

Critical Studies in Sexuality 300A:101

Mondays 4-7pm Dr. Janice Stewart

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Hours: Tuesdays 1-2 Or by appt.

Description

This course offers an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Sexuality from historical and cultural perspectives. We will use literature, film, and theory to explore sex and sexuality as fundamental categories of analysis in the humanities. We will draw upon a wide variety of disciplines with focus on the historical contexts, which have shaped various theories of sexuality. We will examine texts from a number of cultures and historical eras to appreciate the diversity, rather than the homogeneity, of sexual experiences, practices and identities as well as the cultural meanings attached to various forms of sexuality. Text selections will attempt to be as inclusive as possible, paying attention to differences in historical epoch, gender, race, class and sexual practice (including lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual and transgendered sexualities). The course does not posit a single, transhistorical or transcultural point of view, nor does it assume that sexual identity is a fixed inner essence unaffected by social and cultural forces; rather, it stresses the historically and culturally specific nature of sexual practices and the development, since the 19th century, of the relatively modern concept of a sexual identity.

Through the lenses of gender, race and sexual orientation, we will examine some of the philosophical, literary, social, and political dimensions of critical studies in sexuality.

Beginning with a survey of contemporary interdisciplinary scholarship and popular culture we will attempt, via philosophical, psychoanalytic, and literary routes, to develop a vocabulary for addressing the varieties and complexities of identity and community formation that this literature documents. We will also provide a background and some tools to allow students to relate critically to particularly relevant debates on sexual identity, subjectivity and the body, by examining the arguments and voices that have problematized and challenged the modern discourse of the subject. We will try to explore what dimensions do fantasy and imagination, including imaginative literature/erotica, add to the multiple histories of sexualities that we are tracking? How does the intersection of race/class/ethnicity trouble our readings of these categories? How indeed, do we know what we think we know about bodies, sensations, political agency and the constraints and limits of sexuality? What is the history of the terms within which we understand ourselves to be most ourselves today? What are the limits of these terms; in what other terms might we understand ourselves in relationship to others?

Required Texts:

Middlesex Jeffery Egenides

History of Sexuality Michel Foucault

** plus \$15 photocopying charge

Course Requirements

- A) Participation 10%
- B) 4 page paper 20% Oct 15
- C) Midterm 30% Oct 22

D) Final project 40% Nov 27

A. Class Participation

Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Class members will learn as much from the exchange of views inside the classroom as we will from analyzing the readings on our own. This will be a low-key speaking opportunity.

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected. Excessive absences (more than 2 classes) will negatively affect your grade. Anyone missing 40% of the class for any reason will automatically fail this course.

B. 4 page responses

Elaborate on a central theme or debate from the course readings by placing two of the readings in conversation. The aim of the paper is twofold: to analyze the texts' theoretical arguments and to explore their political implications. Do not re-tell an author's position, engage that position, critique it, think about the possibilities that it offers. Find an example to work with and explore it through this lens.

C. Midterm 2 hour

This is will be a low stress, short answer midterm. You will choose 3 out of 10 possible statements and address the significance, politics, issues, problems from our reading/lectures. You will be expected to draw on lecture materials as well as readings.

D. Final research project

In this assignment you are encouraged to look at the structure of the course and choose a topic that relates specifically to one of the various segments. You can take this assignment in many different directions. An essay is not the only way to go for this. If you do choose an essay, 10 pages would be about the length for this assignment. This project will constitute the bulk of your mark for this course and requires thoughtful analysis and research. Evaluation for this assignment is based on thoughtful engagement with topics/issues and in depth scholarly research. Research is most definitely required.

A few notes: No interpretive dance. No cutting and pasting of any magazine, book, laundry lists, anywhere. Absolutely, no Popsicle sticks. No Bristol board artwork. No creative writing, including poetry. Please come and see one of us if you are planning on the creative project so that we can be sure of each other's intention.

Schedule	Topics	Readings	Speaker's
Sept 10	The Roots and Context of sexual politics	Introduction	Dr. Janice Stewart
17 Quirk-e	Deconstructing and Reconstructing Sex and Gender through Photography	*students will meet in Brock hall for a presentation and art viewing from 4:30-7	Quirk-e
24	Doing and Undoing the <i>History of Sexuality</i>	Foucault	Manuela Valle

Oct 1	Queer Race	*Readings to follow	Dr Proma Tagore University of Victoria
15	Sexuality and the Documentary		Aerlyn Wiseman, Documentary film maker
22	midterm	Catch-up and discussion	Janice Stewart
29	Queer Cinema	"Unsung Heros" "Queerscapes in Contemporary Hong Kong Cinema." "New Queer Cinema and Third Cinema."	Dr. Helen Hok-Sze Leung SFU
Nov 5	Queering and Genderbending Music	*Readings to follow	Dr. Claudia Ruitenber
19	Queering Discussions of Race	Juana María Rodriguez, Audre Lorde	Manuela Valle
26	Politics of Perversion	<i>Middlesex</i>	Dr. Janice Stewart

Notes:

1. In the interests of fairness to all members of the class who work hard to meet deadlines, all late assignments will be subject to a penalty deduction of one letter grade per day (A+-B+) including weekends, unless a valid medical excuse is provided. NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED ELECTRONICALLY.
2. The course coordinator and participating instructors look forward to working with each of you over the course of the coming term as we explore together the critical and disciplinary parameters of sexuality. Please do not hesitate to approach any of us, either inside or outside of class, with questions, queries, feedback, or suggestions relating to the course as a whole, the material covered, or your individual progress. If for any reason the Course Coordinator's office hours are inconvenient for you, please do not hesitate to contact her in order to arrange a separate appt.
3. Should you have a religious observance that will prevent you from attending class, from completing an assignment on time, or from writing a test, please be sure to let me know at least two weeks in advance so that alternate arrangements can be made.
4. Please review departmental regulations on **plagiarism and cheating** so that we can all avoid the unpleasantness of discoveries and of consequences that range from a minimum of a zero on the paper to a maximum of expulsion from the university. In particular, please remember to document all sources, to ensure that all work is fully original and your own, and note that you may not recycle even your own work from other university courses, from student publications, or from way back in high school. All of these things constitute academic dishonesty.

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**Any student who has special needs for assistance, and who is registered with the Office of Student Disability Services should meet with the instructor during the first week of classes

Because class discussion is a key component of this course we will promote a safe and diversity-sensitive learning environment that respects the opinions, and wellbeing of others. Diversity means the inclusion of contrasting perspectives together with the appreciation and valuing of different and differing voices from various social and cultural perspectives. To this end, in this class we aspire to create a climate of mutual respect among and between students and faculty by promoting an atmosphere that is free from discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.