

Fall 2008
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LSH A256

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LSH A345

SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITIES

This advanced seminar examines the emerging body of work in the fast-growing field of sexuality studies. While the course focuses on sociological research, it takes numerous side trips into other disciplines. We begin by exploring theories and methods in sexuality studies. What is “sexuality” and how has it been studied? What theories and methods inform the field? After considering early sexologists’ contributions and the work of Sigmund Freud, we will survey the sociology of sexuality from its beginnings in quantitative research through social constructionism and feminism. Then we’ll examine the Michel Foucault’s radical rethinking of modern understandings and look at the challenges of queer theory.

In the second part of the course we’ll focus on several streams in contemporary sociological work in sexuality, asking how the preceding theories and methods have been shaped cutting-edge research on the construction of heteronormativity, the making of homosexualities, sexual commodification and globalization. We’ll end by looking at how transgender activists and theorists force us to reassess taken-for-granted understandings of the relationship among bodies, genders, and sexualities.

The course will consist of lectures and discussions, and possibly a film or two. Participation will be key, and students will be responsible for helping to lead class discussions, with one or two people co-facilitating each session with me. Co-facilitators will email a brief analytic overview (2-3 pages) to all students two days before class. This statement should highlight the core themes and arguments, salient questions, and points of confusion/contradiction in the week’s readings.

Students taking the course for credit are expected to submit a paper (20-25 pages) by December 15. You must get my approval of your proposed topic by submitting a short written description no later than October 13, which I am happy to discuss with you in advance. Students will present their research in progress in class on October 27 and November 24.

This syllabus is subject to revision.

BOOKS

Julia Ericksen, *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard 1999).
ISBN 0-674-50535-2

James Farrer, *Opening Up: Youth Sex Culture and Market Reform in China* (Chicago 2002). ISBN-10: 0226238717

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (Vintage 1979)
ISBN-10: 0679724699

C. J. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (California 2007) ISBN-10: 0520252306

David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* (Duke University Press 2007) ISBN-978-0-8223-3869-7

**Additional readings listed on the syllabus will be available on Sakai.

I. FORMATIONS OF SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE

What is “sexuality” and how has it been studied? Theories, methods, and other things

September 8. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW OF COURSE

Arlene Stein, “Three Models of Sexuality: Drives, Identities, and Practices,” *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 1989.

September 15. SEXOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS.

Steven Seidman, “The Science of Sex: Sexology and Psychoanalysis,” in S. Seidman, *The Social Construction of Sexuality*, Norton 2003.

Ethel Spector Person, “A Psychoanalytic Approach” in J. Geer and W. O’Donoghue, *Theories of Human Sexuality* (Plenum 1987).

Sigmund Freud, “Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness” (1908)

Sigmund Freud, “The Sexual Life of Human Beings” (1920)

Sigmund Freud, “The Passing of the Oedipus Complex” (1924)

Sigmund Freud, “The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman” (1924)

September 22. SURVEYING SEX

Julia Ericksen, *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century*

September 29. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Carole Vance, "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality," in D. Altman, et al, *Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality?* (GMP 1989).

William Simon and John Gagnon and, "A Sexual Scripts Approach" in J. Geer and W. O'Donoghue, *Theories of Human Sexuality* (Plenum 1987).

Ken Plummer, "Homosexual Categories," from K. Plummer, *The Making of the Modern Homosexual* (London: Hutchinson), 1981.

Barrie Thorne and Zella Luria, "Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds" in C. Williams and A. Stein, *Sexuality and Gender* (Blackwell 2002)

Joanne Nagel, "Sex Matters: Racing Sex and Sexing Race" in *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality*, Oxford, 2003.

Adam Green, "The Social Organization of Desire," *Sociological Theory* 26:1 March 2008.

October 6. FEMINISM/FEMINIST SEX DEBATES

Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" in R. Rapp, *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (1975).

Catherine MacKinnon, "Sexuality" in J. Geer and W. O'Donoghue, *Theories of Human Sexuality* (Plenum 1987).

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*. Norton 1994.

Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes Toward a Radical Theory of Sexuality" in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. H. Abelove, M. Barale and D. Halperin (Routledge 1993).

Gayle Rubin, "Afterword: Sexual Traffic" In *Feminism Meets Queer Theory*, ed. E. Weed and N. Schor, Indiana, 1997.

October 13. FOUCAULTIAN/DISOURSE THEORY

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1*.

Steven Epstein, "An Incitement to Discourse: Sociology and The History of Sexuality," *Sociological Forum* (Vol. 18, No. 3, September 2003).

October 20. QUEER THEORY

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public" in R. Corber and S. Vallochi, *Queer Studies: An Interdisciplinary Reader* (Blackwell 2003).

Eve Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet* (University of California Press, 1990) --excerpt

Judith Butler, "Critically Queer" in *Bodies that Matter*, 1993.

Lynne Layton, "Trauma, Gender Identity and Sexuality: Discourses of Fragmentation," *American Imago*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 1995.

Arlene Stein and Ken Plummer, "I Can't Think Straight: Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology," *Sociological Theory* (12:2 July 1994).

October 27. INTERLUDE: Comparing theories, reflecting upon the state of the field, thinking about our own research, presenting our work in progress

Joshua Gamson and Dawne Moon, "The Sociology of Sexualities: Queer and Beyond," *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 2004. 30:47–64

Part II: STREAMS IN CONTEMPORARY SEXUALITY RESEARCH

A look at some recent sociological and interdisciplinary research.

What do the preceding theoretical traditions contribute to empirical investigations of sexuality?

November 3. CONSTRUCTING HETERONORMATIVITY

C. J. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag*

November 10. (HOMO)SEXUALITIES

Roger Lancaster, "Subject Honor: Object Shame" in C. Williams and A. Stein, *Sexuality and Gender* (Blackwell 2002)

Sasho Lambevksi, "Suck My Nation: Masculinity, Ethnicity and the Politics of (Homo)sex," *Sexualities* Vol 2(4), 1999.

Jane Ward, "Dude-Sex: White Masculinities and 'Authentic' Heterosexuality Among Dudes Who Have Sex With Dudes," *Sexualities*, Vol. 11(4), 2008.

Arlene Stein, "Sisters and Queers: The Decentering of Lesbian Feminism" in R. Lancaster and M. diLeonardo, *The Gender/Sexuality Reader* (Routledge 1997).

Maureen Sullivan, "Rozzie and Harriet? Gender and Family Patterns of Lesbian Coparents," *Gender & Society*, Vol. 10, No. 6, Dec. 1996.

November 17. CAPITALISM/COMMODIFICATION/GLOBALIZATION

James Farrer, *Opening Up*

November 24. PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH IN PROGRESS—part II

December 1. CAPITALISM/COMMODIFICATION/GLOBALIZATION—CONT'D

Finish James Farrer, *Opening Up*

Begin David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*

December 8. BODIES AND BINARIES

Finish David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender*

Final papers due: December 15