Course description
This course explores cross-cultural and historical perspectives on sexual meanings, experiences, representations, and activist movements in the United States, and other locations. Our interdisciplinary focus will question the theories and changing meanings of sexual and gender identities and practices and their dynamics with gender, race, sex and class. We will explore the contemporary history of sexual identity movements, and the emergence of modern sexual and gendered categories (gay, lesbian, transgender, heterosexual, etc.). Students will also be introduced to queer theory and some of its recent developments stirred by the queer of color critique and queer and disability studies. Finally, the course ends with the study of sexual practices such as hooking-up, asexuality, polyamory and pornographic consumption and production. The study of transgressive identities and practices reveals as much about these actions and ways of being than the normative systems they question. Through a diverse set of course readings, open small-group dialogue as well as hands-on learning projects, each course participant will further develop a critical consciousness on sexuality and queer studies. Students will complete the course with a more complex understanding of the historical and cultural embeddedness of sexual and gender identities, practices and communities.

Course Requirements
Prerequisites: This course has no prerequisites. It is only open to undergraduate students.

Disabilities:
“If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.”

Academic Integrity:
“You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai ). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.”

Course Materials:

Other readings will be posted on Latte. Some hyperlinks are included in the syllabus. Journal articles are proceeded by ** on the syllabus. Students will be responsible to find these articles on the Brandeis Libraries Website.

Participation Policy
Sustained, astute and critically engaged class participation is crucial for a successful and productive classroom atmosphere. Your participation largely depends upon completing the reading assignments. Therefore you must come to class having done all assigned readings. We must create together an atmosphere where we can all express our opinions and learn from each other. Success depends on all of us.

You must attend all class sessions. Your participation grade will be affected after three absences. Six absences will automatically result in a failing grade.

**Assignments**

All assignments must be submitted the day they are due. After two days, your grade will be affected and you will begin losing 1% per day of the assignment grade.

**Class participation and attendance** 10%

Please read the participation policy.

**Special Event Report** 5% (2 pages)

Complete a report on one of the two Women’s and Gender Studies events this term. You must first summarize the event and offer your views on the event. Second, discuss how the event related to some of the in-class discussions or readings. If your schedule does not permit attending the events please notify me in advance to provide an alternative assignment (see February 4 and March 10). The reports are due on February 11 and March 18.

**2 Collective Book Review** 15% (1-2 pages each)

Read .2013. “Oye Loca: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami.” Minnesota University Press. [available at Brandeis’ bookstore], Prepare notes to openly share your thoughts on the reading. We will discuss in class the following points: What is the argument of the book? What are the main questions? What are the main themes? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the monograph? Does the author provide interesting analysis? Which parts of the book did you prefer and why? What are some of the key terms that might be useful to explore further? What are some of the most important contributions the book makes? Why is this book important? Submit your notes in class and participate in your group and in the open dialogue (Jan 28 and Feb. 2).

**Two Take-Home Exams** 40% total (4-6 pages total approx.)

A take-home exam will be distributed in class on February 9. You will hand in your typed double spaced, (12’ font Times New Romans) responses on February 25. The exam will cover class materials, discussions and lectures from January 12 to February 9. The second exam will cover the rest of class materials. It will be distributed on April 13 and collected on April 22. Exams will be composed of 2 to 3 open questions that can be answered through a short essay. The whole length of all responses for one exam will be of 4 to 6 pages.

**Three reflection papers** 30% total (3-4 pages)

During the semester you will be asked to reflect on your own life and your environment through three reflection papers. Final questions will be distributed in class but they will ask you to reflect on questions such as (Paper 1. What are some of the gender and sexual norms I grew up with in my family, in school, neighborhood, religious community or other defined spaces. How do I relate to these norms? Paper 3: How have the materials, discussions or reflections transformed my ways of thinking of my own gender and sexuality?) The paper should be submitted in class within 7 days. The paper should be typed double spaced, 12’ font Times New Romans. (Reflections due feb. 9, March 16, April 27).
Course Plan:

**Introduction, Overview of Course and Expectations**

**January 12**
What motivates you to take Sexuality and Queer studies?

**January 14**
- Blackwood, Evelyn and Saskia Wieringa. “Introduction” Female Desires: Same-sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Cultures”

**January 19** - Martin Luther King Day: No university exercises

**Histories and Memories**

**January 21**

**January 26**

**January 28**
Peña, Susana. 2013. Oye Loca!: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami. The University of Minnesota Press. (p. ix-77) Submit notes and participate in-class

**February 2**
Peña, Susana. 2013. Oye Loca!: From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami. The University of Minnesota Press. (p. 77-end)
Submit notes and participate in-class

**February 4**
**Special event:** Faith Smith- Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Distinguished Faculty Lecture 3:30pm. “Strolling the Ruins” (Alumni Lounge, Usdan).

**Modern Inventions**

**February 9**
Reflection 1 Due

**February 11**

Take home exam distributed

February 16-20- Midterm Recess

February 23
-Ross, Marlon, B. “Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm” In Black Queer Studies a Critical Anthology. Johnson, E. Patrick, Henderson, Mae. (e-book at Brandeis Library, see p. 161)  

Queer Practices, Theories and Performances

February 25
-Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality”  

March 2

-Take-Home Exam 1 Due

March 4

March 9

March 10
Special event- Lubin Symposium “Race, Gender and Incarceration” 3:30pm, International Lounge, Usdan.

March 11
-Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Queer and Now” In the Routledge Queer Studies Reader
March 16

**Reflection 2 Due**

**Sexuality, Neoliberalism and Nation**

March 18

March 23

March 25

March 30

April 1

April 3-10—Passover and Spring Recess

**Asexuality, Polyamory and other Practices**

April 13
- **Take-Home Exam Distributed**

April 15

April 20
April 22
-Take-Home Exam Due

April 27
The end?

Final Reflection Due

Any changes to the reading schedule will be communicated in class prior to the reading.