

HUM 395 (Humanities Seminar)

**“Race/Gender/Sex & Science:
Making Identities and Differences”**

Spring 2015

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:20, in Harris L07

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Drop-in office hours this quarter:

Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00, and Thursdays, 3:00-4:00, in 1808 Chicago Ave., Rm. 206

A copy of this syllabus can be found on the Canvas site for the course.

Summary:

In this seminar, we will focus on the interplay between science, technology, and medicine, on the one hand, and race, gender, and sexuality, on the other. Taking up a series of controversial issues and cases from the recent past and the present, we will consider the implications of developments in the life sciences for politics, social identity, and cultural belonging. In our readings and discussions, we will examine the roles of science, technology, and medicine in redefining race, gender, and sexuality; the ways in which cultural beliefs about race, gender, and sexuality have influenced scientific research and the development of knowledge; and the efforts by individuals and social movements to challenge scientific institutions and assert new claims about identity, difference, and inequality.

In short, we will keep coming back to two reciprocal questions:

- *On the one hand:* How do cultural ideas about race, gender, and sexuality influence knowledge and knowledge production?
- *On the other hand:* How do scientific claims and technological developments influence cultural understandings of race, gender, and sexuality?

More specifically, over the course of the quarter, we will take up such questions as:

- How many sexes are there, and how do we know?
- What is the scientific status of our ideas about race?
- How has the availability of sex reassignment surgery changed what we understand sex, gender, and sexuality to be?
- How do medical technologies become “gendered”?
- How have new reproductive technologies, and new methods of tracing ancestry, changed notions of kinship and racial belonging?
- Is homosexuality a biologically determined state, and what is at stake in asking the question?
- How should gender, race, and sexuality be taken into account when human populations are studied in clinical research?
- How have scientists and physicians sought to study and repair human sexual functioning?
- What kinds of ideas about sexuality and sexual diversity are transmitted to students in medical school?

Our goal is not to resolve these controversial issues but, rather, to understand their stakes as well as the ways in which different people, groups, and social institutions have taken positions in relation to them.

Course Requirements:

Your **grade** for the quarter will be calculated on the basis of the following five **course requirements**:

Class attendance and participation	15%
Critical summary of one day's readings	15%
Book review of assigned reading	15%
Research paper	40%
Oral presentation with PowerPoint	15%

Here are the details:

1. *Class attendance and participation* (15%): This is a seminar, and your participation is expected.

2. A *critical summary* (3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced, with standard fonts and margins) of both of the readings assigned for one of the following class meetings: April 7, April 9, or April 14 (*15% each*). Please choose the session you prefer and submit the summary as a Word document using the inbox set up for that purpose on Canvas under “Assignments.” Your summary must be submitted **at least 24 hours before** that class meeting (that is, by 11 am on April 6 if you choose the April 7 readings; or by 11 am on April 8 if you choose the April 9 readings; or by 11 am on April 13 if you choose the April 14 readings).

Your summary should address both of the readings for that class meeting (devoting more or less equivalent space to each), carefully summarizing the main arguments and discussing the readings critically in relation to the themes of the course. Try to bring the readings into conversation with one another, rather than discussing each one totally separately. These summaries should be written out in full paragraphs; they should not take the form of a list or bullet points. Please proofread carefully and pay close attention to matters of style, syntax, and organization. (If your paper has a lot of careless errors and does not seem to have been proofread adequately, I will ask you to re-do it.) You do not need to provide a reference list, but quotes and paraphrases should be followed by in-text citations placed inside parentheses—for example, “(Roberts, 227).”

I will grade your critical summary directly on Canvas, and a marked-up and graded version will be made available to you through Canvas.

Because writing the critical summary should prepare you well for the seminar discussion, I will look to the people who wrote summaries to take the lead in participating in the discussion that day.

3. A *book review* (typed, double-spaced, with standard fonts and margins) of the assigned book by Rachel Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm*, due no later than 5:00 pm on Monday, May 4 (15%). Please submit the review as a Word document using the inbox set up for that purpose on Canvas under “Assignments.” Your review should be 900 to 1100 words (standard for an academic book review). It should be addressed to a general audience of academics or advanced students who might be interested in reading such a book. You should summarize the main

arguments of the book, critically discuss its contributions, take note of any key shortcomings, and offer an overall evaluation or recommendation.

I will grade your book review directly on Canvas, and a marked-up and graded version will be made available to you through Canvas.

4. A research paper (about 15 pages, not including references), **due by 9 am on Monday, June 8 (40%)**. Please submit your paper as a Word document using the inbox set up for that purpose on Canvas under “Assignments.”

Your paper should investigate a specific research topic related to the themes of the course. It must draw on course materials but must also extend beyond course readings. The paper should be in essay format and should state and prove an identifiable central argument. Please proofread carefully and pay close attention to matters of style, syntax, and organization. (If your paper has a lot of careless errors and does not seem to have been proofread adequately, I will not accept it.)

Your paper should include a title and should be broken into sections with headings. Use parenthetical citations for quotes and references to other texts. List all such texts in your bibliography. (You may use any standard bibliographic style, as long as you are consistent.) Please use a standard font and a ragged right margin (rather than right justification).

You are **required to come to my office hours no later than April 23** (near the end of Week 4) to discuss your paper topic with me and get my approval. Please bring with you to the meeting (or if possible, send me in advance by email) a **written description** of the topic (1-2 paragraphs plus a short reference list). If your paper will be thematically similar to, or will have any overlap in actual content with, any other paper you have written in the past or are writing this quarter, please also provide a clear description of the overlap as well as an explanation of how your paper for this class will differ.

5. At our class meetings in Week 9 (May 26 and 28), each student will deliver an *oral presentation (using PowerPoint)* briefly describing his or her research paper (15%). **Your PowerPoint file must be submitted on Canvas in the inbox set up for that purpose by 9 am on Tuesday, May 26.** You will be graded primarily on the quality and clarity of the oral presentation, but also on the quality and clarity of the PowerPoint.

Course Mechanics:

Please read the following bulleted items carefully. Along with providing basic information, this section also serves as fair warning of my classroom policies and expectations:

- ◆ This course will make use of the “**Canvas**” course management system (<http://www.it.northwestern.edu/education/learning-management/login.html>). Students are responsible for logging in, checking regularly for posted announcements, and obtaining readings and assignments from the site.

- ◆ Important course **announcements** may also be sent to students' registered campus email addresses. You are responsible for monitoring those email accounts.
- ◆ Unless you are directed to do so by me, please do not use Canvas to send broadcast announcements to the rest of the class. If you have material that you think should be shared, please ask me to distribute it.
- ◆ This syllabus and schedule are **subject to change** in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Announcements of changes will be posted on Canvas and emailed to students.
- ◆ There are two **books** assigned for this course:

Maines, Rachel P. 1999. *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Epstein, Steven. 2007. *Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

These books are available for purchase from the Norris Center Bookstore. Copies have also been placed on reserve at the main library.

- ◆ All **other course readings** are available for download from the Canvas site in the form of PDFs. Please bring readings with you to class, either as printouts or on your laptops or tablets.

Note that some PDFs appear sideways when viewed in Adobe Acrobat. They will print fine as is, but to read them on screen, select "Rotate View" from the "View" menu.

- ◆ Over the course of the quarter, your grades will be made available to you on Canvas.
- ◆ Students are responsible for all material presented in the readings, films and video clips, and class discussions. **Class attendance** is required. While I will post my PowerPoints on Canvas after class, these are not intended to be comprehensive, and often they will not make complete sense by themselves. Students are expected to attend class in order to learn the course material.
- ◆ I also fully expect that students will be not just physically present in the classroom but also mentally present (that is, conscious and not otherwise occupied with email, texting, Facebook, computer games, or other online activities). You are welcome to bring technology to the seminar room as long as you can handle it responsibly and respectfully. Laptops and tablets should be used for note-taking or other class-related purposes only.
- ◆ Class will be conducted as a seminar, not as a lecture course. I will typically begin with some framing comments, and then I will facilitate a discussion. Come to class having

already read the readings for that day (bring them with you), and be prepared to **participate!** Please do ask questions and offer opinions! Disagreement with the instructor or fellow students is fine, as long as you are polite and patient in how you go about it.

- ◆ Except under very unusual circumstances, **late assignments** will be marked down sharply. Late final papers may not even be accepted at all, if they arrive too late for me to grade them.

Please note that there is no excuse for failing to keep **electronic backups** of your data (for example, on flash drives, external hard drives, “cloud” storage sites, or other computers) in case your primary computer fails or your hard drive crashes.

- ◆ All written work for the course must be **typed, double-spaced**, using standard fonts and 1-inch margins on all sides.
- ◆ Any student with a documented **disability** who needs accommodations should contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD; 847-467-5530) and should speak with me as early as possible in the quarter, ideally within the first week of class. All discussions will remain confidential.

Please note that my office is on the second floor of a building without an elevator. Any student who cannot attend my office hours as a result is welcome to make an appointment with me to meet elsewhere.

- ◆ A course that includes the theme of sexuality may contain material that will startle or even upset some students. Please keep this possibility in mind and be forewarned.
- ◆ I am committed to strict enforcement of 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 be certain to familiarize yourself with the university’s policy on academic integrity (see <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>). 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, it should be clear that **no collaboration** is permitted on written work, 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**.

- ◆ This course makes use of **Turnitin**, a software product that compares your work against other texts in its database in order to safeguard academic integrity. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site. Please contact me if you have any questions about Turnitin.
- ◆ Please be respectful of those around you. At the beginning of class, please make sure your **cell phone** is turned off or set to vibrate. In addition, arriving late, leaving early, and walking in and out of class are distracting to those around you. Obviously they are sometimes unavoidable. But I'd appreciate your keeping them to a minimum.
- ◆ This syllabus and all lectures and PowerPoint presentations for this course are copyright 2015 by Steven Epstein. Students are prohibited from selling (or being paid for taking) notes during this course to or by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of Professor Epstein. No **audio or video recordings** of class are permitted without the instructor's permission.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

WEEK 1

TUE, MAR 31: INTRODUCTION

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 1993. "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough." *The Sciences* 33 (2): 20-26.

Hammonds, Evelyn M., and Rebecca M. Herzig, eds. 2008. *The Nature of Difference: Sciences of Race in the United States from Jefferson to Genomics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp. 1-11 (Chapter 1: "Dictionary Definitions of 'Race'").

THU, APR 2: CO-PRODUCTION AND LOOPING EFFECTS

Jasanoff, Sheila. 2004. "The Idiom of Co-Production." In *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*, edited by S. Jasanoff. London: Sage, pp. 1-6 only.

Hacking, Ian. 2007. "Kinds of People: Moving Targets." *Journal of the British Academy* 151: 285-318

WEEK 2

****REMINDER:** You must turn in a **critical summary** of the readings for one of the next three classes (by 11:00 am on the day before that class).

TUE, APR 7: THE SEXING AND GENDERING OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Richardson, Sarah. 2012. "Sexing the X: How the X became the 'Female Chromosome.'" *Signs* 37 (4): 909-933.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2000. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books. Pp. 115-145 (Chapter 5: "Sexing the Brain").

THU, APR 9: THE TECHNOSCIENTIFIC CONSTRUCTION OF RACE

Morning, Ann. 2008. "Reconstructing Race in Science and Society: Biology Textbooks, 1952–2002." *American Journal of Sociology* 114 (S1): S106-S137.

Roberts, Dorothy E. 2011. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-Crete Race in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: New Press. Pp. 226-257 (Chapter 10: "Tracing Racial Roots").

WEEK 3

****REMINDER:** Your **last chance to turn in a critical summary** is by 11:00 am on Monday, April 13 for the April 14 readings.

TUE, APR 14: RACIALIZATION IN SCIENCE

Montoya, Michael. 2007. "Bioethnic Conscription: Genes, Race and Mexicana/o Ethnicity in Diabetes Research." *Cultural Anthropology* no. 22 (1): 94-128.

Kahn, Jonathan. 2012. "Forensic DNA and the Inertial Power of Race in American Legal Practice." In *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History*, edited by Keith Wailoo, Alondra Nelson and Catherine Lee, 114-142. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

THU, APR 16: TRANSGENDER POSSIBILITIES AND THE REMAKING OF SEX AND GENDER

Meyerowitz, Joanne J. 2002. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 51-129 (Chapter 2: "Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty"; Chapter 3: "From Sex to Gender").

WEEK 4

TUE, APR 21: CATEGORICAL POLITICS IN MEDICINE AND SOCIETY

Westbrook, Laurel, and Kristin Schilt. 2014. "Doing Gender, Determining Gender: Transgender People, Gender Panics, and the Maintenance of the Sex/Gender/Sexuality System." *Gender & Society* 28 (1): 32-57.

Bryant, Karl. 2006. "Making Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood: Historical Lessons for Contemporary Debates." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 3 (3): 23-39.

Hamlin, Kimberly A. 2011. "The 'Case of a Bearded Woman': Hypertrichosis and the Construction of Gender in the Age of Darwin." *American Quarterly* 63 (4): 955-981.

****REMINDER:** You must come to my **office hours to discuss your paper topic** with me by April 23. Bring your written description (1-2 paragraphs, plus a short reference list) with you or, better yet, email it to me in advance.

THU, APR 23: THE BIOLOGY OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION

****Film clip in class:** Excerpt from "Twilight of the Golds," by Ross Marks (1996).

LeVay, Simon, and Dean H. Hamer. 1994. "Evidence for a Biological Influence in Male Homosexuality." *Scientific American*, May, 44-49.

Byne, William. 1994. "The Biological Evidence Challenged." *Scientific American*, May, 50-55.

Servick, Kelly. 2014. "New Support for 'Gay Gene.'" *Science* 346 (6212):902.

Terry, Jennifer. 2000. "'Unnatural Acts' in Nature: The Scientific Fascination with Queer Animals." *GLQ* 6 (2): 151-193.

WEEK 5

TUE, APRIL 28: ACTIVISM AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE

Nelson, Alondra. 2011. *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight against Medical Discrimination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 115-152 (Chapter 4: "Spin Doctors: The Politics of Sickle Cell Anemia").

Waidzunas, Tom J. 2013. "Intellectual Opportunity Structures and Science-Targeted Activism: Influence of the Ex-Gay Movement on the Science of Sexual Orientation." *Mobilization* 18 (1): 1-18.

THU, APRIL 30: GENDER, HEALTH, AND THE TECHNOLOGY OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION

**Film in class: "Passion and Power: The Technology of Orgasm," by Wendy Slick and Emiko Omori (2008).

Maines, Rachel P. 1999. *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. Pp. 1-66. (**Not on Canvas—buy the book.**)

WEEK 6

****REMINDER:** Your **book review is due** no later than 5:00 pm on Monday, May 4.

TUE, MAY 5: GENDER, HEALTH, AND THE TECHNOLOGY OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION (CONT.)

Maines, *Technology of Orgasm*, 67-123.

THU, MAY 7: RECONSTRUCTING KINSHIP: GENDER, RACE, SEXUALITY, AND THE TECHNO-ECONOMICS OF REPRODUCTION

Thompson, Charis. 2005. *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp. 145-178 (Chapter 5: "Strategic Naturalizing: Kinship, Race, and Ethnicity").

Almeling, Rene. 2011. *Sex Cells: The Medical Market for Eggs and Sperm*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 52-83 (Chapter 2: “Selling Genes and Gender”).

WEEK 7

TUE, MAY 12: BIOMEDICAL INCLUSION AND DIFFERENCE: RACE AND GENDER IN RESEARCH

Epstein, Steven. 2007. *Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 1-16, 30-115 (Introduction and chapters 2-5). **(Not on Canvas—buy the book.)**

THU, MAY 14: BIOMEDICAL INCLUSION AND DIFFERENCE (CONT.)

Epstein, *Inclusion*, 203-257 (chapters 10 and 11).

Shim, Janet K., Sara L. Ackerman, Katherine Weatherford Darling, Robert A. Hiatt, and Sandra Soo-Jin Lee. 2014. "Race and Ancestry in the Age of Inclusion: Technique and Meaning in Post-Genomic Science." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 55 (4): 504-518.

WEEK 8

TUE, MAY 19: THE GENDERING AND SEXUALIZING OF TECHNOLOGIES, AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL PRODUCTION OF SEXUALITY

Oudshoorn, Nelly. 2003. *The Male Pill: A Biography of a Technology in the Making*. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 171-190 (Chapter 8: “‘The First Man on the Pill’: Disciplining Men as Reliable Test Subjects”).

Carpenter, Laura M., and Monica J. Casper. 2009. “A Tale of Two Technologies: HPV Vaccination, Male Circumcision, and Sexual Health.” *Gender & Society* 23 (6): 790-816.

Waidzunas, Tom, and Steven Epstein. 2015. “‘For Men Arousal Is Orientation’: Bodily Truthing, Technosexual Scripts, and the Materialization of Sexualities through the Phallometric Test.” *Social Studies of Science*. Online at <http://sss.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/01/07/0306312714562103?papetoc>.

THU, MAY 21: SEXUAL MEDICINE

Loe, Meika. 2004. *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*. New York: New York University Press. Pp. 63-93, 125-165 (Chapter 3: “Fixing the Broken Male Machine”; Chapter 5: “The Search for the Female Viagra”).

Murphy, Marie. 2014. "Hiding in Plain Sight: The Production of Heteronormativity in Medical Education." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. Online at <http://jce.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/11/06/0891241614556345>.

WEEK 9

****REMINDER: PowerPoint files** for student presentations **due** by 5 pm on Monday, May 25.

TUE, MAY 26: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

THU, MAY 28: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

****REMINDER: PAPERS DUE ON CANVAS BY 9 AM ON MONDAY, JUNE 8.**