Course Description: Sex scandals have proven to be an enduring part of political discourse from the ancient times to the present. The first Roman Emperor, Augustus, exiled his daughter Julia after her philandering discredited his moral reforms; during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette was accused of sleeping with men, women, and even her own son; and more recently, an unverified report from Buzzfeed involving Donald Trump and certain Moscow mattresses raised eyebrows and ire. Although sex scandals are often dismissed as lurid distractions from “real” political issues, in this course we will take them seriously as elements of political discourse. Through a close study of a number of political sex scandals, both past and present, students will consider the following questions: How and why are issues of sexuality morality tied to political legitimacy? Why is sex a useful discourse for expressing political discontent? How do issues of race, class, religion, and region influence the shape of sex scandals?

Students in this course will:

- Consider how and why sexual (mis)behavior functions as a metaphor for political legitimacy.
- Gain an understanding of how sexuality intersects with other forms of identity, including race, class, gender, religion, ability, nation, etc.
- Learn how to read academic texts strategically, looking for argument, evidence, and approach.
- Develop skills in academic research.

Course Readings
All class readings can be found on the course moodle site:
https://moodle.umass.edu/course/view.php?id=39306

Course readings appear on the syllabus under the day on which they will be discussed. Therefore, if a reading is listed under the heading “Sep 9,” students must complete that reading by class time on September 9.

Assignments:

- Attendance & Participation = 10%
- Reading Quizzes: 15%
- Play Assignment: 25%
- Students’ Choice Assignment: 25%
- Final Multimedia Presentation: 25%

Participation: Showing up to class is the single best thing you can do to improve your grade. Your participation grade is based on 1) class attendance and 2) demonstration that you have done the reading and are actively engaging with the ideas discussed. One way to do this is to speak up in class; if you can answer my questions or if you have thought of your own questions to ask, I will know that you are keeping up. However, I understand that many people are uncomfortable speaking up in class. While I encourage you to try to speak up anyway, since this is a skill that you’ll be called upon to use throughout your lives, if you know that you are a person who has difficulty participating vocally you can let me know. Together, we will come up with an alternative way for you to participate.

Reading Quizzes: Students will complete five quizzes on the readings over the course of the semester. After beginning the quiz, you will have ten minutes to finish. A total of ten quizzes will be available: students may take more quizzes if they wish to raise their grade. Quizzes that are not attempted will be recorded in the gradebook as a zero, but the lowest 5 scores will be dropped. Quizzes must be completed by 10:30am on Fridays.

Play Assignment: Due Friday, Sept. 29 by 5pm. Students will attend a showing of play The Scarlet Professor, which will be held September 15 & 16, 2017 at 8pm and September 17, 2017 at 3pm at Theatre 14, Mendenhall Center for the Arts, Smith College, Northampton, MA. (You can find the website for the play here.) They will then complete a short reflection paper (3-5 pages, double-spaced) connecting the play to larger course themes. Full guidelines for the assignment will be posted on Moodle. There will also be a symposium held Saturday, Sept. 16. Students will have the opportunity to complete an extra credit assignment by attending the panel on “Sex and Shame from the Puritans to the Present” from 3-4:45pm in the Earle Recital Hall, Sage Hall at Smith College. (Website for symposium here.)

Students’ Choice Assignment: Due Friday, Nov. 3 by 5pm. Students will identify a scholarly article or chapter on a sex scandal that they feel should be discussed in class. You will write a short paper summarizing your chosen piece, and explaining how it expands our understanding of the role of sexuality/gender/race/class etc in politics. Three of your selections will be assigned to the class during Week 12. Full guidelines will be posted on the moodle site.
**Final Multimedia Project/Presentation:** Due in class, Monday, Dec. 11. Students will complete a final research project which explores a sex scandal of their choice. Your project may be in the form of a Powerpoint Presentation, a blog post, a photo essay, a video, a wikipedia page, a digital timeline, or another format. Please also upload your project to moodle. You will complete a project proposal (due Friday Oct. 13 in class) outlining your proposed topic and explaining how you intend to present your work. Full guidelines will be posted on the moodle site.

**Late Assignments Policy:** Students who anticipate that they will need an extension on an assignment should speak to me as soon as possible. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Assignments received late will be marked down by a third of a grade letter for every day they are late (so an assignment that would have been an A will be an A- if turned in one day late, a B+ if turned in two days late, etc.). However, students should still make every effort to turn in assignments—a late assignment will always be worth more than a missed assignment.

**Academic Dishonesty (is bad):** All students should be familiar with the University’s policies governing student conduct and academic integrity. For a complete overview, see: http://www.umass.edu/honesty/

Plagiarism is totally unacceptable in my class, and I will fail any assignment that fails to cite an author whose words or ideas are invoked or that reproduces other people’s work without quotation marks. We will talk more about what constitutes plagiarism in class. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to work on your assignments well ahead of time. Most students are tempted to copy other people’s work in moments of panic directly before a due date. Don’t put yourself in that position, and if the choice is between plagiarism and taking a late penalty, always take the penalty.

**Disabilities:** If you have a disability (documented or otherwise) I will make every effort to accommodate you. You can help me do this better if you alert me to your situation as soon as possible. You can also consult the University’s Disability Resource Center: see https://www.umass.edu/disability/

**Content Warnings:** In this class, we will be talking (at length) about sex and sexuality, race and racism, and other challenging topics. If you are uncomfortable reading and discussing this material, this may not be the best class for you to take. On the first day of class, students will be asked to fill out a worksheet asking them to identify topics that they would like to receive warnings about ahead of time. Such warnings are intended to provide students with a heads-up so that they can take whatever precautions are necessary for self-care.

**Schedule:**

**Week 1: Introductions**

Sep 6: Introductions; Syllabus

**Week 2: Sex at Work**

Sep 11: 

Sep 13: Guest Speakers: Harley Erdman and Eric Sawyer discuss The Scarlet Professor

Sep 15: 
Wellesley Statement from CERE faculty re: Laura Kipnis Freedom Project visit and aftermath

***Attend a production of The Scarlet Professor, Sept.15 & 16, 2017 at 8pm or September 17, 2017 at 3pm***

EXTRA CREDIT: Attend panel on Sept. 16 “Sex and Shame from the Puritans to the Present” from 3-4:45pm.

**Week 3: Misbehaving Monarchs**

Sep 18:


Sep 20:


Sep 22:


Play Assignment Due
**Week 4: Sex and Space**

**Sep 25:**

**Sep 27:**


**Sep 29:** Guest Speaker: Prof. Jack Gieseking


**Week 5: Monica and Bill**

**Oct 2:**

**Oct 4:**

Oct 6:

Week 6: Slavery

TUESDAY Oct 10:

Oct 11:

Oct. 13:


Project Proposal Due in Class

Week 7: Sexual Knowledge

Oct 16:

Oct 18:
Oct 20:

Week 8: Age

Oct 23:


Oct 25:

Oct 27:

Week 9: Imperialism I

Oct 30:

Nov 1:

Nov 3:

Students’ Choice Assignment Due

Week 10: Imperialism II

Nov 6:

Nov 8:

Nov 10:

**SHORT PAPER TWO DUE**

**Week 11: Religion**

Nov 13:


Nov 15:

Nov 17:

**NO CLASS FOR TURKEY REASONS: Nov 20-24**

**Week 12: Students’ Choice!**

Nov 27
Nov 29
Dec 1

**Week 13: Pornography**
Dec 4:


Dec 6:

Dec 8:

Week 14: Wrap-Up

Dec 11:
Final Project Presentations