

**Women Leaders in STEM**  
**Wednesday 7-8 pm RZR 205**

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**Overview**

**Goal:** To develop students' understanding of modern-day issues surrounding the role of women and female leaders in STEM disciplines, and prepare them to respond to these issues in industry, policy, and academia.

Students will read Francis Conley's memoir, *Walking Out on the Boys*, over the course of the semester. The extended case study will serve as a platform for discussing relevant concepts in the larger context of theory, practice, and current scholarship. When guest speakers visit the class, students will prepare questions in advance in order to steer conversation in a direction relevant to their personal experience. The course is based on the idea that students act most effectively in real-world situations if they are already aware of where they stand in relation to these issues and have developed personal goals, values, and skills for handling them. To demonstrate the development of their individual understanding, students will prepare a final presentation that analyzes a case study in an area related to their field of study.

*Learning Objectives*

- To understand the nature of current issues facing women in both theory and example (through readings and lectures, comprehension demonstrated in reading responses)
- To analyze the origin of these problems and their manifestations in literature and case studies (through class discussion)
- To evaluate the legitimacy of current arguments and assumptions (through class discussion)
- To solidify an individualized portrait of where one stands in relation to these topics and a personal value base for approaching these issues in the real world (achieved by the end of the class, demonstrated in final presentation)

**Assignments and Grading**

The final grade in this course will consist of the following:

Attendance & participation in discussion	30%
Leading one discussion group	35%
Final presentation	35%

- The attendance grade will be calculated as the fraction of attended lectures and excused absences (one allowed per semester) over the total number of lectures.
- In a small group, you will lead one class discussion over the course of the semester on a given topic. I will supply resources, but you are welcome to supplement and/or find your own. Discussion can take any form your group finds appropriate: seminar style, debate, role-play, simulation, etc.
- A final grade of 70% or above will be considered "satisfactory."

## Course Materials

Required text: Frances K. Conley (1998) *Walking Out on the Boys*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Other selected readings and supplemental materials will be available through our class website: [www.cogconfluence.com/women-leadership/fall13-course-page/](http://www.cogconfluence.com/women-leadership/fall13-course-page/)

## Course Trajectory & Weekly Syllabus

Although women in the U.S. now earn half of STEM doctorates, they represent 21% of full professors in science and 5% in engineering. Outside of faculty positions, women comprise only 25% of the STEM workforce. In the window between starting graduate school and applying for senior-level positions, the U.S. is losing many women from STEM fields. Retaining and advancing women in STEM fields is a serious challenge with consequences for technical innovation, economic growth, and the status of the U.S. as a global leader in STEM disciplines (why?). The numbers of women *leaders* in STEM and other areas are even smaller. The percentages of female heads of government, and women occupying upper-level positions in the corporate sector, nonprofit world, science, and industry is 20% across the board, and lower than 10% in some cases.

For the first 3 sessions we will focus on the question of whether there exist inherent and gender-specific differences between men and women, and how these differences affect women's roles and opportunities as leaders in STEM fields.

We will then begin to consider harassment in its overt and invisible forms, and forms of response to discrimination. From gender discrimination we will transition into the inescapable presence of sexuality and the power relationships it creates as a facet of human interaction.

Next we will address the question of how these factors contribute to differences in technical expectation and double standards in competency between men and women, and finally, how all of these issues take shape in different fields within the STEM sector.

Importantly, over the course of the semester, we will be considering our own responses to what I call the *Reformer's Dilemma*. One of the greatest challenges to those facing discrimination is when to raise complaint against the status quo. If this is done before the reformer has enough authority, claims will be dismissed by those with greater power. Yet in order to effectively challenge the status quo, one must work with the existing system for long enough to acquire sufficient authority. Is it acceptable for one to perpetuate a status quo that condones inequality or discrimination as a means to secure their own professional success? Is this leadership? The goal is for students to arrive at their own answer to this question by the time of the final presentation.

### **Wednesday January 15**

Introduction to course

Sheryl Sandberg: Why we have too few women leaders (TED video)

*For next class:* Read *Walking Out on the Boys* Chapter 1 (p. 9-38)

### **Wednesday January 22**

- Focus: Gender norms in the context of leadership
- WOOTB p. 36: The double-edged sword of assertiveness
- Christine Lagarde, the first female chief of the IMF  
<http://www.vogue.com/magazine/article/christine-lagarde-changing-of-the-guard/#1>  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/lagarde-vs-the-glass-ceiling/>
- Deborah Tannen, *Talking from 9 to 5*, differences in male and female communication
- Sign up for discussion groups

*For next class:* Read *Walking Out on the Boys* Chapter 2 (p. 39-66) (very rich)

### **Wednesday January 29**

- *Focus:* Gender norms in the context of leadership
- “What Women and Men Should Be, Shouldn’t Be, Are Allowed to Be, and Don’t Have to Be: the Contents of Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes,” Deborah Prentice and Erica Carranza, *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (2002)
- Finding mentors and partners
- WOOTB p. 61: Male and Female leadership styles

*For next class:* Read *Walking Out on the Boys* Chapter 3 (p. 67-88)

### **Wednesday February 5**

#### **Discussion Group: The Female Leadership “Advantage”**

“Leadership and Gender Advantage,” Robert P. Vecchio, *The Leadership Quarterly* (2002). *Available Online*

“The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence,” Alice H. Eagly, Linda L. Carli, *The Leadership Quarterly* (2003). *Available Online*

*For next class:* Read *Walking Out on the Boys* Chapter 4 (p. 89-106)

### **Wednesday February 12**

- Focus: Introduction to the “Reformer’s Dilemma”
- *Rebels in groups: Dissent, Deviance, Difference and Defiance*, J. Jetten & J. Hornsey (Eds.), (2011), see Deborah Prentice chapter (p. 201-218).

*For next class:* Read *Walking Out on the Boys* Chapter 5 (p. 107-127)

### **Wednesday February 19**

- Focus: Responding to overt harassment and invisible discrimination, workshop
- Frances Resigns

For next class: Read *Walking out on the Boys* Chapter 6 (p. 128-144)

### **Wednesday February 26**

- Focus: Responding to discrimination (*Guest Speaker*)

For next class: Read *Walking out on the Boys* Chapter 7 (p. 145-160)

### **Wednesday March 5: Spring Break, No class**

### **Wednesday March 12**

#### **Discussion Group: Sexuality in STEM leadership**

For next class: Read *Walking out on the Boys* Chapter 8 (p. 161-174)

### **Wednesday March 19**

- Focus: Technical expectation and double standards in competency

For next class: Read *Walking out on the Boys* Chapter 9 (p. 175-194)

### **Wednesday March 26**

(Guest Speaker)

For next class: Read *Walking out on the Boys* Chapter 10 (p. 195-215)

### **Wednesday April 2**

#### **Discussion Group: Revisiting the Reformer's Dilemma**

*Rebels in groups: Dissent, Deviance, Difference and Defiance*, J. Jetten & J. Hornsey (Eds.), (2011)

For next class: Read *Walking out on the Boys* Chapter 11 (p. 216-238)

### **Wednesday April 9**

- Focus: Differences Across fields - how do these issues take shape elsewhere?

For next class: Prepare presentation

### **Wednesday April 16**

Individual Presentations

### **Wednesday April 23**

Last class: Semester synthesis

### **Disability Accommodations**

Any student who has a documented disability and who may need special accommodations is encouraged to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All such discussion will remain strictly confidential. In addition, students with disabilities should also contact the Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.