

**Southern Illinois University**  
**SOC 530 Topical Seminar in Sociology**  
**“Seminar in Sexuality”**  
**Fall 2011**

**Class Times:** W 6:00pm-8:30pm (Faner 3410)

**Instructor:** Chris Wienke, PhD

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**Overview**

This graduate seminar examines the emerging body of work in the fast-growing field of sexuality studies. While the course draws largely from sociology, it takes several side trips into other disciplines. We begin by situating sexuality in historical context, with an emphasis on the diverse and evolving history of American sexual attitudes and practices. This is followed by a discussion of theories and methods in sexuality studies. After briefly considering the contributions of early sexologists and the work of Sigmund Freud, we will survey the sociology of sexuality from its beginnings in quantitative research, through classical sociological theory, social constructionism, and feminism. We'll then examine Foucault's radical rethinking of sexuality and grapple with the challenges of queer theory. The second part of the course will take up several substantive areas in the sociology of sexuality, drawing on cutting edge quantitative and qualitative research. Topics will include sex work and sexual commerce, sexual orientations and gender, sexual health and disease, premarital heterosexuality, sexuality and space, and non-marital and non-monogamous sexuality. Students will be asked to write reactions to readings, to discuss readings in class, and to conduct and present their own research.

**Required Materials**

1. Erickson, Julia (1999). *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Harvard University Press.
2. Foucault, Michel (1978). *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Vintage Books.
3. Regnerus, Mark & Jeremy Uecker (2011). *Premarital Sex in American: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying*. Oxford Press.
4. Stacey, Judith (2011). *Unhitched: Love, Marriage, and Family Values from West Hollywood to Western China*. NYU Press.
5. Diamond, Lisa (2008). *Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love and Desire*. Harvard Press.
6. Gray, Mary (2009). *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. NYU Press.
7. Bernstein, Elizabeth (2007). *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*. University of Chicago Press.

8. Nack, Adina (2008). *Damaged Goods: Women Living with Incurable Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. Temple University Press.

9. Selected readings available in the main office of the Department of Sociology and on Blackboard ("Course Content").

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

**1. Discussion/Participation** Graduate study means learning from every possible source – from your readings, your peers, your life experiences, your instructor, your research. Participating in seminar discussions is one of the best ways to learn. You are expected to contribute your questions and insights to the class. The culture of the seminar will, I hope, be a congenial one for self-expression. I will work to maintain such a culture by swiftly countering displays of contempt and practicing pedagogical equity to the fullest extent possible. However, I cannot help you learn if you don't participate in discussion. Doing excellent written work is not enough to demonstrate adequate performance in graduate school. So show a little backbone, organize yourselves in whatever way you need in order to ensure broad participation in the discussion, and whatever you do, don't suffer in silence. Say anything you can defend against reasoned argument. And treat colleagues' contributions with respect, which means taking them seriously and challenging them as well as extending basic courtesy.

Naturally, **attendance** is expected and necessary in order to successfully complete this course. More than one absence that is not due to extraordinary circumstances will result in a lowered grade.

**2. Weekly Comments** (worth 15% of the final grade) Before 2:00pm on the day of the seminar, post to Blackboard ("discussions") a comment of approximately 300 words (also attach a Word file version of the comment). Comment succinctly on what you found most interesting, important, puzzling, infuriating, fundamental, etc., about the readings. You may find it helpful to pick the sentence that best states your purpose, meaning, question, or point of view and use that as the topic sentence of the final (posted) version of your comment. I want a focused comment, not a summary of the material, although sometimes a sentence that distills what you think the readings are "really about" also can be very useful. Distributed in a timely manner, these comments will not only help you organize your response to the readings but also will serve as a guide for discussion. Submit *six* comments over the course of the term.

**3. Critical Reviews** (worth 25% of the final grade) Each student must write a publication-length (800 words) formal review of the reading(s) for one week. Most disciplinary journals include examples (I suggest you look over the most recent issue of *Contemporary Sociology*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Sexuality & Culture*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, or *Gender & Society*). You may want to divide the critical review into two halves. In the first half (1-2 pages), summarize the purpose of the reading(s), the major theories or concepts employed, the methods used to gather the data, and the findings or arguments of the reading(s). In the second half (about 2-3 pages), critique the reading(s), which involves pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the reading(s). Your review should assess the theories, methods, and findings of the research, and identify controversies or unresolved issues. Submit final drafts as though to a book review editor. This assignment is due by no later than **November 30**.

**4. Presentation of Class Readings** (worth 15% of the final grade) Each student will lead class discussion about the assigned reading(s) (either once or twice, depending on enrollment). Your presentation should address: (1) the purpose of the reading(s); (2) the major theories and concepts employed; (3) the methods

used to gather the data; and (4) the findings or arguments of the reading(s). You should also offer your evaluation of the reading(s) as well as your general thinking on the larger topic. After summarizing the main points of the reading(s), you should identify a number of questions that the reading(s) raises and pose these questions to members of the class. Also, consider particularly problematic passages in the text and help the group engage with them, either by providing and then eliciting alternative readings of the text, contextualizing the debates implicit or explicit in the text, or preparing specific questions for discussion. To help with the presentation, you must duplicate and distribute written presentation outlines to class participants (outlines should be as concise as possible; focus on main points, not the details). Your grade for this assignment will be based on the effectiveness of the presentation in conveying important points from the reading(s) and stimulating useful discussion.

**5. Final Project and Presentation** 40% of your final grade will come from a project you complete and hand in by the end of the semester. The project is an opportunity to demonstrate what you have learned in this course, and should be framed around issues, concepts, or problems from the readings and class discussion. You may write a research paper, a research proposal, a critical review of literature on a particular topic or issue, an excerpt from current research, or some similarly substantial piece of work. You must hand in a brief statement of your project choice and topic by no later than October 12. You must submit a draft of your project to another seminar participant for comments (see below) by no later than November 30. *Final drafts* should be typewritten or word-processed, double-spaced, in standard 12-point fonts, and should be at least 20 pages in length. No late projects will be accepted; papers are due by December 14. You will make a formal 15-30 minute presentation to the class on either December 7 or December 14. Your presentation should be based on either the *rough draft* you submitted for comments or on the *final draft*.

**6. Comments on drafts** (worth 5% of your grade) Each participant will be responsible for reading, and providing written and oral comments on, the draft project text of one fellow participant. This will be your opportunity to provide supportive-yet-critical feedback to your colleagues at a critical stage in the development of their projects. You will receive drafts by no later than November 30 and must return comments by December 7 to allow time for revisions. Hand in your colleague's comments with the final version of the paper.

**Grades will be assigned on the following scale:**

- A:** Truly exceptional and outstanding work
- B:** Solid, acceptable graduate-level work
- C or below:** Below acceptable level for graduate work

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS**

**PART 1: FORMATIONS IN SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE**

A look at history, theory, and methods

WEEK 1: Aug 24      Organizational Meeting

***SEXUALITY IN AMERICAN HISTORY***

WEEK 2: Aug 31      Readings from D'Emilio & Freedman, *Intimate Matters* (Chapters 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, & 15)

## **SEXOLOGY, PSYCHOLANALYSIS, CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGY, & CONSTRUCTIONISM**

- WEEK 3: Sept 7
- Steven Seidman, "The Science of Sex: Sexology and Psychoanalysis," & "Social Theories of Sex" (pp.13-18) in *The Social Construction of Sexuality*.
  - Kingsley Davis, "The Sociology of Prostitution." 1937. *American Sociology Review*. 2, 5: 744-755.
  - John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in Abelove et al., *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*.
  - Kenneth Plummer, "Symbolic Interactionism and the Forms of Homosexuality," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.
  - Carol Vance, "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality" in D. Altman et al., *Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality?*
  - William Simon and John Gagnon, "A Sexual Scripts Approach" in J. Geer & W. O'Donohue, *Theories of Human Sexuality*.

## **SURVEYING SEX**

- WEEK 4: Sept 14
- Erickson: *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.

## **FEMINIST SEX DEBATES**

- WEEK 5: Sept 21
- Steven Seidman, "Social Theories of Sex" (pp.18-24) in S. Seidman, *The Social Construction of Sexuality*.
  - Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" in R. Rapp, *Toward an Anthropology of Women*.
  - Catherine MacKinnon, "A Feminist/Political Approach," in J. Geer & W. O'Donohue, *Theories of Human Sexuality*.
  - Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience," in *Blood, Bread, Poetry*.
  - Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes Toward a Radical Theory of Sexuality," in Abelove et al., *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*.
  - Lillian Rubin, "The Sexual Dilemma" in *Intimate Strangers*.

## **FOUCAULTIAN/DISDISCOURSE THEORY**

- WEEK 6: Sept 28
- Foucault: *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*.

## **QUEER THEORY**

- WEEK 7: Oct 5
- Arlene Stein & Ken Plummer, "'I Can't Even Think Straight': 'Queer' Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.
  - Ki Namaste, "The Politics of Inside/Out: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism, and a Sociological Approach to Sexuality," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.
  - Adam Green, "Gay But Not Queer: Toward a Post-Queer Study of Sexuality." 2002. *Theory & Society*, 31: 521-545.
  - Dana Takagi, "Maiden Voyage: Excursions into Sexuality and Identity Politics in Asian America," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.
  - Kristin Esterberg, "'A Certain Swagger When I Walk': Performing Lesbian Identity," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.
  - Jane Ward "Straight Dude Seeks the Same: Mapping the Relationship between Sexual Identities, Practices, and Cultures" in Stompler et al., *Sex Matters*.

- Cathy Cohen, "Contested Membership: Black Gay Identities and the Politics of AIDS," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.
- Joshua Gamson, "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct?: A Queer Dilemma," in S. Seidman, *Queer Theory/Sociology*.

WEEK 8: Oct 12      **INTERLUDE:** Reflecting on our own research, discussing our work in progress, and other matters  
**RESEARCH PROJECT CHOICE & TOPIC DUE**

**PART 2: STREAMS IN CONTEMPORARY SEXUALITY RESEARCH**

A look at recent sociological studies of sexuality

**PREMARITAL HETEROSEXUALITY**

WEEK 9: Oct 19      Regnerus & Uecker: *Premarital Sex in American: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think about Marrying*.

**NON-MARITAL & NON-MONOGAMOUS SEXUAL RELATIONS**

WEEK 10: Oct 26      Stacey: *Unhitched: Love, Marriage, and Family Values from West Hollywood to Western China*.

**SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS & GENDER**

WEEK 11: Nov 2      Diamond: *Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women's Love and Desire*.

**SEXUALITY & SPACE**

WEEK 12: Nov 9      Gray: *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*.

**SEX FOR SALE**

WEEK 13: Nov 16      Bernstein: *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*.

WEEK 14: Nov 23      THANKSGIVING BREAK

**SEXUAL HEALTH AND DISEASE**

WEEK 15: Nov 30      Nack: *Damaged Goods: Women Living with Incurable Sexually Transmitted Diseases*.  
**ROUGH DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE TO COMMENTATOR**

WEEK 16: Dec 7      Paper Presentations  
**COMMENTS DUE**

FINALS: Dec 14      Paper Presentations  
**FINAL PROJECT DUE**