Gender in everyday interactions

- In our everyday interactions we “do gender”—act to support and bring into creation our belief that men and women are different
- Some examples:
  - Establishing gender of interaction participants is crucial
  - Self-segregation
  - Using gendered terms as negative or positive labels
  - Jokes about the differences between men and women
  - Attributing success, failure or preferences to gender

Language and gender

- Our beliefs about gender are built into the way we use language.
- Some examples:
  - Men and women are “opposite sexes”
  - English uses male generic language, e.g., freshmen, mankind, “he” meaning “he or she”
  - Spotlighting: unnecessarily highlighting a person’s gender, e.g., “lady doctor” and “woman lawyer” define women professionals as exceptions
  - Women’s names and titles draw attention to their relationships with men, e.g., Mrs., Miss, Mrs. John Smith
  - Many words for women, including “girl,” “gal,” “lady,” “female,” “Ma’am,” even “woman,” have ambiguous connotations

The gender pay gap

- 2001: Women made $752 dollars for every $1000 made by men
  - Median weekly earnings for all full-time workers: $606; men $683; women $517
- Gap has closed—1950: $486; 1970: $594; 1990: $716
- Gap holds for different races and education levels

Gender in the dictionary

- Manly: having the qualities generally regarded as those that a man should have; virile; strong, brave, resolute, honorable, etc.
- Womanly: like a woman, womanish
- Masculine: having qualities regarded as characteristic of men and boys, as strength, vigor, boldness, etc.; manly; virile
- Feminine: having qualities regarded as characteristic of women and girls, as gentleness, weakness, delicacy, or modesty
- Effeminate: 1. having the qualities generally attributed to women, as weakness, timidity, delicacy, etc. 2. characterized by such qualities; weak; soft; decadent, etc.
Avg. earnings by gender & education, 1998

Why are men paid more than women?

1. Different work patterns
   - Home-work conflict creates seniority gap
   - Although women may choose different work patterns, their choices are constrained (e.g., by family wage gap and lack of child care)
   - However, after accounting for work patterns, women make around 80% of what men do

2. Comparable-worth discrimination (women are paid less for comparable jobs)
   - The "family wage" vs. "pin money"
   - Women’s work is devalued

3. Pay discrimination (women are paid less for the same jobs)

4. Promotion gap
   - Job ladders (gendered internal labor markets)
   - "Glass ceiling" vs. "glass escalator"