

Chapter 1—The Study of Communication, Gender, and Culture

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Rick was born with male and female sex organs. Which of the following is the best term to describe Rick as a person with biological qualities of a male and a female?
- transsexuals
 - intersexed
 - transgendered
 - gender rebels
 - dualsexed

ANS: B PTS: 1 REF: p. 20

2. Information about sex, gender, and communication is best gleaned through
- quantitative research methods
 - qualitative research methods
 - critical research methods
 - mixed research methods.
 - each of the methods above offers useful insights into sex, gender, and communication.

ANS: E PTS: 1 REF: p. 14-15

3. Which of the following persons would be accurately described as "cisgendered?"
- A person born as a biological female who embodies both masculine and feminine characteristics.
 - A biological male who prefers romantic and sexual relationships with biological males.
 - A biological female who identifies as female and feminine.
 - A biological female who enjoys dressing in men's clothing.
 - A person whose biological sex is inconsistent with their gender identity.

ANS: C PTS: 1 REF: p. 26

4. The meaning of masculinity and femininity in our lives is affected by
- our age
 - our race
 - our interactions with others
 - the historical time period in which we live
 - all of the above

ANS: E PTS: 1 REF: p. 22-25

5. Which of these chromosomal patterns has/have been found in people our society labels male?
- XXX
 - XX0
 - XYY
 - X0
 - none of these

ANS: C PTS: 1 REF: p. 20

6. The term *patriarchy* literally means ____.
- oppression of females.
 - from male standpoint.

- c. rule by the fathers.
- d. government by men.
- e. all of the above.

ANS: C PTS: 1 REF: p. 32

7. Your *Gendered Lives* book includes a text box outlining transgendered activism on college campuses. Students emphasized the connection between language and identity by creating ways of identifying themselves and others that did not specify gender. The word "ze" is:
- a. a pronoun representing masculine and feminine people.
 - b. a verb representing transformation.
 - c. a description of a person who is transgendered.
 - d. a description of a person who is androgynous.
 - e. a description of a person who is transsexual.

ANS: A PTS: 1 REF: p. 29

8. Yan Bing and Dianna are college students discussing how they each define "cheating" in a romantic relationship. Yan Bing considers flirting during an IM conversation cheating, but Dianna thinks cheating only involves physical contact. Later, they continue the discussion with friends over dinner. This scenario best describes which of the following?
- a. Communication is a dynamic and contextual.
 - b. Communication is gendered.
 - c. Yan Bing and Dianna are exhibiting feminine styles of communication.
 - d. Content level of meaning and relationship level of meaning are not the same thing.
 - e. All of the above.

ANS: A PTS: 1 REF: p. 33

9. A professor says to a student, "I will not accept your paper after 5 pm today." The content level of meaning in this message is that
- a. the professor is open to negotiation.
 - b. the professor feels s/he has to explain the policy to the student.
 - c. the professor can exercise power over the student.
 - d. the professor feels s/he has greater status than the student.
 - e. the professor won't accept the paper after 5 pm today.

ANS: E PTS: 1 REF: p. 34-35

TRUE/FALSE

1. Researchers have found that views of gender generally remain consistent over the average person's life-span.

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 23-27

2. Society, family, and friends teach us what it means to be male and female.

ANS: T PTS: 1 REF: p. 20-26

3. The Industrial Revolution led to the redefinition of masculinity and femininity.

ANS: T PTS: 1 REF: p. 24-25

4. Historically and in all cultures, women have been the primary caretakers of young children.

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 24

5. Hermaphrodite is the preferred word for people who have male and female sex organs.

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 20

6. Androgyny is a term describing individuals who "feel their biological sex is wrong—that they are really women trapped in men's bodies or men trapped in women's bodies."

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 23

7. There are two distinct genders, female and male.

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 20-26

8. Gender identity is the same thing as one's biological sex.

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 21

9. Most transsexuals experience a change in their sexual orientation after transitioning.

ANS: F PTS: 1 REF: p. 28

IDENTIFICATION

Instructions: Identify the following:

1. Content and relational levels of meaning

ANS:

Communication includes the content level of meaning, which is the literal or informational message, and the relational level of meaning, which defines the relationship between communicators. Both levels must be understood to interpret communication. Dimensions of the relational level are liking, responsiveness, and power. Example, C = "I'll meet you at the thing over by the place." R = liking/familiarity between communicators.

PTS: 1 REF: p. 34-35

2. Essentializing

ANS:

Essentializing involves referring to all men as if they are the same, and as if that similarity reflects some fundamental essence that is maleness. In the same vein, essentializing involves referring to all women as if they are the same, and as if that similarity reflects some fundamental essence that is female-ness. Essentializing is problematic because it obscures differences between people of the same sex while also minimizing similarities between women and men.

PTS: 1 REF: p. 19

3. Sex

ANS:

Sex is an individual quality determined by biology (chromosomes and hormones). Sex is biological; gender is socially constructed. Sex is innate; gender is learned. Sex is unchanging, or stable (possible exception-sex change surgery.)

PTS: 1

REF: p. 19-20

4. Gender

ANS:

Gender refers to the traits, behaviors, and assumptions linked to masculinity and femininity. Individuals perform gender roles, however, those roles are created and defined by society at large. Gender varies over time and between and within cultures.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 20-26

5. Androgyny

ANS:

Coined in the 1970s, androgyny is the combinations of the Greek words *aner/andros* (man) and *gyne* (woman). Androgynous people reject rigid sex roles and embody dualities that the culture considers masculine and feminine. For example, an androgynous person may be both strong and sensitive.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 23

6. Symbols

ANS:

Symbols are what humans use to communicate. They include signs (i.e., "\$" signifies dollar) and words. Symbols are abstract, arbitrary, and ambiguous. Symbols require mediation or interpretation of thought. Humans create meaning because symbols are not innate. People differ in how they perceive and interpret communication.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 35-36

7. Intersexed

ANS:

Intersexed individuals are born with ambiguous genitals and may differ from most people in hormonal, chromosomal, and physiological ways. Intersexuals, for many years, routinely underwent "clarifying surgery," which reconstructed genitals to appear more typically masculine or feminine. Concerning intersexed people, doctors have routinely decided which sex the child was "meant to be" and advised parents to authorize "clarifying surgery" that then allowed parents to bring the child up as the sex it was "meant to be."

PTS: 1

REF: p. 20

8. Transsexual

ANS:

Transsexual is a term that usually refers to someone who has changed their physical sex to more closely align with their sexual identity. This is done through hormones and surgery. Transsexuals are often referred to as post-transitional males to females (MTF) or post-transitional females to males (FTM).

PTS: 1

REF: p. 27

9. Cisgendered

ANS:

A person whose biological sex and gender identity are consistent. The term draws attention to the taken-for-granted assumption that all people experience consistency between sex, gender and social orientation.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 26

10. Patriarchy

ANS:

Patriarchy is a term that literally means "rule by fathers." To say that a culture is patriarchal means that it is primarily focused on men's goals, needs, and realities. Men are given preference over women as ideologies, structures, and practices are defined by and for men.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 32

ESSAY

1. Popular psychology books often profile the behaviors and characteristics of the "opposite sexes." Based on your understanding of material from chapter 1, how would you critique this labeling of men and women? Make sure your answer demonstrates your understanding of essentializing, androgyny, and sex and gender.
The framework for the answer to this essay may be found throughout chapter 1.

ANS:

Answers should:

- Explain the difference between the definitions of sex and gender (pages 19-26)
- Explain the tendency of these books to essentialize or presume that all members of a sex are alike in certain respects (page 18) and focus on these as key opposing differences between sexes
- Reference that many men and women have androgynous characteristics, or qualities associated with both masculine and feminine ideals (page 23)

Students may also note that men and women have many similarities (page 18) and how societal definitions of gender are in a constant state of change.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 18-26

2. The author of your *Gendered Lives* text states, "Gender, culture, and communication are interlinked.... Because this is so, we cannot study any one of them without understanding a good deal about the other two." Explain what Wood means by this statement. How do these elements mutually influence one another?

ANS:

Our conceptions of masculine and feminine behaviors are influenced by culture and they change over time. Different cultures have differing expectations for masculine and feminine behaviors. We learn gendered identities through communication, which is dynamic and systemic. Context, culture, and history are systems that influence how we understand and construct gender. Therefore, gender is influenced by culture. Through communication, we both reinforce or challenge these ideals. Using communication as a dynamic process, we may change cultural meanings of gender. For instance, some challenge the traditional view of gender as dualities and consisting of only two possibilities and researchers have recognized androgynous characteristics in men and women. We may influence ideas about gender during personal interactions. By communicating these ideas, conceptions of gender change.

PTS: 1 REF: p. 19-36

3. Define levels of meaning in communication and provide a concrete example of each level of meaning.

ANS:

Communication has two levels of meaning: content and relationship. Content level of meaning is the denotative, or literal, meaning of communication. Relationship level of meaning defines the relationship between communicators. Dimensions of relationship level meaning are power, liking, and responsiveness. Example: "You will do what I say." Content level of meaning is that the receiver of this message will do what the sender says. Relationship level of meaning is that the sender has the power to tell the receiver what to do.

PTS: 1 REF: p. 33-36

4. Unlike sex, gender is a relational concept. Explain what this means and the implications of it, and give an example that illustrates your point.

ANS:

Gender is a relational concept because we can only understand femininity compared and contrasted with masculinity. Likewise, we cannot understand masculinity without the concept of femininity. We socially construct these two to be opposites; for example, if we see masculinity as being about strength, then femininity is seen as weakness. This concept is important because it means that when we change our ideas about one gender, we necessarily change the way we think about another gender.

PTS: 1 REF: p. 25

5. What is the difference between being transgendered and transsexual?

ANS:

While some people may define these terms differently, generally a transgendered person is someone who feels that his or her gender identity does not match his or her biological sex. For instance, a transgendered person may have been born female but feel male or very masculine. A transsexual person is someone who has taken hormones or had surgery to change one's biological sex. Some transgendered people never want to have surgery to become a different biological sex.

PTS: 1 REF: p. 27

6. What does it mean to say, "meanings are constructed through human interaction with symbols"? Why is this significant for our understanding of gender?

ANS:

This statement means that the meaning of ideas, concepts, and things are not inherent. They are built culturally through interactions that produce a shared understanding. For example, red roses are not inherently connected to love, but in the U.S., we have decided that giving someone red roses is a gesture of romantic love. This idea is important for our understanding of gender because it points out that what we agree is masculine or male and feminine or female is socially agreed upon but not the inherent truth. It may change across cultures, over time, and in different contexts.

PTS: 1

REF: p. 35-36