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Spring 2013 office hours
T 10-12, W 12-1

HIST 410

Sex in the Modern United States

Spring 2013
MW 10-11:20 Lillis 175

This course will explore the changes and continuities in sexual thought and behavior between the Civil War and the present. We will discuss the intersections of sexuality with race, class, gender, and religion. This exploration grows out of an awareness of the deep historical roots of several sexual traditions—analyzed in HIST 410 Sex in Early America—which struck many twentieth-century observers as “natural.” Further, we will analyze the ways in which intimate actions, desires, and beliefs have shaped public policy during the past 150 years.

Topics include: “sexual revolutions,” obscenity and censorship, feminist theories of sexuality, sexual identity politics, changing scientific and medical understandings of sex and the policy outcomes achieved by various reform movements.

Assigned Readings (required)

- Elizabeth Reis, *American Sexual Histories*, Second ed. (Wiley Blackwell: 2012).
- Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (orig. 1900; Penguin Classics 1994 edition or free Kindle edition).
- Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape and Resistance* (Vintage: 2011).
- Les Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*. Second ed. (Alyson Books: 2004).
 - **NOTE:** this book has gone temporarily out of print; however, on May 1, we will be able to download it FREE from the author’s website.

Assignments

- 20% Participation.
 - Bring three discussion questions to class each Wednesday. These questions should be typed ahead of time and turned in by hand. Although we may not be able to discuss each question, this is your chance to show that you have prepared to participate in historical analysis. The quality of your questions will be reflected in your participation grade.

- 30% Reading responses @ 10% each.
 - In four pages, interpret and analyze each of the three assigned books. Focus on historical context and significance, rather than your personal reaction.
- 20% Primary source interpretations @ 10% each.
 - Use the Knight Library or its databases to locate two primary sources pertaining to one theme in the history of sexuality. The first sources must have been produced between 1860 and 1920. The second source must have been produced between 1965 and 2010. They should recount situations or illuminate the perspective of persons directly involved with your chosen theme. If they describe a particular event, they should be written either during or soon after its occurrence.
- 30% Final Exam.
 - The final exam will cover material from the lecture, textbook, and other assigned readings—excluding the three books about which you have already written responses.

Policies

Please submit all papers via blackboard (safeassign) prior to class on the due-date, unless otherwise directed. Uploaded papers should use size 12 font and format pages with standard margins.

All work should be completed independently. Plagiarized assignments will fail, and I will report all instances of plagiarism. By plagiarism, I mean representing the words or ideas of another writer as your own. For more details, go to:

<http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/tabid/68/Default.aspx>

Although I am not constantly online, I do return emails within 24 hours. I also communicate regularly with students via blackboard announcements. If your uoregon address is not your primary email access point, be sure to check blackboard for new announcements and revisions to the syllabus before each class.

Over the course of the semester, I look forward to meeting individually with all of the students in this course, either during my regular office hours or by appointment. Office visits can help you understand and digest information covered in class, provide additional resources for pursuing independent work, and, ideally, spark intellectual curiosity. Please do not attend office hours in order to ask me to repeat a lecture that you did not attend.

My grading practices adhere to the History Department's standards, as follows. I do not change grades retroactively.

- ✓ A+: Work of unusual distinction. Therefore, in the History Department, this grade is rarely awarded.
- ✓ A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.

- ✓ B: Work that satisfies main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.
- ✓ C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria reasonably well.
- ✓ D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards, but which exhibits some engagement with the material.
- ✓ F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1. Overview

- Apr. 1 Course introduction
- Apr. 3 Theorizing sex in history
 - Read: “Sex in History,” pp. 1-25 (online)
 - Bring three discussion questions based on the reading (hardcopy)

Week 2. Battle Scars

- Apr. 8 Sex during and after the Civil War
 - Read: Reis, ch. 9.
- Apr. 10 No class
 - **Primary source interpretation 1 due via blackboard**

Week 3. Free Love or Social Purity?

- Apr. 15 Free love and free speech
 - Read: Jesse Battan, “The Word Made Flesh,” blackboard; begin *Sister Carrie*.
- Apr. 17 Social purity
 - Read: Reis, ch. 11; continue *Sister Carrie*.
 - Bring three discussion questions based on this week’s reading (hardcopy)

Week 4. The First Sexual Revolution

- Apr. 22 Bohemians, “slumming,” and the invention of dating
 - ***Sister Carrie* reading response due**
- Apr. 24 Sexology, deviance, and sexual minority communities
 - Read: Reis, ch. 10, 13
 - Bring three discussion questions based on these chapters (hardcopy)

Week 5. Sex and Racialized Modernity

- Apr. 29 The rape-lynching complex
 - Read: Crystal Feimster, *Southern Horrors* & primary documents online
- May 1 Reproductive politics from “race suicide” to *Buck v. Bell*
 - Read: Reis, ch. 12
 - Bring three discussion questions based on this week’s reading (hardcopy)

Week 6. Sexual Liberalism

- May 6 Victory girls and “playboys”
 - Read: Begin *At the Dark End of the Street*
- May 8 “Not June Cleaver”
 - Read: Continue *At the Dark End of the Street*

Week 7. Another Sexual Revolution

- May 13 Reproductive politics from *Griswold to Roe*
 - Read: Reis, ch. 15; finish *At the Dark End of the Street*
- May 15 Civil Rights, Black Power, and *Loving v. Virginia*
 - ***At the Dark End of the Street* reading response due**
 - Bring three discussion questions based on the book (hardcopy)

Week 8. Queer Liberation

- May 20 The Compton’s and Stonewall Riots
 - Read: Reis, ch. 14; begin *Stone Butch Blues*
- May 22 Fighting AIDS
 - Read: Reis, ch. 16, continue *Stone Butch Blues*
 - Bring three discussion questions based on this week’s reading (hardcopy)

Week 9. Sex Wars

- May 27 Feminist “Uses of the Erotic”
 - ***Stone Butch Blues* reading response due**
- May 29 From “Moral Majority” to “Abstinence Only”
 - Read: (selections on blackboard)
 - Bring three discussion questions based on this week’s reading (hardcopy)

Week 10. Next Wave

- June 3 *Girls gone wild? Assessing the outcomes of two sexual revolutions*
 - Read: (selections on blackboard)
- June 5 Course review
 - **Primary Response #3 due**
 - Bring three discussion questions based on this week’s reading (hardcopy)

Final Exam: Tuesday, June 11, 10:15 a.m.