

SOCIOLOGY 135: SEXUAL CULTURES
Fall 2017

INSTRUCTOR Jill Bakehorn, Ph.D. (Pronouns: she/her or they/them)
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Office: 479 Barrows Hall

Sign-up Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:00pm
Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

Drop-in Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
10:05-10:50am

CLASS MEETING Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:00-12:00pm
60 Evans

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will be drawing upon social construction theory to examine the creation, reproduction, and stratification of sexualities and sexual cultures in particular social, cultural, historical, and political contexts. While many people think of sexuality as inherent, biological, and purely “natural”, we will be challenging the idea of a “pre-social” sexuality. You will come to see sexuality as something that is constructed and structured by and through social relations.

The course begins with an examination of sociological theories of sexuality. How do sociologists approach the study of sexuality? What do we mean by sexuality? How has this definition changed over time? What implications does this have for people’s lives?

We will then unpack terms like heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, transgender, asexual, polyamorous, and others. We will spend a good deal of time deconstructing commonsense ideas about sexual identity categories, paying particular attention to the complexity of sexuality as it intersects with other identity categories.

In the last section of the semester, we will focus on the pornography industry. We will apply the theories and understandings of sexualities learned in the first part of the course to the modern day pornography industry in the United States. We will examine the history, debates, and politics of the industry, focusing on pornography made by women and LGBTQ folks. We will examine how the sex industry can be a reflection of and reinforce sexual inequalities, but can also be used to challenge these inequalities.

Some questions about sexuality and sexual cultures that will be addressed:

- ▶ What does it mean to say that sexualities are constructed?
- ▶ How does sexual practice become sexual identity?
- ▶ How does queer theory inform our understandings of sexualities?
- ▶ What is feminist porn?
- ▶ How are race, class, gender, and sexual identity represented in pornography?

Keep in mind this is a sociology course. Just to refresh your memory, sociology is the study of human social activity, organization, and interaction. Sociology is about the search for patterned behavior and social, rather than individual, explanations for this behavior. Sociologists look beyond the taken-for-granted notions of our social environment to examine the many layers of social meaning in the human experience. (If this doesn't sound familiar to you, or you are unclear about the *sociological perspective*, please refer to your introductory sociology text for a refresher.)

This class will be **challenging** on a number of levels:

- ❖ You will be expected to keep up with a number of readings for each class meeting.
- ❖ These readings will be challenging not only in terms of their length and number, but also in terms of the subject matter presented and the complex theories proposed.
- ❖ We will be challenging common sense, taken-for-granted notions of sexuality.
- ❖ We will be speaking frankly about issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Some topics may be challenging in the sense that you may find the subject matter embarrassing or difficult to discuss. Some of these topics will be graphic, controversial, or explicit. Frank discussions and presentation of material may include things that some find offensive.

This course challenges many taken-for-granted assumptions about sexuality and the social world. Keep in mind that your personal experiences may not match the general sociological insights discussed in the course. This does not negate the insights. Ask yourself why this might be the case. You may not agree with everything we read and discuss, but I expect you to have an open mind and demonstrate your knowledge of the sociological perspective. Disagreements and debates are expected and welcome in this class, however, I will not tolerate personal attacks.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- ❖ Explain the social constructionist perspective in relation to sexuality
- ❖ Apply the main tenets of queer theory
- ❖ Connect sociological theories to the social world and your experiences
- ❖ Use an intersectional approach
- ❖ Critically analyze media/"common sense" understandings of sexuality
- ❖ Be conversant in the major debates around pornography

REQUIRED TEXTS

Ward, Jane. 2015. *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men*. New York: New York University Press.

Taormino, Tristan et al, eds. 2013. *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure*. New York: The Feminist Press.

Course Reader: Available at Copy Central (2576 Bancroft Way) and on bCourses.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Responses: Two 2-3 page response papers. Each is worth 20% of your final grade. Due dates are listed in the course outline. I will upload response paper prompts to bCourses. No late responses are accepted without prior approval.

These reading responses will test your comprehension of course readings as well as your ability to explain, synthesize, and make connections between the readings **in your own words**. Because you will not be able to rely on direct quotations of the material, you must focus on your own understanding and articulation of the texts. You will be asked to make connections between the course materials and your experience of the social world.

Exams: Take-home midterm and final exam--both are in essay format. Each is worth 30% of your final grade. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class. No late exams are accepted without prior approval.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Reading Responses (40%)

Exams (60%)

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Readings: Readings should be completed prior to class. You must keep up with the readings to participate in class discussions and complete assignments. Bring your reading materials to every class; you will likely need to refer to them in class discussions. All of your assigned readings (aside from the required books) are available on bCourses and as a reader from Copy Central.

Participation: This class will incorporate the use of lecture, films, music, visuals, and group discussions. I expect you to be an active participant in the course. Bring your questions and comments to class and don't be shy about bringing them up.

You can also participate by posting links to news stories or videos, as well as any relevant thoughts on issues related to culture in the chatroom or discussion board on bCourses. Be sure to contextualize any posts by connecting them to issues in the class. Provide **trigger warnings** where appropriate.

If you have a question about the readings, lecture, etc., please post your question to the chatroom or discussion board on bCourses where both your questions and my answers will be visible to other students, rather than e-mailing me. Feel free to answer each other's questions as well.

Missing Class: If you miss a class, do not ask me if you missed anything. Of course you did!--but don't expect me to fill you in. I suggest sharing contact information with a classmate early on in the semester and getting the notes you missed.

Course Slides: I use course slides which often incorporate media. I will post course slides after lecture, not before, but they will only contain the text. Keep in mind that these slides are meant to be a guide during lecture and are therefore not exhaustive or a substitute for attending class.

Course Etiquette: Do not read, listen to music, browse the Internet, text, or sleep during class. If you want to do these things, don't bother coming to class. All phones must be silenced and put away during class.

Laptop Policy: I encourage you to consider taking notes without a computer if you are able. If you need/want to use a computer during class, I ask that you **sit in the back two rows of the classroom** so that you do not distract and disturb other students.

Email: Clearly indicate to which class you are referring in your emails to me. I endeavor to respond to emails within 24 hours, but this is not always possible; please be patient.

GRADING POLICIES

No **late assignments** will be accepted without prior approval.

Turnitin: All of your assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously turned in papers as well.

For assignments turned in via bCourses, your feedback can be found there. Be sure to carefully consider the feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments.

If you would like to request a re-grade or re-evaluation of an assignment, you must first, wait 24 hours after the assignment was returned and second, write up a statement detailing why you believe you deserve a higher grade. This statement should be about the substance of your work, not about effort. **You must request a re-grade within 7 days of the assignment being returned.** My assessment and grade of your work will be used, even if that means you get a lower score than originally given for that work.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University defines academic misconduct as “any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community” (UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct).

Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is collaboration with other students on response papers or on exams or using notes during exams. Plagiarism includes turning in any work that is not your own as well as improper or missing citations of others' works. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the Code of Academic Conduct. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to The Center for Student Conduct and a zero for that assignment.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur because students are unaware of how to cite their sources or because they feel desperate. If you get to this point in your writing, contact me immediately rather than doing something you'll very likely regret.

OFFICE HOURS

I will be holding **Sign-up** office hours from 3:00pm-4:00pm on Mondays. Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

I will be holding **Drop-in** office hours from 10:05am-10:50am on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays—no appointment necessary.

If you are having any difficulties with the material or assignments for the course or if you are having any personal problems that are affecting your ability to complete assignments on time, you should take advantage of office hours early in the semester. I will be much more amenable to granting extensions when I have been made aware of problems early on rather than at the last minute.

Remember that office hours are an important resource if for no other reason than getting to know your instructors could help you when you may need letters of recommendation.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Disability Accommodations

If you qualify for any disability accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so you can receive the accommodations to which you are entitled. <http://dsp.berkeley.edu>

Student Learning Center

Provides support for writing, various academic disciplines including social sciences, as well as help for transfer and international students. <http://slc.berkeley.edu>

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services

To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. Please note that I am **not** a confidential advocate. To speak to a confidential care advocate: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/dean/confidential-care-advocate/>

COURSE OUTLINE Readings are to be **completed** on the day listed below. Schedule is subject to change.

WEEKS ONE AND TWO: CONSTRUCTING SEXUALITY

Wednesday, 8/23 **Introductions**

Friday, 8/25 + **The Social Construction of Sexuality**
Monday, 8/28

Seidman, Steven. 2010. "Social Constructionism: Sociology, History, and Philosophy." Pp 25-39 in *The Social Construction of Sexuality*. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton.

Weeks, Jeffrey. 2010. "The Invention of Sexuality." Pp 12-45 in *Sexuality*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Wednesday, 8/30 **Constructing Sexual Hierarchies**

Rubin, Gayle. 1999. "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." Pp 143-178 in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality: A Reader*, edited by Richard Guy Parker and Peter Aggleton. London: UCL Press.

Friday, 9/1 **Critiques of the Social Construction of Sexuality**

Vance, Carole S. 1998. "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality." Pp 160-170 in *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Reader*, edited by Peter M. Nardi and Beth E. Schneider. New York: Routledge.

WEEK THREE: QUEER THEORY AND SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITY

Monday, 9/4 **NO CLASS: LABOR DAY**

Wednesday, 9/6 **Queer Theory Meets Sociology**

Epstein, Steven. 1994. "A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality." *Sociological Theory* 12(2): 188-202.

Friday, 9/8 **Queering Sociology**

Ingraham, Chrys. 1994. "The Heterosexual Imaginary: Feminist Sociology and Theories of Gender." *Sociological Theory* 12(2): 203-219.

Namaste, Ki. 1994. "The Politics of Inside/Out: Queer Theory, Poststructuralism, and a Sociological Approach to Sexuality." *Sociological Theory* 12(2): 220-231.

WEEK FOUR: CONSTRUCTING SEXUAL IDENTITIES

Monday, 9/11 + Constructing the Homosexual and the Heterosexual Wednesday, 9/13

Weeks, Jeffrey. 1996. "The Construction of Homosexuality." Pp 41-63 in *Queer Theory/ Sociology*, edited by Steven Seidman. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.

Wilkinson, Sue and Celia Kitzinger. 1994. "The Social Construction of Heterosexuality." *Journal of Gender Studies* 3(3): 307-316.

Friday, 9/15 Catch-Up/Review

WEEKS FIVE-SEVEN: NOT GAY: SEX BETWEEN STRAIGHT WHITE MEN

Monday, 9/18 Homosexual Contact in Straight White Male Culture

Ward: Chapter 1: Nowhere Without It: The Homosexual Ingredient in the Making of Straight White Men

Wednesday, 9/20 + A History of "Not-Gay" Sex **READING RESPONSE 1 DUE Wednesday, 9/20**

Friday, 9/22

Ward: Chapter 2: Bars, Bikers, and Bathrooms: A Century of Not-Gay Sex

Humphreys, Laud. 1970. "Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places." *Society* 7 (3):10-25.

Monday, 9/25 Heteroflexibility

Ward: Chapter 3: Here's How You Know You're Not Gay: The Popular Science of Heterosexual Fluidity

Wednesday, 9/27+ Homosexual Contact and Heterosexual Authenticity Friday, 9/29

Ward: Chapter 4: Average Dudes, Casual Encounters: White Homosociality and Heterosexual Authenticity

Silva, Tony. 2017. "Bud-Sex: Constructing Normative Masculinity among Rural Straight Men That Have Sex With Men." *Gender & Society* 31 (1):51-73.

Monday, 10/2 Homosocial Hazing

Ward: Chapter 5: Haze Him! White Masculinity, Anal Resilience, and the Erotic Spectacle of Repulsion

Wednesday, 10/4 Heterosexual Constructions of Queerness

Ward: Chapter 6: Against Gay Love: This One Goes Out to the Queers

Friday, 10/6 Catch-up/Review

WEEKS EIGHT-ELEVEN: (DE)CONSTRUCTING SEXUAL IDENTITIES

**Monday, 10/9 + Negotiating Multiple Identities: Gender, Religion,
Wednesday, 10/11 and Nation**

Ozyegin, Gul. 2015. "Chapter 1: Virginal Facades." Pp 47-106 in *New Desires, New Selves: Sex, Love and Piety among Turkish Youth*. New York: New York University Press.

Friday, 10/13 Review for Midterm

Monday, 10/16 **MIDTERM DUE
NO CLASS, BUT CATCH UP ON READINGS**

**Wednesday, 10/18 Negotiating Multiple Identities: Race, Gender, and
Sexuality**

Hammonds, Evelyn. 1997. "Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality." Pp 136-156 in *Feminism Meets Queer Theory*, edited by Elizabeth Weed and Naomi Schor. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

**Friday, 10/20 + (Re)Defining Sexual Identities: Hook-Up Culture
Monday, 10/23**

Rupp, Leila J. et al. 2013. "Queer Women in the Hookup Scene: Beyond the Closet?" *Gender & Society* 28(2): 212-235.

Budnick, Jamie. 2016. "'Straight Girls Kissing'? Understanding Same-Gender Sexuality beyond the Elite College Campus." *Gender & Society* 30 (5):745-768.

**Wednesday, 10/25 + Constructing New Identities: Asexuality
Friday, 10/27**

Przybylo, Ela. 2016. "Introducing Asexuality, Unthinking Sex." Pp 181-191 in *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies, Third Edition* edited by Nancy L. Fisher and Steven Seidman. New York: Routledge.

Scherrer, Kristin S. 2008. "Coming to an Asexual Identity: Negotiating Identity, Negotiating Desire." *Sexualities* 11(5): 521-641.

**Monday, 10/30 +
Wednesday, 11/1** **Constructing New Identities: Polysexualities**

Ritchie, Ani and Meg Barker. 2006. "There Aren't Words for What We Do or How We Feel So We Have To Make Them Up': Constructing Polyamorous Languages in a Culture of Compulsory Monogamy." *Sexualities* 9(5): 584-601.

Friday, 11/3 **Beyond Monogamy: Polyqueer Sexualities**

Schippers, Mimi. 2016. "Introduction: Polyqueer Sexualities." Pp 1-28 in *Beyond Monogamy: Polyamory and the Future of Polyqueer Sexualities*. New York: New York University Press.

WEEK TWELVE: FEMINIST PORN

Monday, 11/6 **The Porn Wars**

Dodson, Betty. 2013. "Porn Wars." Pp 23-31 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Wednesday, 11/8 **Women Making Pornography**

Penley, Constance, et al. 2013. "Introduction: The Politics of Producing Pleasure." Pp 9-20 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Bakehorn, Jill A. 2010. "Women-Made Pornography" Pp 91-111 in *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry*, 2nd edition, edited by Ronald Weitzer. New York: Routledge.

Friday, 11/10 **NO CLASS: VETERANS DAY**

Monday, 11/13 **In Their Own Words: Feminist Pornographers**

Taormino, Tristan. 2013. "Calling the Shots: Feminist Porn in Theory and Practice." Pp 255-264 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Ryan, Dylan. 2013. "Fucking Feminism." Pp 121-129 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Flores, April. 2013. "Being Fatty D: Size, Beauty, and Embodiment in the Adult Industry." Pp 279-283 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

WEEK THIRTEEN: LGBTQ PORN

Wednesday, 11/15 **Gay/Lesbian Porn**

****READING RESPONSE 2 DUE****

Butler, Heather. 2004. "What Do You Call a Lesbian With Long Fingers? The Development of Lesbian and Dyke Pornography." Pp 167-197 in *Porn Studies*, edited by Linda Williams. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Friday, 11/17 **Genderqueer/Trans* Porn**

Lee, Jiz. 2013. "Uncategorized: Genderqueer Identity and Performance in Independent and Mainstream Porn." Pp 273-278 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Angel, Buck. 2013. "The Power of My Vagina." Pp 284-286 in *Feminist Porn Book*

Hill-Meyer, Tobi. 2013. "Where the Trans Women Aren't: The Slow Inclusion of Trans Women in Feminist and Queer Porn." Pp 155-163 in *Feminist Porn Book*

WEEK FOURTEEN: RACE IN PORN

Monday, 11/20 **Depicting Race**

Miller-Young, Mireille. 2013. "Interventions: The Deviant and Defiant Art of Black Women Porn Directors." Pp 105-120 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Love, Sinnamon. 2013. "A Question of Feminism." Pp 97-104 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Wednesday, 11/22-Friday, 11/24 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

WEEK FIFTEEN: CONCLUSIONS/CATCH-UP/REVIEW

Monday, 11/27 **Constructing Authentic Sexuality?**

Bakehorn, Jill. 2016. "Making Politics Explicit: Depicting Authenticity in Women-Made Pornography." Pp 456-467 in *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies, Third Edition* edited by Nancy L. Fisher and Steven Seidman. New York: Routledge.

Wednesday, 11/29 **Catch up/Review**

Friday, 12/1 **Review for Final**

WEEK SIXTEEN: READING, REVIEW, AND RECITATION

Monday, 12/4- Friday, 12/8

FINAL EXAM DUE: Tuesday 12/12 at 7pm