

IST 297: Gender and the Global Information Technology Sector Spring 2011 (M – W, 11:15-12:30)

NOTE: This course is being offered as a blended learning course. Students may take this course in one of the following modes:

1. Face-to-face classroom course (University Park only).
2. Web-based access to live classroom lectures/discussions during set class times (University Park or Non-UP).
3. Web-based access to archived classroom lectures/discussions that can be viewed at any time (University Park or Non-UP).

Web versions of the course are offered through the e-Learning @ Penn State Cooperative.

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Course Description

The growing trend toward outsourcing, off shoring, and dispersion of work across national boundaries means that students entering the workforce in the twenty-first century must be prepared to deal with a global client base and global colleagues. Part of this preparation includes understanding the gender diversity of colleagues, clients and users with whom you will be working -- both virtually and face-to-face -- to develop, deploy and use information technology solutions. This course takes a cross-cultural examination of gender as it relates to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields in general, and the information technology field, in particular. Understanding the gender and cultural diversity of both colleagues and users will have ramifications for the way in which work is accomplished, user requirements for technology are understood, and interaction with computer-based tools is accomplished. However, to varying degrees around the world, women are underrepresented in the in STEM, generally, and in the IT field, in particular. They are under represented both in the IT workforce and in the conceptualization of the IT user. Similarly, a dominant model of masculinity is associated with technology development, deployment and use. For these reasons, it is necessary for those working in STEM fields to have an understanding of gender issues in order to have a complete understanding of users, and to work productively with colleagues.

Course Learning Approach

This course integrates the field of gender studies with STEM and information technology (IT) studies. It provides an overview, analysis and critique of current issues related to gender, STEM and IT. It also introduces and critiques theories that are used to better understand and analyze the issues. In the course of doing so, this course shows how different theories affect the ways in which gender issues are understood and addressed in the information technology field. At the end of the course students will have a basic understanding of gender

theories that are employed in STEM and the information technology field, and how socio-cultural factors of a country affect the role of women and men in it. Hence, part of this course will focus on gender and IT in other countries to reinforce concepts about cross-cultural influences on gender and IT. This course employs a combination of lectures, guest presentations, case studies, scenario analysis, independent research and personal reflection.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will understand:

- The rationale for gender diversity in the information technology sector
- The dimensions of the gender imbalance in the information technology sector
- The ways in which the STEM fields are influenced by gender stereotypes about masculinity and femininity
- Gender theories that are used to explain the gender imbalance in STEM and IT
- Issues affecting the recruitment of women into the STEM / IT fields such as: education, self efficacy and role models
- Issues affecting the retention of women in the STEM / IT fields such as: work-life balance, workplace climate and mentors
- Educational and workplace interventions being implemented to address the under representation of women in the IT sector
- The influence of a country's socio-cultural factors on the recruitment and retention of women in the IT sector.

Course Materials

The required reading materials for this course consist of a set of assigned readings that are available in the ANGEL course website. The assigned readings for each day are listed in the syllabus and are in a folder in the Angel site associated with that particular date. You are expected to do the assigned readings **before** class and come prepared to engage in discussion about them.

University Policies

Academic Integrity: According to the Penn State Principles and University Code of Conduct:

Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at Penn State University, allowing the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. In accordance with the University's Code of Conduct, you must not engage in or tolerate academic dishonesty. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person, or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

Any violation of academic integrity will be investigated, and where warranted, punitive action will be taken. For every incident when a penalty of any kind is assessed, a report must be filed.

Nondiscrimination and Harassment: The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or veteran status. Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment of faculty, staff or students is prohibited and will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment violates the dignity of individuals and impedes the realization of the University's educational mission. The University is committed to preventing and eliminating sexual harassment of faculty, staff and students through education and by encouraging faculty, staff and students to report any concerns or complaints about sexual harassment. Prompt corrective measures will be taken to stop sexual harassment whenever and wherever it occurs.

Accommodating Disabilities: Penn State encourages academically qualified students with disabilities to participate in its educational programs. We are committed to equal opportunity in our admissions policies and procedures and are dedicated to providing reasonable accommodations for qualified students. Penn State students seeking special services or academic accommodations through Penn State must self-disclose their need for these services or accommodations to the World Campus or Penn State's Office for Disability Services (ODS). Contact Penn State's Office for Disability Services (ODS). To be eligible for academic accommodations through ODS, students must have a documented disability as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The University is responsible for making all its programs and services available to all students. The Office for Disability Services acts in an advisory capacity for all Penn State locations, including the World Campus. The World Campus will work with ODS to make reasonable academic adjustments or accommodations for eligible World Campus students. Penn State's guidelines for appropriate documentation—and the verification forms necessary for each disability category—may be obtained from the "Documentation Guidelines and General Information for Students with Specific Conditions" section of the ODS Web site. For more information, contact ODS.

IST 297: Gender and the Global Information Economy
Dr. Eileen M. Trauth
Course Syllabus: Spring 2011

Monday, January 10

Topic: Course Overview

Unit I: Gender & Technology

Gender & the IT Field

Wednesday, January 12

Topic: Gender & IT Consumers

Monday, January 17

Topic: Gender & IT Producers

Wednesday, January 19

Topic: The IT Gender Imbalance

Gender & STEM

Monday, January 24

Topic: Gendering of STEM

Wednesday, January 26

Topic: STEM and Masculinity

Monday, January 31

Topic: STEM and Feminism

Theorizing Gender, STEM & IT

Wednesday, February 2

Topic: Gender Essentialism

Monday, February 7

Topic: Social Shaping of Gender

Wednesday, February 9

Topic: Within Gender Variation

Monday, February 14

Topic: Unit Summary

Unit II: Gender & IT Issues

Recruitment

Wednesday, February 16

Topic: Education

Monday, February 21

Topic: Self-efficacy

Wednesday, February 23

Topic: Role Models

Retention

Monday, February 28

Topic: Work-life Balance

Wednesday, March 2

Topic: Workplace Climate

Monday, March 14

Topic: Mentors

Interventions

Wednesday, March 16

Topic: Education

Monday, March 21

Topic: Workplace

Topic: Unit Summary

Unit III: Gender, IT & Globalization

Monday, March 28

Topic: Europe

Wednesday, March 30

Topic: Ireland

Monday, April 4

Topic: Oceania

Wednesday, April 6

Topic: Australia

Monday, April 11

Topic: Africa

Wednesday, April 13

Topic: South Africa

Monday, April 18

Topic: Asia

Wednesday, April 20

Topic: Korea

Monday, April 25

Topic: Unit Summary

Wednesday, April 27

Topic: Course summary