

MARY CRAWFORD & RHODA UNGER



W O M E N
a n d
G E N

A FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY FOURTH EDITION

Women and Gender

A Feminist Psychology

FOURTH EDITION

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University of Connecticut

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WOMEN AND GENDER: A FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY

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Women and Gender

A Feminist Psychology

*To our husbands
Roger Chaffin and Burt Unger
for always being there;
to our children:
Mary, Mark, and Ben
Laurel and Rachel, and our grandchildren,
Alex, Isaac, and Hannah
who represent our hopes
for the future.*

About the Authors

MARY CRAWFORD is Professor of Psychology and former director of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Connecticut. She has taught the psychology of women and gender for twenty-eight years. As a faculty member at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, she earned the Trustees' Award for Lifetime Achievement. She has also held the Jane W. Irwin Chair in women's Studies at Hamilton College, served as distinguished Visiting Teacher/Scholar at the College of New Jersey, and directed the graduate program in women's studies at the University of South Carolina. Professor Crawford received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of Delaware. She is a consulting editor for *Psychology of Women Quarterly* and *Sex Roles*, the U.S. editor of *Feminism and Psychology*, and a Fellow of both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society. Mary Crawford has spoken and written about women's issues for audiences as diverse as the British Psychological Society, *Ms.* magazine and the "Oprah Winfrey Show." She is the author of numerous research articles on gender and is actively involved in mentoring future psychologists. Books she has authored or edited include *Gender and Thought: Psychological Perspectives* (1989); *Talking Difference: On Gender and Language* (1995); *Gender Differences in Human Cognition* (1997); *In Our Own Words* (1997/2000); *Coming Into Her Own: Educational Success in Girls and Women* (1999); and *Innovative Methods for Feminist Psychological Research* (1999).

RHODA UNGER is Professor Emerita of Psychology at Montclair State University and Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University. She received her Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Harvard University. Professor Unger was the first recipient of the Carolyn Wood Sherif Award from the Division of the Psychology of Women of the American Psychological Association. She is also the recipient of two distinguished publication awards and a distinguished career award from the Association for Women in Psychology. She has been the president of the Division of the Psychology of Women and, more recently, president of the Society for the Psychological Study

of Social Issues. She has lectured extensively in the United States and abroad as a Fulbright scholar in Israel, a distinguished lecturer at the University of British Columbia, and as a visiting fellow of the British Psychological Society. She is currently the founding editor of *ASAP (Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy)* an electronic and print journal of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, which can be found at www.asap-spssi.org. Professor Unger is the author or editor of eight previous books—the most recent of which is the *Handbook of the Psychology of Women and Gender* published in 2001. Her other books include: *Resisting Gender: Twenty Five Years of Feminist Psychology*; *Representations: Social Constructions of Gender*; *Women, Gender, and Social Psychology*; and *Female and Male*.

Preface

We wrote this book to share our excitement about the psychology of women and gender. Psychology is in the midst of a transformation into a more balanced and inclusive body of theory, research, and practice. Contemporary feminism has provided psychology with a wealth of new theoretical frameworks and scholarship. In turn, psychological research is being used to further social change to benefit girls and women. This is an exciting time for students to begin their study of women and gender, and an exciting time to be teaching in this dynamic field.

As we wrote the fourth edition of *Women and Gender*, we increasingly recognized the need to look even more at the social and cultural context of girls' and women's lives. The world has become a smaller and more dangerous place, and current political and social events will continue to have a major impact on relationships between women and men. This edition considers ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity to a greater extent than previous editions.

As *Women and Gender* enters its fourth edition, we feel more confident than ever that it is a thought-provoking and informative text that is also a great read. Through an ongoing process of dialogue with students and teachers who used the earlier editions, we have created a new shorter edition that speaks to today's students without sacrificing the depth and nuance that instructors expect from us. Because of feedback from previous editions of the book, we have added many new areas of research and eliminated much older, out-of-date material. We believe students will find that this book discusses many issues that are crucial to their lives today.

We believe in introducing students to a variety of perspectives. We try not to oversimplify research findings and social issues. Rather, we respect the intelligence of our student readers. Although many will be new to feminist concepts and psychological methods, all are capable of reasoned analysis. And we have found, along with other instructors who have used the earlier editions, that students appreciate a text that does not talk down to them. The issues are too important, and too complex, to be presented superficially.

We take up the issues students want to know about: media images, women and leadership, transgender activism, male-female differences, relationships, career success, sexuality, date rape, and eating disorders. Students are eager to discuss and debate these topics. We relate the most current and comprehensive research on each. Sometimes, we leave an issue open and unresolved, so the reader may use informed judgment to make up her or his own mind. Feminism has nothing to fear from critical thinking!

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

Even more than in the earlier editions, *Women and Gender* is grounded in a social constructionist perspective. In other words, we view gender not as an attribute of individuals but as a system of meanings in which we are all immersed. Furthermore, we regard psychology not as an abstract, decontextualized search for truth but a human enterprise shaped by culture. The social constructionist stance opens the way to critical analysis of popular culture, mass media, and everyday understandings of women and men. It also encourages critical analysis of why psychology chooses favored research topics, how it views women as objects of analysis, and how it has treated women who have made psychology their career, both historically and in the present.

The consistent social constructionist approach in this text makes it far more than just a compendium of research on sex differences or women's experiences. We draw on a huge variety of research using methods that range from case studies to surveys and experiments, and on theoretical perspectives from anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies, as well as psychology. Our social constructionist perspective organizes this wide-ranging knowledge base and fosters the analysis of women and gender in their social, cultural, and historical context.

THEMES OF THE BOOK

Four themes organize this book:

- **Gender is more than just sex.** Gender is a system of meanings related to power and status. It operates at individual, interactional, and cultural levels to structure people's lives. We examine phenomena from each of these levels—individual, internalized aspects such as gender identity and gender typing; interactional aspects such as stereotypes, attributions, and self-fulfilling prophecies; and cultural aspects such as media representations, laws, and religious teachings.
- **Language and naming are sources of power.** Aspects of reality that are named become more visible. Regaining for women the power to name is the first step in personal and social change. We analyze gender bias in naming and language use, both in ordinary language (e.g., the “generic he”) and in the specialized language of psychological constructs (e.g., “premenstrual syndrome”). We also show how ongoing language change is making

women's experiences more visible. Thinking critically about language can increase understanding of how the gender system works and how it can be changed.

- **Women are not all alike.** Feminist scholars have become increasingly sensitive to the differences among women—in social class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, and culture. Integrating diversity throughout each chapter of the book, we explore how these differences affect women's experiences, including gender socialization, adult relationships, and psychological distress and disorder. We also make use of a great deal of cross-cultural data, reflecting the transformation of psychological knowledge from its formerly white, North American, middle-class perspective. In discussing cultural differences, we avoid the ethnocentric view that presents other societies as exotic or less developed. Instead we contextualize practices that may seem strange to North American students. This depth of interpretation is especially important when discussing controversial issues such as female genital surgery. Moreover, cross-cultural data provide powerful examples of our first theme, that gender is more than just biological sex. Even phenomena thought to have a strong biological base, such as menarche and menopause, are shaped by culture.
- **Psychological research can foster social change.** Students want more than just information about the problems confronting girls and women. They want to know what is being done to resolve them, and what might be done in the future. Without an emphasis on change, studying the psychology of women and gender could promote a sense of helplessness and pessimism. In every chapter of this text, there are powerful examples of people who have been agents of change.

Many of the problems that confront girls and women today are the result of social structures that disadvantage them. While changes in individual attitudes and behaviors, traditionally a focus of psychological research and practice, are necessary, they must be linked with changes in societies as a whole. Psychological research and theory can point the way to progressive social change.

NEW IN THIS EDITION

This edition retains and expands successful features from earlier versions. Each of the four themes is woven throughout the book; each chapter ends with a summary of how the four themes are played out in that particular chapter (in Chapter 15, the themes are summarized and contextualized). This allows students to trace the themes throughout the book and see their relevance across a wide range of topics.

- **Student friendliness.** Written by two active researchers, *Women and Gender* has always been notable for its scholarship. In this edition we have made it shorter and more student-friendly while sacrificing none of the authoritative research base that made the earlier editions so popular with instructors.

- **More effective text and chapter organization.** One result of our dual focus on student interest and scholarly depth is that we have reorganized many chapters extensively by adding new themes and topics and eliminating some areas which are no longer relevant to women today.
- **Emphasis on social change.** A third major revision in this edition is the increased emphasis on personal and social change. Although the use of psychological research to foster change has always been a theme of the book, we now make the connections between research and social policy more visible, and we highlight women and men who are agents of change. Continuing an innovation begun with the third edition, each chapter contains a boxed feature, "Making a Difference," which describes one person's efforts to bring about social justice. These features, researched and written by Mykol Hamilton, Professor of Psychology and Psychobiology at Centre College, are an exciting and unique part of *Women and Gender*, providing models of feminist activism.
- **Expanded multicultural coverage.** The new edition expands the multicultural perspective of the previous editions by adding new findings about the interactions of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and social class in women's lives.
- **More coverage of women's health.** Throughout the book there is greater attention to women's health issues, reflecting the recent increase in research in this area. Rather than isolating health issues in a single chapter, we chose to stress the interaction of physical and psychological well-being, and their sociocultural specificity, by discussing health issues in context. For example, typical and atypical development of the female body is discussed in Chapters 5, 7, and 12; reproductive health issues in Chapters 5, 7, 8, and 12; the physical and psychological effects of culturally sanctioned violence against girls and women in Chapters 8 and 13; eating disorders in Chapters 2 and 14; and the social construction of mental health and illness in Chapters 8, 10, 12, and 14.

NEW COVERAGE IN EACH CHAPTER

Instructors are invited to take a look at the complete table of contents to see how comprehensive our coverage is. Here, we would just like to point out a few new areas of emphasis in each chapter.

Chapter 1: With its focus on issues relevant to diverse students, Chapter 1 is an engaging introduction to the field. It presents a variety of feminist perspectives, which are contrasted to conservative perspectives on women and gender. New to this edition is expanded coverage of third wave and global feminism, and updated references on attitudes toward feminists and feminism.

Chapter 2, "Images of Women and Men," has always been a student favorite. In this new edition we have revised the sequence so that students are presented first with material on media images and their impact before discussing stereotypes and their impact on perception and thought. The problematic aspects of women's quest for beauty and their conformity to impossible standards of weight are now presented in a multicultural and global perspective. New research on the institutional and cultural bases of various forms of sexism is highlighted. Many new illustrations and thought-provoking cartoons are included.

Chapter 3, “Doing Gender,” unique to our text, shows how the belief that women and men are (and should be) fundamentally different is created and sustained in ordinary interaction through cognitive processes. In this edition, we discuss new work on stereotype threat and its impact on women’s math performance. We also continue to move beyond the “double bind” by focusing on new research on perceptions of entitlement and legitimacy and how these influence the way women understand their place in the world.

Chapter 4, “The Meanings of Difference,” tackles that perennial student question, “Just how different are women and men?” helping students think critically about how difference is defined, measured, and evaluated. Debates over gender differences in cognition and personality are connected to current societal issues such as women’s underrepresentation in math and science careers and the undervaluing of care work done primarily by women. Along with updated material, this chapter has new research on culture and personality and on stereotype threat as it affects math performance in diverse cultural groups.

Chapter 5, “Biology, Sex, and Gender,” is the most sophisticated and nuanced discussion of this topic available to students. In this new edition, we critically review recent studies suggesting a genetic basis for sexual orientation as well as new research on the many biological factors that influence human sex. Intersex and transgendered individuals are discussed from ethical as well as scientific perspectives. Finally, there is an increased emphasis on the contribution of culture in determining how sex leads to gender.

Chapter 6, “Becoming Gendered: Childhood,” now includes a synthesis of theoretical and empirical work on the social construction of gender before birth and throughout childhood. New material examines the increasing polarization of girls’ and boys’ toys and clothing and its potential impact on gender equality. New topics include the gendering of emotion and the development of helplessness, the antecedents of gender flexibility, and how gender segregation in children contributes to the development of male dominance. This chapter integrates cutting edge information on cognitive processes and social interaction.

Chapter 7, “Becoming a Woman: Puberty and Adolescence,” includes new material on the experience of adolescent girls as they encounter their changing bodies and boys’ and men’s response to their sexual maturation. New to this edition is a discussion of the way the marketplace tries to speed up the sexual maturation of girls. In response to increasing biological determinist theories about puberty, we stress how ethnicity and social class interact with situational context. New topics include peers, schools, and social power and the impact of social demands on the mental health of young women. We also examine critically the questions of when and how participation in sports is good for young girls.

Chapter 8, “Sex, Love, and Romance,” covers the cultural construction of sexual desire, romance, and norms for sexual behavior. We offer comprehensive coverage of adolescent sexuality, lesbian and bisexual women, the silencing of female desire, and a discussion of female genital surgery in cross-cultural perspective. Our integration of new research on sexual scripts as a function of ethnic group and social class and on HIV/AIDS and women make this chapter topical as well as comprehensive.

Chapter 9, “Commitments: Women and Close Relationships,” updates its survey of heterosexual marriage, cohabitation, divorce, and lesbian relationships. Current statistics on these life paths in our own and other societies, as

well as emerging relationship types such as egalitarian marriage, are presented. New to this edition is the integration of qualitative research on how couples justify and perpetuate inequality in marriage.

Chapter 10, "Mothering," analyzes the diverse experiences of women who mother, including teen mothers, lesbian mothers, and single mothers. Medical and family-centered models of pregnancy and childbirth are contrasted, and the physical and psychological consequences of pregnancy and birth are comprehensively covered. The topic of reproductive rights includes new information on the erosion of women's choices in the current political climate.

Chapter 11, "Work and Achievement," reflects the rapid change in women's work roles. The unpaid work of women in their homes is acknowledged, and the domain of employment is analyzed for gender inequality as well as opportunity. A provocative section, "Leadership: Do Women Do It Differently?" discusses up-to-the-minute research on leadership style and effectiveness. The most recent research on tokenism and its differential effects for women, men, and ethnic minorities is integrated into this edition. The chapter also features an expanded synthesis of the costs and benefits of juggling work, relationships, and family.

Chapter 12, "Midlife and Beyond," continues to emphasize the social construction of age and aging. It contains a new unit on the way menopause is used as a way to construct a medical/biological image of the weakness of midlife women, and includes the newest research findings on the negative aspects of hormone replacement therapy and the pressures to remain young and beautiful that have led women to engage in unsafe health practices. The chapter discusses the many complex role transitions of midlife and the important role of past and present poverty on women's lives. In this edition, new details on the positive aspects of growing older are provided.

Chapter 13, "Violence Against Women," written especially for this book by Jacquelyn White, Barrie Bondurant, and Patricia Donat, is organized around a model that identifies the commonalities among the various forms of violence against women: child sexual abuse, dating violence, sexual assault, and wife abuse. Its developmental contextual perspective views violence against women as occurring in a sociocultural context that supports male control of women. New to this edition is a discussion of sexual harassment in varied settings. The controversial topics of miscommunication and date rape and false memory syndrome are addressed. Most important, there is a wealth of information on what is being done to stop violence against girls and women.

Chapter 14, "Mental and Physical Health," continues its emphasis on the relationship between physical and psychological health. We have expanded our coverage of the way race, ethnicity, and social class influence the development of various psychological disorders such as depression as well as eating disorders. We have expanded our discussion of relational-cultural therapy as an important form of feminist therapy while, at the same time, explaining the similarities and differences between various forms of therapy that focus on women's lives.

Chapter 15, "Making a Difference: Toward a Better Future for Women," allows the instructor to end the course with a positive synthesis of the gains that feminist psychology has brought. This empowering chapter speaks to students

about both personal and social change as a result of their involvement in feminist psychology.

At the personal level, Chapter 15 discusses research on the changes that occur in students' attitudes toward women, self-esteem, and feminist identity as a result of studying the psychology of women. It acknowledges and encourages increased personal empowerment for students.

At the societal level, Chapter 15 shows students how psychology can be used outside the classroom. It ties together the "Making a Difference" features from earlier chapters and discusses third wave feminism—the work of today's young activists. With examples of successful activism, it demonstrates how much society has changed in response to the first two waves of the women's movement.

USING THIS BOOK

Women and Gender contains a great deal of information and a sophisticated analysis of the field. However, as the wide adoption of the earlier editions at very diverse institutions shows, it is an approachable book. The fourth edition is considerably shorter and even more user-friendly. It can be read by people who have the equivalent of one course in psychology and no previous exposure to women's studies. Students find the wealth of women's own accounts of their experiences compelling. And they like the touches of humor that lighten serious issues.

The book can be used in either a chronological developmental sequence, in social/clinical clusters, or in groupings of topical issues. Each chapter can stand as a unit by itself, allowing maximum flexibility in combining them. Chapters 5–7, 9–10, and 12 have a developmental approach that covers the life span. Chapters 2, 3, and 11 are social psychologically oriented, and Chapters 4, 8, and 14 form a clinical/personality cluster.

SUPPLEMENTS

In our own teaching, we also use *In Our Own Words: Writings from Women's Lives*, (McGraw-Hill, 2001), a reader we developed specifically to connect the psychological research and theory in textbooks like our own with the voices and experiences of diverse girls and women. *In Our Own Words* is a collection of short (2–20 pages) essays, each with a distinctive personal voice. Some are humorous (Gloria Steinem's "If Men Could Menstruate"), some are poignant (Judith Ortiz Cofer's "The Story of My Body"), and all are memorable.

In Our Own Words is organized into five sections: Making Our Voices Heard; The Making of a Woman: Bodies, Power, and Society; Making Meaning; Making a Living: Women, Work, and Achievement; and Making a Difference. A section of 5–7 readings and their associated two-page introduction can be read along with a textbook chapter. For example, the section on bodies, power, and society nicely complements the *Women and Gender* chapters on "Images of Women" or "Sex, Love, and Romance." Or, students can write brief reaction

papers on selections of their choice, using the questions provided at the beginning of each essay. *In Our Own Words* provides a stimulus for student interest and class discussion and an experiential counterpoint to research.

The Instructor's Manual for the new edition, prepared by Mykol Hamilton with Jennifer Lambdin and Michelle Broadus, continues our tradition of providing the best teaching resources in the field. It features test items (multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay), current video listings, classroom demonstrations and other techniques for stimulating active involvement, sample syllabi, suggestions for using World Wide Web resources, course evaluation forms, ideas for integrating additional readings, and much more. Contact your McGraw-Hill representative for further information about supplements that accompany this text.

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Like the previous editions, this book came about with the help of colleagues and friends. Jackie White, Barrie Bondurant, and Patricia Donat contributed a compelling chapter on violence against girls and women to each edition. We are grateful to have their expertise on this vitally important topic. Mykol Hamilton contributed not only the Instructor's Manual but the "Making a Difference" feature. We are grateful to Mykol for taking on these sizable tasks. Her superb work will make teaching easier and more rewarding for instructors who choose our book.

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We consider this book to be truly a collaborative effort. Our respective partners, Roger Chaffin and Burt Unger, have by now put in decades of effort in support of our research and writing. Their belief in the value of our work and their tangible support has sustained us through the tough spots. Our colleagues, students, and friends, too, should know that this book would not exist without your cooperation. We are grateful for the network of support that makes our work possible.

Mary Crawford
Rhoda Unger

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