

Sample Lesson Plan

Gender: Issues and Contexts

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Course: WMST 1002 Gender: Issues and Contexts
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Lesson Title: The Undervaluing of Women's Paid and Unpaid Work

Topic: Women have long been associated with the private realm of the home, unpaid work, and childcare. Household labour has great value, but women are not paid for this work. We will examine the value of women's paid work and their unpaid work in the home and connect this work to the feminization of poverty.

Learning objectives

Students will understand:

1. The structural and systemic barriers that women face in reference to paid and unpaid labour as a result of traditional gender norms.
2. How the devaluing of unpaid labour leads the political system, legal codes, etc. to not see women as productive members of society (through Marilyn Waring's film on time use and the value of women's unpaid labour)
3. How the structural and systemic barriers make it difficult for women to fully engage in the labour market or even to be able to work
4. How women face the "time crunch" of attempting to combine paid and unpaid labour.
5. How boys and girls are steered at a young age into particular careers through education and different gender norms and expectations, leading to labour market segregation.
6. The myth that women have only recently started to work: women have always worked, whether they were paid or not.

Lesson components

1. Initial set of questions for students to think about (20 mins.)
2. Lecture (20 mins.)
3. Film: *Who's Counting: Marilyn Waring on Sex, Lies and Global Politics* (1995) to explore time use, value of unpaid labour and what happens to those who are deemed inactive (i.e. no social supports are created for those who are not seen to require them). Video 18:16 mins. (45 mins. with discussion)
4. Lecture (15 mins)
5. Reflection questions: Fix the Problem (20 mins)
6. Wrap-up discussion (15 mins)

7. Lecture and conclusion (15 mins)

Previously assigned readings

Course textbook: Deborah Stienstra. “Factsheet: Women and Restructuring in Canada.” Pp. 644 – 651.

Barbara Ehrenreich. “Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America.” Pp. 626 – 636.

Main concepts from readings

Stienstra:

1. A factsheet on the experience of restructuring in Canada in relation to women, with a particular focus on diverse experiences
2. Canadian economy has undergone significant restructuring as a result of private corporations and government stemming from neoliberalism, globalization, changes in demographics, etc
3. This leads to an increase of responsibilities for women and negatively impacts them and their community. Some women more impacted than others (a reflection of intersectionality; e.g., immigrant women experience more hardship).
4. Significant changes for women in the labour market under neoliberalism. Women make up almost half of the workforce, but:
 - a. Large majority are in part-time employment
 - b. Are in pink ghettoized jobs that are undervalued
 - c. Deal with a gender wage gap
 - d. Face difficulties finding adequate childcare
 - e. Face increased demand to do unpaid labour and experience the double burden of the “second shift”
5. Women rely heavily on government supports like Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplements. Thus, when government social policies and programs are cut, they experience greater hardships.
6. At the same time, women make up the majority of public-sector workers. Thus, when social and public services are reduced or eliminated, they experience further hardship through loss of employment during a time when social welfare is reduced.

Ehrenreich:

1. Well-known and regarded example of a journalist going undercover for a month to live in poverty in the US in 1998. Dated piece but still used to show difficulties of living in poverty.
2. Ehrenreich gave up everything to live as a poor individual in Key West. Moved around and worked a number of jobs—waitress, housekeeping.
3. Took place in period of welfare reform, which significantly impacts low-income women.
4. Notes camaraderie despite hardships of living in poverty.

Main concepts from film *Who’s Counting? Marilyn Warning on Sex, Lies and*

Global Politics

1. Time is a valuable tool
2. Time use has significant impact on women
3. Across the globe, women do more unpaid labour
4. Unpaid labour is not valued and people doing it are deemed nonproductive, making them invisible in the political arena. Yet political action is required to provide social and public policies & programs to support people doing unpaid labour and help them return to the labour market.

ACTIVITY #1: Warmup, self-reflection discussion

20 minutes

Materials: Questions in PowerPoint to explore and then later discuss as a class

Format: Work in groups of 3

Instructions: In groups of three, take 10 minutes to discuss the following questions on the PowerPoint. At the end we will have a larger group discussion.

Questions

1. Is there any type of work you won't do? Why?
2. How will do you or will you balance paid work, unpaid work, and demands of family and personal relationships?
3. In your domestic relationship, what role do you expect your partner to have in the division of household labour? What should your role be?
4. How do you or will you communicate this division of labour with your partner?
5. If you have or plan to have children, who will take care of them? How will this division of labour take place?

Follow up questions:

Cover the above questions with the larger class. Then ask:

- 1) Do you or will you have a different approach to paid and unpaid labour than your parents or guardians? Why and how?
- 2) How will you ensure that you have a division of labour that you're comfortable with?

LECTURE

20 minutes

Cover the above material in PowerPoints. Discuss concepts with the class.

FILM CLIP: Who's Counting: Marilyn Waring on *Sex, Lies and Global Politics*

Show 18:16 min to 36:00 min (18 min).

Total time (film and discussion): 45 minutes

Materials: PowerPoint questions for discussion after film

Format: Work in groups of 3

Instructions: As we review the film clip, please keep in mind the following questions on the PowerPoint. Once the clip is done, you will have a couple of minutes to discuss the film as a group. At the end we will have a larger group discussion.

Questions:

1. How has women's unpaid work been valued by society, politicians, and economists?
2. What is the actual value of women's unpaid work? What does it contribute to the economy and to society?
3. Who benefits from women's unpaid labour?
4. Why are time use surveys important when assessing women's work?
5. What are the larger (macro) concerns about the lack of value placed on women's unpaid work?

LECTURE

15 minutes. Cover the new lecture material in PowerPoints. Discuss concepts with the class.

ACTIVITY # 2: Fix the Problem!

20 minutes

Materials: PowerPoint questions to explore in small groups and later discuss as a class

Format: Work in groups of 3

Instructions: In groups of three, take 10 minutes to discuss the following questions on the PowerPoint. At the end we will have a larger group discussion

Questions:

1. Why does kinship work typically fall to women?
2. How might a universal child care policy help women workers?
3. What shifts need to take place in the private realm to help women workers?
4. Give 1 or 2 examples of how women's unpaid work sustains patriarchy and capitalism.
5. Given that women make up the majority of part-time workers, what can be done to improve both their unpaid and paid labour conditions?
6. How can part-time work be improved for women workers?

Whole-class wrap-up questions:

Time: 15 mins

1. What issues do you think need to be addressed around women's paid and unpaid work?
2. What program or policy change do you think would be most effective for supporting women's paid work and their unpaid household labour?
3. Do you think society and politicians are ready for such a change? Can we afford it?

4. Are you in favour of such a change? Why or why not?

Lecture and conclusions

Lecture on a few more points related to women and their work and then conclude the weekly topic

Time: 15 mins