ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Women at Work
LIR 891, Section 4
Fall, 2004

The usual specifications for written assignments that are required in other SLIR classes will apply in this class: double-spaced typed papers that are clearly written. Also please observe any deadlines.

Diversity Panels: 300 points.
Purpose: To examine how different groups perceive their own power and the application of power at work
Basis: Pairs or triads
Products:
- Literature review that covers at least 7 books or journal articles on power (due November 17)
- Interview transcripts from a minimum of 8 interviews per student (due November 17)
- Summary Paper (due December 1)
- Panel presentation (due December 8)

As described in the course purpose, the world of work has changed dramatically for women over the past 40 years but in many important ways women are still not equal to men, earnings and absence at the top of the major corporations in the U.S. being the among the most obvious. Why this is the case is something of a puzzle, and examining that puzzle is a major function of this course. Something that becomes evident in readings about women at work and women’s conversation and observations about their own experiences is that the elements that distinguish men’s and women’s career experiences are often subtle. For example, it is rare that a woman will hear that she has been turned down for a promotion because she is a woman, though she might be turned down because she is not aggressive enough or too conciliatory, traits more often associated with women’s styles at work. This assignment is meant to get at one of the subtle areas – perceptions of and use of power.

This assignment has four parts: a short literature review, interviews of at least 8 people from a single demographic group along with transcripts of the interviews, a summary paper based on the interviews, and an in-class presentation based on the interviews.

Products:

   Literature Review:
   Please do a literature review of at least 7 books or academic journal articles on social power (do not use Estrich or French & Raven for this portion of the assignment). Your review should include a summary of each publication (purpose, central premise, nature of supporting material or data, and central conclusion), a discussion of the key themes that unify the literature you examine, and what you think is missing from the literature. Please attach a reference list showing complete
citations for all of your sources. Also, please attach copies of all of the articles you review. The review should be approximately 15 double-spaced pages.

**Interview and Interview Transcripts:** In this part of the assignment, each student is responsible for interviewing at least 8 people from a particular demographic group. Attached is a list of groups. We will decide on which group your interviewees will be drawn from during the first class session. It will be your responsibility to identify the interviewees. Do NOT interview anyone from SLIR or who is an HR/IR professional or student. There will be training on interviewing during the second class. The method you will be using is one where all of the interviewers will be using the same interview protocol. The diversity surfaces in the systematic differences in the answers by members of the different groups. You may want to do the interviews in pairs, but that is not required.

You should plan to provide a “transcript” of the interviews. Usually a transcript is a word-for-word record of the questions and answers. Because this is difficult to get without taping (or otherwise recording) the interview, we do not expect a complete transcript. However, you should do your best to record most of what is said in each interview.

**Summary Paper:** Prepare a paper summarizing the interview experience and what you learned. The paper should include the following: a summary of the characteristics of those you interviewed (age, gender, occupation, etc.), presentation and analysis of the information found in the interview, including the common themes as well as differences in responses identified in the interviews, and an integration of what you learned into the literature included in your literature review. The paper should be approximately 15-20 pages.

**In-class Presentations:** The objective of the in-class presentations is for each group to share with the class what they have learned from their interviews and for there to be an exchange between groups about the similarities and differences between each group’s findings. The presentations should be relatively informal - no handouts or slides, but rather a conversational presentation of what they learned and what was interesting about it. Each group should expect questions from the class and some discussion. The expectation is that differences among groups will surface from the examination of their answers to the same questions.


One objective of the course is to give you a different perspective and add to your understanding of the issues and challenges peculiar to women in the workplace. One requirement of this course is that you keep a journal describing your reactions to the ideas presented during the course. You can base your journal entry on either class or the readings. Because you will be synthesizing your reactions to the interviews in a separate assignment, do not make those the focus of your journal entry. These entries do not have to be long (rarely more than a page or two) but can reflect any number of issues:

- How the experience stimulated you
• What you feel you learned
• Whether you agree or disagree with the perspective that was presented
• How your own understanding about what is important about women at work changed due to this contact

You do not have to describe every encounter; however, this journal should serve as a record of how your own knowledge and understanding of workplace disability is changing as a result of this course. The journal should be about 15 pages, typed double-spaced. While it does not have to be written in a formal style, we do expect correct grammar, spelling, complete thoughts, etc.

To conclude the journal, please attach a 5 page plan describing how what you have learned will affect your actions and behavior in your next HR job. As part of this summary, discuss what you think you will do differently as a result of your experiences with the class and its assignments.

**Discussion Questions** (100 points in total). Due in various classes.
As will become evident, one of the lessons of this course is that for women to make progress, they need to begin to share their stories. Class discussion is one vehicle for learning that lesson. To foster discussion and increase student comfort with conversing in class, each of you will be responsible for generating discussion questions for one class and leading the discussion.

During the first class meeting, each student will be assigned a class for which (s)he will be responsible for posing her/his questions to the rest of the class and leading some discussion. The format will be that at a certain point in the class, the responsible student will distribute a list of at least three questions based on the reading for that period. Students will break into groups of two to three and discuss the questions together. Then, we will reconvene as a class and share the points made in the small groups.

In addition, we expect to have guest speakers for three class meetings. Please generate at least three questions based on the readings for two of those classes, the ones held on September 15 and September 29, that you can pose to our guests. Embed your question in terms of a specific reading. You can use either the required or suggested readings to construct your list; or if you have an additional reading that you want to use, that is fine. Please type them up and hand them in at the start of class. Each set of questions to the guests will be worth 5 points. The questions and discussion facilitation for the individual class will be worth 90 points.
Demographic Groups

1. Unmarried women under age 36 with no children
2. White women with at least one child under age 6
3. Minority women age 36 or younger
4. Women in their 50s
5. Women not born in the U.S.
6. Men under age 36
7. Men in their 50s
8. Women in jobs not traditionally held by women