

Sex and Gender: Take-Home Final

Please type your essays. Maximum length: five single-spaced pages or equivalent, as specified below. Turn it in electronically to turnitin.com as you did before, but also please put a hard copy in my mailbox in the main anthro office (102 Stewart). Due December 14.

Please use the guidelines from the midterm in writing these essays. As before, a good essay will make one or more arguments (positions, claims) and will support them with evidence. No outside reading is expected, Please Strunk and White your essays in order to stay within these page restrictions.

First Question: max length: 2 single-spaced pages

In the middle part of the course (Evolutionary perspectives on sex and gender) we discussed how selection might have shaped sex differences in a variety of areas. For any THREE of the following, give some evidence to support the existence of a sex/gender difference (the evidence can come from any part of the course), and explain why it might have been favored by selection (i.e., explain how it might be adaptive in a Darwinian sense). Please use the theory you learned, don't just make it up. There is considerable intra-sexual variation in these areas also; use evolutionary theory to address this if and where appropriate.

- (a) same-sex aggression and risk-taking
- (b) mate preferences: physical characteristics
- (c) mate preferences: behavioral characteristics
- (d) interest in uncommitted sex (e) parental investment

Second Question: max length: 2 single-spaced pages

The societies that we have learned about from the assigned readings and films vary in the nature of social relationships between women and men, and between people of the same sex. Choose some aspects of this variation that seem important to you, and describe and explain the variation. Use ethnographic examples from the last part of the course to support your answer. The explanations can be evolutionary, economic, and/or social, but should focus on material discussed in readings and lecture.

Third Question: max. length: 1 single-spaced page

It has become popular these days to say that gender differences arise from the interaction of nature and nurture (genes and environment, biology and culture, etc.). It's a nice, pluralistic, feel-good statement. But *how* do they interact to produce the differences we see between women and men? (a) Explain norms of reaction briefly, and how it is relevant to this question (b) give an example of how a child's interests and behavior shape his/her own socialization and how this can enhance sex/gender differences, and (c) give an example of how small sex differences in infants or young children can be shaped (enhanced or muted) by a society's way of life (culture).