

# **SOCIOLOGY 119**

## **“SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES”**

**Winter 2008**

**Tue & Thu, 3:30 – 4:50 pm in Solís 104**

**Prof. Steven Epstein  
Department of Sociology  
University of California, San Diego**

**Contact info:**

**Office phone: 858-534-0489**

**Email: [sepstein@ucsd.edu](mailto:sepstein@ucsd.edu)**

**Home page: <http://sociology.ucsd.edu/~sepstein>**

**Drop-in office hours this quarter:**

**Tue. 5:00-6:00 and Thu 11:00-12:00  
in the Social Science Building, Room 476**

**Teaching Assistant: Meghan Duffy ([mmduffy@ucsd.edu](mailto:mmduffy@ucsd.edu))**

*A copy of this syllabus can be found at <http://sociology.ucsd.edu/~sepstein/courses/>.*

## **Summary:**

This course investigates the social sources of sexual meanings, values, institutions, and identities, and seeks to understand how sexuality has influenced other domains of society. The premise of the course is that sexuality is an important arena for sociological inquiry that has received less attention from sociologists than it deserves.

On one hand, it is impossible to understand the fierce moral and political controversies that surround sexuality, the loaded meanings attributed to sexual experiences, or the varied social identities and social movements constructed around sexual behavior, without considering sexuality in broadly sociological terms—as a system of meaning and practice shaped by many other social institutions. On the other hand, we cannot fully understand other institutions studied by sociologists—including the economy; the family; the state; and systems of inequality such as gender, class, race, and nation—without investigating the ways in which sexual meanings intersect with and help shape these institutions.

The course is divided into four parts. First, we consider a range of theoretical and methodological approaches that have contributed to the sociological study of sexuality, including psychoanalytic theory, survey research, social constructionism, and the work of Michel Foucault. Then, in the second part of the course, we use those theoretical tools to analyze how and why questions of sexuality have become central to definitions of, and debates over, morality. In discussing morality, we take up issues such as censorship and pornography, and we also pay close attention to the history of “moral panics” in relation to sexual expression.

In the third part of the course, we explore the intertwining of sexuality with other social institutions, such as political economy (as manifested in sex work, sex trafficking, and sexual tourism) and medicine (as reflected in debates over the medicalization of sexuality). Finally, in the last part of the course, our focus is on sexual identity, both as a means for organizing individual experience and as a basis for collective political action. Here we consider such issues as the relation between sexual identity, masculinity, and femininity; the implications of bisexual and transgender identities for the study of sexuality; the intersections of sexuality and race in the formation of identity; the rise of activism organized around sexual identities; and “ex-gay” identities and antigay activism.

Because LGBT studies and queer studies have been fundamental to the study of sexuality in general, this course will also serve as an introduction to sociological perspectives within LGBT studies and queer studies. However, the range of the course is broader than any particular set of sexual identities, and the course is open to anyone who has an interest in the general topic. The bulk of the course readings emphasize sexuality in the United States, but a number of them focus on other countries as well as on broad processes of globalization.

The course has no formal prerequisites. However, as we will be considering a series of theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of sexuality, students will benefit from prior course work in sociology.

## **Course Mechanics:**

- ◆ No books are assigned for this course. All course readings (articles and book chapters) are electronically accessible via **e-reserves** (<http://reserves.ucsd.edu/>). Please note that you will be responsible for downloading and printing each item. You can access the files from any campus computer, and you can print them with an ACS laser printing account (see <http://sdacs.ucsd.edu/~icc/laser.php>). You can also download and print the files from off-campus, but in order to do so you need to specify a proxy in your web browser (an easy process; see <http://www-ono.ucsd.edu/documentation/squid/>). In the case of any problems accessing e-reserves, library staff are available to help you.

All **films** that appear in the syllabus are to be viewed in class.

- ◆ There will be a **take-home midterm exam** and a **take-home final exam** covering course material (readings, lectures, and in-class films). The schedule that follows shows the dates on which the assignments will be distributed as well as the due dates. Both the midterm and the final will consist of essay questions, and each will require about eight typed, double-spaced pages. The midterm will count for 40% of the course grade, and the final will be 50% of the course grade.

In general, the midterm and final exams will demand a thorough comprehension of the course material, a capacity to compare and contrast different theoretical and analytical perspectives, an ability to synthesize the course material and draw analytical conclusions, and the willingness to take the time to write careful and thoughtful essays.

The course TA, Meghan Duffy, will hold **workshops** for students who would like additional help in preparing their midterms and finals (exact times and locations to be announced).

- ◆ The remaining 10% of the course grade will be based on **questions** that you prepare in advance of any five class meetings of your choice (excluding Jan. 31). For each of the five class meetings that you choose, you must come up with at least three questions about one or more of the readings for that class and email those questions to the TA, Meghan Duffy ([mmduffy@ucsd.edu](mailto:mmduffy@ucsd.edu)), no later than 3:30 pm on the day before class. Meghan will compile the questions and send them to me as a group, and I will use them in planning my lecture. (However, neither I nor Meghan will be able to respond specifically to your questions in writing.) The goals are (1) to help you organize your thoughts about the reading; (2) to encourage you to complete the reading in advance of class; and (3) to give us a sense of your thoughts about the reading. Please note the following:

-- Your questions should be based on a careful reading of the assigned texts for that class meeting. They should concern substantive issues related to the reading that you believe merit discussion or that you would like clarification on. Your questions should not be overly vague (“What is this article about?”) and should not be a substitute for a trip to the dictionary (“What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean?”).

-- You do not need to sign up for specific class meetings in advance. Just send in your questions for any five classes that you choose (again, excluding Jan. 31).

-- Your questions should appear in the main text of your email (not an attachment). They should be clearly written and should make grammatical sense.

-- The **header** of your email message must read: "SOC 119 QUESTIONS from <Your name exactly as it appears on the course roster>."

-- For each set of questions that you submit, you will receive (by return email from Meghan) a grade of either 2 points (full credit, for three reasonably appropriate and adequate questions) or 1 point (partial credit, for fewer than three questions, or for questions that are substantially lacking) or 0 points (no credit, for questions that are completely inappropriate). If you submit fewer than five sets of questions, then you will receive no credit for the missing sets. Thus by the end of the quarter, you will have accumulated somewhere between 0 and 10 points.

-- If you wish, you may submit a sixth set of question, in which case the lowest grade will be tossed out. You are also welcome to submit additional questions after the first six sets; however, those questions will not count toward your grade.

-- **Late questions** (emailed after 3:30 pm on the day before class) will not be accepted under any circumstances (including problems with your email account or your computer). Instead, you will need to submit questions for another class meeting in order to make your quota of five sets of questions.

- ◆ Students are responsible for all material presented in the readings, lectures, and in-class films. **Class attendance** is expected. Come to class having *already read* the readings assigned for that day (bring them with you), and be prepared to participate!
- ◆ **Late take-home midterms** will be marked down unless a doctor's note is presented. (The later they are, the more they will be marked down.) **Late take-home finals** will not be accepted at all, unless you contact me before the final is due *and* submit a doctor's note with your final. Please note that there is no excuse for failing to keep electronic backups of your data (for example, on flash drives, CDs, external hard drives, or other computers) in case your primary computer fails or your hard drive crashes.
- ◆ Please understand that, in a class of this size, I cannot accept any midterms or finals sent as **email attachments**.
- ◆ All papers must be submitted in two ways: first, in printed form; and second, electronically to **Turnitin.com**. Turnitin.com is a software program that compares your work against other papers in its database, including other papers submitted for this course now or in the past. Information on accessing Turnitin.com will be provided with the assignments. You can also refer to <http://iwdc.ucsd.edu/students.shtml>.

“Students agree that by taking this course all required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.”

- ◆ I am committed to strict enforcement of university regulations concerning **plagiarism and integrity of scholarship**, which means that **I report** all such cases to university administrators. Please familiarize yourself with the “UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship” (<http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm>). You should understand that examples of plagiarism include obtaining text from any source (including the internet), and passing off such text as your own work, rather than citing the source of the material. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, I encourage you to speak to me about it. Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will typically result in a failing grade FOR THE ENTIRE COURSE and may lead to suspension or dismissal from the university.
- ◆ Please be respectful of those around you. At the beginning of class, please make sure your **cell phone** is turned off or set to vibrate. And please don't chat with other students during class. In addition, arriving late, leaving early, and walking in and out of class are distracting to those around you. Obviously they are sometimes unavoidable. But I'd appreciate your keeping them to a minimum.
- ◆ Please do ask questions and offer opinions! Discussion in lecture is heartily encouraged. Disagreement with the instructor or with your fellow students is fine, as long as you are polite and patient in how you go about it.
- ◆ This syllabus and all lectures for this course are copyright 2008 by Steven Epstein. Students are prohibited from selling (or being paid for taking) notes during this course to or by any person or commercial firm without my express written permission. No **audio recordings** of class are permitted without my permission.
- ◆ Any students wishing to request classroom or assignment **accommodations** for disability-related needs should contact me by email or in person to discuss arrangements as early as possible in the quarter.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

### WEEK 1

TUE, JAN 8: INTRODUCTION

## **PART ONE: How Do We Study Sexuality?**

THU, JAN 10: FREUD AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

**Film clip:** “Deliver Us From Evil” (Amy Berg, 2006)

Freud, Sigmund. 1963. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVI: Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis. London: Hogarth, 303-38 (“The Sexual Life of Human Beings” and “The Development of the Libido”).

### WEEK 2

TUE, JAN 15: SURVEYING SEXUAL BEHAVIORS: FROM KINSEY TO MODERN SEX RESEARCH

**Film clip:** “Kinsey” (Bill Condon, 2004)

Kinsey, Alfred C., Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. 1948. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, **read** 3-9; **skim** 335-63; **read** 636-41.

Kinsey, Alfred C., et al. 1953. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 4-11.

THU, JAN 17: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND THE CREATION OF SEXUAL MEANING

**Film clip:** “Guardians of the Flutes” (Paul Redish, 1994)

Herd, Gilbert. 1987. *The Sambia: Ritual and Gender in New Guinea*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 101-10, 145-55.

Plummer, Ken. 1982. “Symbolic Interactionism and Sexual Conduct: An Emergent Perspective.” In *Human Sexual Relations*, ed. Mike Brake, 223-41. New York: Pantheon.

### WEEK 3

TUE, JAN 22: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM: SEXUAL SCRIPTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Carrillo, Héctor. 2002. *The Night Is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 255-87 (Ch. 11: “Trust, Love, Passion: The Relational Context of HIV Risk”).

Escoffier, Jeffrey. 2003. “Gay-for-Pay: Straight Men and the Making of Gay Pornography.” *Qualitative Sociology* 26, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 531-55.

THU, JAN 24: FOUCAULT: POWER, KNOWLEDGE, PLEASURE

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 3-35, 103-105.

WEEK 4

## **PART TWO: Sexuality and Morality**

TUE, JAN 29: THE BOUNDARIES OF “APPROPRIATE” SEXUALITY

**\*\*Take-home midterm distributed\*\***

Rubin, Gayle S. 1993. “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality.” In *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale and David M. Halperin, 3-44. New York: Routledge.

THU, JAN 31: CENSORSHIP

**Film:** “This Film is Not Yet Rated” (Kirby Dick, 2006)

**Read this article for the midterm (we will not discuss this text in class):**

Kimmel, Michael. 2006. “Ritualized Homosexuality in a Nacirema Subculture.” *Sexualities* 9 (1): 95-105.

WEEK 5

TUE, FEB 5: MORAL PANICS: SEXUAL THREATS, CHILDREN, AND THE FAMILY

Freedman, Estelle B. 1989. “‘Uncontrolled Desires’: The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960.” In *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, 199-225. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Nathan, Debbie, and Michael Snedeker. 1995. *Satan’s Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt*. New York: Basic Books, 67-92 (Ch. 4: “Judy Johnson and the McMartin Preschool”).

THU, FEB 7: MORAL PANICS: SEXUAL THREATS, CHILDREN, AND THE FAMILY (CONT.)

**\*\*Take-home midterm due at 3:30 pm (a hard copy must be submitted in class, and an electronic version must be submitted to Turnitin.com)\*\***

**Film:** “Capturing the Friedmans” (Andrew Jarecki, 2002)

Levine, Judith. 2002. *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex*. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 68-89 (Ch. 4: “Crimes of Passion: Statutory Rape and the Denial of Female Desire”).

WEEK 6

TUE, FEB 12: POWER AND AGENCY

Carrillo, Héctor. 2006. “Where Does Oppression End and Sexual Pleasure Begin? Confronting Sexual and Gender Inequality in HIV Prevention Work.” Pp. 109-122 in *Sexual Inequalities and Social Justice*, edited by N. Teunis and G. Herdt. Berkeley: University of California Press.

THU, FEB 14: THE POLITICS OF PORNOGRAPHY

Vance, Carole S. 1993. “Negotiating Sex and Gender in the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography.” In *Sex Exposed: Sexuality and the Pornography Debate*, ed. Lynne Segal and Mary McIntosh, 29-49. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Fung, Richard. 1996. “Looking for My Penis: The Eroticized Asian in Gay Video Porn.” In *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience*, ed. Russell Leong, 180-91. New York: Routledge.

WEEK 7

### **PART THREE: Sexuality and Social Institutions**

TUE, FEB 19: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SEX: SEX FOR PAY

**Film:** “Live Nude Girls Unite” (Julia Query, 2000)

Frank, Katherine. 2002. *G-Strings and Sympathy: Strip Club Regulars and Male Desire*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002, 203-28 (Ch. 6: “Hustlers, Pros, and the Girl Next Door: Social Class, Race, and the Consumption of the Authentic Female Body”).

Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2005. “Desire, Demand, and the Commerce of Sex.” Pp. 101-125 in *Regulating Sex: The Politics of Intimacy and Identity*, edited by E. Bernstein and L. Schaffner. New York: Routledge.

THU, FEB 21: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SEX: SEX FOR PAY (CONT.)

Kligman, Gail, and Stephanie Limoncelli. 2005. "Trafficking Women after Socialism: To, through, and from Eastern Europe." *Social Politics* 12 (1):118-140.

WEEK 8

TUE, FEB 26: THE MEDICALIZATION OF SEXUALITY

Loe, Meika. 2004. *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*. New York: New York University Press, 29-61 (Ch. 2: "The Rise of Erectile Dysfunction").

Irvine, Janice. 1993. "Regulated Passions: The Invention of Inhibited Sexual Desire and Sexual Addiction." *Social Text* 37 (winter): 203-26.

## **PART FOUR: Sexualities, Identities, and Social Movements**

THU, FEB 28: SEXUALITY, MASCULINITIES, AND FEMININITIES

Pascoe, C. J. 2007. *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 52-83 (Ch. 3: "Dude, You're a Fag: Adolescent Male Homophobia").

Moore, Mignon. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities." *Signs* 32 (1):113-139.

WEEK 9

TUE, MAR 4: MAPPING IDENTITIES

**Film excerpts:** "Transgeneration" (Jeremy Simmons, 2005)

Valentine, David. 2007. *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 29-53.

Esterberg, Kristin G. 2002. "The Bisexual Menace: Or, Will the Real Bisexual Please Stand Up?" In *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, ed. Diane Richardson and Steven Seidman, 215-27. London: Sage.

THU, MAR 6: INTERSECTIONS: RACIAL IDENTITIES AND SEXUAL IDENTITIES

**Film clip:** "Tongues Untied" (Marlon Riggs, 1989)

**\*\*Take-home final exam distributed\*\***

Takagi, Dana. 1994. "Maiden Voyage: Excursions into Sexuality and Identity Politics in Asian America." In *Asian American Sexualities: Dimensions of the Gay and Lesbian Experience*, ed. Russell Leong, 21-35. New York: Routledge.

WEEK 10

TUE, MAR 11: COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. 2002. *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950-1994*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-5, 15-23. (You can **skip** pp. 5-15, even though they appear in the PDF.)

Gamson, Joshua. 1995. "Must Identity Movements Self-Destruct? A Queer Dilemma." *Social Problems* 42 (3): 390-407.

THU, MAR 13: THE LEFT, THE RIGHT, AND THE POLITICS OF SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP

Seidman, Steven. 2005. "From Outsider to Citizen." Pp. 225-245 in *Regulating Sex: The Politics of Intimacy and Identity*, edited by E. Bernstein and L. Schaffner. New York: Routledge.

Erzen, Tanya. 2006. *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-Gay Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 183-215.

EXAM WEEK

**\*\*TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE\*\*** 4:00 pm on Tuesday, March 18 (the final exam date for this course). A hard copy must be brought to SSB 476, and an electronic version must be submitted to Turnitin.com.