Gender Studies 332 & Sociology 376: Sexuality, Science, & LGBT Rights

Spring 2016
Mondays & Wednesdays, 11AM-12:20PM
Technology Institute, Room L170

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Course Description:

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 2015 ruling legalizing same-sex marriage across the country marked a milestone in the struggle for LGBT rights. Many have viewed the decision as the outcome of a coalescence of factors, including increasing visibility and political organization of LGBT people, the overturning of a number of important institutional and legal statutes that marked a legal divide between heterosexual and LGBT people, and shifting social norms related to gender and sexuality. This course examines the role that science, medicine and the social sciences in particular have played in facilitating the legal recognition of LGBT people. But rather than simply tracing these important intersections, we will also ask a number of critical questions: How have the sciences played a role not simply in challenging the notion of “difference” and its associated stigma, but also in producing a particular “kind” of sexual subject worthy of legal recognition? What “forms of life” have been made possible and alternatively, what forms of life have been foreclosed, or rendered invisible? In what ways does the struggle for trans visibility we now see emerging within mainstream conversations differ (or not)? How might we imagine alternative paths toward respect for diversity that don’t rely upon notions of “sameness” and the pitfalls that some scholars and others have argued are associated with a push for the recognition of LGBT rights? Finally, how might these complexities - including an important desire for equal treatment under the law and the possibility of nevertheless excluding some people from legal recognition - lead us to different frameworks within which to imagine sexual and gender difference and vice versa?

The course will begin with a brief historical overview of the emergence of sexuality as an object of scientific inquiry, and trace some of the key historical moments in the formation of gay and lesbian identities in the 20th century. Here, we will focus on the tensions that existed within psychological and medical discourse regarding same-sex desire and practice, even as scientific research shifted toward an affirmative stance toward “non-normative” sexualities. Then we will consider the tensions between “gay-affirming” scientific scholarship and critiques (primarily from scholars in the humanities and humanistic social sciences) that call attention to the potential unintended consequences of this research. Finally, we examine the specific role that the social sciences have played in securing legal recognition and examine the consequences (positive and negative) of a “rights-based” framework rooted in notions of sameness.

Topics will include:

- Major theoretical approaches to study of sexuality
- The pathologisation and de-pathologisation of homosexuality
- Essentialist and constructivist debates regarding sexuality and sexuality orientation
- Sexual fluidities
- Sexual orientation change efforts
- Same-sex parenting
- Same-sex marriage
- Critical trans politics
Course Requirements

Readings:

REQUIRED book for purchase:

OPTIONAL PURCHASE BUT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:
The rest of the readings for the course will be available as a Course Reader from Quartet Copies (825 Clark St, Evanston, IL 60201). The same readings will also be available electronically via Canvas (See “Files” tab); **however, after Class 3, this will be a screen-less course (no laptops, ipads, etc), and I ask that you bring the readings to class.** Unless you have a way to cheaply print the readings, it will probably be more cost-effective to purchase the Course Reader.

Note: See “Schedule of Readings” at the end of this syllabus for a complete list of readings by week.

Assignments/Grading:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses (7)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Short Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take-Home Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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Seven Reading Responses (35% of total course grade):
With the exception of Weeks 1 and 5, you must complete an on-line reading response for one of the required readings assigned for EACH upcoming week (i.e., readings from Weeks 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9). For each chosen reading, the written response will involve three components, **all submitted via a Google Form (a link for each week will be provided via Canvas):**

1) You will be asked to respond to a series of questions that are designed to help you think through the reading.

2) You will write about a passage from the reading that inspired or frustrated you and how it did so (160-300 words).

3) Finally, you will pose two open-ended questions designed to stimulate discussion about the reading by engaging with a concept, pushing back against the author or a concept, relating the article/chapter to something else we’ve read or discussed, etc. Imagine you were asked the question you posed and ask yourself if you could engage with it – what would you say? If you would have nothing to say, then it’s not likely to stimulate discussion. (Note: If I choose one of your questions for class discussion, I will not disclose who wrote it, but note that I may pose your questions☺).

**Important:** You are expected to read **everything** that is assigned (this will be important for doing well on the midterm and final); however, you only need to complete a reading response for one reading per week. (i.e., don’t attempt to respond to all the week’s readings in your response).
Further points about the reading responses:

- **Reading responses are due SUNDAYS by 7PM:** Each reading response is due BY THE SUNDAY JUST BEFORE THE WEEK IN WHICH A READING WILL BE COVERED. For example, your response for one of the readings listed for Week 2 (see Reading Schedule) is due by Sunday, April 3 at 7pm. Likewise, your response to a reading from Week 3 is due by Sunday, April 10th and so on. (Again, no reading response will be available for Week 5. This is to give you more time to focus on the midterm essay).

- **Only do a response to a reading with a star (*). Why? Some of the readings are important, but more difficult to engage with in terms of identifying a main argument or responding to the questions posed. See “Schedule of Readings” for starred readings.**

- **Late responses will not be accepted (Google Forms uses a timestamp)**

- **BONUS: We will drop your lowest score (out of 7).**

**Grading of reading responses:**

Each reading response will be worth 100 points. To receive credit, you must complete all of the sections (responses to questions, reflection on passage and your two questions). If you thoughtfully engage with the questions, write a sufficiently thorough reflection and pose two questions that ask students to engage with the text (**but can’t be answered by simply repeating what’s in the text**), you should do well. These responses are not meant to be essays, but please write clearly and in complete sentences. Major points may also be deducted for not covering each of the main topics (-25); not writing enough (-25); or if it appears that you simply didn’t put in much effort (-25). You may also lose points for overall poor writing. **However, in general, we grade these assignments generously so long as you show you are thoughtfully engaged. The TA will not be providing extensive feedback – just enough to note what you could improve. If you are not doing well on these please come speak to one of us ASAP.**

**Note:** These responses are intended to help you to critically engage with the material for the class, rather than read passively. At first, writing answers to the questions may feel awkward or uncertain, but it will get easier as the course progresses. Most importantly, your reflections and questions will help us to have a more engaged discussion in class.

*Further instructions for responding to the reading response questions are posted under the “Pages” tab in Canvas. Please read them – they will help you understand what is expected.*

**Attendance (10%):**

Class attendance is **mandatory**. However, you may miss two classes for **any reason without penalty** (this includes illness, emergencies, personal days, etc) **so long as you email the TA (please cc me) to let us know, preferably before class, but by no later than one hour after class has ended; otherwise, it will count as an unexcused absence.** Beyond the first two, however, **your COURSE GRADE will be reduced by 5% per absence regardless of the reason, even if you are sick.** So, please use your absences sparingly. For example, if you skip classes early on just because you don’t feel like coming and then become sick later in the course, you will have already used up your excused absences. If there are extraordinary circumstances that will result in your missing more than the 2 classes (such a serious/chronic illness, death in the family, etc), **please**
**contact me as soon as possible.** Some documentation may be required in these cases. **You may lose up to 15% of your course grade for five or more total absences.** You are always welcome to come speak with me regarding struggles with attendance or participation, whatever the reason, but I must maintain the same attendance standards for everyone in the class, with the exception of some extraordinary life event. If you have questions about this policy, please ask.

*At the beginning of class, please sign the attendance sheet at the front.* Please do not sign in friends or colleagues who miss class. This will result in grade deductions for both people and possible disciplinary action. My apologies for even bringing it up, but it has happened in the past.

**Participation (5%):**
In addition to attending class, you are expected to **actively participate** in class. This course will contain a mix of lecture and discussion. I encourage you to ask questions, answer questions I will pose, and respond to points/arguments your colleagues make. I will take note of folks who are generally disengaged (obviously, there may be days when you don’t feel like talking and that’s okay, but your participation score will reflect your overall level of engagement).

**Midterm Essay (20%):**
You will be asked to write a midterm essay of approximately 5-6 pages drawing on some themes covered in the course up to this point in the course. Instructions for the essay will be made available via Canvas approximately one week before the due date. You will upload your papers to Canvas by Friday, April 29th by 12pm NOON.

**Take-home essay final (30%):**
There will be a take-home final essay exam that will require you to integrate some of the material covered throughout the quarter. The essay prompt(s) will be distributed via Canvas on Monday, May 30th at noon. Your essays will be due by Monday, June 6th by noon on Canvas. Further details will be provided in class but you should plan for no more than 10 pages of writing.

**Policy on Late Papers (both Midterm and Final Essays):**
Late papers will receive a whole letter grade (10%) deduction per 24-hour period after the due date/time. **Papers more than 48 hours late will NOT be accepted under any circumstances.** If your paper will be late (any amount of time past the initial deadline for any reason, please contact me ahead of time).
Course Mechanics and Policies

Please read the following information carefully. It is your responsibility to know the following details about the course. If you have questions about this information or other information not presented here, please contact me.

Course Title/Number:
Gender Studies 332 and Sociology 376 are the same course. There are no differences in assignments, grading or anything else.

Canvas:
This course will use the “Canvas” course management system.

• I will regularly send announcements to the class via Canvas, so be sure to turn on your email notifications so that you receive updated information about the course (To do so, go to “Settings”, then “Notification” and select “ASAP” under “Announcement”). Be sure you link to an email address that you check regularly.
• Please do not use Canvas to send out mass emails to the rest of the class. If you have an important announcement, please send me an individual email and we can discuss whether it is relevant for the entire class.
• All course readings will be posted as pdfs on Canvas under “Files” and arranged by class/date.

Classroom Etiquette/Respect:

• Please arrive to class on time. In the event that you are late, please enter the classroom quietly while minimizing disruption to other students.
• Please silence your cell phones and other devices – both sound and if possible, vibration – to avoid distracting other people.
• In-class use of electronic devices like laptops and tablets should only be used for class-related purposes, not checking Facebook, trading stocks, or auctioning old articles of clothing or bicycle parts on Ebay.
• Please treat one another and me with respect. This is a course about sexuality and HIV, gender and race, marginalization, stigma and so on. If disagreements arise during the course of discussion (with me or with other students), please first attempt to listen and understand the other person’s point of view and then express your own view in a way that facilitates understanding rather than forecloses it. This means listening to yourself as you speak so as to take note of the way in which you are using language and how it may affect other people around you.

Changes to the Syllabus:

• I may decide to make changes to the syllabus from time to time. I will always provide you with ample notice of any changes via an announcement on Canvas. Changes might include swapping out a reading for a different one, eliminating a reading, or adjusting the timing of readings if we get behind.
• Changes to due dates for written assignments are unlikely. However, if I do make changes, you would have the same amount of time or more to complete the assignment, not less.
**Students with Disabilities:**
- Students with a documented disability who need accommodations should contact the Office for Services for Students with Disabilities (847-467-5530).
- Students with disabilities should also speak with me during the first week of class (all discussions will remain confidential).

**Audio/Video Recordings:**
- Audio or video recordings of the lectures are NOT allowed without the express permission of the instructor.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:**
- **Violations of academic integrity** include plagiarism (see below), cheating, using another person’s work as if it were your own, covering for another student’s dishonesty and so on. You should become familiar with Northwestern University’s policy: [http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html)
- **Plagiarism:** Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to: directly copying work written by another person without an appropriate citation; modifying a few words written by someone else, but otherwise presenting another person’s ideas as if they were your own without appropriate citations; using information from the internet without appropriate citation even if that information has no identifiable author (such as information from a Wikipedia page). If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to appropriately cite other people’s work, please come speak with me.
- **Reporting plagiarism or violations of academic integrity:** Instructors at Weinberg College at Northwestern are required to report any suspected violations of policies related to academic integrity to Dean Mark Sheldon’s office. The Dean will then follow up to assess whether there has in fact been a violation and what the appropriate response might be. See [http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/](http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/) for further information.
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

**Tues, Mar 29 (Class 1)**

No assigned reading for this class, but please starting reading for Wednesday, March 30th.

**Wed, Mar 30 (Class 2)**


*Note:* This chapter is available electronically on Canvas. Please order book asap to have it by the end of Week 2.

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WEEK 2: HISTORY OF SEXUALITY AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

**READING RESPONSE 1 DUE: Sun, Apr 3, by 7pm**

(To one of the starred readings for Week 2)

**Mon, Apr 4 (Class 3)**


*Foucault, Michel. (1978). *History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction (Selections).* Read pp. 3-35; *SKIM* 36-39; and *READ* 40-46

**Wed, Apr 6 (Class 4)**

WEEK 3: PATHOLOGISATION AND DE-PATHOLOGISATION OF HOMOSEXUALITY

READING RESPONSE 2 DUE: Sun, Apr 10 by 7pm

Mon & Wed, Apr 11-13 (Classes 5 and 6)


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WEEK 4: ESSENTIALISM VS. CONSTRUCTIVISM DEBATES

READING RESPONSE 3 DUE: Sun, Apr 17 by 7pm

Mon, Apr 18 (Class 7)


Wed, Apr 20 (Class 8)


WEEK 5: SEXUAL ORIENTATION CHANGE EFFORTS

NOTE: NO READING RESPONSE FOR THIS WEEK

Mon & Wed, Apr 25-27 (Classes 9-10)


In-class film (~35 min): Abomination: Homosexuality and the Ex-Gay Movement

**MIDTERM DUE FRIDAY APRIL 29 BY NOON**

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WEEK 6: SAME-SEX PARENTING

READING RESPONSE 4 DUE: SUN, MAY 1 BY 7PM

Mon, May 2 (Class 11)


Wed, May 4 (Class 12)


**WEEK 7: SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

**READING RESPONSE 5 DUE: Sun, May 8 by 7pm**

**Mon, May 9 (Class 13): Overview**


**Note:** Don’t be alarmed by the length of this piece. It’s actually quite short. Please first scroll through initial pages to take note of how the document is arranged and citations are used. Note that much of the text is footnotes (you don’t need to read through these except when interested); it also has very wide margins☺

**Wed, May 11 (Class 14): Debating same-sex marriage**


Spade, Dean & Willse, Craig. (2013). Marriage will never set us free. Organizing Upgrade: Engaging Left Organizers in Strategic Dialogue. (**short online article**)

WEEK 8: BEYOND LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS

READING RESPONSE 6 DUE: Sun, May 15 by 7pm

Mon, May 16 (Class 15)


Wed, May 18 (Class 16)


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WEEK 9: LGBT'S RIGHTS IN A TRANSNATIONAL CONTEXT

READING RESPONSE 7 DUE: Sun, May 22 by 7pm

Mon, May 23 (Class 17)


Optional but recommended😊
https://thenib.com/meet-the-american-pushing-homophobia-in-uganda-483631c1cb4d#.t6szp4qli

Wed, May 25 (Class 18)

WEEK 10: NO CLASS AND START OF READING WEEK

Mon, May 30: No Class (Memorial Day)

**Take-home FINAL ESSAY EXAM posted on Canvas BY NOON, MAY 30TH**

Mon, Jun 6:

**FINAL ESSAY EXAM DUE VIA CANVAS BY NOON, JUNE 6TH**