

SO377
Sociology of Sexualities
Department of Sociology, Colby College
Office hours
Wed. 3:45 – 5:00, Fri, 8:30 – 9:30, tba

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205 Diamond Building

“Why, given the variety of sexual behaviors and relationships, do we speak of only two opposite sexes? Why don’t transvestites, transsexuals, hermaphrodites, and the institutionalized third genders in some societies affect the conceptualization of two genders and two sexes?” ~~ Judith Lorber

SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITIES

In this course we investigate and consider the historical and contemporary constructions of human sexualities from within the discipline of sociology. We explore the social aspects of human sexuality and various sexual identities and orientations or preferences. The social constructionist perspective and feminist approaches frame the course; we also look at queer theory and its relationship to sociology. Topics include: issues of human sexual desire, attraction, and gender; the interrelationship between gender and sexuality; sexual behaviors and practices; heterosexuality; lesbianism; gay male sexuality; bisexuality; transsexuality and transgenderism; and intersexuality. We consider historical shifts and developments and political movements for the expansion of the rights of people of all sexualities.

Required books available for purchase at the Colby Bookstore

The Gender of Sexuality, Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter, Pine Forge Press
Feminisms, Masculinities, Sexualities, Nancy Chodorow, University Press of Kentucky
Passion and Power: Sexuality in History (Critical Perspectives on the Past), Kathy Peiss, Christina Simmons, with Robert A. Padgug, editors, Temple University
Sexuality and Gender, Christine Williams and Arlene Stein, eds., Blackwell Publishers
Bisexuality: a Critical Reader, Merl Storr, Routledge

Recommended:

Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us, Kate Bornstein, Vintage Books
‘And Then I Became Gay’: Young Men’s Stories, Ritch C. Savin-Williams, Routledge
Sex and Sensibility: Stories of a Lesbian Generation, Arlene Stein, University of California Press
She’s Not There: Life in Two Genders, Jennifer Boylan, Broadway

Some additional readings are (and will be assigned) and made available, most of which are noted below on the reading outline.

There are many interesting web sites regarding this subject matter and pointing to an array of materials, including Colby’s library page: http://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/library/helpwithassignments/subject-guides/sexualities.cfm

The American Sociological Association website (and its links):
<http://www2.asanet.org/sectionsex>

Documentary videos, all on Reserve in the Library

(Probable viewing order):

Adventures in the Gender Trade

History of Sexuality, vols. 2 & 3

Before Stonewall

After Stonewall

Coming Out Under Fire

Growing Up Gay

Thank God I'm a Lesbian

You Don't Know Dick

Is It a Boy or a Girl?

Feature-length films will also be recommended across the course of the semester, hopefully by you as well as by me.

Class Policies

Responsibilities: You are responsible for *all* class materials—readings, lectures, discussions, and films—and for all assignments and exams (you cannot pass the course without completing all work). Come to class *prepared* to discuss assigned readings.

Please note: There is an extensive amount of reading assigned and required for this class. Your continued enrollment in the course is the indication that you are aware of the reading expectations and agree to meet these requirements. Part of my commitment in this course is to encourage you to actively explore the specific sociological and social psychological topic of sexualities as extensively as possible through selected readings. You are responsible for all assigned readings, even those which we do not discuss in class (unless noted otherwise over the course of the semester). That is, you are responsible for each assigned reading, whether or not it is covered in class meetings; we will not be able to cover everything in class. I strongly encourage you to raise questions and topics for class discussion from any and all of the readings. This will help us all to master the materials.

I adhere to the national standard which is that for every credit hour, the course requires about four hours of out-of-class work per week. (This is a four credit course.)

Attendance: The Colby attendance policy reads as follows:

Student Attendance in Classes. “Students are expected to attend **all** of their classes and scheduled course events in any semester or January and are responsible for any work missed. Failure to attend can lead to a warning, grading penalties, and/or dismissal from the course by the instructor with a failing grade.” *My specific policy* is that only genuine and verified health or family crises will be granted the status of excused absences. (Verification must come from the Dean of Students’ Office. Do not provide me notes from anyone in the Health Center.) Please respect this policy. Attendance will be taken regularly and absences will be considered in the calculation of final grades. Especially since this is a seminar which meets only once a week, attendance at each class meeting is vital. A second and third absence each will result in a lowering of your grade. A second absence will require that you write a paper, approximately eight pages, covering the materials covered in the class meeting missed. (Consult with me first before writing this paper.) This paper is due before the next class meeting. More than two absences will result in your being dropped from the course.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism in any of its forms will result in failing the course, no exception, and my handing over of materials showing plagiarism to the Dean of Students Office. Please review the Student Handbook with respect to plagiarism; see, for an overview, the last page of this document).

Assignments, due dates, and grading:

1. Class participation, group facilitation, and weekly short assignments (pertaining to the readings); group sharing (at least once by each student) of a poem or piece of music pertinent to the course content — 30% of course grade
Active class participation is expected. To insure that our class meetings are lively and interesting, you need to be prepared and ready to contribute to class discussions, having read and considered the assigned texts (or viewed assigned videos). This is a seminar, not a lecture course. I envision it being structured by me and driven by you! It is neither fair to your classmates nor good educational pedagogy for you to slide through these discussions and let others carry them. Thus: be prepared!! (I will feel free to call on people as I see fit if participation lags!)
2. Take-home analytical papers – 2 (pertaining to assigned readings) — each 25% of course grade
First due 3/21; Second due 5/21
3. Book review on a book covering a subject relevant to the course material and of interest to you; this book choice must be approved by me by 4/18
(a) Short in-class presentation the last class meeting together with a hand-out;
(b) formally written analytical review (5 – 8 pages, guidelines will be provided) due also the last class meeting — 10% of course grade
4. Short analytical response papers for 4 of the videos/films — (composite of the four) 10% of course grade
2 reviews are due before spring break; two by 5/2
(Some videos are listed on syllabus, others will be added; some will be viewed in class, others are available on Reserve in the Library)
(Note: response papers, both of readings and of videos, are to be revised as you choose and resubmitted as a packet on the last day of class.)

Suggestions:

Take notes on course materials as you read them—doing so will facilitate learning and retention and save you an enormous amount of time over the term.

Stay up with the reading; catching up is always a more difficult process. (Try to begin assigned readings in advance.)

Come by during my office hours: that's why I'm there!

Week 3 **The Construction of Sexual Identities**
2/21

Read for week 4

Chodorow, chapters 2 and 3, "Heterosexuality as a Compromise Position," and "Individuality and Difference in How Women and Men Love"

Williams & Stein, Part 1

Introduction

1. Dinnerstein, Hicamous-Hogamous (Excerpt)
2. Plummer, Symbolic Interaction and Sexual Conduct: An Emergent Perspective
3. MacKinnon, Pleasure Under Patriarchy (Excerpt)
4. Epstein, A Queer Encounter: Sociology and the Study of Sexuality

Recommended: Arlene Stein & Kenneth Plummer, I Can't Even Think Straight: Queer Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology

Week 4 **The Construction of Sexual Identities (cont.)**
2/28

Read for week 5

Peiss & Simmons

1. Peiss & Simmons, Passion and Power, An Introduction
2. Padgug, Sexual Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in History
5. Weeks, Movements of Affirmation: Sexual Meanings and Homosexual Identities
9. Simmons, Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression

Week 5 **Historical Developments and Shifting Meanings of Sexualities**
3/7

Read for week 6

Peiss & Simmons

7. Schwartz, Peiss, & Simmons, "We Were a Little Band of Willful Women": The Heterodox Club of Greenwich Village [pictures]
6. Chauncey, From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Medical Conceptualization of Female "Deviance"
4. Peiss, "Charity Girls" and City Pleasure: Historical Notes on Working Class Sexuality, 1880-1920
13. Kennedy & Davis, The Reproduction of Butch-Fem Roles: A Social Constructionist Approach

Week 6 **Historical Developments and Shifting Meanings of Sexualities (cont.)**
3/14

Read for week 7

Peiss & Simmons

10. Fee, Venereal Disease: The Wages of Sin?
11. Freedman, "Uncontrolled Desires": The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960
8. Rodrique, The Black Community and the Birth Control Movement
12. D'Emilio, The Homosexual Menace: The Politics of Sexuality in Cold War America
16. Padgug, "Gay Villain, Gay Hero: Homosexuality and the Social Construction of AIDS"

Week 7 **Historical Developments and Shifting Meanings of Sexualities: Politics
3/21** **and the Body**

Read for week 9

Williams & Stein, Part III: Sexuality in Childhood and Adolescence

Introduction

9. Thorne, Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds
10. Martin, I Couldn't Ever Picture Myself Having Sex.: Gender Differences in Sex and Sexual Subjectivity
11. Leblanc, The Punk Guys Will Really Overpower What the Punk Girls Have to Say: The Boy's Turf (Excerpt)
12. Kaplan, Tough Times: Susan Carver (Excerpt)

Part IV: Sexual Objectification

Introduction

13. Hill Collins, The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood
14. Chapkis, Live Sex Acts: Women Performing Erotic Labor (Excerpt)
15. Loe, Working for Men: At the Intersection of Power, Gender, and Sexuality
16. Giuffre & Williams, Boundary Lines: Labeling Sexual Harassment in Restaurants
Peiss & Simmons
14. Snitow, Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women Is Different
15. Read, (De)Constructing Pornography: Feminisms in Conflict

Week 8 **Spring Break — No Classes**
3/28

Week 9 **Topics in Contemporary Sexuality: Child Developmental; Sexual
4/4** **Objectification in the Culture**

Read for week 10

Williams & Stein, Part V: Sexuality and Religion

Introduction

17. Barkowski, Breaking Walls, Raising Fences: Masculinity, Intimacy, and Accountability
Among the Promise Keepers (Excerpt)
18. Kaufman, Sex Segregated Living: Celebrating the Female (Excerpt)
19. Warner, The Metropolitan Community Churches and the Gay Agenda: The Power of
Pentecostalism and Essentialism (Excerpt)
20. Mernissi, The Muslim Concept of Active Female Sexuality: Fatima Mernissi

Part VII: Sexual Politics and Social Change

Introduction

25. Michael, Gagnon, & Laumann, Sex and Society
26. Cantu, A Place Called Home: A Queer Political Economy Mexican Immigrant Men's
Family Experiences
27. Stacey, Gay and Lesbian Families Are Here; All Our Families Are Queer; Let's Get Used
to It!
28. Schneider & Jones, Social Control, Civil Liberties, and Women's Sexuality

Week 10
4/11

**Topics in Contemporary Sexuality: Religion and Spirituality;
x Politics and Social Change**

Read for week 11

Part VI: Leisure and Recreation

Introduction

21. Gamson, Publicity Traps: Television Talk Shows and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Visibility (Excerpt)
22. Durham, Girls, Media, and the Negotiation of Sexuality: A Study of Race, Class, and Gender in Adolescent Peer Groups (Excerpt)
23. Messner, Becoming 100 Percent Straight (Excerpt)
24. Davidson & Taylor, Fantasy Islands: Exploring the Demand for Sex Tourism

Part VIII: Future Directions

Introduction

29. Seidman, Meeks, & Traschen, Beyond the Closet? The Changing Social Meaning of Homosexuality in the US
30. Giddens, Intimacy as Democracy
31. Jamieson, Intimacy Transformed? A Critical Look at the Pure Relationship
32. Fausto-Sterling, The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough

Week 11
4/18

**Topics in Contemporary Sexuality: Recreation; Media;
Future Trends and Issues**

Read for week 11

Storr

Editor's Introduction, Parts I and II

1. Ellis, Extracts from Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume I: Sexual Inversion (1897) and from Studies in the Psychology of Sex Volume II: Sexual Inversion (1915)
2. Freud, Extract from Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality: 1. The Sexual Aberrations (1905)
3. Stekel, Extracts from Bi-Sexual Love (1920)
4. Kinsey, Pomeroy & Martin, Extracts from Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male (1948)
5. Klein, Extracts from The Bisexual Option: a Concept of One Hundred Percent Intimacy (1978)
6. Udis-Kessler, Notes on the Kinsey Scale and Other Measures of Sexuality (1992)
7. Blumstein & Schwartz, Bisexuality: Some Social Psychological Issues (1977)
10. George, Extracts from Women and Bisexuality (1993)
11. Clausen, Extract from My Interesting Condition (1990)
12. Valverde, Extract from Sex, Power and Pleasure (1985)

Week 12
4/25

Bisexualities: Theoretical Developments and Approaches

Read for week 12

Storr, Part III

13. Eadie, Extracts from Activating Bisexuality: Towards a Bisexual Politics (1993)
14. Garber, Extracts from Vice Versa: Bisexuality and the Eroticism of Everyday Life (1995)
15. Pramaggiore, Extracts from Epistemologies of the Fence (1996)
17. Daumer, Extract from Queer Ethics: or the Challenge of Bisexuality to Lesbian Ethics (1992)
18. Herdt, Extract from A Comment on Cultural Attributes and Fluidity of Bisexuality (1984)
19. Ault, Ambiguous Identity in an Unambiguous Sex/Gender Structure: the Case of Bisexual Women (1996)

Articles on intersexuality (to be provided)

Dreger, A History of Intersexuality: From the Age of Gonads to the Age of Consent

Crouch, *Betwixt and Between: The Past and Future of Intersexuality*

Chase, *Surgical Progress Is Not the Answer to Intersexuality*

Week 13

Bisexualities: Lived Experiences

5/2

For week 14

Prepare book previews – written and in-class presentation

Week 14

Book previews by class participants

5/9

Academic Honesty

from the Colby College Student Handbook

An understanding of the concepts of academic honesty and its flip side, plagiarism, are essential to education. The following is the College's official statement on plagiarism.

Education and the growth of human knowledge depend upon the interaction of human minds. To collaborate in learning, both with experts and with peers, is a necessary and valuable activity. It is no more legitimate to steal the product of another person's mental labor, however, than it is to steal the product of his or her physical labor. Money buys the use of material goods; documentation and acknowledgment are legal tender in the world of ideas.

Plagiarism, a word derived from the Latin word for kidnapper, covers a wide spectrum of dishonest uses of the products of another's intellectual labor. The most blatant plagiarism is outright copying of someone else's work, whether from a book or from another student, and passing it off as your own. It is also dishonest to paraphrase or summarize or even adopt occasional apt phrases from another writer unless you give credit to your source. To follow another's line of reasoning without indicating the source of that thought process is also plagiarism.

Plagiarism, cheating, using the work of another student as your own (including material stored on the computer), and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses. Submitting the same work in more than one course without the permission of the instructors is a form of academic dishonesty, as is enrollment, without the permission of the instructors, in two classes that have the same class meeting times (or overlap at all). For the first offense, the instructor may impose an academic sanction up to and including dismissal of the offender from the course with a mark of F. The instructor will also report the case to the department chair and the dean of students, and in his or her report the instructor may recommend additional penalties, including suspension or expulsion. If a recommendation for additional penalties is made by the instructor, the dean of students, after consultation with the department chair, may impose other or additional penalties, including suspension or expulsion. This report becomes part of the student's confidential file and is destroyed upon graduation. A second offense automatically leads to suspension or expulsion. Students may not withdraw passing from a course in which they have been found guilty of academic dishonesty. A student is entitled to appeal to the Appeals Board, within seven days of receipt of the letter of notification, charges of academic dishonesty. The decision of the board will be final and binding unless overruled by the president of the College, who has final authority and responsibility (see student discipline procedures).

The College also views misrepresentations to faculty, within the context of a course, as a form of academic dishonesty. Students lying to or otherwise deceiving faculty are subject to dismissal from the course with a grade of F, as well as possible additional disciplinary action.

Student accountability for academic dishonesty extends beyond the end of a semester and even after graduation. If Colby determines, following the completing of a course or after the awarding of a Colby degree, that academic dishonesty has occurred, the College may change the student's grade and rescind credit for the course, and/or revoke the Colby degree.