readings above to support the thesis statement presented (25 pts). This means that if you could have used findings from a paper listed above to make your point more clearly and you do not do so, you will be penalized.

3. The paper is well structured and synthesizes the material appropriately. Rather than summarize each of the readings above, the paper identifies common themes or divergent findings that must be taken into account in making a logical argument in support of the thesis statement (25 pts).

4. The concluding paragraph summarizes the focus of the paper and identifies the implications for the study of gender (25 pts).

5. Well written, proper grammar, proper referencing, spelling, and punctuation (10 pts).