Gender

Defined as the cultural and attitudinal qualities associated with being male or female. Sometimes referred to as a culture’s notions of masculinity and femininity.
Sex and Sexuality

- Sex: the biological differences between females and males—chromosomes, hormones, anatomy
- Sexuality: the social practice of communication between bodies for the purposes of sexual pleasure, biological reproduction, or as work.
- Types of sexuality: heterosexual—sex between opposite sex partners; homosexual—sex between same sex partners; bisexual—sex practiced with both same sex or opposite sex partners
Gender and sex roles

- The gender or sex behaviors that a society expects of males and females. Societal roles work on a continuum from very strict societies with high levels of gender segregation to very relaxed societies with gender integration.
- Relaxed societies with “third sexes”—the berdache (an individual who participates in opposite sex behaviors)
Socialization

- Both gender and sexuality are almost entirely learned behaviors within specific social contexts
- Gender markers: symbols and signs that identify a person’s gender—blue for boys, pink for girls
- Gender or sexual scripts: the processes expected of each gender through one’s life course (age effects)
- Agents of socialization—play, dress, media, peers, family, media
Sexism and Heterosexism

- Sexism: prejudice and discrimination based on gender; patriarchy—a social system which institutionalizes male dominance and female subordination; misogyny—male hatred of female; misandry—female hatred of male.
- Heterosexism: compulsory heterosexuality—social attempts to coerce people into being heterosexual
Historical and Economic impacts

- Creation of gender segregation through economic development impacts—secretaries once were male; factory workers once were female
- High infant mortality affected family relations and sexuality
Social movements for women’s and sexual rights

- History of feminism—Wave one: Right to vote
- Second wave: Equality issues. Feminist theories—liberal, socialist, libertarian, radical, inclusive feminism: women of color, global, men’s
- Sexual rights: Right to contraception, gay liberation movement
A gender division of labor is functional to society. Men play instrumental roles of working outside the home; women play expressive roles of caregiving in home. Weaknesses of theory: fits fifties U.S. not 21st century. Some men more caring, women more instrumental.
Conflict theory

- Engels: first class antagonism was between men and women. Men wanted to expropriate labor of women.
- Men created patriarchy to ensure power of men as group and enforce subordination of women as group.
- Women’s false consciousness is they accept patriarchy and sexism
Symbolic interaction theory

- Gender and sexuality are learned behaviors through everyday interactions
- Gender is learned through roles and social scripts
- Gender differences in language and social interactions circumscribe gender relationships—see Deborah Tannen
21st Century Work issues

Gender segregation in school and work
Equal pay for equal work, comparable worth: equal pay for comparable jobs
Second shift—see Arlie Hochschild
Glass ceiling and the glass escalator
Caring labor—what about the children? Elderly? Disabled
Systems of social support