HIST 125: Sexuality: Past and Present

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the role that the past has played in shaping modern sexuality. The focus will be on the recent past and on sexuality in the United States, but comparisons will be made with the more distant past and the diversity of human societies around the globe. Topics to be addressed will include: sexual norms and possibilities for nonconformity, the interplay of sex and gender roles, sex and the body, the role of religion, science, and capitalism in shaping social values about sexuality, censorship and sex, modern romance, sexual liberation, and personal sexual identities. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to apply the lessons of the past to their own lives.

Student Learning Outcomes

DESCRIBE how the past influences the modern psychological, sociological, and physiological self.

EXTRAPOLATE from examples in popular culture how the modern self is sexualized.

ILLUSTRATE the pervasiveness of sexuality and the sexualized self in everyday life.

IDENTIFY the various performances of sexuality in modern popular culture.

RELATE lessons of the past to one’s present and future self and to one’s family.

General Education Foundations

This course is one of nine courses that you will take in General Education Foundations. Foundations courses cultivate skills in reading, writing, research, communication, computation, information literacy, and use of technology. They furthermore introduce you to basic concepts, theories and approaches in a variety of disciplines in order to provide the intellectual breadth necessary to help you integrate the more specialized knowledge gathered in your major area of study into a broader world picture.

This course fulfills the GE requirement for Area E (Lifelong Learning). Courses in Lifelong Learning and Self-Development facilitate understanding of the human being as an integrated physiological, social, and psychological organism. Students learn about such matters as human behavior, sexuality, nutrition, health, stress, key relationships of humankind to the social and physical environment, and implications of death and dying. Courses in Lifelong Learning and Self-Development integrate three kinds of inquiry (though not necessarily with equal emphasis): 1. Sociological: in this context, the relationships between an individual and broader society; 2. Physiological: the human body as an integrated organism with systemic functions such as movement, nutrition, growth, reproduction, and aging; and 3. Psychological: the study of the mental processes that create consciousness, behavior, emotions, and intelligence.
Course Requirements

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions. There will be weekly required readings, including selections from Mathew Kuefler, ed., The History of Sexuality Sourcebook (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) and other readings available through Blackboard and listed below. Students will be expected to complete the readings before the class in which they will be discussed. Preparedness for the in-class discussions throughout the semester will be evaluated according to the grading rubric below, for a total of 20% of the final grade.

2. An initial assignment (in week 1), within which students will have to find a news article (from a recent newspaper, magazine, or online article) that describes in some detail some aspect of current sexuality and compares it to how it used to be. Students will also write a 500-word summary of their findings. 10% of the final grade will be based on this assignment.

3. An assignment (in week 8), within which students will work in small groups to research a topic in the use of sex in advertising, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, and then create a wiki through Blackboard with examples of their findings and their analysis. 15% of the final grade will be based on this assignment.

4. Another assignment (in week 13), within which students will work in small groups to research a period in the history of fashion and the sexual body, focusing on “sex appeal” through clothing, and then create a wiki through Blackboard with examples of their findings. 15% of the final grade will be based on this assignment.

5. Twice (in week 9 and week 15) students will be expected to participate in film workshops, to see how topics related to the course have been addressed in modern popular film. Students will have to watch the film before the in-class workshop, be prepared to summarize the film and connect it to themes of the course, and choose a ten-minute clip from the film to present and discuss in class. 10% will be given for each, for a total of 20% of the final grade.

6. Final essay. Students will present a personal and family history of sorts in a final essay. It is intended to connect the content of the course to students’ own lives, and should describe their particular relationship to some of the themes of the course. So they might talk about family migration from rural to urban communities, or ages at marriage and number of children for ancestors when compared to occupations, or the role of religion in personal or family values about sexuality, or the diversity of sexual identities among family members, or dating customs as described by family members, or immigration history. Students who do not feel comfortable with this assignment may write on a different topic, as negotiated with the instructor of the course. This assignment is worth 20% of the final grade.

Grading Rubric for Participation:

Participation in class meetings will be graded according to the following schema:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Participation (0.4%)</th>
<th>Novice (no points)</th>
<th>Intermediate (1/2 of possible points)</th>
<th>Proficient (full points)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seldom comments in class</td>
<td>Comments in some classes but not all</td>
<td>Comments frequently in most classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Preparedness (0.4%)
- Shows no preparedness for discussions
- Shows preparedness for discussions in some classes but not all
- Shows preparedness for discussions in most classes

### Comprehension (0.4%)
- Discussion shows little understanding of the readings
- Discussion shows some understanding of the readings
- Discussion shows deep understanding of the readings

### Questions (0.4%)
- Asks few or no questions to aid in understanding
- Asks some questions to aid in understanding
- Regularly asks questions to aid in understanding

### Debate (0.4%)
- Shows little interest in engaging other students about the discussion topics
- Shows only some interest in engaging other students about the discussion topics, or only in some classes
- Shows real interest in engaging other students about the discussion topics

### Total Percentage Points: 2%

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**Other Important Information about the Course**

**Plagiarism:** SDSU has clear guidelines about what constitutes plagiarism, and there is a tutorial and quiz available through the SDSU library’s website intended to help teach students to avoid plagiarizing. I expect each student to take this quiz during the first month of the semester, and show me the results of the quiz. Work that is plagiarized even in part will not receive a grade, and there will be no chance to rewrite work that is plagiarized or submit alternative assignments.

**Other Forms of Cheating:** Any attempt to reuse essays found online, in part or in whole, or any other forms of deliberate cheating, will result in an immediate F for the course.

**Late Assignments:** If you have a legitimate excuse for a late assignment, you can submit late or be given an alternative and equivalent assignment. But you must be prepared to submit documentation about the reason for it, including your role in it. Otherwise, work may be penalized or late submissions not accepted.

**For Students Needing Accommodations:** If you are a student who needs accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Ability Success Center (SASC) at (619) 594-6473; located in the Calpulli Center (for more information, see [http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/Default.aspx](http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/Default.aspx)). To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact SASC as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from SASC.

**Use of Electronic Devices:** I do not permit use of any electronic devices during class meetings except if they are used for class-related activities. There may be penalties for unauthorized uses.
Office Hours: Please come and visit me during my office hours if you wish to talk about the course, and especially if you would like my help or advice or if you are concerned about your success in the course. I am happy to do what I can to help.

Respect for Others: Please show courtesy to others in the course, whether during class discussions or in discussion board postings. Even if you disagree with someone or find what someone says or writes to be offensive, you can reply in a courteous manner.

Course Outline

Week 1: Sexuality and the Past

Why is it important to think about sexuality in the past as a physiological, sociological, and psychological aspect of human life? How has the recent past shaped the present?

Assignment: Students must find a news article (from a recent newspaper, magazine, or online news source that contrasts how some aspect of sexuality used to be and how it is today, that is, something that focuses on the changing nature of modern sexuality) and discuss its relevance in class.

Week 2: Sex and Gender in Traditional Societies

What constitutes a traditional society? How are traditional societies different from each other and how are they the same? How have traditional human societies, past and present, organized sexual and gender roles and understood sexuality in relation to human bodies, personalities, and identities?

Readings: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, documents 9 (Code of Hammurabi), 10 (Creon’s Speech from Antigone), 11 (Andromache’s Speech from Women of Troy), 16 (Egyptian marriage contracts), 17 (Egyptian married couple), 18 (from Augustine’s Confessions), 32 (Rape of Lucretia from Livy).

Watch and be prepared to discuss in class: “The Surprising History of Sex and Love” (part of the series “The Ancient World According to Terry Jones,” 2002, 50 min.)—available for streaming from Kanopy (through SDSU library).

Week 3: Religion and Sexual Morality in Traditional Societies

How have religious beliefs and ideas about sexual morality contributed to traditional societies? How do such values shape the human person individually and socially?

Readings: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, documents 3 (Adam and Eve), 5 (Laws of Manu), 6 (Ban Zhao), 12 (Isaac and Rebekah), 13 (Ecclesiasticus), 14 (Ramayana), 24 (Leviticus), 25 (Ezekiel), 40 (Kojiki), 42 (Rig Veda), 44 (Krishna and the Gopi), 48 (Qur’an), 51 (Dhammapada).

Week 4: Gender and Sexual Nonconformity in Traditional Societies

What alternatives gender and sexual roles existed in traditional human societies, past and present? How have societies differently organized the relationship between physical bodies, social roles, and psychological identities?

Readings: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, documents 7 (Early Japan), 8 (Ancient North Africa), 19 (Aristophanes’ Speech from Symposium), 21 (Theocritus), 26 (Sacred Prostitution), 27 (Ritual Castration), 28 (Apuleius), 34 (Martial), 36 (Kamasutra), 130 (Boy Actresses in Japan).
Watch and be prepared to discuss in class: “Eunuchs: India’s Third Gender” (BBC film, 1991)—available for streaming from Kanopy (through SDSU library)

**Week 5: Case Study on Christian Ideas about Sex and Marriage**

How have Christian ideas about sex and marriage changed from its beginnings to the present day?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 56 (Jesus), 57 (Paul), 58 (Paul), 66 (Augustine), 67 (Jerome), 68 (Penitentials), 84 (Chaucer), 85 (Martin Luther), 99 (Hammer of Witches).

**Week 6: The Impact of Worldwide Connections**

How has the growing interconnectedness of the world shaped ideas about human sexuality? How have human societies responded to global diversity in sexual values, customs, and identities?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 97 (Raden Adjeng Kartini), 98 (Marco Polo), 101 (Vespucci), 102 (Díaz del Castillo), 104 (Robertson on Tahiti), 105 (anon. on Tahiti), 141 (Nawal El Saadawi), 156 (Nawal El Saadawi).

**Week 7: Science and Modern Sexuality**

How have scientific ideas—medical, psychiatric, and even statistical—shaped modern sexuality in its physiological, sociological, and psychological aspects?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 114-116 (Masturbation), 117 (Freud), 118 (Eugenics), 121 (Kinsey), 122 (Frigidity), 123 (Sociobiology), 124 (Scientific Matchmaking).

**Week 8: Capitalism and Modern Sexuality**

How has capitalism—urbanization, the wage economy, and consumerism—shaped modern sexuality or the relationship between self and society?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 135 (Jane Addams on urban life), 136 (Kgatla), 148 (Margaret Sanger and Mahatma Gandhi debate), 151 (men and women at the beach).

Student assignment: Work in small groups to examine the history of the use of sex in advertising from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century, and as a group create a Wiki through Blackboard that highlights their findings.

**Week 9: First Student Workshop on Film**

How are ideas about the impact of globalism, science, and capitalism on sexuality reflected in film?

Student assignment: Select a film set in American history and analyze how well it reflects what you have learned about the impact of modern globalism, science, and capitalism on sexuality.

**Week 10: The Formation of Modern LGBTQI+ Identities**

How did modern Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and other identities take shape? How have classifications of physical bodies, social selves, and psychological identities changed over time?
Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 119 (sexual inversion), 152 (Berlin drag ball), 125 (Evelyn Hooker), 153 (Stonewall riots), 169 (Gay Liberation Front), 113 (Anita Bryant), 171 (Bisexuality).

Watch and be prepared to discuss in class: “Before Stonewall” (First Run Features, 1984, 87 min.)—available for streaming from Kanopy (through SDSU library)

**Week 11: Modern Romance**

How have modern ideas about romance come into being, and shaped sexuality?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 159 (Poem on breasts), 160 (Lesbian Rekhti poem), 161 (Walt Whitman), 162 (Jung), 164 (Simone de Beauvoir).

**Week 12: Censorship, Surveillance, and TV/Film Depictions**

What do we get to talk about when it comes to sex—and what don’t we get to talk about?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 143 (Regulation of prostitution—for), 144 (Regulation of prostitution—against), 145 (Anthony Comstock), 146 (Hays Code), 147 (Ida Wells Barnett), 154 (AIDS), 155 (Abortion).

Watch and be prepared to discuss in class: “The Hays Code” (project for National History Day, 2012, 9 min.)—available with YouTube online

**Week 13: Liberation and Backlash; Fashion and the Sexual Body**

Do the lessons of history tell us that too much sexual freedom will bring a backlash?

Readings: *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, documents 87 (Marquis de Sade), 167 (Helen Gurley Brown), 163 (Wilhelm Reich), 166 (Jagua Nana), 175 (Pornography), 177 (same-sex marriage).

Student assignment: Work in small groups to examine the history of fashion and the sexual body, focusing on “sex appeal” through historical clothing, and as a group create a Wiki through Blackboard that highlights their findings.

**Week 14: Sexuality, Past, Present, and Future**

Knowing what we know about sexuality in the past and present, what can we predict about the future? How will sexual custom and sexual values change in your lifetime, and what will be the factors involved in that change?


**Week 15: Second Student Workshop on Film**

How does modern film reflect the complexities of modern sexualities?

Student assignment: Select a film and analyze how well it reflects what you have learned about modern sexuality and identity.

**Finals Week:** Final essay is due