

# Is English Sexist?<sup>1</sup>

**English 379: Language & Gender**  
**Prof. K. Emmons**

**Case Western Reserve University**  
**Spring 2008 ~ MW 9:00 – 10:15 ~ CRN: 16889**



In the 1970s Robin Lakoff suggested that women and men spoke, essentially, different languages – do you think that’s true (sitcom dialogue aside)? Do women speak a “powerless” dialect of English? Is “assertiveness training” the answer? Do men gossip? What’s the latest attempt to establish an epicene pronoun?

Why do women’s statements often sound like questions? Do men dominate group discussions? How many vocabulary words (on average) do men (and women) possess? Why is “feminist” the “f-word” these days?<sup>2</sup>



This course will explore questions like these (and many others) as they relate to the interdisciplinary study of language and gender. We will outline the progression of scholarship from Robin Lakoff’s 1975 *Language and Woman’s Place* to the current proliferation of research on the topic. A variety of methodologies and theoretical frameworks will inform our study and discussion. Assignments will include a weekly journal, several (2-3 page) research reports and/or book reviews, and a final research project/seminar paper.

<sup>1</sup> Check out the ongoing debate on Case’s Forum: <http://forum.case.edu/read/7/25288>

<sup>2</sup> Clipart courtesy of: free-clipart.net