

For this assignment (1 -1 ½ pages)

Relevant Readings/Video: Judith Lorber, “Night to His Day”; Laurel Richardson, “Gender Stereotyping in the English Language”; NPR, “Talking While Female”

LANGUAGE AND THE GENDERED ORDER

Comment on these case examples; write a paragraph or two for each case. In each situation, the individual affected made a claim of “unfairness” to a higher authority (e.g., college dean, workplace manager).

Have these students/worker been treated fairly or unfairly? What should happen next? Do you see these incidents as disrupting or reinforcing the dominant gendered scripts of socialization that Lorber and Richardson describe in the reading? Think about the ways in which your answers reflect your sense of the importance of language usage and particular styles of verbal communication to gender equality. Be sure to incorporate the readings – and National Public Radio’s “Talking While Female.

1. A college student turns in a literature paper in which she refers to the human race as “mankind” and individuals as “he”. The paper is returned with a failing grade because the student did not use gender-inclusive language, as the professor had explicitly requested in the assignment prompt. The course is an American literature class.
2. An editor at a publishing house includes in her assistant’s job evaluation a negative comment about her assistant’s refusal to use gender-inclusive language (e.g., “human” rather than “man”) in her prose. The publishing house guidelines explicitly urge all staff to use gender-inclusive language in their professional communication.
3. A female student receives a low grade for a political science oral presentation because, in the instructor’s words, she “uses typical unassertive female speech patterns and a deferential style.” When the student questions the grade, the instructor tells her that the low grade is fair and will benefit her because it will inspire her to be a more assertive speaker, which will help her not only in school, but also in her future professional life.

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