

PSY-316: The Psychology of Gender

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of theoretical, empirical, and applied literature related to gender and gender research in psychology. It examines how gender identity and roles are shaped by psychological, social, and cultural forces. Students will explore major theories of gender development and analyse how intersecting factors such as culture, religion, media, and history influence gender norms and expectations. The course addresses both traditional and non-traditional gender identities and expressions, emphasizing how gendered expectations impact behaviour, social experiences and mental health. Core topics include development of gender identity and norms, influence of gender on psychological well-being, and gender and mental health disparities and differences. Students will engage with real-world examples and current debates, gaining critical tools to understand, evaluate, and apply psychological concepts to issues of gender diversity, equity, and inclusion. By the end of the course, students will be able to think critically about the role of gender in psychological science and assess how power, identity, and context shape gendered experiences across the lifespan.

Course Objectives:

The course will facilitate students to:

- Understand psychological theories and concepts related to gender identity, roles, and development.
- Examine how Pakistan's cultural, social, religious, and historical contexts shape gendered experiences.
- Analyse the impact of gender norms on mental health, behaviour, and well-being.
- Apply intersectional frameworks to explore gender in relation to identity, power, and equity.
- Critically engage with real-world examples and contemporary debates on gender diversity.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Understand the psychological aspects of gender identity and roles.**
- Analyse cultural and social influences on gender development.
- Evaluate the impact of gender on mental health and behaviour.
- Application of concepts in Pakistani context.

Course content

- Introduction: What is Gender? Historical importance and Key Concepts
- Methods of Gender Research
- Theoretical Approaches I: Biological & Evolutionary Theories
- Theoretical Approaches II: Cognitive, Social Learning, Gender Schema Theories

- Gender Identity Development & Expression Across the Lifespan
- Culture, Religion, and Socialization of Gender
- Intersectionality: Gender, Race, Class, Disability, and Globalization
- Media and the Construction of Gender Norms
- Communication and Language: Gendered Interaction Styles
- Gendered Behaviours
- Gender and Relationships: Love, Friendship, Sexuality
- Gender in Education and the Workplace
- Gender and Mental Health: Disparities, differences in help-seeking behaviour, stress, Coping, and Disorders
- Gender and mental health: Professional and ethical issues
- Exploring all the concepts with reference to Pakistan

Reference material:

- Helgeson, V. S. (2020). *The Psychology of Gender (sixth edition)*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Brannon, L. (2017). *Gender: Psychological Perspectives (seventh edition)*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Fine, C. (2010). *Delusions of gender: How our minds, society, and neurosexism create difference*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.
- APA (2015). *Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming People*

Richards, C., Lenihan, P., Milton, M., Moon, I., & Zitz, C. (2024). *Guidelines for Psychologists Working with Gender, Sexuality and Relationship Diversity*. (2nd ed.) British Psychological Society.