

Fall 2020  
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Office hours: TBA

## **SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITIES**

This advanced seminar examines the fast-growing field of sexuality studies. Sexuality appears to be a very private and personal matter. We often assume that it is a "natural" expression of our biological natures. But sexuality follows certain patterns; it may be experienced personally and intimately, but there is a social dimension as well. This course examines how sexuality is "constructed" in society. While the course focuses on sociological studies, it takes side trips into other disciplines, including history, anthropology, psychology, and politics. We will ask: What is "sexuality" and how has it been studied? We'll examine a number of streams in contemporary social research on sexuality, including the political economy of sexualities, the construction of bodies and identities, race and globalization, bodies and intimacies, and sexuality and the state. And we'll consider different methods social scientists have used to study sexuality, including surveying, interviewing, and ethnography, and the ethical questions that may emerge.

While we will take a broad overview of the topic of sexuality, special attention will be given to a "psychosocial" approach which bridges the psychic and social realms without reducing it to either. This approach draws from sociology, psychology, queer and cultural studies, and is synthesized by Katherine Johnson in *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, a required text.

The course will consist of lectures and discussions via Zoom and will include some special guests. 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. We will also workshop our research projects. Students will be assessed on the basis of written work and participation in class discussions.

Learning goals: Students will acquire broad understanding of the major theoretical debates and areas of substantive concern within the subfield of sexualities. They will learn how social scientists have studied sexual desire, identities and behaviors. They will gain insight into the relationship between dominant and minority sexual formations, and the linkages among gender, race, class, and nation as they relate to sexual matters.

### **REQUIREMENTS**

#### **1) *Participation/ Weekly Questions* (40% of grade)**

Students are expected to attend class, read carefully and participate actively in discussion each week. On the basis of the readings, you will develop at least three analytic question that you will upload to Canvas the day before class (Monday) by noon. Everyone should read each other's questions before class. You are exempt from this assignment the week(s) you are leading class.

## 2) *Class Discussion Leader* (10% of grade)

Each student will be expected to help lead two discussions during the semester. As a co-facilitator, your job is to critically introduce the material, discuss some key themes that emerge in the readings, offer a critique or appreciation of the reading(s). Co-facilitators will post a brief analytic overview (2-3 pages) to all students. This statement should highlight the core themes and arguments, salient questions, and points of confusion/contradiction in the week's readings. Feel free to show how the articles/book reflects the themes of the course, drawing links with previous readings, discussions where appropriate. Do not summarize the readings. Post on Canvas by Monday at 6pm.

## 3) *Paper or Research Proposal* (50% of grade)

Students taking the course for credit are expected to submit a 20-25 page paper on a topic related to this course. The paper can be analytical, critically reflecting on a substantive issue related to the sociology of sexuality. Or you may choose to write a research proposal, drawing on theoretical perspectives and existing empirical work to identify an interesting research question relating to the course theme.

A preliminary statement of your research project is due October 6. Email a short project description to me. Be as specific as possible and include citations to a few key reference works. If you are undecided about your focus, send ideas for two possible projects. At this time you should make an appointment to discuss this paper with me further—if you have not already spoken with me about it. To get final approval for your topic, you will submit a 2-3 page memo describing your project, complete with a brief bibliography by October 20, which you will share with the class.

Students will present their research in progress in class on November 13. This is an opportunity to share your work with the class and to receive feedback on your project. Final presentations of research will take place at the end of the course. Students taking the course for credit are expected to submit a paper (20-25 pages) by December 15.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change.

## **REQUIRED BOOKS**

Jennifer Hirsch and Shamus Khan, *Sexual Citizens: A Landmark Study of Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus*, Norton, 2020

Katherine Johnson, *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, Polity, 2015.

\*\*Additional readings listed on the syllabus will be available on Canvas.

*The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age,*

*social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.*

### **September 1. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW**

Peruse tables of contents of the journal *Sexualities* <http://journals.sagepub.com/loi/sex>

*Note: there will be no class on September 8.*

By September 8, please do the following:

- post a paragraph about yourself on Canvas.
- share your thoughts about *what* social researchers study when they study sexuality.
- share with us what *you're* most interested in studying in this course. By September 15, read what others have posted on Canvas and be prepared to discuss the readings for the week.

### **September 15. PSYCHOLOGY AND SEXOLOGY**

Freud, Sigmund. 1949[1910]. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, pp. 1-28.

Chodorow, Nancy, "Homophobia as a Permissible Prejudice,"  
<https://www.cyberpsych.org/homophobia/noframes/chodorow.htm>

View [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mf9D\\_j-vBs&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mf9D_j-vBs&feature=youtu.be)

Janice Irvine, "Regulated Passions: The Invention of Inhibited Sex Desire and Sex Addiction," *Social Text*, 1993.

Katherine Johnson, *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, Chapter 2

### **September 22. SURVEYING SEX**

Watch "Kinsey" (2004)

Alfred Kinsey, "Sexual Behavior in the Human Male," 1948 (1976).

Karen Winkler, "Kinsey, Sex Research, and the Body of Knowledge: Let's Talk About Sex," *WSQ*, 2005.

Saidya Hartman, "An Atlas of the Wayward," in *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments*

Paula England, et. al. "Hooking Up and Forming Romantic Relationships on Today's College Campuses"

<http://www.nyu.edu/classes/jackson/sex.and.gender/Readings/England%20-%20Hooking%20Up.pdf>

### **Sept 29. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM I**

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

Ken Plummer, "Homosexual Categories: Some Research Problems in the Labeling Perspective of Homosexuality," 1981.

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1*, 1978, excerpt.

Katherine Johnson, *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, chapter 3

### **October 6. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM II**

\*\*A preliminary statement of your research project is due.

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

Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes Toward a Radical Theory of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger*, 1984.

Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," in *Sister/Outsider* 1978.

Gloria Anzaldua, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness," in *Making Face, Making Soul*, 1990.

### **Oct. 13. QUEER AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORIES**

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, excerpt.

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

Vruti Patil, "The Heterosexual Matrix as Imperial Effect," *Sociological Theory*, 2018.

Katherine Johnson, *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, ch. 4

### **Oct. 20. THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF SEXUAL INTERACTIONS**

\*\*Please have your proposed paper topic approved by submitting a short written description to me no later than October 20.

Jennifer Hirsch and Shamus Khan, *Sexual Citizens*

### **Oct. 27. STATES AND SEXUALITIES**

Jyoti Puri, *Sexual States*, 2016, pages TBA.

Koen Slootmaeckers, "Nationalism as Competing Masculinities," *Theory and Society*, 2019.

Niina Vuolajarvi, "Governing in the Name of Caring—the Nordic Model of Prostitution and its Punitive Consequences for Migrants Who Sell Sex," 2018.

### **Nov. 3. TRANSNATIONAL INTIMACIES**

Kimberly Hoang, *Dealing in Desire*, 2015, TBA

Hector Carrillo, *Pathways of Desire*, 2017, TBA.

Ghassan Moussawi, "Queering Beirut, the Paris of the Middle East: Fractal Orientalism and Essentialized Masculinities in Gay Travelogues," *Gender, Place, and Culture*, 2013.

### **Nov. 10. THINKING ABOUT METHODS I**

Laud Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade*, 1970, excerpt.

Peter Nardi, "The Breastplate of Righteousness: Twenty-five Years After Laud Humphreys' Tearoom Trade," 1996.

Julia O'Connell Davidson and Derek Layder, *Methods, Sex, and Madness*, 1994, excerpt.

Janice Irvine, "Can't Ask, Can't Tell: How IRBs Keep Sex in the Closet," *Contexts*, 2012

### **Nov. 17. THINKING ABOUT METHODS II**

Elizabeth Bernstein, "Appendix: Note on Methodology," in *Temporarily Yours*, 2007.

Bolton, Ralph. "Mapping Terra Incognita: Sex Research for AIDS Prevention" in *Culture, Society and Sexuality* ed. Parker and Aggleton, 1999

David Valentine, "Ethnography as an Activist Strategy," *Imagining Transgender*, 2007.

Jessica Fields, "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research," in *Imagining Queer Methods*, 2019.

#### **November 24. IDENTITIES, EMOTIONS, AFFECTS**

Janice Irvine, "Shame Comes Out of the Closet," *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 2009.

Arlene Stein, *The Stranger Next Door*, 2001, excerpt.

Deborah Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*, 2009, excerpt.

Katherine Johnson, Introduction, *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, chap. 5

#### **Dec. 1. GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND EMBODIMENT**

Brandon Andrew Robinson, "The Quantifiable-Body Discourse," *Social Currents*, 2016.

Talia Mae Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers: On Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion," *Hypatia*, 2007.

Angela Jones, Introduction, *Camming: Money, Power and Pleasure in the Sex Work Industry*, 2020.

#### **Dec. 8. TOWARD THE FUTURE**

Katherine Johnson, *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto*, ch. 6, 7

Melissa Farley, "Prostitution, the Sex Trade, and the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Logos*, 2020.

Additional reading TBA

**\*\*Final papers due: December 15**