

Syllabus: Sexual Politics in the US (WGS 321B/621BG) Spring 2016

Course Schedule: MW 12:30pm – 1:45pm

Course Meeting Location: Tribble Hall A205

Professor: Kristina Gupta

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Office Hours: W 10:30-11:30am, W 3:30-4:30pm and by appointment

Office Location: Tribble Hall A115

Course Overview



This course explores the politics of sexuality in the United States. Drawing on feminist scholarship, queer theory, and lesbian, gay, and transgender studies, we will explore different historical and theoretical approaches to thinking about issues of power and sexuality. We will discuss sexual identities and cultures, state regulation of sexuality, sexual commerce, and cultural representations of sexuality, among other topics. Throughout we will examine how other social categories such as race, class, gender, and disability intersect with the politics of sexuality.

The course is organized into four units: Theories, Histories, Identities/Bodies, and Regulation. The first unit explores different theoretical approaches to sexuality, with a

focus on “social constructionist” perspectives and accounts of the ways in which sexuality is related to the distribution of power in our society. The second unit focuses on understanding how the politics of sexual identities, practices, and norms have changed over time in the United States. The third unit examines the politics of a variety of contemporary sexual identities, communities, and practices. The fourth unit focuses explicitly on the role of the state and other political institutions in producing and regulating sexuality, examining issues such as marriage, the regulation of pornography and sex work, sex education, and reproductive rights, among others. At the end of the course, we will discuss possibilities for transforming the ways in which sexuality is regulated in the United States.

Course Goals

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- 1) Explain and apply different theoretical approaches to the study of sexuality
- 2) Identify key historical transformations in the social construction of sexuality in the United States
- 3) Demonstrate familiarity with a diverse set of contemporary sexual practices, identities, and communities
- 4) Analyze the role of power in the social construction of sexuality and the role of the state and other institutions in regulating sexuality
- 5) Demonstrate skill in the areas of critical reading, research, writing, and oral expression

Course Texts

- 1) Audre Lorde (1982). *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name - A Biomythography*
- 2) Michel Foucault (1990). *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*
- 3) Hanne Blank (2012). *Straight: The Surprisingly Short History of Heterosexuality*
- 4) Kathleen A. Bogle (2008). *Hooking Up: Sex, Dating, and Relationships on Campus*
- 5) Jeffrey Q. McCune Jr. (2014). *Sexual Discretion: Black Masculinity and the Politics of Passing*
- 6) Elizabeth Bernstein (2007). *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*
- 7) All other readings will be available on the course website or through e-reserves

Assignments

Reading Responses (4): 40%

Pop Culture Presentation: 15%

Final Paper: 30%

Class Participation: 15%

Reading Responses: You will be asked to write four 2-3 page responses on our readings this semester. For each response, you will choose one assigned reading to discuss. You will select a quotation from the reading, briefly situate the quotation in the context of the reading, and then analyze the quotation. Additional guidelines will be distributed. At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for a group, which will determine your due dates.

Group 1 Due Dates: 1/27, 2/17, 3/16, 4/6

Group 2 Due Dates: 2/3, 2/24, 3/23, 4/3

Group 3 Due Dates: 2/10, 3/2, 3/20, 4/20

Pop Culture Presentation: At the beginning of the semester, you will sign up for one pop culture presentation. For this presentation, you will be asked to choose a "text" from the media or popular culture, such as a movie or TV clip, news article, or music video, and explicitly relate the text you have chosen to at least one reading from the course. Additional guidelines will be distributed.

Final Paper: For the final paper, you will be asked to choose a question of interest to you related to the course, and to answer this question drawing on course readings and outside research. The final paper length for undergraduates will be 10-12 pages (15-18 pages for graduate students). Over the course of the semester, you will turn in a series of small assignments in preparation for the final paper. Additional guidelines will be distributed.

Preliminary Question: 3/14

Annotated Bibliography: 4/11

Outline: 4/25

Informal Presentation to Class: Monday, April 2nd at 2:00pm (final exam period)

Final Paper: Sunday, May 8th by the end of the day

Participation: This course is primarily a discussion-based course. Your participation is essential. Quality participation includes both contributing thoughtfully to the discussion and listening and responding respectfully to others. It is important that you not only complete and struggle with the reading for the day, but that you give yourself sufficient opportunity to digest the texts and ponder the ideas and implications of the day's readings. Please expect to be called on at any time. I will provide a rubric for participation and will ask you to evaluate yourself at several points during the semester. I will then use your self-evaluations to help me determine your participation grade.

Policies

Absences: Attendance is required. Each student is allowed three (3) absences with no penalties. For each additional absence, the student's participation grade will be lowered. Three (3) late arrivals will be counted as one absence. If you must miss class, I do appreciate knowing when you will be absent, but notifying me doesn't "excuse" the absence.

Late Work: All work is due at the beginning of class on the due date listed. Late work will not be accepted.

Technology in the Classroom: Please do not answer your phone or text in class unless there is a genuine emergency (e.g. an immediate family member is sick). You may bring a laptop, but only for taking notes or accessing material relevant to the class discussion. Please do not use your laptop to check your email, surf the Internet, update your Facebook status, or shop online.

Help and Resources: If you have any questions or concerns at any point, please email me or come to my office hours. Also, please take advantage of the following resources:

- For assistance with your writing, visit the Writing Center (<http://college.wfu.edu/writingcenter/>)
- For assistance with organization, time management and study strategies, visit the Learning Assistance Center (<http://lac.wfu.edu/>)
- For assistance with research or with citing sources, please visit the Reference Desk at the Z. Smith Reynolds Library (<http://zsr.wfu.edu/>)

Academic Integrity: As signatories to the Wake Forest Honor Code, you are required to uphold academic honesty in all aspects of this course. Please familiarize yourself with the details of the Honor Code. In addition, please make sure that you understand what counts as plagiarism (see below).

Definition of Plagiarism: If you use another person's words or ideas in your own work without appropriately acknowledging them, you are committing plagiarism. According to the Purdue Online Writing Lab, "There are some actions that can almost unquestionably be labeled plagiarism. Some of these include buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper (including, of course, copying an entire paper or article from the Web); hiring someone to write your paper for you; and copying large sections of text from a source without quotation marks or proper citation. But then there are actions that are usually in more of a gray area. Some of these include using the words of a

source too closely when paraphrasing (where quotation marks should have been used) or building on someone's ideas without citing their spoken or written work" (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>). If you any questions at any point about plagiarism or other issues related to academic integrity, please ask me.

Special Needs: If you have a disability that may require an accommodation for taking this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (336-758-5929) within the first two weeks of the semester.

Revisions to Syllabus: I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as needed. Revisions will be posted on the course website.

Preliminary Course Schedule

Date	Topic	What to Read Before Class	What is Due
Introductions			
W 1/13	Introductions	Syllabus Steven Seidman, "Theoretical Perspectives," pp. 1-12	
W 1/20	Biomythographies	Lorde, Chs. 1-20 from <i>Zami</i> , pp. 1-153	
M 1/25	Biomythographies	Lorde, Chs. 21-Epilogue from <i>Zami</i> , pp. 154- 256	
Module 1: Theoretical Approaches to Sexuality			
W 1/27	Saint Foucault	Foucault, Parts 1-3 from <i>The History of Sexuality</i> , pp. 1-73	Group 1 RR 1
M 2/1	Saint Foucault	Foucault, Parts 4-5 from <i>The History of Sexuality</i> , pp. 75-159	
W 2/3	Feminist Theories	Anne Koedt (1970), "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," pp. 371-377 Catherine MacKinnon (1989) "Sexuality, Pornography, and Method: Pleasure under Patriarchy," pp. 314-346	Group 2 RR 1
M 2/8	Queer Theories	Gayle Rubin (1984), "Sexual Thoughts" and "The Limits of Feminism" from "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," pp. 9-16, 27-34 Eve Sedgwick (1993), "Queer and Now," pp. 1-20 Annamarie Jagose, "Queer Theory," pp. 258-263	
W 2/10	Intersectional Theories of Sexuality	E. Patrick Johnson, (2001), "'Quare' Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned from my Grandmother," pp. 1-25	Group 3 RR 1
Module 2: Historical Approaches to Sexuality			
M 2/15	Hetero-histories	Blank, Chs. 1-3 from <i>Straight</i> , pp. 1-66	
W 2/17	Hetero-histories	Blank, Chs. 4-5 from <i>Straight</i> , pp. 67-120	Group 1 RR 2
M 2/22	Hetero-histories	Blank, Chs. 6-7 from <i>Straight</i> , pp. 121-166	
Module 3: Contemporary Sexual Practices, Identities, and Communities			

W 2/24	College Sexual Cultures	Bogle, Chs. 1-5 from <i>Hooking Up</i> , pp. 1-95	Group 2 RR 2
M 2/29	College Sexual Cultures	Bogle, Chs. 6-8 from <i>Hooking Up</i> , pp. 96-186	
W 3/2	The Down Low?	McCune, Chs. 1-3 from <i>Sexual Discretion</i> , pp. 1-101	Group 3 RR 2
M 3/7	No Class	SPRING BREAK	
W 3/9	No Class	SPRING BREAK	
M 3/14	The Down Low?	McCune, Chs. 4-Conclusion from <i>Sexual Discretion</i> , pp. 102-174	Final Question
W 3/16	Student Research Symposium on Gender and Sexuality		Group 1 RR 3
M 3/21	Class Visit: Jane Ward	Jane Ward (2008), "Dude-Sex: White Masculinities and 'Authentic' Heterosexuality Among Dudes Who Have Sex With Dudes," pp. 414-434	Discussion Question
W 3/23	Bisexualities, Polyamories, and Asexualities	Ani Ritchie and Meg Barker (2006), "There Aren't Words for What We Do or How We Feel So We Have To Make Them Up': Constructing Polyamorous Languages in a Culture of Compulsory Monogamy," pp. 584-601 Kristin Esterberg (2011), "The Bisexual Menace Revisited: Or, Shaking Up Social Categories is Hard to Do," pp. 278-284 Mark Carrigan (2011), "There's More to Life than Sex? Difference and Commonality Within the Asexual Community," pp. 462-478	Group 2 RR 3
M 3/28	Disabled Sex and Trans* Sex	Alison Kafer (2012), "Desire & Disgust: My Ambivalent Adventures in Devoteeism," pp. 331-353 Avery Tompkins (2014), "'There's No Chasing Involved': Cis/Trans Relationships, 'Tranny Chasers,' and the Future of a Sex-Positive Trans Politics," pp. 766-780	
Module 4: State and Institutional Regulation of Sexuality			
W 3/30	Homonormativities and Same-Sex Marriage	Lisa Duggan (2002), "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," pp. 175-94. Dean Spade and Craig Willse (2013), "Marriage Will Never Set Us Free," np	Group 3 RR 3
M 4/4	Regulating Gender	Dean Spade (2015), "What's Wrong with Rights?" and "Administrating Gender" from <i>Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law</i> , pp. 38-49, 73-93	

W 4/6	Terrorism and International Politics	Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai (2002), "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," pp. 117-148	Group 1 RR 4
M 4/11	Sexual Commerce	Bernstein, Chs. 1-3 from <i>Temporarily Yours</i> , pp. 1-69	Final Annotated Bibliography
W 4/13	Sexual Commerce	Bernstein, Chs. 4-7 from <i>Temporarily Yours</i> , pp. 70-187	Group 2 RR 4
M 4/18	Sexual Violence	Estelle Freedman (2013), "Introduction: The Political History of Rape" and "The Enduring Politics of Rape" from <i>Redefining Rape: Sexual Violence in the Era of Suffrage and Segregation</i> , pp. 1-11, 271-289	
W 4/20	Sexual Violence	Rachel Hall (2004), "It Can Happen to You': Rape Prevention in the Age of Risk Management," pp. 1-19 Anastasia Powell and Nicola Henry (2014), "Framing Sexual Violence Prevention: What Does it Mean to Challenge a Rape Culture?" pp. 1-21	Group 3 RR 4
M 4/25	Sexual Health and Rights	Catherine Connell and Sinikka Elliott (2009), "Beyond the Birds and the Bees: Learning Inequality Through Sexuality Education," pp. 83-102 Paul Sendziuk (2008), "Zipped Trousers, Crossed Legs, and Magical Thinking: Sex Education in the Age of AIDS," pp. 55-58	Final Outline
W 4/27	Sexual Health and Rights	Linda Gordon (2012), "Citizenship and the Right to Birth Control," pp. 60-64 Carole Joffe (2013), "Roe v. Wade and Beyond: Forty Years of Legal Abortion in the United States," pp. 54-59 Katha Pollitt (2015), "Reclaiming Abortion Rights," pp. 76-78 Dorothy Roberts (2015), "Reproductive Justice, Not Just Rights," pp. 79-82	

Monday, May 2nd at 2:00pm (Final Exam Period): Final Presentations Due

Sunday, May 8th by the end of the day: Final Papers Due