Here is a list of the readings covered thus far in the semester.

1) Anne Fausto-Sterling ‘Dueling Dualisms’:

2) Judith Butler:

3) Ancient Greeks: creation myth, Hippocratic Corpus:

4) Siobhan Somerville, ‘Scientific Racism’:

5) Evelyn Hammonds, ‘Black (W)holes…’:
6) Kimmel, *Welcome to Guyland*: 

7) Barbara Welters, 'The Cult of True Womanhood': 

8) Thomas Laqueur, 'Destiny is Anatomy': 

9) Anne Carson, 'Putting Her In Her Place': 
Questions to consider:

How do the readings establish gender as something that is socially constructed?

How can we use theory as tools for understanding a set of evidence and for understanding the society in which we live?

Some of the readings are historical; some are contemporary. How do the historical readings allow us to see/understood something that is seemingly normal as strange in our own world?

Some things to consider as you write this paper:

It is not the subject matter that make a paper sociological, but the perspective. A good sociology paper will balance both individual agency and structural constraints (i.e. gender norms). Be careful of the following analytic traps/explanatory devices. They tend to close an argument rather than open it.

1) The individual argument: the individual is free to make choices, and those decisions can be understood by understanding the ideas/decisions/personal narrative of the individual. Our decisions are informed/constrained by the structures of society. Bob doesn’t wear skirts or makeup. Why? You are all students at Middlebury College. Why?

2) The ‘human nature’ argument: women are naturally weaker and therefore occupy this role in society. Women have the capacity to reproduce and therefore are the caregivers. Men are stronger by nature and therefore are the producers. You may not argue on the basis of biology, science, psychology. Yes, there might be science involved, but your task is to understand what society does with that information, how it is constructed, and the implications of that construction for the individual.

3) The society argument: ‘society made me do it’ cannot be an explanation for a particular phenomenon. Society is a process, not a thing.

If you are having trouble identify an argument…

Option 1: A question you want to answer. How does the theory help us understand something (depictions of black female sexuality in music videos/anti-abortion speeches in congress)? What do we learn about the evidence from the theory? What are the implications of our findings?

Option 2: A hypothesis you want to test. Given the theory, what might you expect to be the case? How well does your evidence align with the theory? If it does, what conclusions might you draw about your evidence? If it does not, what might we learn from the theory and about your evidence?

Evidence

Sociology is an empirical discipline. This means that your evidence will take the form of observations. You may choose conduct interviews, participant observations (parties, dining halls, dorms), or you can use media images, ads, newspapers, videos.

Requirements

***You must use the readings from class in your paper, including key concepts and quotes. You may use whatever format you would like for citations. Just be consistent.

****Your paper must have an argument (if you are having trouble identifying one, see options 1 and 2 above. You must be able to support your argument with evidence, and then draw conclusions.
Possible prompts: