

**WGSS 286: History of Race & Sexuality in the U.S.  
Fall 2021**

Instructor: Derek Siegel  
 Instructor Pronouns: they/them/theirs  
 Class Meetings: **Wed\*** 4:00-5:15pm EST  
 Classroom: South College W219

Email: dpsiegel@soc.umass.edu  
 Zoom Office Hours: Mon 4:00-5:15pm EST  
*To schedule, send me an email!*

\*We will only have one synchronous meeting per week, on Wednesday afternoons – with the exception of Week Three (we will be meeting on Monday 9/13)

**Course Description**

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 and outside of WGSS. 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, and how these formations shape our own subjectivities.

**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

**Readings**

I have assigned a mix between journal articles, think pieces, book chapters, and other texts.

**Readings should be done for the date they are listed under on the syllabus.** Sometimes I assign only excerpts of a reading, so please pay careful attention to page numbers. Everything without a link on this syllabus is available for free on Moodle.

**Weekly Work Flow (A mix of synchronous and asynchronous)**

While you have assigned readings and discussion questions for both Mondays and Wednesdays, we will only meet once per week from 4pm – 5:15pm EST. I will not be collecting written responses to discussion questions. Rather, they will help prepare you for our conversation on Wednesday. Mini-recorded lectures will be posted on Mondays to correspond with those readings. We will also be using Slack throughout the week to continue discussion.

Mondays – 1) Read/View Assigned Texts, 2) Watch 5-10 minute recorded lecture, and 3) spend 10-15 minutes responding to discussion questions (for our weekly in-person class). *Since we aren't meeting, some people might find it useful to spend their weekly 20 minutes on Slack on Monday afternoons. I will also be available during that time for office house.*

Wednesdays – Come to class prepared to review *both* sets of readings and discussion questions.

Note: Class is cancelled on Monday 9/6 and Monday 10/11, so there are no required readings on these days. For Week Three, we will meet on Monday 9/13 (no class on Wednesday 9/15)

Anytime during the week – Spend at least 20 minutes on Slack reading and commenting on various discussions (we’ll review slack during the first week, don’t worry if you’re not familiar). Channels for you to engage in include: readings (what stands out, favorite quotes, questions, etc), discussion questions (start and/or continue the conversation), and general (how do you see the content connecting to the news or other aspects of your life? Share and discuss outside sources).

### **How to Use Which Technologies (Moodle v Email v Slack)**

Accessing Assigned Readings & Recorded Mini-Lecture (Moodle)

**All Readings Will Already Be Up on Moodle**

**Mini-lectures (on Mondays) will be posted in a folder on top of Moodle page.**

Submitting Assignments – Short Essays & Final Project Components (Moodle)

Discussion Questions – I will email discussion questions on Monday and Wednesday mornings (once I write them!), as well as post them on our Slack workspace.

Office Hours – On Mondays, 4:00 – 5:15pm EST I will be available via zoom, Slack, or email to discuss readings, assignments, check-in, or just chat. I’ll create one-on-one zoom calls for anyone who’d rather talk face-to-face than over chat/e-mail. Limited in-person hours available.

### **Course Requirements & Evaluation**

#### 1. Active Participation (25%)

Based on 1) attending and participating in discussion groups, 2) your participation on the Slack workspace (students should spend at least 20 minutes on Slack/week), and 3) coming to office hours during Weeks Four or Five (I’ll share more info about that!).

**The participation grade will be based, in part, on several self-evaluations throughout the semester, probably on Weeks Six and Ten.**

*Note: For now, I have no specific expectations for Slack participation, other than that you’re reading and posting (at least part of the time in response to others), engaging course content, and practicing respectful dialogue. Depending on how things go, we might come up with more specific expectation, which I’d communicate clearly.*

2. Short Essays (45%) – Each short essay (2-3 pages) is worth 15% of final grade. I will make the prompts and rubrics available at least one week before the deadline.

**Short Analysis of Course Readings – Due Friday 9/24 (15%)**

**Short Analysis of Course Readings – Due Friday 10/22 (15%)**

**Short Reflection Paper – Due Friday 11/12 (15%)**

3. Final Project (30%) – Each student will select a topic that they will explore through the lens of race and sexuality, including readings from the syllabus and their own outside research. This assignment is not meant to replicate what we’ve already covered, so you’ll need to choose a different topic or stake out a specific sub-topic within something we’ve already covered. The early proposal will let me give feedback, and as the date gets closer I’ll share more info!

**Final Project Proposal – Due Friday 11/19 (5%)**

**Final Project Paper (5 Pages) – Due Wednesday 12/15 (25%)**

### **Academic Honesty & Writing Support**

I expect you to write your own original content and adhere to high levels of academic honesty. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action and will receive an “F” in the course. You are encouraged to read and discuss course topics widely; however, make sure to use your own words and cite others when you’re referencing ideas that are not your own. If you’re overwhelmed, please don’t plagiarize! I’m a resource, as well as the research librarians and the Writing Center, which provides free, 1-on-1 help by appointment.

### **Disability & General Accommodations**

Whether or not you have official disability accommodations, I encourage you to meet with me in office hours or via email to discuss any issues you may anticipate this semester. The sooner we talk, the better! I understand that we’re living in a pandemic and that you all are not only taking other classes, but negotiating a wide range of other stressors and responsibilities. Which is to say that I’ll do my best to reasonably accommodate your needs. Don’t hesitate to reach out.

### **COVID-Safety and Precautions**

All students should follow university guidelines, regarding vaccination, testing, and masks. As we learn more about what COVID has in store for us, we’ll make collaborative decisions about what we expect from one another. Communication is key so that we can all feel as safe as possible.

**Course Readings – Highlighted dates are when we will meet, synchronously, in-person.**  
**Please come prepared to discuss all readings assigned for the week.**

Unit 1: Introduction + Key Terms

Week One – Syllabus Review

**Wed Sept 1<sup>st</sup>**

Please read the syllabus for our first meeting! Come with questions ☺

Week Two –Intersectionality, Structure, Social Constructs

Mon Sept 6<sup>th</sup> – No Class, Labor Day

**Wed Sept 8<sup>th</sup>**

1. Vance, Carole. 2002. Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality. Pp. **28-31** in *An Introduction to Women’s Studies*.
2. Johnson, Allan G. 1997. "Patriarchy. The System: An It, Not a He, a Them, or an Us." *Women’s Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. p. **68-76**.
3. Coastan, Jane. “The Intersectionality Wars.” *Vox*.  
<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>

Week Three –Sex & Sexualities

**Mon Sept 13<sup>th</sup>**

1. Serano, Julia. 2013. “A Word About Words.” *Excluded*. Seal Press, pp. **8-20**.
2. McIntosh, Mary. 1968. “The Homosexual Role.” *Social Problems* 16(2): p.**182-185**
3. Rubin, Gayle. 1984. “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality.” Introduction. P. **143-148**

Wed Sept 15<sup>th</sup> – Last Day of Add/Drop / Class Cancelled, Yom Kippur

### Week Four –Race & White Supremacy

Mon Sept 20<sup>th</sup>

1. Smith, Andrea. 2015. “Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy: Rethinking women of color organizing.” **Pp. 66-73.**
2. Lowrey, Annie. 2020. “The Plight of Essential Workers.” *The Atlantic*.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/why-are-americas-most-essential-workers-so-poorly-treated/611575/>

Wed Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>

1. Smedley & Smedley, 2005. “Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real.” *American Psychologist*, 60(1) pp. 16-26.
2. Blaque, Kat. “The History of Whiteness.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmHct5IHxrA>

Unit 2: Producing “Other-ness”: A Historical Perspective

### Week Five – Eugenics & Reproductive Justice

Mon Sept 27<sup>th</sup>

1. McWhorter, Ladelle. 2009. “Managing Evolution: Race Betterment, Race Purification, and the American Eugenics Movement.” **P. 203-217**

Wed Sept 29<sup>th</sup>

1. Ross, Loretta and Rickie Solinger. 2017. “Reproductive Justice: An Introduction.” **P. 58-73**
2. 10 Reasons to Rethink Overpopulation – Population & Development Program @ Hampshire
3. Fried, Marlene Gerber. 2008. “10 Reasons to Rethink Reproductive “Choice.” **P. 1-2**

### Week Six – Xenophobia, Othering, and Being an “American”

Mon Oct 4<sup>th</sup>

1. Gover, Harper, and Langton. 2020. “Anti-Asian Hate Crime During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Exploring the Reproduction of Inequality.” *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 45: **Excerpt. P. 647-655.**
2. .Illing, Sean. 2019. “White identity politics is about more than just racism.” *Vox*.  
<https://www.vox.com/2019/4/26/18306125/white-identity-politics-trump-racism-ashley-jardina>

Wed Oct 6<sup>th</sup>

1. Esch, Joanne. 2010. “Legitimizing the ‘War on Terror’: Political Myth in Official- Level Rhetoric.” *Political Psychology* 31(3): **Excerpts. 366-69; 372-77.**
2. Yuanzhi, Lu. 2020. “American Exceptionalism has become deadly arrogance.”  
<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1184607.shtml>

## Week Seven – Constructing “Normal” Sexuality

Mon Oct 11<sup>th</sup> – No Class, Indigenous People’s Day

Wed Oct 13<sup>th</sup>

1. Carter, Julian B. 2007. “Introduction.” In “The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1940.” **First 6 pages – Stop at the first Subheading**
2. Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. “Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images.” In *Black Feminist Thought*. **Pp. 69-84.**

Unit 3: Contemporary Sexual and Racial Politics

## Week Eight – More than the Nuclear Family: How We Take Care of Each Other

Mon Oct 18<sup>th</sup>

1. Collins, Patricia Hill. 1990. “Bloodmothers, Othermothers, and Woman-Centered Networks.” In *Black Feminist Thought*, **pp. 178-183.**
2. hooks, bell. 2000. “Community: Loving Communion.” In *All About Love*. **Pp. 127-136.**

Wed Oct 20<sup>th</sup>

1. Jackson, Stevi & Sue Scott. 2004. “The Personal is Still Political: Heterosexuality, Feminism, and Monogamy.” *Feminism & Psychology* 14(1): **pp. 151-156.**
2. Jacobson, Ivy. 2020. “13 Legal Benefits of Marriage.” *The Knot*  
<https://www.theknot.com/content/benefits-of-marriage>
3. Chambers, David L. 1992. “Tales of Two Cities: AIDS and the Legal Recognition of Domestic Partnerships in San Francisco and New York.” **P. 181-182, 184-187 (excerpts)**

## Week Nine – “Just Not Attracted to People Like You,” Manufacturing Desire

Mon Oct 25<sup>th</sup>

1. Strings, Sabrina. 2019. “Intro.” *Fearing the Fat Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia*. **p.8-20**
2. Hunter, Margaret. 2007. “The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality.” *Sociology Compass*, 1(1). **pp. 237-240; 246-250.**

Wed Oct 27<sup>th</sup>

1. Sara C. – Article on Medium. <https://medium.com/@QSE/when-you-say-i-would-never-date-a-trans-person-its-transphobic-here-s-why-aa6fdcf59aca>
2. Robinson, Brandon A. 2015. “Personal Preference as the New Racism: Gay Desire and Racial Cleansing in Cyberspace.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1(2), **pp. 317-328.**

## Week Ten – Creating the Modern LGBT Movement

Mon Nov 1<sup>st</sup>

1. Stryker, Susan. 2008. *Transgender History*. “Stonewall” and “Stonewall’s Transgender Legacy.” Seattle: Seal Press. **Pp. 121-129.**
2. Rivera, Sylvia. 1973. “Y’all Better Quiet Down” Speech. <https://vimeo.com/234353103>
3. Gould, Deborah B. 2012. “ACT UP, Racism, and Question of How to Use History.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 98(1): **pp.54-61.**

**Wed Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1. Read *all three* “Against Equality” Memos (they’re each extremely short!)  
<http://www.againstequality.org/about/marriage/>  
<http://www.againstequality.org/about/military/>  
<http://www.againstequality.org/about/prison/>
2. Westbrook, Laurel. 2021. “Unlivable Lives: Violence and Identity in Transgender Activism.” *Alternative Anti-Violence Approaches*, pp. 162-186.

Week Eleven – Sex Work & Racial JusticeMon Nov 8<sup>th</sup>

1. Poltras, Andrew. “What Constitutes Sex Work.”  
<http://www.hopesandfears.com/hopes/now/question/216863-what-constitutes-sex-work>
2. Jackson, Crystal and Jennifer Reed. 2016. “Missing Rights + Misplaced Justice for Sex Workers in the United States.” pp. 15-21
3. Scaccia, Annamarya.” 2018. <https://rewire.news/article/2018/04/02/sesta-already-devastating-impacts-sex-workers-just-like-predicted/>

**Wed Nov 10<sup>th</sup>**

1. Khan, Cristina. 2019. “Constructing Eroticized Latinidad: Negotiating Profitability in the Stripping Industry.” *Gender & Society* 33(5): pp. 702-718.

## Unit 4: Anti-Racism &amp; Solidarity

Week Twelve – Transnational FeminismsMon Nov 15<sup>th</sup>

1. Dependency Theory (1 page): <https://udel.edu/~jdeiner/depend.html>
2. McKean, Benjamin. 2021. “The Boat Stuck in the Suez Canal Shut Down Global Commerce. So Could Organized Workers.” <https://jacobinmag.com/2021/03/ever-given-suez-canal-global-supply-chains-economy-workers>
3. de la Cadena, Marisol. 2010. “Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections beyond “Politics.” *Cultural Anthropology*. Excerpts: 337-341. 350-355.

**Wed Nov 17<sup>th</sup>**

1. Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2002. “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others.” pp. 783-790.
2. Jordan, June. 1982/2003. Report from the Bahamas. *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 3 (2): pp. 6-16.

Week Thirteen – No ClassMon Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> – Class CancelledWed Nov 24<sup>th</sup> – No Class, Thanksgiving Break

## Week Fourteen – Politicizing Everyday Life

Mon Nov 29<sup>th</sup>

1. Kendall, Mikki. 2020. “Solidarity is Still for White Women.” In *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women a Movement Forgot*. Pp. 1-14.
2. AwesomelyLuvvie (2018). <https://www.awesomelyluvvie.com/2018/04/weaponizing-white-women-tears.html>
3. Graham, Renée. (2019). <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2019/04/30/black-women-aren-here-save-america-from-itself/GmP5RedfNptOzOmEoUyAJP/story.html>

Wed Dec 1<sup>st</sup>

1. Lorde, Audre. 1984. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Pp. 110-114.
2. IndigenousAction. “Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally-Industrial Complex.” <https://www.indigenouaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/comment-page-1/>

## Week Fifteen – To be Determined

Mon Dec 6<sup>th</sup>

Wed Dec 8<sup>th</sup>