

21A231J/SP.455J/HASS E

GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND SOCIETY

MIT Spring 2006

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MW 2:30-4:00
16-220

This course seeks to examine how people experience gender—what it means to be a man or a woman—and sexuality in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. We will explore how gender and sexuality relate to other categories of social identity and difference, such as race and ethnicity, economic and social standing, urban or rural life, etc. One goal of the class is to learn how to critically assess media and other popular representations of gender roles and stereotypes. Another is to gain a greater sense of the diversity of human social practices and beliefs in the United States and around the world.

Classes will integrate lecture and discussion. Occasionally we will break into small groups for more concentrated discussion. Some lectures will directly engage our readings while others will integrate background historical and theoretical information.

Requirements

Participation. You *must* attend class and participate in discussions; this part of the course, including Reader Responses (see below), will account for 25% of the final grade. Writing Reader Responses will help you feel prepared to speak up in class; if a student does not volunteer, she or he may be called upon to speak. You are expected to keep up with all assigned readings. Students who miss more than 3 classes will lose credit.

Reader Responses consist of a couple paragraphs describing your reaction to one or more of the readings for that session. Do not summarize, but rather give us your response to the reading. These should take no more than 30 minutes to write. While reader responses are not individually graded, they will be factored into the overall evaluation of your performance. You will write five over the course of the term. You will be encouraged to post these on the course Stellar site prior to the class for which they are due to share your thoughts with your classmates.

Argumentative Essays. You will write 3 papers, each counting for 25% of your final grade. The first paper will address the relationship between gender/sexuality and political economy. The second paper will discuss a socially/politically controversial topic concerning gender/sexuality. The third paper may examine the role of gender and sexuality in the construction of personal identity, and can include personal reflection. There is no final examination.

This is a Communication Intensive (CI) subject. Your three papers will be 7-8 pages (roughly 2000 words) each. You will *rewrite* the first two papers in light of the comments received on them. The revised draft is the version that will be graded. Rewriting the third paper is optional. There will be a writing tutor for this class. You will be expected to meet with the writing tutor before submitting each draft and revised paper to the instructor.

Presentation. Students will give a 5-10 minute presentation of the third paper, time limit to

be determined on the basis of enrollment. Presentations are factored into the participation grade. Rehearsing is advisable.

The first two papers are due March 8 and April 12. You will get the papers back no later than one week after they have been handed in, and must submit your rewrite one week later (March 20 and April 26). If you plan on revising the third paper, the first version must be handed in by May 10. The third paper is due on May 17.

We are fortunate to have a *writing tutor*, Ann Snodgrass, for this course. You are required to make an appointment with Dr. Snodgrass to discuss the progress of your first paper. You are encouraged to meet with the writing tutor frequently, but at least once for each paper.

Because this is a CI subject, you will automatically pass Phase 1 of the Writing Requirement if you receive a grade of B or better.

The readings assigned for a class session follow the date and title of the session.

Required Books (available at the Coop):

Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex*

Annick Prieur, *Mema's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, and Machos.*
Chicago

Heather Paxson, *Making Modern Mothers: Ethics and Family Planning in Urban Greece*

the remainder of the readings will be found on the course Stellar site for you to download.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Wed. Feb. 8 introduction to the study of gender and sexuality: the sex/gender system

PART I: CONCEPTS AND THEMES

Mon. Feb. 13 is sex to gender as nature is to culture?

reading response due in class

read: Ruth Hubbard, "Rethinking Women's Biology" in *The Politics of Women's Biology*. New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1990, pp. 119-129.

Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes." *The Sciences*, March/April 1993, pp. 20-24.

Wed. Feb. 15 cultural acquisition of gender as learned behavior

read: Barrie Thorne, "Children and Gender: Constructions of Difference," pp. 100-113 in *Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Difference*, Deborah Rhode, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Huynh-Nhu Le, "Never Leave Your Little One Alone: Raising an Ifaluk child," pp. 199-222 in *A World of Babies: Imagined Childcare Guides for Seven Societies* (2000) Cambridge University Press.

Marissa Diener, "Gift from the Gods: A Balinese Guide to Early Child Rearing" pp. 91-116 in *A World of Babies: Imagined Childcare Guides for Seven Societies* (2000) Cambridge University Press.

PART II: GENDER AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Mon. Feb 20 PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY

TUE. Feb. 21 arranged marriage and inheritance in agricultural and pastoral societies

read: begin reading *Middlesex*; discuss through p. 125

Jane Collier, "From Mary to Modern Woman" *American Ethnologist* 13(1):100-107, 1986.

Wed. Feb. 22 science, republicanism and The Woman Question

read: Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, "Introduction: The Romantic Solution" in *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women*, pp. 1-29. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1978.

Teri Kapsalis, "Mastering the Female Pelvis: Race and the Tools of Reproduction" in *Public Privates: Performing Gynaecology from Both Ends of the Speculum*, 1997, pp. 31-59.

handout paper topics

make appointment to meet with writing tutor in the next couple of weeks

Mon. Feb 27 social reproduction: reproducing formal and informal class relations

reading response due in class

read: Rayna Rapp, "Family and Class in Contemporary America: Notes Toward an Understanding of Ideology," in *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*, Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, eds. New York: Longman, 1982, pp. 25-39.

Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor" in Ellen C. DuBois and Vicki Ruiz, *Unequal Sisters*, Third Edition, 2000, pp. 436-459.

Mary Romero, "Who Takes Care of the Maid's Children? Exploring the Costs of Domestic Service," in *Feminism and Families*, edited by Hilde Lindeman Nelson. Routledge, 1997, pp. 151-169.

Wed. Mar 1 women in the global economy

read: Carla Freeman, *Designing Women: Corporate Discipline and Barbados's Off-Shore Pink-Collar Sector*. *Cultural Anthropology* 8(2): 169-186, 1993.

view: *Mardi Gras: Made in China*

Mon. Mar 6 gender, work and professionalization

read: Kath Weston, Production as Means, Production as Metaphor: Women's Struggle to Enter the Trades. In *Uncertain Terms: Negotiating Gender in American Culture*, F. Ginsburg and A. Tsing (eds.) 137-151. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Linda McDowell, 'Body Work 1: Men Behaving Badly' and 'Body Work II: The Masqueraders,' pp. 158-203 in *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1997.

Rosalind Williams, from "Men and Women in a Technological World," pp. 198-211 in *Retooling: A Historian Confronts Technological Change*. MIT Press, 2002.

Wed. Mar. 8 gender and agency

read: Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2(3): 274-290, 1988.

Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance," *American Ethnologist* 17(1): 41-55, 1990.

FIRST PAPER DUE

Mon. Mar. 13 appetite, image, control

read: Carole M. Counihan, "Food Rules in the United States: Individualism, Control, and Hierarchy," in *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power*. Routledge, 1999; pp. 113-128.

Helen Gremillion, "In Fitness and in Health: Crafting Bodies in the Treatment of Anorexia Nervosa," *Signs*, 27(2): 381-414, 2002.

PART III: GENDER AND SEXUALITY AS IDENTITY

Wed. Mar. 15 the invention of sexuality-based identities

read: Jonathan Ned Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality," *Socialist Review* 20(1):7-33, 1990.

Maxine Davis, "The Importance of Sexual Harmony" from *The Sexual Responsibility of Women*, pp. 22-36. 1956.

Allan Bérubé, "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II" in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, eds. NY: Monthly Review Press, 1983. Pp. 88-99.

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and the Lesbian Continuum" in *Women—Sex and Sexuality*, edited by Catharine Stimpson, University of Chicago Press, 1981; pp. 62-91.

Mon. Mar. 20 coming out and leaving the closet behind

read: Arlene Stein, chapters 1, 2 and 3 from *Sex and Sensibility: Stories of a Lesbian Generation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Ellen Lewin, *Wives, Mothers and Lesbians: Rethinking Resistance in the US*. In *Pragmatic Women and Body Politics*, Margaret Lock and Patricia Kaufert, eds. Cambridge University Press, pp. 164-177.

FIRST PAPER REWRITE DUE

Wed. Mar. 22 other genders/sexualities

read: Gilbert Herdt, "Gender and Socialization" in *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*. pp. 67-99

Annik Prieur, *Mema's House*, Chapter 1

Mon. Mar. 27 SPRING BREAK

Mon. Apr. 3 transvestite lives and sex work
reading response due in class

read: Annik Prieur, *Mema's House*

Wed. Apr. 5 transgender and transexualism in the U.S.

read: Cressida J. Heyes, *Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender*. *Signs* 28(4): 1093-1120, 2003.

view: *You Don't Know Dick*

Mon. Apr. 10 intersexuality

read: Cheryl Chase, "Hermaphrodites with Attitude" *GLQ* 4(2):189-211, 1998.

"What are you?" by William Beeman, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Brown University, in the *Baltimore Morning Sun*, Sunday, March 17, 1996.

discuss *Middlesex*

Wed. Apr. 12 do western sexual identities travel?

read: Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar, *Dismantling Assumptions: Interrogating "Lesbian" Struggles for Identity and Survival in India and South Africa*. *Signs* 29(2):493-516.

Holly Wardlow, "Anger, Economy, and Female Agency: Problematizing 'Prostitution' and 'Sex Work' among the Huli of Papua New Guinea." *Signs* 29(4):1017-1040, 2004.

SECOND PAPER DUE

Mon. Apr. 17 NO CLASS

Wed. Apr. 19 sexism, racism and violence

read: Michaela de Leonardo, "White Lies, Black Myths: Rape, Race and the Black 'Underclass,'" 53-68 in the Gender/Sexuality Reader

Lori L. Heise, "Violence, Sexuality, and Women's Lives" in the Gender/Sexuality Reader, pp. 411-433.

PART IV: REPRODUCTIVE POLITICS AND GENDERED CITIZENSHIP

Mon. Apr. 24 de-essentializing sex/gender/kinship

reading response due in class

read: Jane Collier, Michelle Rosaldo, Sylvia Yanagisako, "Is there a Family? New Anthropological Views." In *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*, Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, eds. New York: Longman, 1982. Pp. 25-39.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Lifeboat Ethics," 82-88 in the Gender/Sexuality Reader.

Gail Landsman, "'Real Motherhood', Class, and Children with Disabilities," in *Ideologies and Technologies of Motherhood*. France Winndance Twine and Helena Ragoné, eds. Pp. 169-187.

Christine Ward Gailey, "Ideologies of Motherhood and Kinship in US Adoption," in *Ideologies and Technologies of Motherhood*. France Winndance Twine and Helena Ragoné, eds. pp. 11-55.

Wed. Apr. 26 view: *The Lynchburg Story*

SECOND PAPER REWRITE DUE

Mon. May 1 fetal images and abortion debates

read: Rosalind Petchesky, "Fetal Images: The power of visual culture in the politics of reproduction." *Feminist Studies* 13(2):263-292, 1987.

New York Times article on sonograms and anti-abortion groups

Linda L. Layne, "Baby Things as Fetishes? Memorial goods, Simulacra, and the 'Realness' Problem of Pregnancy Loss," in *Ideologies and Technologies of Motherhood*. France Winndance Twine and Helena Ragoné, eds. pp. 111-138.

Wed. May 3 nationalism and gender

read: Rhoda Kanaaneh, *Conceiving Difference: Birthing the Palestinian Nation in the Galilee*. *Critical Public Health* 7(3&4):64-79, 1997.

Rhoda Kanaaneh, "Boys or Men? Duped or 'Made'?" *Palestinian Soldiers in the Israeli Military*. *American Ethnologist* 32(2): 260-274, 2005.

Mon. May 8 *Making Modern Mothers: Ethics and Family Planning in Urban Greece*,
Chapters 1-2.

reading response due in class (can include questions for the author!)

Wed. May 10 *Making Modern Mothers*, Chapters 3-5.

Mon. May 15 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Wed. May 17 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Third Paper Due WEDNESDAY MAY 17