



**Overview:** This course examines the language structures and usage patterns exhibited by women and men, as well as the efforts to reduce sexism in language. It focuses on the following questions:

- How do biologically-based gender differences affect language acquisition and development?
- How do the members of each sex use language differently?
- How does language treat the sexes differently?
- How do such differences affect our perceptions, attitudes and behavior in everyday life?
- How do children learn the norms for language and gender?
- How do different cultures vary in these norms?

**Texts:** Students will be responsible for reading chapters assigned from the textbook, *Communicating gender* by Suzanne Romaine (1999), as well as handouts provided by the professor.

**Course evaluation:** Student progress will be measured using the following criteria:

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| ➤ Class attendance and active participation in discussions of weekly readings<br>(more than 4 absences will result in a lowered grade) | 25% |
| ➤ Homework assignments   | 25% |
| ➤ Midterm exam   | 25% |
| ➤ Final exam   | 25% |

**Office hours:** The professor will be available for consultation in Office 4, Pedreira, during the following hours: Mon., Wed., and Fri., 11:00 am-1:00 pm.

Appointments are recommended to ensure that there is no conflict with another student. The professor may be reached at: 764-0000, x2035. Messages may also be left at: x2553. E-mail is encouraged. The professor's address is: [apousada@earthlink.net](mailto:apousada@earthlink.net).

- Session 1: Introduction to course, textbook, professor, and other students.  
(1/20/06) Analysis of gender issues in cartoons. Analysis of sexist language.  
Homework:  
1) Read Romaine, Romaine, Ch. 1—Doing gender  
2) Bring money for textbook (\$45)
- Session 2: Displaying gender. Gender in cross-disciplinary perspective.  
(1/27/06) Communicating gender through language. Analysis of personal dating ads.  
Homework:  
1) Read Romaine, Ch. 2—Boys will be boys?
- Session 3: Nature of masculinity and femininity. Gender vs. sex. Limitations of  
(2/3/06) binary view of gender. Devaluation of females across cultures. Nature vs. nurture in  
understanding gender. Analysis of gender in nursery rhymes and fairy tales.  
Homework:  
1) Write a 500-word analysis of gender in “Little Red Riding Hood” to hand in (preferably  
typed, double-spaced). A#1  
2) Read Romaine, Ch. 3—What’s gender got to do with grammar?
- Session 4: Gender in grammar. Leakage between natural and grammatical  
(2/10/06) grammar. Analysis of grammatical gender in Spanish and English.  
Homework:  
1) Read Romaine, Ch. 4—English—A man-made language?
- Session 5: Sexism in language. Notion of male generic. Discussion of  
(2/17/06) publishers’ guidelines for non-sexist language.  
Homework:  
1) Find at least 5 examples of non-sexist or gender inclusive language in publications  
produced in PR (either in English or Spanish). These can be found in newspapers,  
magazines, pamphlets, books, etc. Hand in clippings or photocopies. Be prepared to  
discuss them in class. A#2  
2) Read Romaine, Ch. 5—What’s in a name?
- \*Note: no class on Friday, 2/24/05—Wednesday classes meet to make up missing class
- Session 6: Lexical gender. Names, titles, occupations. Invisibility of women in  
(3/3/06) much of historical writing.  
Homework:  
1) Read Romaine, Ch. 6—Gendered talk: Gossip, shop talk, and the sound of silence
- Session 7: Characteristics of women’s language. Gender differences in  
(3/10/06) discourse. Politeness and “proper” language. Analysis of jokes about men’s and women’s  
language.  
Homework:  
1) Read Romaine, Ch. 7—Learning how to talk like a lady

Session 8: How children learn gender stereotypes. Gendered play. Boys' and girls' social networks. Role of schools and hidden curriculum. Gendered texts. Listening to Tannen recording on gender.

Homework:

- 1) No reading assignment
- 2) Do exercise 2 on p. 219 of Romaine (gender stereotyping in advertising aimed at children). Prepare 500-word report to hand in (preferably typed, double-spaced). A#3

Session 9: Viewing of videos on gender. Discussion of videos in class.

(3/24/06) Homework:

- 1) Study for midterm exam.

Session 10: Midterm exam

(3/31/06) Homework:

- 1) Read Romaine, Ch. 8—Different words, different worlds?

Session 11: Language at work, sexual harassment, definitions of rape, press coverage of sex crimes.

(4/7/06)

Homework:

- 1) Read Romaine, Ch. 9—Advertising gender
- 2) Write down five specific examples of gender stereotypes in advertising (from press, radio, or TV) to hand in. Bring clippings, photocopies, or recordings if possible. Be prepared to discuss them in class. A#4

Note: no class on 4/14/06—Holy Week

Session 12: Marketing of feminine gender. The sexual sell. The happy homemaker. The career woman. The househusband. Declaring war on sexist advertising. Analysis of advertisements.

(4/21/06)

Homework:

- 1) Read Romaine, Ch. 10—Language reform: A misguided attempt to change herstory?

Session 13: Reform of sexist language. Resistance to reform. Public vs. private usage. Analysis of Puerto Rican examples of non-sexist language.

(4/28/06)

Homework:

- 1) Read Romaine, Ch. 11—Writing feminist futures

Session 14: Male utopia, female dystopia. Feminist science fiction. Language of the future. Viewing of video on gender in science fiction. Discussion of video.

(5/5/06)

Homework:

- 1) Study for final exam

Session 15: Final exam

(5/12/06)