

290C: History of Sexuality and Race in the United States

Location: Integrative Learning Center (ILC) S331

Time: Monday and Wednesday 10:10-11am

Instructor:

Angie Willey

E-mail: awilley@wost.umass.edu

Office Hours: 11:15am-12:15pm Monday and by appointment

Office: South College rm. W407

Discussion Section Instructors:

Kevin Henderson

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Sections:

01AB-DIS(20948) Fridays, 10:10-11:00 AM, Bartlett Hall, rm. 3

01AC-DIS(20949) Fridays, 12:20-1:10 PM, Bartlett Hall, rm. 3

Office Hours: 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM on Mondays and by appointment

Office: South College, rm. W406

Sandra Russell

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Sections:

01AF-DIS(20952) Fridays, 12:20PM-1:10PM, South College, rm. W101

01AE-DIS(20951) Fridays, 1:25PM-2:15PM, South College, rm. W101

Office hours: Mondays 11:30AM-1:00PM and by Appointment.

Office: South College, rm. W406.

Derek Siegel

E-mail: dpsiegel@soc.umass.edu

Sections:

01AA-DIS(20947) Fridays, 9:05-9:55 AM, Bartlett Hall, rm. 3

01AD-DIS(20950) Fridays, 12:20-1:10 PM, Bartlett Hall, rm. 109

Office Hours: 2:15 PM – 3:15PM on Mondays and by appointment

Office:Thompson Hall, rm. 704

Overview

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary feminist study of sexuality and race. Its primary goal is to provide a forum for students to consider histories of the concepts of sexuality and race in the U.S. We will explore these concepts through theoretical frameworks within WGSS and in terms of a range of sites where those theoretical approaches become material, are negotiated, or are shifted. The course is a fully interdisciplinary innovation. It will emphasize the links rather than differences between theory and practice and between cultural, material, and historical approaches to bodies, race, gender, and sexuality. Throughout the course, we will consider contemporary U.S. politics in light of histories of racial and sexual formations.

Course Objectives

To provide a critical introduction to the concepts of sexuality and race in the U.S.

To provide an introduction to the historical interconnectedness of formations of race and sexuality in the U.S.

To emphasize the role of sexuality and race in the formation of the modern self and its social, legal, political, and cultural frames of reference

To insist on the necessary relationship between theory and lived experiences of bodies

To introduce students to a range of historical and interdisciplinary materials and approaches.

Course Outcomes

An understanding of historical contingency with respect to sexuality and race.

Ability to apply feminist theoretical perspectives on sexuality and race to analyses of particular case studies.

Gen-Ed Goals for this Course

The objectives and outcomes for this class are designed to meet general education goals.

This course has a U Gen Ed designation, meeting the general education curriculum goal of creating awareness of the various dimensions of human identity, including issues of race and ethnicity, social class, gender, age, sexual identity, disability and nationality.

This course also has an HS Social World Gen Ed designation, for historical studies, meeting the general education goal of learning how our histories and the stories we tell about them shape the present.

Required Readings

There are no texts to purchase for this class. All of the readings are available either through UMass Library Course Materials on Moodle or as ebooks through the UMass library catalog.

This course entails a significant amount of reading. Please make sure to budget enough time to complete the readings and take notes prior to class. It is essential that you complete the readings before class begins in order to participate fully in the intellectual life of the course. Readings listed for a specific date are meant to be completed before class on the that date. Readings for every 2-3 week section of the course can be found below the section on Moodle (scroll down to find the pdfs).

Class Policies

Email triage policy: Who do I contact when I have a question? (See emails on first page)

Regarding lecture absences: contact Professor

Regarding section absences: contact your TA

To discuss course content outside of class: contact either Professor or TA

To discuss assignments: contact TA

To discuss grades: contact TA; TAs will refer cases to Professor

Class Philosophy

Learning is a *process*, both individual and collective. We come to this course with different backgrounds and experiences, yet we are all moving through it together. Though we acquire information, arrive at insights, and develop skills at our own pace, learning is inescapably interdependent. For this reason, we will proceed with respect and patience for each other, especially when we disagree.

Electronics Policy

Mounting research on student success suggests that university students retain information better and participate more effectively when taking notes by paper and pen. Research has also shown that simply having one's own smartphone or laptop within sight, even when they aren't being used, significantly decreases concentration on attention-demanding tasks. Laptop screens also are a significant distraction for other students sitting close by to a laptop user.

Based on this research, we will have a low-tech classroom for 290C. Please refrain from using laptops, smartphones and tablets in lectures or sections (unless for an in-class assignment). Please always bring paper and pens and your notes to class. You may do the readings online, but you will only be allowed to access paper notes (typed or handwritten) during class- including for open-notes quizzes.

We understand that some students need to use laptops to process lecture information. If you require a laptop for notetaking, we ask that you schedule a meeting with your section instructor to discuss your needs and/or provide an accommodations letter.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be received by their due date. If there is a compelling reason why you cannot hand in your assignment on time—illness, personal or family emergency, varsity athletic commitment—please be in touch with the Professor and your TA as soon as possible. PLEASE BE PROACTIVE in asking for accommodation. Don't suffer in silence.

Statement Regarding Pronouns

There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. The Professor and TAs will gladly honor your request to address you by the name you prefer and gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity. Please advise me and your TA of your name's proper pronunciation, and any name or pronouns not reflected by the record in Spire early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Title IX and mandated reporting

WGSS classes are a place where issues of sexual violence and other sexual misconduct are discussed as a matter of course. It's not a taboo subject, and feminists have long worked to develop theory and activism around sexualized violence, including rape, dating violence, child sexual abuse, and the like. If you want to discuss your own personal experiences of sexual violence in a class, we don't consider that a "report" covered by Title IX (although if you want faculty help and support in reporting sexual violence, we are here to help you do that). Other available resources on campus for addressing sexual violence include both confidential and non-confidential resources—non-confidential resources will keep your concerns private but will report your concerns to the Title IX coordinator, or, the Dean of Students Office who will provide you with different options to assist you. Confidential resources will keep your concerns confidential and will provide you support, assistance in addressing safety concerns as well as other services such as providing you with an advocate. The resources can be found at www.umass.edu/titleix

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Participation (20%) – You are expected to regularly attend all lectures and your assigned section. You may miss two lecture meetings and one section meeting without notification or excuse; thereafter, absences will be counted negatively towards your course grade. In addition to attending lectures and sections, you are expected to have completed the readings and to participate in discussions; in your first section meetings, you will collectively discuss what constitutes "good" section participation. In lecture, good participation includes active listening and notetaking and engaging in individual and group in-class exercises. In section, good participation includes asking questions, promoting dialogue, listening carefully to other students, making comments that are built off other students' comments and questions,

making space for students who have not yet talked, and bringing comments back to course texts and lecture material. If you are unsure how to participate effectively, please talk to your TA.

Reflection Papers (20%, 5 @ 4% ea.) – Every other week you will submit to your Teaching Assistant on Friday (i.e. during section) a 1-page single-spaced REFLECTION PAPER that discusses any or all of the topics covered in the period since the last reflection paper (there are five papers in total). The reflection papers are meant to provide an opportunity for you to take stock of what you have learned in class and to raise questions for future discussion. You can indicate what surprised you, what angered you, and what interested you the most. In writing these papers, you are expected to make specific references to class readings, lectures, and guest speakers. Reflection papers will be graded on a pass/fail basis that considers the timeliness and quality of submissions.

Quizzes (25%, 5 @ 5% ea.) – Over the course of the term, we will have five in-class quizzes. Quizzes will not be announced ahead of time; however, they will be open-note (typed or hand-written hard-copies only) and based on the readings and lectures for that week of the class. If you attend class and complete the readings, the quizzes will not be difficult. Hint: Use the framing questions to guide your note-taking!

Narratives Mini-Presentation (10%) – This assignment is designed to deepen students' understandings of the embodied nature of histories of sexuality and race in the U.S. For this assignment, you will prepare a single slide and deliver a one-minute mini-presentation on a work of fiction or narrative non-fiction and connect it to the themes of the class (your reading choice must be approved in advance by your section instructor).

Take-Home Final Exam (25%) – Your take home exam will be a mix of short-answer and essay questions. It will be distributed the last week of class and due one week later.

Schedule

Section I: Sexuality, Race, and Nation: Introducing Key Concepts

Week 1

Wed January 23: Welcome to 290C!

Meet your teaching team

Course Background & Overview

Syllabus Overview

Introductory paragraph due Friday 1/25 before your first discussion section meeting. Please upload a copy and bring a hard copy to your section instructor. See guidelines below!

Week 2: Key Concepts

Mon January 28: Manifestos

What problems have the collectives who authored these statements diagnosed? What change do they want to see? What do these manifestos teach us about race and sexuality?

"A manifesto is a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of the issuer, be it an individual, group, political party or government. A manifesto usually accepts a previously published opinion or public consensus or promotes a new idea with prescriptive notions for carrying out changes the author believes should be made. It often is political or artistic in nature." (Wikipedia)

The Combahee River Collective Statement:

<http://circuitous.org/scraps/combahee.html>

Queer of Color Manifesto:

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/qoc/qoc.html>

Black Lives Matter Guiding Principles:

<https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/what-we-believe/>

Femme Shark Manifesto:

<http://queerfatfemme.com/femme-sharks/femme-shark-manifesto/>

An Intersex Manifesto:

<https://mishmich.wordpress.com/2012/05/31/an-intersex-manifesto/>

The Transfeminist Manifesto:

<http://eminism.org/readings/pdf-rdg/tfmanifesto.pdf>

Against Equality (on marriage, military, and prison):

<http://www.againstequality.org/about/marriage/>

<http://www.againstequality.org/about/military/>

<http://www.againstequality.org/about/prison/>

Undocuqueer Manifesto:

<https://equalityarchive.com/issues/undocuqueer-movement/>

Queers Crash the Beat Statement:

<http://queerscrashthebeat.com>

Wed January 30: Race

What does it mean to look at race as a social and historical category? Where did the concept come from?

Audrey Smedley and Brian D. Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, Fourth Edition (Westview Press, 2011), 11-40.

Week 3: Defining Key Concepts (Continued...)

Mon February 4: Sexuality

What does it mean to look at sexuality as a social and historical category, rather than simply an attribute of bodies? How did Foucauldian perspectives change sexuality studies (Bristow)? Rather than looking for queer folks in the past, what should we be asking about sexuality and history (Padgug)?

Bristow "Introduction" in *Sexuality*

Robert Padgug "Sexual Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in History"

Wed February 6: Nation

What is nationalism? What is "othering"?

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (Verso, 2006), 1-7.

Raymond Williams, "Nationalist," *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Revised Edition (Oxford University Press, 1983), 213-214.

Jean-François Staszak, "Other/otherness" in International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, 2008, Elsevier, 1-7.

In-Class Screening: "Charlottesville: Race and Terror"

First Reflection Paper Due Friday 2/8 - hard copy to your section instructor. See guidelines under "assignments" above.

Section Questions:

What is sexuality (Bristow, Padgug)? What is race (Smedley)? What is Nationalism (Anderson, Williams)? What does it mean to "other" (Staszak)? Based on your reading so far, why do we need scholarship, activism, and writing on the history of race and sexuality in the U.S.?

Section II: Settler Colonialism, Slavery, and White Supremacy

Week 4: Colonialism, Settler Sexuality, and White Supremacy

Mon February 11: Difference, Conquest, and Settler Sexualities

How is queer being used here? How did the disciplining of indigenous kinship work to produce heterosexuality?

Rifkin, Mark. "Romancing Kinship: A Queer Reading of Indian Education and Zitkala-Sa's American Indian Stories." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12.1 (2006): 27-59.

Screening: Kim Tallbear lecture on "Making Love and Relations Beyond Settler Sexualities"

Wed February 13: Organizing Against White Supremacy

Lecturer: Derek Siegel

How do the logics and practices of white supremacy racialize groups of people in different ways? What does it look like for someone to be harmed by and also participate in white supremacy? How might these debates shape the way activists organize against white supremacy?

Smith, Andrea. "Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy: Rethinking women of color organizing." *Transformations: Feminist Pathways to Global Change* 264 (2015): 66-73.

Week 5: Legacies of Slavery

Mon February 18: NO CLASSES

Tuesday February 19 (Make-up day): We will not meet in person and have no reading. Please watch and submit a 150-200 word entry explaining the title of the talk. You may end with any question the lecture raised for you.

Paragraph on Hortense Spillers due at 11 am 2/19. See guidelines and post below.

Wed February 20: Slavery & Exploitation

How are contemporary sexual stereotypes produced through histories of slavery?

Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1997), 3-55.

Second Reflection Paper Due Friday 2/22 in discussion section.

Section Questions:

How have histories of settler colonialism (Rifkin, Tallbear) and slavery (Roberts) shaped sexuality? What is "heteropatriarchy" (Smith)? What are the "three pillars" of white supremacy (Smith)? Based on these readings, how would you explain to a friend the importance of histories of racism and nationalism to understanding sexual oppression?

Section III: Gender, Sexuality, and Race Across WGSS: Lectures from the field

Week 6: Approaches to Sexuality and Race Across WGSS

Mon February 25: Problem Bodies, Public Space

Guest Lecture: Cameron Awkward Rich

Sears, Clare. "Electric brilliancy: Cross-dressing law and freak show displays in nineteenth-century San Francisco." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 36.3/4 (2008): 170-187.

Wed February 27: South Asia Queer and Trans Studies

Guest Lecture: Svati Shah

http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8203:caste-and-lgbt&catid=119&Itemid=132

http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9509:trans-gender-nonconforming-gnc-intersex-collectives-strongly-condemn-kinnar-akhara-s-support-for-ram-temple-at-ayodhya&catid=129:events-and-activism&Itemid=195

<https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/equal-killing-us-why-indias-transgender-community-rejecting-trans-bill-93579>

Section Questions: How did Dr. Awkward Rich and Dr. Shah's lectures approach questions of gender, race, and sexuality? How did their readings and lectures relate to the histories we've already encountered? What did you learn that you didn't know already? What questions did their talks open up for you?

Section IV: Racial/Sexual Science: Reproduction, Difference, and American Eugenics

Week 7: Racial/Sexual Science: Reproduction, Difference, and American Eugenics

Mon March 4: Science & Difference

What is the philosophy of eugenics? How is sexuality at the heart of eugenic movements (give examples)? What does McWhorter mean by "Saving the Eugenic Baby and Throwing Out the Nazi Bathwater?" How did American Eugenics continue to thrive after 1950?

"Managing Evolution: Race Betterment, Race Purification, and the American Eugenics Movement" in McWhorter *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: A Genealogy*, 196-238.

Wed March 5: Combatting Eugenic Logics

What is reproductive justice? How does the approach combat eugenic logics?

Ross, Loretta J. "Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism." *Souls* 19.3 (2017): 286-314.

Third reflection paper due Friday 3/7 in discussion section.

Week 8: SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Racial/ Sexual Science: The Making of Normal and Deviant Sexuality

Mon March 18: Whiteness and the Making of "Normal Sexuality"

What is "normal" code for? How are eugenic ideas made to seem politically neutral?

"Introduction" in Carter, Julian B. *The heart of whiteness: Normal sexuality and race in America, 1880–1940*. Duke University Press, 2007.

Wed March 20: The Making of the Homosexual Body

Lecture: Kevin Henderson

Ladelle McWhorter "From Masturbator to Homosexual: The Construction of the Sex Pervert" in Cipolla, Cyd, et al., eds. *Queer Feminist Science Studies: A Reader*. University of Washington Press, 2017.

Section Questions: What is "scientific racism" and what are its lasting legacies today? How and why did masturbation become a scientific concern? What were the supposed effects of masturbation and how did it relate to concerns about "social welfare"? How was protecting white men and women from "perversion" related to discovering and sequestering those with "congenital sexual inversion"? What does white supremacy have to do with homophobia and transphobia?

Week 10: Racial/Sexual Science: Eugenics and Immigration

Mon March 25: Historicizing Immigration Debates

How were concepts of race and nation consolidated across the twentieth-century (Ordovery)? How have eugenic discourses surrounding immigration in the U.S. shaped contemporary conversations on the issue?

"National Hygiene: Twentieth-Century Immigration and the Eugenics Lobby" in Ordovery, Nancy. *American eugenics: Race, queer anatomy, and the science of nationalism*. U of Minnesota Press, 2003: 3-58.

Screening: *Queering Immigration*

Wed March 27: Immigration, Racialization, and Plant Sex

Guest Lecture: Banu Subramaniam

Fourth reflection paper due Friday 3/29 in discussion section.

Section Questions: How does the history of race and sexuality in the biosciences help us to understand how those categories function today? How do eugenic logics appear in contemporary culture?

Section V: Storytelling: On Witness and Transformation

Week 11: Why Stories Matter

Mon April 1: Narrating Queer Lives

Lecturer: Sandra Russell

What do you think about Atwood's notion that "writing has to do with darkness"? What does this mean for the reader? How does Morrison critique the relationship between "traditional, canonical American literature" and knowledge? What is "American Africanism," according to Morrison? Why does Morrison challenge the idea that literature is "universal" and "race-free"?

Atwood, Margaret. "Into the Labyrinth." *Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*, Cambridge, 2002, pp. xiii-xxiv.

Morrison, Toni. "Black Matters." *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Vintage, 1992, pp. 1-28.

Wed April 3: On Radical Imagination

Selections from:

Imarisha, Walidah, ed. *Octavia's Brood: science fiction stories from social justice movements*. AK Press, 2015.

Week 12: Why Stories Matter, cont.

Mon April 8: Narrative Resources for a Queer Feminist Sexuality Studies

Audre Lorde, speeches and poems

Wed April 10: Narrating Connections

In class writing exercise & project Q&A

Week 13: Presentations

Mon April 15: Presentations

Wed, April 17: NO CLASSES

Fifth and final reflection paper due Friday 4/19 in discussion section.

Week 14: Presentations, cont.

Mon April 22: Presentations

Wed April 24: Presentations

Section VI: Wrapping up

Week 15: Imagining Just Futures

Mon April 29

Finishing presentations (if extra time is needed)

Final Exam Review

Wed May 1: Manifestos Revisited!

Re-read the manifestos from the start of term