AIM: Gender is one of the most pervasive aspects of human identity the world over. Our gendered identities influence the way we dress, talk, move, think, and live, and informs the choices we make. What part of gender comes from our genetic and biological makeup and what part is socially and culturally constructed? That is one of the broader questions asked in this course, one that has no single, simple, agreed upon answer. We will explore some of the answers scholars have suggested, based on anthropological and other scholarly research. Although relatively new as an academic specialty, the topic of gender is now considered so important that separate departments such as Women’s Studies have emerged, while in Anthropology, gender has become a mainstream topic present in every introductory textbook. This course will take an integrative bio-cultural approach, with an emphasis on culture, in analyzing gender the world over. It will deal not only with gendered persons cross culturally, but with gender relations, marriage, social and political organization, economy, religious views, sexual orientation, and responses to differential social attitudes and treatment based on gender. We will look at assumptions, attitudes, and various ways of knowing, living, and configuring gender in social systems throughout the world and through time.

FORMAT: Classes will be a combination of lectures, slideshow presentations, discussions, group exercises, and possibly guest speakers. The size of enrollment will determine how interactive classes will be. Required readings need to be done by class time in order to make discussions and group exercises effective. Attendance is mandatory and rewarded as a component of the grade with allowance for up to four excused absences. Some films will be shown in class, with specified responses required.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: Grading consists of 10% participation and attendance, 10% responses to videos (usually online quizzes), 15% oral presentation, 15% term paper, and 50% objective-style exams.

TEXTS: The main required text will be a course reader prepared by the professor (not yet available). This will consist of approximately one article per week, depending on length and difficulty. Two additional required books include Ahmed, Leila (1992) Women and Gender in Islam and Spiro, Melford (1997) Gender Ideology and Psychological Reality. These two books should be available in the UH bookstore.

SCHEDULE: (The final syllabus will include a weekly schedule of all the topics, activities, and assignments.)

PRACTICALITIES: (The last page of the final syllabus will have guidelines for students on performing well in the course. These include a description of oral reports, written papers, video responses, reading assignments, attendance and participation requirements, and a step-by-step guide to using the course website.)