

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

Location: Integrative Learning Center (ILC) S331

Time: Monday and Wednesday 10:10-11am

Spring, 2020

Instructor:

Dr. Laura Briggs

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Office Hours: 11:00am-12:00pm Wednesday and by appointment

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Discussion Section Instructors:

Adeline Broussan

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Sections: 9:10-10:00; 10:10-11:00

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Sections: 1:25-2:15; 2:30-3:20

Ana Ospina Pedraza

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Sections: 11:15-12:05; 12:15-1:05

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 the scholarly research on history. The course 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.

Learning Objectives

The application and integration of the methods of analysis history and feminist analysis to real world problems and contexts.

Critical thinking through inquiry and synthesis.

The ability to understand and characterize multiple perspectives.

Communicating persuasively and effectively orally.

Communicating persuasively and effectively in writing.

Required Readings

(all additional readings will be available on Moodle)

N.K. Jemisen, *Emergency Skin*. Available only on Amazon.com (grr) but free to those with a prime membership; otherwise \$1.99. Available [here](#).

All of the other 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 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?

If your question requires more than a two-sentence answer, come to office hours instead.

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.

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.

Workload

In determining how much work a course will require, UMass Amherst follows the "Carnegie Unit" metric of three hours of contact or work per week for each credit. That means that for a 4-credit class like this, students should expect to spend an average of 9 hours per week on the course. This breaks down to 2.5 hours in class and 6.5 hours of outside class preparation per week. Please plan accordingly to allow yourself to spend the time necessary to successfully complete the class work.

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 accommodations. Too many people wind up taking a lower grade rather than share information about their personal situation. Not to worry, we've heard it all, good crises and bad—gender transition, intimate partner violence, couch surfing, food insecurity, sexual violence, mental health issues, pregnancy (wanted and not). Don't suffer in silence. At the least we can help you plan your work; at best we can even connect you with resources.

Statement Regarding Pronouns and Names

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.

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/.

In-class Recordings and Selling of Notes

Some external vendors (like StudySoup and other outlets) recruit and pay students for their notes from a class which are then posted for any other student to purchase and use; others extend to in-class video recordings of class lectures. Some right-wing news outlets have also sought recordings of faculty lectures with malicious intent. UMass lawyers have advised that sharing notes for money or video of class for other than personal use is a violation of the faculty member's copyright and laws prohibiting video-recording without consent.

Disability Accommodations

If you have learning or other disabilities, it is my goal and that of Disability Services to ensure that you have reasonable accommodations that minimize the impact of that disability on your learning or your ability to demonstrate what you have learned in the context of assignments. It is your choice whether to disclose your disability to me; you can simply access services through Disability Services (<http://www.umass.edu/disability/current.html>) and ask me to work with that office to provide appropriate accommodations. However, you do need to let me know that you will need accommodation at or near the beginning of the semester, well in advance of any assignments. If we agree on a modified timeline for the completion of assignments or alternative formats, you are still responsible for completing assignments in a timely way and (unless your accommodation covers it) attending class.

Academic Honesty Statement

Academic dishonesty destroys trust and the good-faith work of a course. Students who get stressed about their grades or having enough time to complete an assignment are sometimes tempted to cheat—to download sections of a paper from the Internet, to borrow quotes or ideas from other students or published sources. Don't. It's not worth it. Chances are good you will be caught and will fail the assignment or the course. (See the UMass policy on sanctions and procedures on Academic Honesty,

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/). Cite *all* your sources, all the time.

Helping someone else cheat is an offense as serious as cheating yourself. Although it is always appropriate to discuss the course material and assignments with each other, inside and outside class, it is *not* appropriate to collaborate on the writing of actual sentences.

Email and Moodle

All students are required to have a UMass email account, which will be used for all correspondence for this course. (Students from other colleges will be assigned one once they register). Registration for this course will also provide access to Moodle, which we will use for supplementary course materials, e-reserves, extra credit opportunities, and to turn in assignments.

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 on Moodle a 2-page double-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 six quizzes, of which 5 will count toward your grade; one will be dropped. Quizzes will not be announced ahead of time. 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! Five quizzes will count toward your final grade, with the lowest grade dropped. This is in lieu of requiring absence excuses; you get one free absence. If there is any reason why you might have additional excused absences, please meet with your TA and we will make other arrangements.

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 in section 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.

Please note: Syllabus is subject to change. If assignments or deadlines change, you will be notified via e-mail through the News Forum on our Moodle site. You are responsible for all Moodle announcements.

Schedule

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

Week 1: Welcome!

Wed January 22: Welcome to 290C!

Meet your teaching team

Course Background & Overview

Syllabus Overview

Introductory paragraph due Friday 1/24 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 27: 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 29: Race

What does it mean to look at race as a social and historical category, rather than simply an attribute of bodies?

Omi and Winant "Racial Formation Rules: Continuity, Instability, and Change"

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

Mon February 3: 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 5: Nation

What is nationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries? How is it being reworked in the present?

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

Alexandra Minna Stern, "Introduction: The New and Old of White Nationalism" *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2019.

First Reflection Paper Due Friday 2/7

Section Questions:

What is sexuality (Bristow, Padgug)? What is race (Omi and Winant)? What is Nationalism (Anderson, Stern)? 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

Week 4: Colonialism, Settler Sexuality, and White Supremacy

Mon February 10: 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.

Wed February 12: Kim Tallbear, "Making Love and Relations Beyond Settler Sexualities," in Donna Haraway and Adele Clarke, eds., *Make Kin, Not Population: Reconceiving Generations* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2018)

Section Questions:

How have histories of settler colonialism (Rifkin, Tallbear) shaped reproduction and sexuality? Based on these readings, how would you explain to a friend the importance of histories of racism and nationalism to understanding sexual oppression?

Week 5: Legacies of Slavery

Mon February 17: NO CLASSES

Tuesday February 18: Dorothy Roberts, "Reproduction in Bondage," *Killing the Black Body*, pp. 22-55.

Wed February 19: Afterlives of Slavery

How have histories of slavery (Roberts, Ocen) shaped reproduction and sexuality? How are contemporary sexual stereotypes produced through histories of slavery?

Priscilla Ocen, "Punishing Pregnancy: Race, Incarceration, and the Shackling of Pregnant Prisoners," *California Law Review* 100 (2012): 1239-311.

Second Reflection Paper Due Friday 2/21 before discussion section.

Section III: Public Bodies: Freak Shows, Lynching, Miscegenation, Empire

Week 6: Sex and Marriage in the History of Race

Mon February 24:

Peggy Pascoe, "Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of 'Race' in Twentieth-Century America," *The Journal of American History* (June 1996): 44-69.

Wed February 26: Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Mind That Burns in Each Body: Women, Rape, and Racial Violence," in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, edited by Ann Snitow et al. (New York, 1983): 328-49.

Screen: *Anita: Speaking Truth to Power*

Week 7 Problem Bodies, Public Space

Mon March 2: Guest Lecture: Cameron Awkward-Rich

Clare Sears, "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 March 4: Guest Lecture: Adeline Broussan

Laura Briggs, "Sex and Citizenship: The Politics of Prostitution in Puerto Rico, 1898-1918," *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico* (University of California Press, 2002), 46-73.

Third reflection paper due Friday 3/6 before discussion section.

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

Week 8: Racial/Sexual Science: Reproduction, Difference, and American Eugenics

Mon March 9: 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 11: 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.

March 16-20: SPRING BREAK

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

Mon March 23: 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 25: Sexuality and the Policing of Migrants

How did sexuality and fears of illicit sex justify mob violence against immigrants in the early 20th century?

Nayan Shah, "Passion, Violence, and Asserting Honor," *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (University of California, 2011), 19-52.

Fourth reflection paper due Friday 3/27 before discussion section.

Week 10: Racial/Sexual Science: Immigration

Mon March 30: Historicizing Immigration Debates

How have eugenic discourses surrounding immigration in the U.S. shaped contemporary conversations on the issue?

Eithne Lubheid, "Entry Denied: A History of U.S. Immigration Control," in *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (University of Minnesota, 2002), 1-30.

Wed April 1: Immigration and Racialization

How were Mexicans made into people who were understood as "not white"?

Natalia Molina, "Placing Mexican Immigration within the Larger Landscape of Race Relations in the United States," *How Race Gets Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the historical power of racial scripts* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2014), pp. 32-55.

Section V: Witness and Transformation: Social Movements

Week 11: Feminism as Sexual Revolt

Mon April 6: Guest Lecture: Kirsten Leng

How was science re-writing women's sexuality in the middle of the 20th century? How was feminism responding to science's authoring of female desire? How did this produce the binariness of sex?

Jane Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution: Second Wave Feminism and the Rewriting of American Sexual Thought, 1920-1982* (Columbia University Press, 2001), 51-80.

Anne Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," in *Sexual Revolution*, edited by Jeffrey Escoffier (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), 100-111.

Wed April 8: The Other History of the Women's Movement: Not Binary

Finn Enke, "Collective Memory and the Transfeminist 1970s: Toward a Less Plausible History." (2018): 9-29.

Screen: *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*

Week 12: Queer of Color Revolutions

Mon April 13: Cathy J. Cohen; Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?. *GLQ* 1 May 1997; 3 (4): 437-465.

What kinds of coalitions does Cathy Cohen imagine queerness can make? Along what grain?

Wed, April 15: Marquis Bey, "Them Goon Rules" *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2019).

What does it mean to think of Blackness as fugitivity?

April 17: Mini-presentations in section

Fifth and final reflection paper due Friday 4/17 before discussion section.

Week 13: Intersectionality

Mon April 20: NO Class

Wed April 22: Guest Lecture: Ana Ospina Pedraza

Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-299.

What kind of revolt is Crenshaw staging in this article?

April 24: Mini-presentations in section

Section VI: Wrapping up

Week 14: Imagining Just Futures

Mon April 27 Guest Lecture: Joy Hayward-Jensen

N. K. Jemisin, *Emergency Skin*

How does Jemisin challenge racist and eugenic logics in her imagination of a just and sustainable future?

Final Exam Review

Wed April 29: Manifestos Revisited!

Re-read the manifestos from the start of term