

**"Introduction to the Sociology of Sexuality"
Sociology S3927.001
Columbia University
Summer, 2011**

*Summer Session D
(May 23 - July 1)*

Call Number: 47696

Points: 3

Day/Time: MTR 2:00pm-4:05pm

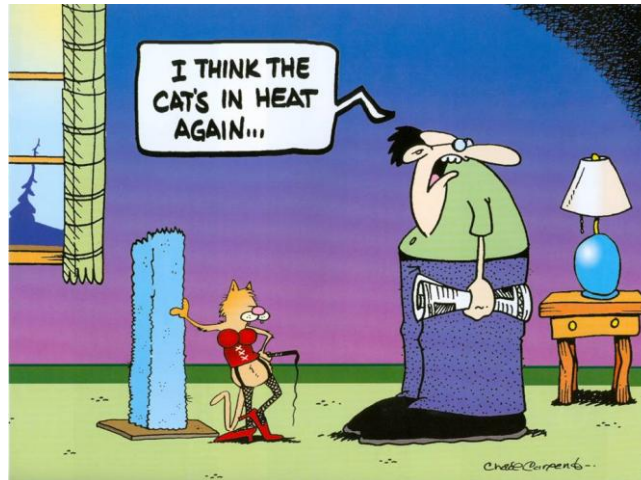
Location: 103 Knox Hall

Professor Danielle Lindemann

Email: djl2103@columbia.edu

Office: 509E, International Affairs Building

Office hours: By Appointment



Course Description:

In this course, students will learn to locate what we think of as a deeply personal issue—human sexuality—within a broader social framework, and to assess the ways in which individual acts and sexual expression are contingent upon history and collective experience. With whom we have sex, how often we have sex, how we identify sexually and perform our sexualities, are not purely the result of biology or individual choice, but they are heavily dependent upon the social worlds in which we are embedded. Topics include sex work, sadomasochism, sexual identity, and the link between sexuality and Feminist theory, as well as various methods useful for pursuing sex and gender research in the social sciences. The course will focus on the United States, although for their final papers, interested students may apply the theories and methods they have learned to cross-national perspectives. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Grading & Policies:

Each student's grade will consist of four major components:

- 1) **Class presentation:** 10% of the final grade will consist of your ability to clearly present the major points of the readings, and to pose fruitful questions for class discussion. **Please hand in your presentation notes to the instructor.** Each student will do one in-class presentation on that day's readings. ***Please confine your summary remarks to 5 minutes and then pose 3-4 questions about the material.*** Students are welcome, but not required, to sign up for additional presentations for extra credit.
- 2) **Class participation:** 20% of the final grade will come from a student's attendance record and the level of his or her participation in class. Small discussion classes are worthless unless students do the reading and actively participate.
- 3) **Short paper:** 20% of the final grade will come from a 5- to 7-page paper, due in Week 3 of the course. Students will have the opportunity to choose from several paper topics, which will be distributed in class.
- 4) **Final Paper:** 50% of the student's grade will come from an 8- to 10-page paper, due on the last day of class. For this paper, each student has the option of writing either a research paper (in which he or she performs a small-scale sociological project on a topic which I have approved) or a "library paper" in which the student explores a theoretical issue relevant to the course material. Students will present these papers at their early stages as well as when they are complete. Grading will take into account the original presentation of the topic, the final presentation of the paper, and the strength and clarity of the paper's argument.

Both papers are due via email or hard copy *on or before the day they are due*. Barring extremely dire circumstances, **late papers will not be accepted.**

Syllabus:

NO TEXTBOOKS ARE REQUIRED! ALL READINGS WILL BE AVAILABLE AS PDF FILES ON THE COURSEWORKS SITE FOR THIS CLASS (<https://courseworks.columbia.edu/>). CLICK ON "SYLLABUS," THEN CLICK ON THE APPROPRIATE CLASS SESSION TO FIND LINKS TO THE READINGS.

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Monday, May 23: Why Study Sex?

- Discussion of the intellectual/social benefits of studying sexuality
- What does it mean to think about sexuality in a sociological context?
- Pass out syllabus
- Discussion of course administration (Assignment of presentations, etc.)

Tuesday, May 24: The Place of Sexuality within the Field of Sociology

What has been the history of sexuality within the discipline of sociology? How and why has this topic

been marginalized? What have been seen as some of the social constituents of human sexuality?

Readings:

Mills, CW. "The Sociological Imagination", Chapter 1 (6 pages)

Epstein, Steven. 2003. "An Incitement to Discourse: Sociology and *The History of Sexuality*." *Sociological Forum* 18, 3 (September): 486-500.

Michael, Robert T., John H. Gagnon, Edward O. Laumann, and Gina Kolata. 1994. Chapt 1 "Sex in America" and Chapt 2 "The Sex Survey" in *Sex in America*. New York: Warner Books: 1-41

Thursday, May 26: The Stigma of Sexual Ethnography

Pursuing "ethnographic" studies of sexuality (i.e. engaging in participant-observation in order to research particular sexual subcultures, such as prostitution) has presented its own set of challenges for researchers. What are some of the challenges/limitations of sexual ethnography, in terms of how these researchers are viewed by their peers, and how might they be overcome, if at all?

Readings:

Chancer, Lynn S. 1998. "Chapter Five: Prostitution and Feminist Theory (Notes from the Sociological Underground)," in *Reconcilable Differences: Confronting Beauty, Pornography, and the Future of Feminism*. Berkeley: Univ of California Press: 173-199 + Notes.

Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2007. "Appendix: A Note on Methodology," in *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*. Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press: 189-201 + Notes

Lindemann, Danielle J. 2011. "The Research as Sociological Object," in *Dominatrix: Gender, Eroticism, and Control in the Dungeon*. Forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press (5 pages).

WEEK 2: FOCUS ON METHOD

Monday, May 30 – NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

Tuesday, May 31: Methods and Ethics

Looking at two classic (and somewhat notorious!) studies, we will look into some of the unique methodological and ethical issues that have historically been involved in sexuality research. Topics of discussion will include data collection, sample selection, and the Institutional Review Board.

Readings:

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. 1948. Chapt 2, "Interviewing," in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders: 35-62.

Humphreys, Laud. 1970. Chap 1 "Public Settings for 'Private' Encounters" and Chapt 2 "Methods: The Sociologist as Voyeur" in *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. Chicago: Aldine: 1-44.

Thursday, June 2: Courtship and Social Networks

With whom we have sex, how often we have sex, and whether or not these encounters lead to marriage are all shaped by the social networks in which we are embedded. We will discuss the fruitful ways in which social network analysis may be applied to the sociology of sexuality as well as some of the drawbacks of this approach. Exactly how deterministic is Michael et al.'s argument? We will also explore historical variation in the social rituals that have led to sexual behavior for individuals in the United States. Do we now live in a "hook-up culture"? PAPER #1 TOPICS DISTRIBUTED TODAY.

Readings:

Michael, et al.. *Sex in America*, Chapt 3 "Who Are Our Sex Partners?": 42-66.

Bailey, Beth. 1989. "Sex Control" and "The Etiquette of Masculinity and Femininity," in *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in 20th-Century America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press: 77-118 + Notes

P. England & R.J. Thomas. 2006. "The Decline of the Date and the Rise of the College Hook Up" in Skolnick, Arlene and Jerome Skolnick, (Eds). *Family in Transition*. Boston: Allyn Bacon: 151-162.

Friday, June 3 – MAKE-UP CLASS FOR MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

Screening of the film *Kinsey* (2004; Directed by Bill Condon and starring Liam Neeson). We will discuss the film on Monday.

WEEK 3: FOCUS ON THEORY

Monday, June 6: History of Sexuality, Part I

A discussion of Michel Foucault's seminal text.

Reading:

Foucault, Michel. 1979. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 1-49.

Tuesday, June 7: Sociology and Queer Theory: Uneasy Allies?

Has "Queer Theory" found its niche within sociology, and vice versa?

Readings:

Stein, Arlene, and Ken Plummer. 1994. "I Can't Even Think Straight': 'Queer' Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology." *Sociological Theory* 12, 2: 178-87.

Epstein, Steven. 1994. "A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality." *Sociological Theory* 12, no. 2 (July): 188-202.

Gamson, Joshua, and Dawne Moon. 2004. "The Sociology of Sexualities: Queer and Beyond." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30, 1: 47-64.

Thursday, June 9: Alternative Family Formation

We foray into the sub-field of family sociology for this class discussion. Topics for today will include heteronormativity and otherness, the ethnographic method, and the notion of "fictive kin."

Reading:

Weston, Kath. 1991. *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press: 1-41; 103-136 + Notes (Chapt. 1 "The Monkey Cage and the Red Desert"; Chapt 2 "Exiles from Kinship"; Chapt 5 "Families We Choose.")

****Friday, June 10th: The short paper is due today by 5 pm. Paper should be emailed to me at djl2103@columbia.edu. Please include your last name in the subject line. ****

WEEK 4: Contentious Topics #1

Monday, June 13: What about Bisexuality?

"Bisexuality," one cover of Newsweek announced in 1995, "Not gay. Not straight. A New Sexual Identity Emerges." Today we will discuss the making of this "new" sexual identity, its detractors, and the social fixedness of the gay/straight binary. Additionally, what are some of the implications of bisexuality within the biological essentialism/social constructionist debate?

In-class DVD screening: *Sex and the City*. 2000. "Boy, Girl, Boy, Girl..." Dir. Pam Thomas. Episode 4, Season 3. Home Box Office.

Readings:

Carey, Benedict. 2005. "Straight, Gay or Lying? Bisexuality Revisited." *The New York Times*. July 5, 2004: F1.

Eliason, Michele J. 1997. "The Prevalence and Nature of Biphobia in Heterosexual Undergraduate Students." *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. 26, 3: 317-326.

Shokeid, Moshe. 2001. "You Don't Eat Indian and Chinese Food at the Same Meal: The Bisexual Quandry." *Anthropological Quarterly*. 75, 1 (Winter): 63-90.

Tuesday, June 14: Teenage Sexuality

Teenage sexuality has received a great deal of political as well as sociological attention. What are the social implications of how we teach our youth about sex?

Readings:

Bearman, Peter and Hannah Brückner. 2001. "Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse." *The American Journal of Sociology*. (Jan.): 859-912.

A. Schalet. 2006. "Raging Hormones, Regulated Love: Adolescent Sexuality in the United States and the

Netherlands” in Skolnick, Arlene and Jerome Skolnick, (Eds). *Family in Transition*. Boston: Allyn Bacon: 129-134.

Thursday, June 16: Final-Paper Topic Presentations

Students will present their final paper topics in class and receive feedback. Additionally, each student must hand in a one-page summary of his/her chosen topic, plus a preliminary bibliography (3-5 sources, at least two of which should be sources not on this syllabus).

WEEK 5: Contentious Topics #2

Monday, June 20: Reproduction and Childrearing

Population control has been a particularly contentious and divisive issue related to sexual regulation. Debates about the need for intervention, and strategies of intervention, dominate the American political landscape. For instance, who has a say—and who should have a say—in how many children members of a society have and how they are raised? When is sexual regulation necessary, and when is it intrusive? How does culture play a role in what we perceive to be “wrong” and “right” when it comes to our families? Are these private issues or matters of public concern, and according to whom?

Readings

Giele, Janet Z. 2006. “Decline of the Family: Conservative, Liberal, and Feminist Views,” in Skolnick, Arlene and Jerome Skolnick, (Eds). *Family in Transition*. Boston: Allyn Bacon: 76-95.

Pyke, Karen. 2006. “‘The Normal American Family’ as an Interpretive Structure of Family Life among Grown Children of Korean and Vietnamese Immigrants,” in Skolnick, Arlene and Jerome Skolnick, (Eds). *Family in Transition*. Boston: Allyn Bacon: 469-490.

Chua, Amy. 2011. *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. Penguin Press. (selections)

Maslin, Janet. 2011. “But Will It Make ‘Tiger Mom’ Happy?” Book Review of Amy Chua’s *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. January 19. *The New York Times*: C1.

Tuesday, June 21: Sex Work

What is the social meaning of erotic labor, and how does it differ from other forms of “emotion work” performed by women in contemporary American society?

Readings:

Chapkis, Wendy. 1997. *Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labor*. New York: Routledge: 69-96 + Notes (Chapter 3: “The Emotional Labor of Sex”).

Frank, Katherine. 2002. *G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002: 203-28 + Notes (Ch. 6: “Hustlers, Pros, and the Girl Next Door: Social Class, Race, and the Consumption of the Authentic Female Body”).

Thursday, June 23: Sadomasochism

Sadomasochism has received a great deal of attention within the field of psychology, tracing back to 19th-Century psychiatrist Richard Krafft-Ebing (who is credited with coining the term “sadomasochism”), and to Sigmund Freud. But how might we look at S/M not as a deeply persona/psychic experience, but as a social phenomenon?

Readings:

Weinberg, Thomas S. 1987. “Sadomasochism in the United States: A Review of Recent Sociological Literature.” *The Journal of Sex Research*. Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb.): 50-69.

Weinberg, Martin S., Colin J. Williams, and Charles Moser. 1984. “The Social Constituents of Sadomasochism.” *Social Problems*. 31: 379-389

Lindemann, Danielle J. 2010. “Will the Real Dominatrix Please Stand up: Artistic Purity and Professionalism in the S&M Dungeon.” *Sociological Forum*. 25, 3 (September).

WEEK 6: Feminism and Sexual Politics

Monday, June 27: The Feminist “Sex Wars”

In 1982, a now-infamous interdisciplinary conference here at Barnard crystallized a series of issues that feminist theorists had been struggling with for decades. Today, we will look at these ongoing “sex wars” between “pro-sex” feminists and those who have sought to eliminate those images they find oppressive to women. At the end of the day, is it possible to consider oneself a feminist and still support pornography? Sadomasochism? Prostitution?

Readings

Wilson, Elizabeth. 1983. “The Context of ‘Between Pleasure and Danger’: The Barnard Conference on Sexuality.” *Feminist Review*. No. 13 (Spring): 35-41.

Overall, Christine. 1992. “What’s Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work”. *Signs*. 17: 705-724.

MacKinnon, Catherine A. 1994. “Sexuality.” In *Theorizing Feminism*. Hermann, Anne C. and Abigail J. Stewart (Eds.) 257-87. Boulder: Westview Press.

Chancer, Lynn S. 2000. “From Pornography to Sadomasochism: Reconciling Feminist Differences.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 571: 77-88.

Tuesday, June 28: Is Sex Always Political?

“Sex,” social theorist Gayle Rubin writes, in a seminal essay, “is always political.” Throughout this course, we have looked at the social, historical, and political constituents of sexuality. Clearly, sex is not purely an individual, psychological phenomenon, devoid of social context. However, is it fair to say that we are making a political statement every time we engage in a sexual act? Further, who has a stake in whether we are behaving in a way that is sexually “normal.” Are there any “normal” folks out there?

Readings:

Rubin, Gayle S. 1993. “ ‘Thinking Sex:’ Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality, in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, Abelove, Henry, Michele Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (Eds.) New York: Routledge: 3-44.

Warner, Michael. 2000. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1-40 + Notes (“Chapter One: The Ethics of Sexual Shame”)

Thursday, June 30: Paper Presentations and Course Wrap-Up

We will discuss any open topics or questions, and students will present their final papers in class. **Final papers are due** either in hard-copy form in class or via email by 11:59 PM tonight (Thursday, June 30th).