SEXUALITY, SOCIETY & CULTURE:
AN INTRODUCTION TO LESBIAN & GAY STUDIES

Course Syllabus

Cross-Listings:
Anthropology 322
Interdisciplinary Studies 315
Women’s Studies 322

Maximum Enrollment: 35 Students

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Room: TBA
Time: MWF [TBA]
Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course provides a broad introduction to theory and research on the cultural meanings and social organization of same-gender attraction, sexual practice, and identity. Drawing from the varied critical frameworks falling under the rubric “Lesbian & Gay Studies,” this course will examine case studies from a variety of world areas and historical periods. While these studies employ a range of social science perspectives (and with occasional forays into biology), anthropological research will receive special attention in this edition of the course. (In other years, the course is offered by the Institute for Liberal Arts and the Department of Women’s Studies with corresponding tailoring of thematic foci.)

Readings and lectures have been designed, on the one hand, to introduce students to the classic studies of same-gender sexuality within the social sciences (particularly anthropology). Equally important, however, this course considers how “sexuality” becomes construed as an object of study for empirical research in the first place. Our examination of a range of themes, times and places, then, will be informed throughout the course by Lesbian & Gay Studies’ attention to how sexuality (especially same-gender sexuality) becomes “knowable” and therefore classifiable. Particular attention goes to cultural lines dividing forms of sexual expression understood as acceptable/moral/natural versus those perceived as unacceptable/immoral/unnatural. Ethnographic studies will attend to how ordinary people in the contemporary world interact with these dominant ways of understanding and categorizing sexuality.

The following are some of the questions that we will address through readings, lectures, and experience-based projects:

- Is erotic attraction to the same sex biologically conditioned?
- Or is “homosexuality” to be understood mainly as a social role created first in modern Western societies?
- Beyond “female” and “male,” what other genders are possible?
- Can we properly say that the Greek philosopher Socrates was “gay”?
- In what ways do modern North American constructions of sexuality intersect with gender and race?
• How are lesbian lives different from gay male ones?
• Are North American notions of lesbian and gay identity currently being adopted across the world as a part of so-called globalization?

At the completion of this course, students will:
• Be familiar with classic studies of same-gender sexuality within the social sciences (particularly anthropology);
• Be able to examine issues of sexuality in the contemporary world through the critical lenses offered by Lesbian & Gay Studies, particularly with respect to how “sexuality” and becomes constructed as an object of study;
• Possess in-depth familiarity with anthropology’s conceptually and methodologically diverse engagements with (homo-)sexuality during the 20th century
• Be acquainted with the major topical areas on which contemporary ethnographic studies of (homo-)sexuality have focused, drawing from several world areas, and the theoretical frameworks informing these studies

Periodically, guest instructors will lecture on specialized topics. (Unless so noted, all lectures will be given by Mr. Junge.)

COURSE TEXTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS
In this course, 3 books will be read in their entirety. While students are strongly encouraged to purchase these books (all are available at the Emory Bookstore), copies of each will be on research in the Woodruff Library.

Required Texts

Supplementary readings for this course are available as PDF files, downloadable from Woodruff Library’s E-Reserves (https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/reserves/).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EVALUATION AND GRADING
Final grades will be based on critical reflection papers, experience-based ethnographic exercises, and classroom discussion and LearnLink participation. Details on assignments and grading are as follows:

Critical Reflection Papers (60%)
During the semester, students are required to turn in four papers, each a critical response to a specific section of the course. As reflected in the syllabus, the course is divided thematically into 12 sections or “parts.” Each reflection paper should draw from readings and lectures to engage the key questions, debates and ethnographic evidence presented for the given section. Reflection papers are generally due one week subsequent to the completion of the given course section. These papers can be up to five double-spaced pages and should follow the written assignment
guidelines below. Students may elect to turn in more than four reflection papers; the top four grades only will enter into the final grade (each worth 15% of the final grade). Papers will be assessed and marked with a standard letter grade.

Experience-Based Ethnographic Exercises (30%)
Students must turn in two experienced-based ethnographic exercises. Students will be provided with several opportunities during the semester (corresponding to a key course theme, and with a deadline clearly indicated on the schedule), and must choose at least two to carry out and write-up. In most cases, these exercises will require observation of a social setting on-campus or elsewhere in Atlanta. Themes to be included: (1) Drag; (2) Lesbian & Gay Religious Practice; (3) Lesbian & Gay Space in Atlanta; (4) Lesbian & Gay Identity/Coming Out; (5) HIV/AIDS; and (6) Mass Media Representations of Homosexuality.

The idea behind these projects is to deepen your appreciation of particular issues covered in this course through first-hand experience. Seeing something or actually talking to people often adds a dimension to comprehension that it is difficult to attain only through reading or hearing lectures. Write-ups should be up to two single-spaced pages, following the written assignment guidelines below. Students may elect to turn in more than two ethnographic exercises; the top two grades only will enter into the final grade (each worth 15% of the final grade). Write-ups will receive one of four possible assessments, corresponding to a 10-point scale: “excellent” (10 pts), “good” (8 pts), “needs improvement but acceptable” (6 pts) and “not acceptable” (0 pts).

Classroom Attendance and Discussion/LearnLink Participation (10%)
Students are expected to come to each class meeting prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. Participation in classroom discussions and on the course’s LearnLink forum are worth up to 10% of the final grade.

COURSE POLICIES
Written Assignment Guidelines
All written work should have one-inch margins and be in Times New Roman font (size 12). Hardcopy, stapled versions should be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. E-mailed or unstapled versions will not be accepted.

Classroom Conduct
Students are expected to attend each class meeting, and attendance will be taken. More than four unexcused absences will result in the lowering of the final course grade by one half unit (i.e., from a “B” to a “B-”). Please arrive punctually. If you are late or miss class contact a “study buddy” as soon as possible to get class notes, assignments, etc. Given the sensitive nature of this class, it is imperative that all students are respectful of the opinions and privacy of others, and do not share non-academic information outside the classroom.

Deadlines and Extra Credit
As several opportunities to raise one’s grade through extra work have been incorporated into the grading system, no extra credit assignments will be allowed. For the same reasons, no extensions (short of a documented health emergency) will be given.
Honor Code
All academic work must meet the standards of Emory University’s Honor Code (https://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/students/honor.html). Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards.

Student Support
Please let me know (either via e-mail or during office hours) if you experience substantial difficulty or distress for any reason. In addition to the resources of the department, there are several services available through the College and University to support your academic and personal success.

PART I – INTRODUCTIONS

Week 1 (Mon) - Course Overview: Themes & Logistics

Week 1 (Wed) - Setting the Stage: Problematizing “Sexuality” and “Lesbian & Gay Studies”
- Jagose, 1-22
- Maria Maggenti, "Falling for a Guy," The Village Voice, June 27, 1995

PART II – 20TH-CENTURY SEXOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

Week 1 (Fri) - Sciencia Sexualis at the Turn of the 20th Century: Hirschfeld, Ellis, Freud

SPECIAL EVENT: Screening of the film “Kinsey” (Time and location TBA)

Week 2 (Mon) - Sex Surveys & the Legacies of Alfred Kinsey

PART III – FOUCAULT AND THE SEXUAL SCIENCES

Week 2 (Wed) - Foucault’s Argument about the History of Sexuality

**Week 2 (Fri) - Engagements with Foucault I**

**Week 3 (Mon) - Engagements with Foucault II: A Historical Testing of Foucault - Two North American Examples**

**PART IV – PRE-MODERN SEXUALITIES**

**Week 3 (Wed) - Ancient Greece**
- Plato, *The Symposium* (entire)

**Week 3 (Fri) - Discussion of issues raised by The Symposium and by Sappho’s poetry**

**Week 4 (Mon) - Same-Gender Behavior and Meaning in Ancient Roman Art & Architecture (guest lecture by Prof. Eric Varner, Dept. of Art History)**

**PART V – RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES**

**Week 4 (Wed) - Homosexuality and Judeo-Christian Scripture (guest lecture by Prof. William Gilders, Graduate Division of Religion): Scriptural Texts**
- Genesis 18-19; Leviticus 17-20; Judges 19-20; Matthew 19; Romans 1-3:20; 1 Corinthians 5-7

**Week 4 (Fri) - Medieval Reinterpretations (Gilders)**
• Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, second part of the second part. 2-2 questions 153-154.

**Week 5 (Mon)** - Current Issues in North American Churches & Synagogues (guest lecture by Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, University Chaplain)

**PART VI – INDIGENOUS SEXUALITIES**

**Week 5 (Wed)** - Early 20th-century Case Study from Anthropology: Malinowski and the Trobriand Islanders

**Week 5 (Fri)** - Late 20th-century Case Studies from Anthropology: Gregor and the Mehinaku and Herdt’s Study of the Sambia (An Age-Graded Form of Same-Gender Behavior & Meaning)

**Week 6 (Mon)** - Film, “Guardians of the Flutes” (50 min.)

**Part VII – ALTERNATIVE GENDER CATEGORIES**

**Week 6 (Wed)** - Wrap-up on the Sambia; Introduction and Case Study: The Hijras of India

**Week 6 (Fri)** - Native American Cultures

**PART VIII – QUESTIONS OF BIOLOGY**

**Week 7 (Mon)** - Bonobo Chimapanzees and the Evolution of Human Sexual Pleasure (guest lecture by Prof. Pat Whitten, Dept. of Anthropology)

**Week 7 (Wed)** - Genetics and the Sexing of the Body; What is biological “sex”? 

Proposed Syllabus #1 (survey) / DTF Application (Marvin B. Junge)
• Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are Not Enough,” The Sciences March-April 1993, pp. 20-24.

Week 7 (Fri) - The Gay Brain; Is homosexuality inherited? Who cares?

PART IX – CONTEMPORARY NORTH AMERICAN LESBIAN & GAY COMMUNITIES

Week 8 (Mon) - The Emergence of Lesbian & Gay Communities
• Jagose, 30-71

Week 8 (Wed) - Urban Space

PART X – DRAG

Week 8 (Fri) - Drag Before Stonewall
• Esther Newton, Mother Camp, first half

Week 9 (Mon) - Visit to class by a drag queen

Week 9 (Wed) - Drag, final discussions

PART XI – KEY CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Week 9 (Fri) - Homophobia: Film on men who have killed queers, "Licensed to Kill," Arthur Dong

Week 10 (Mon) - HIV/AIDS
• Jagosse, 93-95.

**Week 10 (Wed) - Sexuality, Race & Ethnicity:** How notions of race among gays and lesbians intersect with sexuality through gender

**Week 10 (Fri) - Sadomasochism**

**Week 11 (Mon) - Transsexualism**

**Week 11 (Wed) - Heterosexuality.** Discussion of the unmarked category. What can we say about heterosexuality after studying homosexuality? Or about another distinctive category of identity and experience, “bisexuality”?

**Week 11 (Fri) - Families and “Marriage”**

**PART XII – GLOBALIZATION AND SEXUAL CULTURES**

**Week 12 (Mon) - Introduction and Case Study: Thailand**

**Week 12 (Wed) - Globalization, continued. Case Studies: Brazil and South Africa**

**Week 12 (Fri) - Review of key course issues. Final discussions.**