

SOCIOL 276-0-20 Introductory Topics in Sociology
GDNR ST 210-0-20 Gender, Power, and Culture in America

Sociology of Sexuality

SPRING 2010

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sexuality is fundamental to the cultural, economic, political, and social organization of the United States. This course examines the theoretical and methodological approaches that have been used in sociological studies of sexuality—including those that guide sexuality-related analyses of meanings and identities, practices and behaviors, power and politics, and morality and social control.

The course is divided in three parts. Part I provides some important conceptual foundations for us to understand the various approaches that have been used to study sexuality, as well as the contributions of sociology to the field of sexuality studies. In this section we will discuss the work and influence of Freud, Kinsey, and Foucault, as well as understandings that emerged from social constructionist approaches.

In Part II, based on analysis of various contemporary aspects of sexuality in people's everyday lives, we will discuss the links and tensions between individuals' own interpretations and those that are made available to them within the sociocultural contexts in which they live. Among other topics, we will examine how people use and question existing categories of sexual identity, the connections and disconnections between notions of sexual identity and gender expectations, how sociocultural expectations emerge in the interpretations that people make while having sex, the ways in which collective identities and sexuality-related social movements are formed, and how sexuality changes when people move from one social setting to another. We will also pay close attention to forms of social and racial inequality.

Finally, in Part III, we will explore how and why sexuality is a heavily regulated social activity and one that is deeply connected with morality in contemporary society. We will pay close attention to topics such as the emergence of moral panics, the age of consent

and the regulation of teen sexuality, censorship in the mass media, and the criminalization and legalization of sex work.

GOALS:

- To understand how society influences people's sexuality and sexual identities, as well as how people contribute to changing social interpretations of sexuality.
- To discuss how the sociological study of sexuality helps us comprehend society more broadly, as well as to consider the importance of sexuality studies within the broader field of sociology.
- To analyze why sexuality is a socially- and culturally-charged topic, and one that is commonly perceived as requiring considerable social regulation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will be expected to:

- Do all **required readings** prior to each class session.
- Write **one critical review essay** of the required readings for one class session of your choice. Further instructions for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard.
- Complete a closed-book, **in-class midterm** exam that will take place on Tuesday, April 27. The exam will consist of essay questions covering the material discussed during the first four weeks of the quarter (up to April 20). I will provide further instructions on Blackboard.
- Complete a **take-home final**. Students must turn in a hard copy of the final at Prof. Carrillo's office between 11AM and 12 PM on Monday, June 7. Students must also submit an electronic copy of the take-home final via Blackboard and Safe Assignment before noon on Monday June 7. The take-home final, and further instructions, will be posted on Blackboard on Monday, May 31. I will hold an optional review session for the take-home final on Tuesday, June 1st during the regular class time.
- **Attend** class and section on a regular basis and participate in class discussion.
- **Submit** all written assignments in hard copy and electronically on Blackboard.
- Use the following **format** for all written assignments (except for the midterm): 1-inch margins, double spaced, font: Times Roman 12. Include page numbers on all pages, and don't forget to write your name on the first page.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Grading:

In this class you will earn a grade by completing the following assignments:

Critical review essay	20% of the final grade
Midterm	30% of the final grade
Take-home final	40% of the final grade
Section attendance and participation	10% of the final grade

Make-up midterms will be offered only to students who have a medical excuse or comparably serious justification. Late take-home finals will not be accepted at all, unless you contact me before the final is due *and* you have a medical excuse or comparably serious justification. Please note that there is no excuse for failing to keep electronic backups of your data (for example, on flash drives, CDs, external hard drives, or other computers) in case your primary computer fails or your hard drive crashes.

Attendance and participation:

You are expected to attend class and section sessions on a regular basis. Attendance will be taken at sections. Students are responsible for all material presented in the readings, films, lectures, and sections. You must come to class having already read the assigned readings for that day. Please bring your copies of the readings to lectures and sections so that you can refer to them during class. I strongly encourage you to ask questions and offer opinions and comments, both in lectures and during section. I see class discussion as an important component of adult learning.

I will make available some class materials on Blackboard, but students are expected to attend class in order to learn the course material. Students are also expected to be not just physically present in the classroom but also mentally present. Students should not be otherwise occupied with email, texting, computer games, or other online activities that are not part of the class goals and activities.

Diversity of opinions:

In this course we will discuss several topics that can be controversial. Please keep in mind that you may be exposed to opinions that differ considerably from your own. Disagreement with the instructor or other students is fine, as long as you are respectful in how you present your own points of view.

Sexuality-related material:

The goals of this class require that we speak frankly about sexuality. In lectures, films, and class discussion, you may be exposed to sexually explicit language and you will learn information about a variety of sexual interpretations, ideas, practices, and lifestyles that

may differ considerably from your own. For the purposes of the class, it is important to maintain a neutral, non judgmental tone in relation to sexuality.

Communication:

This course will use the Blackboard course management system (<https://courses.northwestern.edu/webapps/login/>). You are responsible for logging in, checking regularly for posted announcements, and obtaining readings and assignments from the site. You will receive course announcements that will be sent to the students' registered campus email address. You are responsible for checking your registered email accounts regularly.

Syllabus is subject to change:

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of unforeseen circumstances. I will post announcements of changes on Blackboard and include them in email messages to students.

Academic integrity:

Academic integrity is fundamental for this course, and plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

I strictly follow university regulations concerning academic integrity, which means that I report all suspected violations of the policy (including suspicion of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, and aiding and abetting dishonesty) to the Assistant Dean for Advising and Academic Integrity, who then carries out a formal investigation. Please familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic integrity (see <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/>). You should understand that examples of plagiarism include obtaining text from any source (including the Internet), and passing off such text as your own work, rather than citing the source of the material. In addition, while I encourage students to collaborate when studying or learning course material or when working on any group projects, it should be clear that no collaboration is permitted on written work or exams, and any collaboration in those cases constitutes academic dishonesty.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, I strongly encourage you to speak to me about it. Confirmed violations of academic integrity will result in both an administrative penalty and an academic penalty. The administrative penalty, assigned by university officials, typically is suspension for one quarter; any such suspension becomes part of your record, which is made available on request to potential employers and graduate school admissions committees. The academic penalty is assigned by the instructor, and my own policy in almost every case is to assign a failing grade for the entire course.

Safe Assignment

This course makes use of Safe Assignment, a software program that compares your work against other texts in its database in order to safeguard academic integrity. Therefore you will be required to submit your written essays electronically on Blackboard in addition to

submitting them in print form. All student work may be analyzed electronically for violations of the university's academic integrity policy and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content. Please contact me if you have any questions about Safe Assignment.

Accessibility:

Any student with a documented disability needing accommodations is requested to speak directly to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (847-467-5530) and the instructor as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first two weeks of class). All discussions will remain confidential.

My office is wheelchair-accessible via a ramp from the parking lot in the back of the building. Let me know if you plan to drop by during office hours so that I can open the door to the building for you.

Courtesy toward others:

Make sure your cell phone is turned off or set to vibrate. Don't engage in conversation with other students that is not part of the class discussion. Please keep to a minimum interruptions and distractions caused by late arrivals or early departures.

Class materials and lectures

Students are prohibited from selling (or being paid for taking) notes during this course to or by any person or commercial firm without my express written permission. No audio or video recordings of class are permitted without my permission.

READINGS:

All readings will be available in Blackboard as PDFs.

You must buy a clicker (a Response Card XR made by Turning Technologies). The clickers are available at the Norris Bookstore. Alternatively, you may buy a ResponseWare license (to use with your phone or computer) from the Turning Technologies website: www.TurningTechnologies.com. Please bring your clicker to class regularly beginning on April 1.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I – Conceptual Foundations for the Sociological Study of Sexuality

Week 1

March 30: Introduction

(No readings)

April 1: Freud and Psychoanalysis

Freud, Sigmund. 1963. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVI: Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis. London: Hogarth, 303-38 (“The Sexual Life of Human Beings” and “The Development of the Libido”).

Week 2

April 6: Kinsey and Surveys of Sexual Behavior

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, read 3-9; skim 335-63; read 636-41.

Kinsey, Alfred C., et al. 1953. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 4-11.

Laumann, Edward O. et al. 1994. “The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States.” (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Ch. 2: “The Study Design” (read 35-42).

Film clip: “Kinsey” (Bill Condon, 2004)

April 8: Social Constructionism

Herd, Gilbert. 1987. *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 101-10, 145-55.

Plummer, Ken. 1982. “Symbolic Interactionism and Sexual Conduct: An Emergent Perspective.” In *Human Sexual Relations*, ed. Mike Brake, 223-41. New York: Pantheon.

Film clip: “Guardians of the Flutes” (Paul Redish, 1994)

Week 3

April 13: Foucault and Notions of Power and Pleasure

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 3-13, 17-35, 103-105.

Kimmel, Michael. 2006. "Ritualized Homosexuality in a Nacirema Subculture." *Sexualities* 9 (1): 95-105.

April 15: The Boundaries of "Normality"

Rubin, Gayle S. 1993. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." In *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin, 3-44. New York: Routledge. (read 3-35)

Tolman, Deborah. 2006. "In a Different Position: Conceptualizing Female Adolescent Sexuality Development within Compulsory Heterosexuality." *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* No. 112: 71-89 (read 71-87)

Part II – Sexuality in People's Everyday Lives

Week 4

April 20: Sexual Identities, Fluidity, and Gender (part I)

Moore, Mignon. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities." *Signs* 32 (1):113-139.

Carrillo, Héctor. 2002. *The Night Is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Ch. 2: "I Am Normal: Gender-Based Categories of Sexual Identity," read 37-42; Ch. 3: "New Freedoms, New Boundaries: Becoming *Homosexuales*, *Bisexuales* and *Heterosexuales*," read 60-65; Ch 4: "Amalgams and Convolutions: Subtleties of Interpretation in Contemporary Sexual Identities," read 79-96.

April 22: Sexual Identities, Fluidity, and Gender (part II)

Anderson, Eric. 2008. "'Being Masculine Is Not About Who You Sleep With...': Heterosexual Athletes Contesting Masculinity and the One-time Rule of Homosexuality." *Sex Roles* 58: 104–115.

Pascoe, C. J. 2007. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 52-83 (Ch. 3: "Dude, You're a Fag: Adolescent Male Homophobia").

Week 5

April 27: In-class midterm

April 29: Sexualities in Motion

Special Guest Lecture by Prof. Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Brown University

Norton, Laura H. 2006. "Neutering the Transgendered: Human Rights and Japan's Law No. 111." *The Georgetown Journal of Gender and the Law* (read pages 1-12 of the PDF).

Boellstorff, Tom. 2005. *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). Chapter 3: Dubbing Culture (read 58-88).

Week 6

May 4: Permanently Crossing Identity Lines?

Valentine, David. 2007. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 29-53.

Esterberg, Kristin G. 2002. "The Bisexual Menace: Or, Will the Real Bisexual Please Stand Up?" In *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, ed. Diane Richardson and Steven Seidman, 215-27. London: Sage.

Film clips: "Transgeneration" (Jeremy Simmons, 2005)

May 6: Collective Identities and Social Movements

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. 2002. *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (read 1-5, 15-23).

Fetner, Tina. 2005. "Ex-Gay Rhetoric and the Politics of Sexuality." *Journal of Homosexuality* 50(1): 71-95.

Week 7

May 11: Sexuality, Race, and Power

Viveros Vigoya, Mara. 2002. Dionysian Blacks: Sexuality, Body, and Racial Order in Colombia. *Latin American Perspectives* 29, No. 2: 60-77.

González-López, Gloria. 2006. "Heterosexual Fronteras: Immigrant Mexicanos, Sexual Vulnerabilities, and Survival." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 3, no.3: 67-81.

Short film: Rent a Dread (Timothy Speaks Fishleigh and Jessica Canham)

May 13: The Sexual Moment and Sexual Health

Carrillo, Héctor. 2002. *The Night Is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Ch 8: “The Sexual Moment: Paths for the Achievement of Pleasure” and ch 11: “Trust, Love, Passion: The Relational Context of HIV Risk.”

Film clip: CONASIDA’s Mexican HIV Public Service Announcements

Part III – Morality and the Social Regulation of Sexuality

Week 8

May 18: Moral Panics

Nathan, Debbie, and Michael Snedeker. 1995. *Satan’s Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt*. New York: Basic Books, 67-92 (Ch. 4: “Judy Johnson and the McMartin Preschool”).

Film: Capturing the Friedmans (Andrew Jarecki, 2002)

May 20: Teenagers’ Sexuality and the Age of Consent

Levine, Judith. 2002. *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex*. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press (Ch. 4: “Crimes of Passion: Statutory Rape and the Denial of Female Desire” pp.68-89).

Shaffner, Laurie. 2005. “Capacity, Consent, and the Construction of Adulthood.” *In Regulating Sex: The Politics of Intimacy and Identity*, edited by Elizabeth Bernstein and Laurie Schaffner, 189-205. New York: Routledge.

New York Times articles on “Sexting.”

Week 9

May 25: Censorship

No readings

Film: “This Film is Not Yet Rated” (Kirby Dick, 2006)

May 27: Sex Work: Criminalization vs. Legalization

Last day to turn in the critical review essay. Electronic copy must be submitted before class. Hard copy must be submitted at the beginning of class.

Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2001. "The Meaning of the Purchase: Desire, Demand and the Commerce of Sex." *Ethnography* 2, No.3: 389-420.

Brents, Barbara G. and Kathryn Hausbeck. 2001. "State-Sanctioned Sex: Negotiating Formal and Informal Regulatory Practices in Nevada Brothels." *Sociological Perspectives* 44, No. 3: 307-332.

Film: "Live Nude Girls Unite" (Julia Query, 2000)

Reading Period

June 1: Review Session

Exam Week

June 7: Take-home final due by 12 noon. Turn in a hard copy at Prof. Carrillo's office between 11AM and 12 PM. Also submit an electronic copy via Blackboard and Safe Assignment before noon.