

512:225
Sexuality in America: The Colonial Period to the Present

Spring, 2017

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"Sex, which ought to be an incident of life, is the
obsession of the well fed world."

Rebecca West, 1912

This course examines the ways in which sexuality was an integral part of American History. Topics include sexual codes and governance in the colonial period; perspectives on prostitution with special attention to the "vice crusaders" of the late nineteenth century; how and why the system of "virtue and vice" of the Victorian period was transformed into a system of "normality" and "deviance" in the twentieth century; the politics of homosexuality; the effects of mass culture and consumer values on the popular meaning of sexuality; the "sexual revolution" of the nineteen seventies; and the question of the role of sexuality in identity formation at the turn of the 21st century.

Requirements

Reading Assignments

Each week you will be responsible for the assigned reading. I will give you short assignments to help you focus your perspective on the readings before or during recitations

Discussion

We will devote some part of each class to discussion. While this is a lecture class, I will put questions to the class, and bring in relevant reading. In order to be

prepared for discussion, you should complete the reading on the day for which it is assigned.

Papers

You will write one 5-page paper, on *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and another on *How to be a Woman*. Each book paper counts for 20% of your final grade

Paper 1:

Paper Questions:

1. Is it possible to argue that Mr. Flint is in love with Linda? Why or why not?
2. What aspect of her relationship with Mr. Flint is most painful to Linda and why? What does her struggle tell us about the meaning of sexual propriety to women's identity in the 19th century?
3. To what extent is the pursuit of power/ control as important – or perhaps even more important – to Mr. Flint than sex? Could you argue that power was, in fact, more important? Why or why not?

Paper 2:

Questions: To be generated in class,.

*You will also be graded on class discussion and short writing assignments. I will announce any writing assignments ahead of time.

*If you would like to speak with me about a grade on a paper, please wait 24 hours after receiving the grade to contact me. Then, you must find time to speak with me about it before 10 days have elapsed.

Course Materials

John De'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Dover Thrift Editions, 2009, ISBN-10: 0486419312)

Caitlin Moran, *How to Be a Woman* (Harper Perennial, 2012, ISBN-10: 9780062124296)

Thomas Foster, *Documenting Intimate Matters: Primary Sources*

Exams:

There will be a Midterm, on Oct. 9, and Final, given on December 22, from 12:00-3:00 P.M. Exams will have sections with IDs, requiring short answers: date, definition, historical significance, and an essay section. There will be one essay required for the midterm, and two essays for the final.

Academic Honesty

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences considers academic fraud, dishonesty and cheating serious academic misconduct. If you are unclear about the proper use and citation of sources, or the details and guidelines for any assignment, you should discuss the assignment and your questions with me. Any cheating or plagiarism will result in automatic failure. For the full policy on academic misconduct see the College's Student Academic Handbook.

Grading

Book paper 1	20
Book paper 2	20
Discussion	20
Midterm	20
Final	20

Additional Resources

If you need help with your papers and would like to visit the Plangere Writing Center, go here for hours and information: <http://plangere.rutgers.edu/>

Class Schedule

January 19: Regulating Sexuality in the Colonial World

Introduction: Sexuality in Historical Context

January 23-Jan. 26: Cities and Sexuality, from Colonial to Victorian Morality

Jan. 23: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 1-2
 Documenting, p. 7-10

Jan. 26: Recitation
 Documenting, p. 14-25
 "Bestiality Cases in New Haven, Connecticut, 1638-49"
(Sakai)

Jan. 30-Feb. 2: "Sex Among the Rabble:" Race, Class and Sex

Jan. 30: Hodes, "Adultery: Dorothea Bourne and Edmond," (Sakai)

Feb. 2: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 3
 Documenting, 41-53

Feb. 6-Feb.9; The Rise of the Victorian Sexual Order

Feb. 6: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 4
 Documenting, p. 54-70
 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, p. 1-97

Feb. 9: Recitation:
 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, p. 98-205

Feb. 13-Feb. 16 The Moral Economy of Pleasure

Feb. 13: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 5

Feb. 16: Carol Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of
 Love and Ritual," (Sakai)

PAPER DUE ON HARRIET JACOBS, 11:59, P.M., SAKAI

Feb. 20-Feb.23 Midterm

Feb. 20: Review for Midterm

Feb. 23: Midterm

Feb. 27-March 2: The Sexualization of Reconstruction Politics

Feb. 27: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 6

March 2: Recitation
Documenting, p. 72-90
Leslie Reagan, "When Abortion was Illegal" (Sakai)

March 6-9: Victorian Morality Under Stress

March 6: *Intimate Matters*, Ch.8

March 9: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 9
Ellis, "The Love Rights of Women"

March 13-16: Spring Break

March 20-23: Modern Sexuality and the Construction of Deviance

March 20: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 10

March 23: Recitation
Documenting, p. 91-115
Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," *Passion and Power* (Sakai)

March 27-30: The Sexual Sell: 1920's

March 27: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 11

March 30: *Documenting*, p.116-123

April 3-6: Modern Sexual Selves

April 3: "Lesbian Pulp Novels and Lesbian Identity" (Sakai)
Caitlin Moran, *How to Be a Woman*, p. 3-150

April 6: Recitation
Caitlin Moran, *How to Be a Woman*, p. 151-301

April 10-13: World War II and the Fifties

April 10: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 12,

April 13: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 13

April 17-20: Sexual Revolutions

April 17: IN CLASS ESSAY: *How to Be a Woman*

April 20: THANKSGIVING

April 24-27: Sexuality and Postmodernity

April 24: *Intimate Matters*, ch. 14, 15

April 27: *Documenting*, 151-171

May 1: Review

