

Sex and Society
Sociology 457 Crn: 16102
Times and Place: MW 8:30 am until 9:50 am. 248 Gerlinger

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Office Hrs: Office Hours: Monday, noon to one; Thursday, two to three; and by appointment.

Course Description

The sociological study of sexuality, gender, and society is an emerging and exciting field of inquiry. Not long ago – at least in polite North American society – sexuality remained under wraps. Normative sexual conduct was not considered a subject for public discussion. Within most of Anglo-American working, middle, and upper class society (and for many others as well) acceptable sexual conduct was regarded somewhat monolithically -- as an instrument of procreation embedded within the institution of heterosexual marriage. This is not to say that other modes of sexual practice did not exist; however, “alternative” sexualities were not allowed to inhabit a legitimate social space.

Today, our diverse perspectives regarding sexual roles, conduct, and values fuel lively, if contentious, personal and public debates -- as well as a rich body of scholarly discourse and research. Actual and anticipated changes in the sexual realm have energized a host of social movements within the United States and elsewhere. Moreover, in a global and multi-cultural society, cultures with widely disparate sexual norms have become proximate – increasing the actual *and* symbolic importance of sexual and gendered matters within and among societies. As students of sociology we endeavor to understand these changes within a broader social context. We are also quite sensitive to ways that social intersections shape sexual perspectives and practices. By this I mean that we wish to know more about how race, gender, and class – as well as combinations of these identities play out in the construction of sexuality and gender.

In this class students will receive a critical introduction to several of the current theoretical frameworks utilized in the contemporary sociological study of sexuality and gender. We will apply these theoretical frameworks to a cross-section of topical issues in the field of sexuality, gender, and society. Class readings are challenging; additionally, students should have the maturity to engage with sensitive and controversial topics respectfully.

The class will function as a learning community; class is structured to include lecture and student participation. Students learn from one another as well as from their professors. It should go without saying that I also learn a great deal from each one of you. **Study groups will be set up for students and individual guidance is freely available. You may e-mail me with short questions any time before eight p.m. – I will usually get back to you within twenty-four hours.**

Course Texts

One text only: *Sexuality and Gender*, edited by Christine L Williams and Arlene Stein. The text is available at the Campus Book Store. A copy of the text is on four-hour reserve at the Knight Library.

Miscellaneous

- Attendance is not required, but recommended for this class. Please do not come to class if you're feeling sick. We will take role and good attendance may play a role in final assessments for grades that are borderline
- No electronic equipment permitted except as requested for assignments
- Please come on time and stay through the class
- Please keep personal conversations to an absolute minimum
- **This class contains material (textual and visual) that can be quite controversial. I ask that you engage with the material (and each other) in a scholarly and respectful manner. If you have issues with films or the library materials – see me in advance.**

Course Requirements

The following is a brief list of course requirements and due dates for assignments. Please consult Blackboard for a fuller description of these assignments. (See "Course Assignment.") Assignments will be discussed in class and you are always welcome to ask questions in person or via e-mail.

1. Three Memos: I will discuss memos in class; Check your syllabus and Bb for due dates, topics and guidelines (15 points total). To be submitted on-line. Dates due: 10/12, 11/18, 12/2
2. In class quiz on readings: Twenty multiple choice/ true false questions (10 points) Due: 10/19
3. Midterm One: Take home essay (5-7 pages double space). A comparison of psychoanalytic and symbolic interactionist theories. A detailed outline of this assignment is will be posted on your Bb site (20 points) Due: 10/28 To be submitted as hard copy
4. Midterm Two: In class, 50 multiple choice and true/false questions (15 points) Due 11/23
5. Final Research Paper: Due on Monday, Dec 7th @4:30 (40 points). To be submitted as hard copy. I will give you more information regarding this paper on the Blackboard site. Miriam Rigby, social science librarian, will provide research support. The topic of research is of your own choosing. This paper must be written for this class only. There will be a marked box in the sociology office for your papers.

Total Points:

Three memos at five points each =	15 points
Quiz	10 points
Midterm One	20 points
Midterm Two	15 points
Research Paper	40 points

Total Points 100 points

Class Calendar for Sex and Society

All readings are due on dates indicated. You will benefit greatly from having done readings before the class. In addition to enhanced understanding of lectures, we'll have better discussions. *I will give pop quizzes if I sense readings aren't being done.*

Text Abbreviations: Sexuality and Gender = SG

A. MODULE A – THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SEX IN SOCIETY: Weeks One through Three

Week One

1. Wednesday: 9/30

Reading due, No readings due

Lecture: The social dimension of sexuality and gender: Construction and Essentialist Perspectives

Assignment: In class survey (anonymous).

Week Two

2. Monday: 10/5

Reading due: SG: "Sex and Society"; Michael et al (371-381)

Lecture: The Social Construction of Sex. We do what our friends do: the importance of attitudes and beliefs in shaping sexual behavior

3. Wednesday: 10/7

Reading due: SG "Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds"; Thorne and Luria (127-141)

Lecture: Gender and preadolescent sexual development

Week Three

4. Monday: 10/12

Reading due: SG "Symbolic Interactionism and Sexual Conduct: An Emergent Perspective"; Plummer (20-32)

Lecture: The social construction of sex: an interactionist perspective

➔ Assignment: 1st Memo due at the beginning of class:

5. Wednesday: 10/14

Reading due: "The Muslim Concept of Active Female Sexuality";

Lecture: Psychoanalytic theory and culture.

Week Four

6. Monday: 10/19

Reading due: "Higamous-Hogamous"; Dinnerstein (5-19)

Lecture: Psychoanalytic theory and the family

➔ Assignment: In class quiz 25 questions – all readings through 10/14

7. Wednesday: 10/21

Reading due: No new readings: Review of readings

Lecture: A closer look at our readings: comparative perspectives on sex and society

➔ Assignment: Midterm One: Take home. Due Wednesday 10/28 at the beginning of class. Comparisons of Symbolic Interactionist and Psychoanalytic perspectives (See Bb).

B. MODULE B: GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS AND SEXUAL ASYMMETRIES (WEEKS FIVE AND SIX)

Week Five

8. Monday: 10/26

Reading due: “ ‘ I couldn’t ever picture myself as having sex’: Gender differences in Sex and Sexual Subjectivity”; Martin (142-162)

Lecture: Understanding Adolescent Sexuality: Gendered sexual experiences.

Theoretical explanations that

Guest Speaker: Miriam Rigby our social science librarian. Miriam is on-board to help you with your research project

9. Wednesday: 10/28

Reading due: “The Naked Citadel”; Faludi (71-86)

Lecture: Masculinity Under Siege

→Assignment: 1st Mid term due (hard copy)

Week Six

10. Monday: 11/2

Reading due: “Working for Men: at the Intersection of Power, Gender, and Sexuality”

Lecture: Sexploitation: Analyzing the commodification of sex

Video: “Not a Love Story” Part One

11. Wednesday: 11/4

Reading due: ““Pleasure Under Patriarchy”; MacKinnon

Lecture: One radical feminist’s perspective on sex and society: A contemporary discussion of MacKinnon’s controversial position

Video: “Not a Love Story” Part Two. Two women traverse and discuss the world of pornography. Includes commentaries by many leading second wave feminists *and* both men and women engaged in the production of various kinds of pornography. Includes scenes that are quite graphic and sometimes violent.

C. Module C: Deconstructions and Renegotiations of Sex in Society (Weeks Seven through Nine)

Week Seven

12. Monday: 11/9

Reading due: "The Meaning of Sex" Chapkis

Lecture: The Feminist Sex Wars – seen in a contemporary context

Video: "Live Nude Girls Unite" Part One by Julia Query; John Montoya; Vicky Funari; Query Productions. First Run/Icarus Films. Sex workers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady organize.

13. Wednesday: 11/11

Reading due: "A Queer Encounter: Sociology and Study of Sexuality"

Lecture: Alternative Sexual Orientations: A critical examination of issues related to sexual orientation. We examine our fourth and last theoretical perspective, that of queer theory.

Video: "Live Nude Girls" Part Two

Week Eight

14. Monday: 11/16

Reading due: Sexuality and Gender in Certain Native American Tribes: The Case of Cross Gender Females

→Lecture: Special Collection Library Visit. Linda Long presents the Tee Corinne Papers, an archival collection of lesbian erotica and related works

15. Wednesday: 11/18

Reading due: "Gay and Lesbian Families are Here: All Our Families are Queer; Let's Get Used to It!" Stacy

Lecture: Sexuality and the Family

→Assignment: 2nd Memo

Week Nine

16. Monday: 11/23

MIDTERM TWO (IN CLASS) No make-ups unless documented illness.

Please provide scantrons. I will provide paper for the short answer essay

17. Wednesday: 11/25

Lecture and activities: Works in progress

Since I expect a small turnout today, we will devote class time to actively working on research projects. Bring your laptops, drafts, and works in progress to share.

Thursday: 11/26 Thanksgiving Holiday

D. Module D: Racialized Sexualities (Week Ten)

Week Ten (Dead Week)

18. Monday: 11/30

Reading due: "The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood"; (191-206) Collins

Lecture: "Intersexions." Racialized Sexuality: Causes and Consequences in the US

Midterm Exams returned and reviewed at the end of class

19. Wednesday: 12/2

Reading due: "Fantasy Islands: Exploring the Demands of Sex Tourism"; Davidson and Taylor (354-367)

Lecture: "Intersexions Two": The Political Economy of Sex Tourism in Jamaica

➔ Assignment: 3rd Memo

➔ Friday, Dec 4th: Eleventh Hour Paper Session Review.

Week Eleven (Finals)

FINAL EXAM on Monday, Dec 7th at 10:15. Your final is the topic paper which is due on December 7th. Paper to be handed in at the Sociology Main Office by 4:30 on the 7th.

There is no other final exam for this class.

Late finals will not be accepted without pre-authorization. Permission for late exams is based on documented illness or emergency only.

Paper returns: You may pick up your papers at the beginning of winter quarter with comments and corrections. I will have your papers in my office – just stop by during one of my winter term office hours.