

## Gender issues at the heart of homophobic bullying

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When it comes to homophobic bullying, males are the most common instigators but also the most common victims, author C. J. Pascoe told a Tulane audience on Wednesday (April 17). Her book, *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*, links bullying to society's definitions of masculinity.



C. J. Pascoe, author of *Dude, You're a Fag*, discusses how the narrow definition of masculinity may contribute to bullying. (Photos by Cheryl Gerber)

Pascoe spoke for the third annual [Marla Custard Lecture on Gender and Sexuality](#) hosted by the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women and the Newcomb College Institute.



Tulane students listen intently to Pascoe's lecture about the relationship between homophobic harassment, heterosexism and masculinity.

Her topic was timely. Also on Wednesday, an anti-bullying bill for public schools that was being considered by a Louisiana legislative committee failed to move forward. The bill would have provided a clearer definition of bullying and required schools to train faculty to identify such harassment.

In her lecture, Pascoe delved into what lies at the heart of homophobic bullying.

She said it is linked to a male's attempt to achieve society's definition of masculinity, leading to a compulsion to idolize heterosexuality and deride homosexuality.

Society's narrow definition of masculinity as the ability to impose one's will on others "through power, competence, dominance and inherent heterosexuality" is not only exceptionally degrading, but also highly detrimental to day-to-day interactions, Pascoe said.

Research shows that "90 percent of recent school shootings involved boys who were teased for being gay," she said.

In her book, which won the Book of the Year Award from the American Educational Research Association, Pascoe suggests ways to redefine gender norms that are damaging to both boys and girls.

She is an assistant professor of sociology at Colorado College. Her current research focuses on gender, youth, homophobia, sexuality and new media.

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