

LANGUAGE AND THE GENDERED ORDER

Homework Assignment: Due Wed. 10/20; Suggested length: 1 -1 ½ pg, typed, double-spaced

Comment on two of these examples, drawing upon the Richardson and Lorber readings. Have these students/worker been treated fairly or unfairly? Do you see these incidents as disrupting or reinforcing the gendered scripts that Lorber describes? How do your answers reflect your sense of the importance of language usage and particular styles of verbal communication to gender equality?

1. A student turns in a literature paper in which she refers to the human race as “mankind” and individuals as “he”. The paper is returned with a failing grade because the student did not use inclusive language, as the professor had requested in the assignment prompt.
2. An editor at a publishing house includes in her assistant’s job evaluation a negative comment about her assistant’s refusal to use inclusive language (e.g. humans, he/she) in her prose.
3. A female student receives a low grade for her political science oral presentation because, in the instructor’s words, “She uses typical unassertive female speech patterns and a deferential style.” When the student questions the grade, the instructor tells her that the low grade will benefit her because it will inspire her to be a more assertive speaker, which will help her not only in school, but also in her future professional life.

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