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 classical and contemporary theories. What is “sexuality” and how has it been studied? In the second part of the course we’ll focus on different methods sociologists have used to study sexuality, and the ethical questions they raise. In the final part of the course, we’ll examine a number of streams in contemporary work on sexuality, including families and life courses, race and globalization, and bodies and intimacies.

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, and how recent theoretical shifts have led researchers to reconceptualize their object of study. 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. And they will try their hand at an original research project!

The course will consist of lectures and discussions, and films and a guest speaker or two. Participation will be key, and students will be responsible for helping 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 will be assessed on the basis of written work and participation in the class discussions. 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 10, which I am happy to discuss with you in advance. Students will present their research in progress in class on October 24 and November 21, and do final presentations on their research on December 12.

This syllabus is subject to revision.

BOOKS
Ken Plummer, *Telling Sexual Stories*, Routledge 1995 (this is expensive! Kindle it, or I will copy)
Jeffrey Weeks, *The Languages of Sexuality*, Routledge 2011

Recommended, if you have no prior background on the subject: S. Seidman, *The Social Construction of Sexuality*, Norton 2003

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

September 5. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW
Key term: sexuality, social constructionism


I. THINKING SEX: CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY THEORIES
What is “sexuality”? What is the relationship between sexuality and “society”? What is the relationship between sexuality and gender? Looking at.

September 12. SEXOLOGY/PSYCHOANALYSIS
Key terms: sexology, psychoanalysis, desire, childhood sexuality

Sigmund Freud, “Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness,” 1908
Sigmund Freud, “The Sexual Aberrations,” from *Three Essays*, 1914
Sigmund Freud, “The Passing of the Oedipus Complex,” 1924

** September 19. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM I
Key terms: essentialism, sexual scripts, gender, heterosexuality, homosexuality, feminism

Jonathan Ned Katz, “The Invention of Heterosexuality”
Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes Toward a Radical Theory of Sexuality”

** September 26—no class
October 3. FOUCAULTIAN/QUEER THEORY
Key terms: queer, discourse

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1*, excerpt
Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, excerpt

October 10. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM II
Keywords: sexual stories, intersectionality, habitus

Ken Plummer, *Telling Sexual Stories*, excerpt, 1995
Patricia Zavella, “Playing with Fire: The Gendered Construction of Chicana/Mexican Sexuality”

Part II: STUDYING SEX: METHODS AND ETHICS
How does one study sexuality? How should we think about research ethics?

October 17. LOOKING AT METHODS
Julia Ericksen, *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century*, 1999, excerpts

** Oct 20, “Intersections”— Black Queer Sexuality Studies Graduate Conference, Princeton University

October 24. RESEARCH ETHICS
Laud Humphreys, *Tearoom Trade*, excerpt
Peter Nardi, “The Breastplate of Righteousness: Twenty five Years After Laud Humphreys’ Tearoom Trade,” *Journal of Homosexuality*
Elizabeth Bernstein, “Appendix: Note on Methodology,” in *Temporarily Yours*

** Discussion of research proposals

Part III: STREAMS IN CONTEMPORARY SEXUALITY RESEARCH
A look at some recent sociological and interdisciplinary research. What are the cutting-edge debates?

October 31. CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFE CYCLES
Key words: families, same-sex marriage

Barrie Thorne and Zella Luria, "Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds"
Eve Sedgwick, “How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay”
Mignon Moore, Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships and Motherhood Among Black Women, 2011, excerpt
Judith Stacey and Tim Biblarz, “How Does the Gender of Parents Matter?”
Mark Regnerus, “How Different are the Adult Children of Parents Who Have Same-Sex Relationships? Findings from the New Family Structures Survey”

November 7. TRANSNATIONAL/CROSS-RACIAL SEXUALITIES
(joint meeting with anthropology graduate seminar)

Sealing Cheng, On the Move for Love: Migrant Entertainers and the US Military in South Korea, excerpt

November 14. INTERLUDE
Comparing theories, reflecting upon the state of the field, thinking about our own research, presenting our work in progress

November 21. GLOBALIZATION/MILITARIZATION
Key terms: globalization, sex tourism, trafficking, prostitution

Sealing Cheng, On the Move for Love: Migrant Entertainers and the US Military in South Korea

** Presentations of research in progress
November 28. RETHINKING BODIES
Key terms: bodies, transgender, cybersex

Clare Maxwell and Peter Aggleton, “Bodies and Agentic Practices in Women’s Sexual and Intimate Relations,” 2012
Don Kulick, Introduction, Travesti: Sex, Gender and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes, 1998
Alice Dreger and April M. Herndon, “Progress and Policies in the Intersex Rights Movement,” GLQ, 2009

December 5. EMERGING INTIMACIES
Key terms: intimacy, individualization, relationality, moral panic, sexual citizenship

Anthony Giddens, The Transformation of Intimacy, excerpt, 1992
Judith Stacey, Introduction, Unhitched, 2011
Roger Lancaster, Sex Panic and the Punitive State, 2011, excerpt

December 12. RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

**Final papers due: December 15**