Sociology 493H1F  Gender Inequality Today

Essay Assignment

Prof. Bonnie Fox
Due date:  Nov. 16, 2017, at the start of class

Assignment:  You should choose one of the three books below. The essay should address the questions I’ve raised about the book you chose. You may also want to comment on the book’s strengths and weaknesses, or discuss what reading it added to your understanding of gender inequality.

The book is about how divisions of work and responsibility based on gender develop as women and men in couples negotiate the transition to parenthood. Your essay should describe the (conventional) divisions of work and responsibility that developed for many of the 40 couples in Fox’s sample, in their first year as parents. Describe the types of gender inequality that were involved in these divisions of work between the women and men – but also any other gender inequalities that developed. Also explain the key causes of the conventional arrangements and inequalities that developed.
There were couples in Fox’s sample who were exceptional, in not developing more conventional patterns with parenthood. Why did they not develop the same conventional patterns the other couples had? Finally, what do you think would need to change for parenthood to become a more equality-making experience?

This book examines the migration of women from poor countries to Canada to work as nannies, and argues that citizenship status is more important than gender in creating inequalities in their lives. Your essay should explain what factors push women in poor countries to migrate to work in wealthy countries like Canada – and how Canada benefits from these women’s need to come here. Then describe the working conditions that nannies experience in Canada – highlighting the features of their experiences that are especially problematic (and exploitative). What would need to change in Canada to significantly improve these women’s work experiences?

Stone found a sample of unusual women: very successful in their careers, they nevertheless quit their jobs when their children were young. Journalists had been writing about this, arguing that the cause of this ‘opting out’ was the transformation women experience when they become mothers. Stone probes the stories of these women to find out why they quit great careers to stay home full time. Your essay should describe the
main reason why these women quit their jobs, giving a full description of the pressures on them to do so. Also, describe other factors influencing the decision to quit. Then discuss what Stone’s findings tell us about the nature and causes of gender inequality in the workplace. (Consider Joan Acker’s argument when thinking about this.)

Please write a proper essay. Be careful to avoid plagiarizing: Any direct copying of text must involve proper citation, to avoid a charge of plagiarism. When copying text word for word, you must put the text in quotation marks, and then identify the writer’s surname, date of publication and page number(s) – in parentheses. If you are paraphrasing something in the text (that is, not copying word for word, but almost that), you must also cite surname, date and page number(s). The same is true if you are using specific facts or closely summarizing arguments from a writer’s work. Note that in this kind of essay, it is best to use your own words, and avoid quoting.

Requirements/Specifications:

Every essay should have a title page and a page of References

Page limit: 12 pages of text (not counting the title page and page of references)
Font (type size): 12 pitch (no smaller)
Spacing: double spacing only
Margins: 1 inch (2.2 cm) all around
Presentation: just staple your essay; do not use a binder of any sort