

SOCIOLOGY 135: SEXUAL CULTURES
Spring 2014

INSTRUCTOR

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E-mail: jabakehorn@berkeley.edu**Office:** 492 Barrows Hall**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 11:30am-1:30pm
and by appointment**Sign-up:** <http://wejoinin.com/sheets/fbpwu>**CLASS MEETING**Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-2pm
160 Kroeber**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.

The course will begin with an examination of sociological theories of sexuality, including queer theory. 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. Next, we will explore a few of the many issues of sexuality across the life course including hookup culture and medicalization. We will end the first half of the semester by looking at bodies and how they reflect, or are subject to, cultural norms of sexuality.

In the second half 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, laws, policies, public sentiment, debates, and politics of the industry, paying particular attention to pornography made by women. 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.

Sexuality will be explored in relationship to other social locations such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity. The differential effects of sexuality and sexual politics along these lines will be discussed and highlighted throughout all of the applied topics.

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

- ▶ What does it mean to say that sexualities are constructed?
- ▶ How have sexualities been constructed over time?
- ▶ How does sexual practice become sexual identity?
- ▶ How does queer theory inform our understandings of sexualities?
- ▶ What are the major debates about pornography?
- ▶ What is feminist porn?
- ▶ How are race, class, gender, and sexual identity represented in pornography?
- ▶ How do women and men consume 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.

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.

This class addresses a number of issues pertaining to gender and sexuality. Some of these topics will be graphic, controversial, or explicit. Frank discussions and presentation of material may include things that some find offensive.

REQUIRED TEXTS

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

Readings on bCourses

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Responses: You will complete three response papers. Each is worth 15% of your final grade. Due dates are listed in the course outline. I will upload response paper prompts to bCourses one week prior to the due date. No late responses are accepted without prior approval by the instructor.

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.

Exams: You will write a take-home midterm and final exam--both are in essay format. The Midterm is worth 25% and the Final Exam is worth 30% of your final grade. You will be responsible for course readings, lectures, and any media presented in the class.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Reading Responses (45%)

Exams (55%)

 Midterm (25%)

 Final Exam (30%)

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 book) are available on bCourses. Be sure to download them early.

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.

I like to start class with a short discussion of topical cultural issues that you have come across. If you see a movie, listen to a song, overhear a conversation, or witness an interaction that ties into issues we have been discussing, please share this with the class!

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 chat room on bCourses. Be sure to contextualize any posts by connecting them to issues in the class.

If you have a question about the readings, lecture, etc., please post your question to the chat room 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.

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.

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.

Email: Please **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

For assignments turned in via bCourses, your feedback can be found in a file there. Be sure to download this file and carefully consider the feedback. This feedback 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

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 ASAP rather than doing something you'll very likely regret.

OFFICE HOURS

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.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Disability Accommodations

Please let me know early in the semester if you qualify for any disability accommodations.

Student Learning Center

“The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals.” Located in The Cesar Chavez Student Center on Lower Sproul Plaza. Front desk phone: 510 642 7332

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

WEEKS ONE AND TWO: CONSTRUCTING SEXUALITY

Tuesday, 1/21 **Introductions**

Thursday, 1/23 **The Social Construction of Sexuality**

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.

Tuesday, 1/28 **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.

Thursday, 1/30 **Critiques and Problems 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

Tuesday, 2/4 Queer Theory Meets Sociology

Stein, Arlene and Ken Plummer. 1994. "I Can't Even Think Straight': 'Queer' Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology." *Sociological Theory* 12(2): 178-187.

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

Thursday, 2/6 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.

WEEKS FOUR & FIVE: (DE)CONSTRUCTING SEXUAL IDENTITIES

Tuesday, 2/11 Constructing the Homosexual and the Heterosexual

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.

Thursday, 2/13 Troubling Sexual Identities and Attractions

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

Rupp, Leila J. et al. 2010. "Drag Queens and Drag Kings: The Difference Gender Makes." *Sexualities* 13(3): 275-294.

Tuesday, 2/18 Negotiating Sexual Identities **Reading Response 1 Due**

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

Queen, Carol and Lawrence Schimel. 1997. "Introduction." Pp 19-25 in *Pomosexuals: Challenging Assumptions about Gender and Sexuality*. San Francisco: Cleis Press.

Raymond, Katherine. 1997. "Confessions of a Second-Generation...Dyke?: Reflections on Sexual Non-Identity." Pp 53-61 in *Pomosexuals: Challenging Assumptions about Gender and Sexuality*.

Thursday, 2/20 Non-Monogamies

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.

Frank, Katherine. 2008. "Not Gay, but Not Homophobic': Male Sexuality and Homophobia in the 'Lifestyle.'" *Sexualities* 11(4): 435-454.

WEEKS SIX AND SEVEN: SEXUALITY OVER THE LIFE COURSE**Tuesday, 2/25 Creating Sexual Cultures for Youth**

Solebello, Nicholas and Sinikka Elliot. 2011. "We Want Them to Be as Heterosexual as Possible': Fathers Talk about Their Teen Children's Sexuality." *Gender & Society* 25(3): 293-315.

Wilkinson, Lindsey and Jennifer Pearson. 2009. "School Culture and the Well-Being of Same-Sex Attracted Youth." *Gender & Society* 23(4): 542-568.

Thursday, 2/27 Hookup Culture

Currier, Danielle M. 2013. "Strategic Ambiguity: Protecting Emphasized Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Hookup Culture." *Gender & Society* 27(5): 704-727.

Rupp, Leila J. et al. 2013. "Queer Women in the Hookup Scene: Beyond the Closet?" *Gender & Society*.

Tuesday, 3/4 Emancipatory Sexualization?

Gill, Rosalind. 2009. "Supersexualize Me!: Advertising and the 'Midriffs.' Pp 93-109 in *Mainstreaming Sex: The Sexualization of Western Culture*, edited by Feona Attwood. New York: I.B. Tauris.

Munford, Rebecca. 2009. "Bust-ing the Third Wave: Barbies, Blowjobs and Girlie Feminism." Pp 183-197 in *Mainstreaming Sex: The Sexualization of Western Culture*, edited by Feona Attwood. New York: I.B. Tauris.

Thursday, 3/6 Medicalization

Braun, Virginia. 2005. "In Search of (Better) Sexual Pleasure: Female Genital 'Cosmetic' Surgery." *Sexualities* 8(4): 407-424.

Wienke, Chris. 2005. "Male Sexuality, Medicalization, and the Marketing of Cialis and Levitra." *Sexuality & Culture* 9(4): 29-57.

WEEKS EIGHT AND NINE: CULTURAL BODIES

Tuesday, 3/11

Cultures of Violence?

****Take-Home Midterm Due****

Buijs, Laurens et al. 2011. "As Long as They Keep Away From Me': The Paradox of Antigay Violence in a Gay-Friendly Country." *Sexualities* 14(6): 632-652.

Khau, Mathabo. 2012. "Female Sexual Pleasure and Autonomy: What Has Inner Labia Elongation Got to Do with It?" *Sexualities* 15(7):763-777.

Thursday, 3/13

BDSM Cultures

Lindemann, Danielle. 2011. "BDSM as Therapy?" *Sexualities* 14(2): 151-172.

Barker, Meg. 2013. "Consent is a Grey Area? A Comparison of Understandings of Consent in *Fifty Shades of Grey* and on the BDSM Blogosphere." *Sexualities* 16(8): 896-914.

Tuesday, 3/18

Bodies of Resistance

Fahs, Breanne and Denise A. Delgado. 2011. "The Specter of Excess: Race, Class, and Gender in Women's Body Hair Narratives." Pp 13-25 in *Embodied Resistance: Challenging the Norms, Breaking the Rules*, edited by Chris Bobel and Samantha Kwan. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Pyle, Nathaniel C. and Noa Logan Klein. 2011. "Fat. Hairy. Sexy: Contesting Standards of Beauty and Sexuality in the Gay Community." Pp 78-87 in *Embodied Resistance: Challenging the Norms, Breaking the Rules*.

Thursday, 3/20

Catch-up/Review

WEEK TEN: SPRING BREAK! MONDAY, 3/24-FRIDAY, 3/28

WEEK ELEVEN: PORN POLITICS

Tuesday, 4/1

The Feminist Sex Wars

****Reading Response 2 Due****

Dworkin, Andrea. 2000. "Against the Male Flood: Censorship, Pornography, and Equality." Pp 19-38 in *Feminism & Pornography*, edited by Drucilla Cornell. New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Clarrisa and Feona Attwood. 2013. "Emotional Truths and Thrilling Slide Shows: The Resurgence of Antiporn Feminism." Pp 41-57 in *The Feminist Porn Book: The Politics of Producing Pleasure* edited by Taormino et al. New York: The Feminist Press.

Thursday, 4/3 Sex Positivity

Queen, Carol. 1997. "Sex Radical Politics, Sex-Positive Feminist Thought, and Whore Stigma." Pp 125-135 in *Whores and Other Feminists*, edited by Jill Nagle. New York: Routledge.

Comella, Lynn. 2013. "From Text to Context: Feminist Porn and the Making of a Market." Pp 79-93 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

WEEK TWELVE: FEMINIST PORN**Tuesday, 4/8 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.

Thursday, 4/10 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*

Love, Sinnamon. 2013. "A Question of Feminism." Pp 97-104 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**Tuesday, 4/15 Gay/Lesbian Porn**

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.

Ryberg, Ingrid. 2013. "'Every time we fuck, we win': The Public Sphere of Queer, Feminist, and Lesbian Porn as a (Safe) Space for Sexual Empowerment." Pp 140-154 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

Thursday, 4/17 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 *The 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 *The Feminist Porn Book*

WEEK FOURTEEN: RACE AND CLASS IN PORNOGRAPHY**Tuesday, 4/22 Depicting Class
Reading Response 3 Due**

Kipnis, Laura. 1996. "Disgust and Desire: *Hustler Magazine*." Pp 122-160 in *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America*. New York: Grove Press.

Thursday, 4/24 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*

Cruz, Ariane. 2013. "Pornography: A Black Feminist Woman Scholar's Reconciliation." Pp 215-227 in *The Feminist Porn Book*

WEEK FIFTEEN: CONSUMING PORNOGRAPHY**Tuesday, 4/29 What Women and Men Want**

Parvez, Z. Fareen. 2006. "The Labor of Pleasure: How Perceptions of Emotional Labor Impact Women's Enjoyment of Pornography." *Gender & Society* 20(5): 605-631.

Loftus, David. 2002. "I Know What Boys Like." Pp 29-48 in *Watching Sex: How Men Really Respond to Pornography*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Thursday, 5/1 Catch up/Review**WEEK SIXTEEN: READING, REVIEW, AND RECITATION**

Monday, 5/5- Friday, 5/9

FINAL EXAM DUE: THURSDAY, MAY 15 6:00 pm