Sociology 135: Sexual Cultures
Fall 2022

INSTRUCTOR
Jill Bakehorn, Ph.D. (Pronouns: she/her or they/them)
E-mail: jabakehorn@berkeley.edu

Sign-up Office Hours: Mondays 4:00-5:00pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30-9:30am
Sign-up: https://calendly.com/bakehorn/office-hours

CLASS MEETING
Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays 10:00am-10:59am
159 Mulford

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 also examine queer theory and the challenges it poses to common-sense understandings of sexuality and identity.

Utilizing these theories, we will explore the tension between our sense of self or subjectivity and the larger social structures, cultures, and communities in which we are embedded. How do people make sense of sexual feelings, behaviors, and identities within larger sociocultural contexts? We will discuss structural dynamics like gender norms, heteronormativity, racial hierarchies, class cultures, scientific knowledge, institutional constraints, and cultural spheres and how these impact individuals’ sense and understanding of their own sexuality and what is possible. How do collective groups challenge, expand, and transform the boundaries of sexuality and sexual identities?
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 an 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; 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 or that differ greatly from your own experiences, preferences, and beliefs. It is important that we are non-judgmental.

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**
❖ Move beyond understanding sexuality as “natural”
❖ Use a social constructionist approach to understanding sexuality
❖ Explore sexuality as a cultural phenomenon and how culture impacts individual experiences of sexuality, including identity and practices
❖ Introduce queer theory
❖ Utilize critical gender and race approaches
❖ Adopt an intersectional understanding of sexuality
Learning Outcomes
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
❖ Utilize a critical gender and race perspective
❖ Use an intersectional approach to discussing social phenomena
❖ Understand how our sexualities are shaped by sociocultural forces and how we may contribute to changing societal understandings of sexuality
❖ Write succinct papers that effectively synthesize course materials and apply theory

Required Texts


Course Reader: Individual files are available digitally on bCourses and a bound reader is available from Copy Central.

Classroom Safety
Students must follow county and campus regulations regarding coronavirus safety protocols. Vaccinations are required to attend in-person classes. Even if not required by campus, consider wearing a face mask that covers both your nose and mouth while indoors to help protect yourself and those most vulnerable to severe illness. These protocols are in place to ensure the safety of everyone.
Assignments

Reading Responses: These reading responses test your comprehension of course readings as well as your ability to explain concepts 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 also be asked to make connections between the course materials and your experience of the social world.

Essay Exams: Midterm and final exam. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class. These exams will focus on your ability to apply theories and to synthesize and make connections between various readings.

All work must be original (you cannot re-use work from other courses).

Weekly Memos: These assignments are designed to keep you motivated and engaged with the course, to provide opportunities for you to check your comprehension, and to prepare for graded assignments. Assignments will be due on Mondays at 11:59pm (exceptions made for Monday holidays-due date is Tuesday).

These assignments give you a space to practice the skills you will later be graded on. You must complete 10 of the 12 assignments in order to get full credit (the lowest two scores will be dropped).

Grade Breakdown
Reading Responses (30%)
Midterm (25%)
Final Exam (30%)
Weekly Memos (15%)

Be sure to carefully consider assignment feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments. For in-text feedback, click on the link “View Feedback.”

GRADE SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Be sure to carefully consider assignment feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments. For in-text feedback, click on the link “View Feedback.”
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.

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. Please note that I will respond to emails during normal business hours.

Names and Pronouns: You have the right to be referred to by the name you prefer and with the correct gender pronouns. Because the name listed in University records may not correspond to your preferred name, please inform me of your name (and pronunciation) and your pronouns so that I can ensure you are properly recognized and respected.

You can refer to me as Prof. Bakehorn, Dr. Bakehorn, or Jill. My pronouns are she/they.

Grading Policies

Extensions are provided for those with this accommodation from DSP.

I will accept late work, but you will receive a 5% penalty for each day the paper is late (up to 7 days past due date). Please note that bCourses rounds up to the next whole number. For example, if you submit an assignment 1.3 days (32 hours) late, the late penalty will round up to 2 days. You do not need to contact me to turn in a paper late.

Life sometimes prevents us from meeting all of our obligations. I don’t think that one missed assignment should derail a student’s academic progress. If you do not turn in one of the graded assignments, you will receive a grade of 50. This will allow you to recover from this setback rather than tanking your grade for the class and potentially impacting your GPA. Any subsequent missing assignments will receive a 0.

Assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously turned in papers as well as searching the internet.

To request a re-grade of an assignment: 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. Be sure to make specific reference to your work, don’t simply say that you responded to the questions asked. Demonstrate how you did so. 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 papers and 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 0 for that assignment.

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

Office Hours

Please see Page 1 or this link for information about my office hours. These office hours are specifically for you. We can discuss readings, assignments, post-college plans, existential dread, how to access resources, letters of recommendation, any issues you are having—doesn't have to be related to this class—what is bringing you joy, whatever.

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, please take advantage of office hours—I am here to help!

Remember that office hours are an important resource if for no other reason than getting to know your instructors could help you in the future when you may need letters of recommendation. You do not need to be struggling or have course-specific questions to go to office hours.

All office hours will be via Zoom.
**Student Support Services**

**Course Accessibility**
This course is intended for all UC Berkeley students, including those with mental, emotional, physical, or cognitive disabilities, illnesses, injuries, impairments, or any other condition that can negatively impact equal access to education. If, at any point in the semester, you find yourself not able to fully access the space, content, and experience of this course, you are welcome (but not required) to contact me by email or during office hours to discuss your specific needs.

I also encourage you to contact the [Disabled Students’ Program](https://dsp.berkeley.edu). If you have a diagnosis, DSP can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through DSP, you can ensure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors.

**Student Learning Center**
“The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the [SLC](http://slc.berkeley.edu) helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals.”

**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: [Survivor Support](https://bancalifornia.org/services/survivor-support). Please note that I am not a confidential advocate; I am a mandated reporter. You can speak to a [Confidential Care Advocate](https://path2care.org/confidential-care) at the Path to Care Center.

**Economic, Food, and Housing Support**
If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at the [Basic Needs Center](https://bnc.berkeley.edu). You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via [Calfresh](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/foodassistance/eligibility-california) or our [Food Assistance Program](https://food.berkeley.edu). If you are in need of food immediately, please contact our UC Berkeley [Food Pantry](https://food.berkeley.edu/food-pantry). More information can be found [here](https://food.berkeley.edu/food-pantry).

**Mental Health Resources**
All students — regardless of background or identity — may experience a range of issues that can become barriers to learning like strained relationships, anxiety, depression, alcohol and other drug problems, difficulties with concentration, sleep, and eating, and/or lack of motivation. UC Berkeley offers many services like [Recalibrate](https://recalibrate.berkeley.edu) and [Student Mental Health](https://mentalhealth.berkeley.edu).
Course Outline
Complete readings on the day listed below. Course schedule is subject to change.

**Week One: Introductions**

Wednesday, 8/24  Welcome + Introductions

Friday, 8/26  Introducing the Sociology of Sexuality

**Weeks Two-Four: Constructing Sexuality & Queer Theory**

Monday, 8/29  The Social Construction of Sexuality


Wednesday, 8/31 +  Sexuality: Discourse, Power, and Knowledge

Friday, 9/2


Monday, 9/5  Holiday: NO CLASS

Wednesday, 9/7  Critiques of the Social Construction of Sexuality

Friday, 9/9  
**Queer Theory Meets Sociology**


Monday, 9/12  
Wednesday, 9/14  
**Queering Sociology**


Friday, 9/16  
**Catch-up/Review**

Week Five: Constructing Sexual Identities

Monday, 9/19  
Wednesday, 9/21  
**Constructing the Homosexual**


Friday, 9/23  
**Constructing the Heterosexual**

Weeks Six-Eight: Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men

Monday, 9/26  Homosexual Contact in Straight White Men's Culture

Jane Ward: Chapter 1: Nowhere Without It: The Homosexual Ingredient in the Making of Straight White Men in Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men

Wednesday, 9/28 +  A History of “Not-Gay” Sex
Friday, 9/30

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


Monday, 10/3 +  Heteroflexibility
Wednesday, 10/5


Friday, 10/7 +  Homosexual Contact and Heterosexual Authenticity
Monday, 10/10

Jane Ward: Chapter 4: Average Dudes, Casual Encounters: White Homosociality and Heterosexual Authenticity in Not Gay


Wednesday, 10/12  Homosocial Hazing

Jane Ward: Chapter 5: Haze Him! White Masculinity, Anal Resilience, and the Erotic Spectacle of Repulsion in Not Gay
Friday, 10/14  
Heterosexual Constructions of Queerness

Jane Ward: Chapter 6: Against Gay Love: This One Goes Out to the Queers in *Not Gay*

Week Nine: Midterm

Monday, 10/17  
Review/Catch Up

Wednesday, 10/19  
Work on Midterm—NO CLASS

Friday, 10/21  
TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE
NO CLASS

Weeks Ten-Eleven: (De)Constructing Sexual Identities

Monday, 10/24 +  
Constructing New Identities: Asexuality

Wednesday, 10/26


Friday, 10/28  
Constructing New Identities: Polyamory and Language

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.

Monday, 10/31 + Wednesday, 11/2
Negotiating Multiple Identities: Trans Genders, Sexualities, and the Creation of a Category


Friday, 11/4
Negotiating (Trans) Gender and Intimate Relations


Weeks Twelve-Fifteen: Activism, Culture, and Porn

Monday, 11/7 + Wednesday, 11/9
Women Making Pornography


Friday, 11/11
Holiday: NO CLASS

Monday, 11/14 + Wednesday, 11/16
In Their Own Words: Feminist Pornographers


Friday, 11/18  Genderqueer/ Trans* Activism & Subjectivity in Porn  
**READING RESPONSE 2 DUE**


Monday, 11/21  Mental Health Day: NO CLASS

Wednesday, 11/23  HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

Friday, 11/25  HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

Monday, 11/28  Resisting Anti-Blackness in Porn


Mireille Miller-Young: “Interventions: The Deviant and Defiant Art of Black Women Porn Directors” Pp 105-120 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Sinnamon Love: “A Question of Feminism” Pp 97-104 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Wednesday, 11/30 +  Constructing Authentic Sexuality?  
Friday, 12/2  Review/Wrap up Semester


Week Sixteen: Reading, Review, and Recitation

Monday, December 5—Friday, December 9

**FINAL EXAM**: Due Monday, 12/12 at 11am