

“AWESOME CLASS!”

—ANONYMOUS FORMER STUDENT

“DR. GRAHAM ROCKS, DUDE!”

—ANONYMOUS FORMER STUDENT



ENGL 4522
LANGUAGE AND GENDER
Dr. Sage Graham
TR 1:00 - 2:25 -- Fall 2022



Language is ever-present in our daily lives and plays a critical role in how we see our world and the others around us. In this course, we'll explore how gender affects the ways we communicate in our daily interactions. Looking at a variety of settings, we'll analyze spoken and written language to determine how men and women are perceived differently (and act differently) when communicating with others. Some questions we might explore are:

- Do you think people of different genders communicate differently?
- Do you think binary gender stereotypes are true? Are women gossip-y? And men uncommunicative? Do men not communicate what they're feeling while women do it too much?
- How have labels for gendered identity evolved in recent years?
- How are gender identities portrayed on TV? Corporate websites? In literature? What about movies? Advertising?
- How do we see 'strong' males versus 'strong' females?
- What about 'strong' people who don't fall neatly into a binary mold?
- How do female vs. male vs. non-binary 'superheroes' talk? Or male/female/non-binary heroes/heroines in books or on TV?
- How does gender affect conversation? Who gets to talk the most? Who gets interrupted?
- What kinds of words do we use every day to mark someone's gender? We say *male* nurse, for example, because the presumption is that nurses are female. At one time, people said *firemen*, but now we say *firefighters* as that profession has changed. Do you say 'policeman' and 'policewoman' or do you say 'police officer' or 'law enforcement officer'?
- How does swearing intersect with gender? Do b*tches always have to be female, for example?

These are just some of the topics we'll explore this semester. The course is designed to allow students the opportunity to choose a focus that matches their interests and/or specialty area(s). Some students might want to examine male and female behaviors in online gaming, some might explore medical practice web pages; others might investigate how men and women are characterized in literary texts; others (creative writers, for example), might look at their own work in light of how they portray particular types of characters to achieve specific effects – so many options, so little time!!!!