Course Description

The terms "gay," "lesbian," and "bisexual" are terms which bring to mind very specific images -- images associated with modernity and the West. But nonheteronormative sexualities exist all over the globe, and have existed for long before the current "global gay" movement. Our current ideas about what it means to be "straight" or "gay," and even the use of these terms as identities are recent, while a wide variety of sexual activity is and has been common across the globe. In fact, the divide between hetero- and homo- that Western culture tends to insist on may not exist in other cultures. Furthermore, there are a wide range of sexual activities (including a lack thereof) which fall into the basket of being considered beyond the pale of heteronormativity by Western societies, often while being considered quite normal in their own cultures. Since sexuality is complex, it is difficult, and perhaps misleading, to apply our own assumptions and labels to the desires, loves, and sexual activity of other people.

Sexuality is a difficult topic to define -- does one's sexuality come from one's sexual activity alone? From what one finds erotic? From a certain category of people one desires? Sexuality may even impact gender and the body; the formation of identities in different cultural contexts may be a two-way street. Furthermore, sexuality may also be considered something that one does (an activity) rather than something that one is (an identity).

This class will examine how sexual identities are created, some of the vast array of diverse human activity in this area, how the social sciences have handled this topic, and how race, class, culture, and ethnicity all influence how these matters are viewed.

Course Aims and Objectives:

This course aims to introduce the student to some of the wide variety of human behavior, cultural structures, and beliefs regarding sexuality which falls outside the heteronormative range established by Western cultures. At the same time, we will examine and deconstruct the way the academy has, thus far, handled this difficult topic. Students will learn basic anthropological and gender studies tools for analyzing and understanding gender, sexuality, and identity, while also considering past academic work on this subject. By the end of the semester, students will be able to formulate their own critiques of academic work as well as analyze gender structures, sexuality practices, and identity in various cultures, including our own.

Required Readings: Required books will be available at the bookstore and on reserve at the library. I also recommend trying the Advanced Book Exchange, at http://www.abebooks.com, a consortium of independent used booksellers which I have found very useful in the past for finding multiple copies of used books (in varying conditions and prices).

Additional required articles--marked in the syllabus with the word Reserve in bold print--will be made available to students via our course website, on Latte.
Please note that online articles, marked in bold with the word **Online**, are available via link from the syllabus and our website.

**Required Books (will also be on reserve in the library):**


**Recommended Books (heavily used in the syllabus or have other useful material, or I just think they are extremely good books):**


**Course Requirements:**

- **Syllabus Quiz**
  - 5% first day of class

- **Attendance and participation in class discussion:**
  - 15% throughout semester

- **Class Presentation:**
  - 25% student signup

- **Short essay:**
  - 25% due week 6

- **Final Paper:**
  - 30% due final day of class

**PLEASE NOTE:** I do not use Latte to calculate final grades, as it is inaccurate (the rounding does not agree with my grade schema) and does not take participation, presentations, or attendance into account. I strongly recommend that you ignore the website's grade calculation.

**General Requirements:** Class attendance and participation are both essential to this class. For this reason, unexcused absences will impact your grade; the discussion we do in class cannot be replicated by simply doing the reading. Although this is not a writing intensive course, the papers are another vehicle for you to reflect on the reading topics and to introduce your own ideas;
creativity, critical thinking, and good analysis are all highly encouraged. Please note that reading must be completed before class.

No cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices will be permitted in class, unless you are an EMT or other medical professional on call. Laptops will also not be permitted without my prior consent. Students observed using cell phones will be marked absent; this will have an effect on the final course grade. Laptops may be used during discussion to look up material relevant to the discussion only!

Email Policy: Emails will be answered within 24 hours, except for weekend days (when I cannot guarantee to check my email as regularly). I do not check email between the hours of 9 pm and 8 am. Please keep emails short and to the point; longer commentary may be better discussed during office hours. Written work should be turned in via our course website, as this is more secure than email; email should be used as a last resort.

Written Work/Assignments: All written work will be graded on presentation (grammar, writing skills, proper citation, etc.), arguments (flow, use of texts, coherent and clear thesis), and grasp of the ideas presented in class as well as on your own original theory and take on the material. Assignment sheets will be available on our website and due dates are specified in the syllabus. Written work submitted later than fifteen minutes after the due date will be lowered by a third of a grade for each day late, except in cases of illness or emergency. Written work should be submitted via our website.

Specific Assignments: Please note that more detailed assignment sheets will be available on our website in the folder marked "Class Assignments."

Class Presentation: Students will sign up to start a particular class with a brief presentation on the readings and a set of discussion questions, which will also be posted to Latte for class preparation the night before.

Short Essay (Ethnographic Essay): Students will write a 5-7 page essay responding to a particular topic using some of the theoretical material we have been reading as a lens. A more full assignment sheet will be provided on our class website; please read this before doing the assignment.

Final Essay: Near the end of the semester, students will undertake a slightly longer essay which may use some outside research, if the student is so inclined. More complete assignment sheets will be made available to you on our class website; please read these before doing the assignment.

Please note: These descriptions are for your information only. In all cases the assignment sheets will supersede the syllabus in matters of assignment detail. Be sure to read the assignment sheet before doing the assignment.

Written Work: Assignment sheets will be made available on the class website, and due dates are specified in the syllabus. Written work submitted later than fifteen minutes after the beginning of class on the due date will be lowered by a third of a grade for each day late, except in cases of illness or emergency. All sources MUST be cited. Please use in-text citation. For example:

American teenage girls seem to be in a liminal state, for "as a society, we discarded the Victorian moral umbrella over girls before we agreed on useful strategies and programs--a kind of 'social Gore-Tex' to help them stay dry" (Brumberg 1997: 201).

Works Cited:

NOTE. Proper anthropological citation utilizes the LAST NAME of the author, the YEAR of the publication date, and the PAGE number, in that order (Chicago in-text citation). I will also accept MLA and APA citation.

I will not accept footnote or endnote citation.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANT NOTE: NO FORM OF CITATION ALLOWS YOU TO OMIT PAGE NUMBERS ENTIRELY. PERIOD. If page numbers exist, you must include them for direct quotes and specific summary material.

Be sure to include the works cited page. All papers must be word-processed, spellchecked, double-spaced, and possess reasonable margins and page numbers. I highly encourage you to proofread as grammar and punctuation are essential parts of writing well, and writing is one of the main tools of the social sciences. Clear and readable prose is also highly esteemed! **We will be using our course site to turn in papers this semester.**

**Important Policies on Written Work:**

I will grade a paper down by an amount of my choosing for omitting any of the above (Works Cited page, name, title, etc.).

I will grade a paper down for incorrect or made-up citation format.

I will lower a grade by **4 points (from an A to an A-, and so on)** for any paper that refers to men and women as “males” or “females” (noun use; of course it is fine to use the adjectives “male” and “female”). It is objectifying and dehumanizing to refer to human beings this way and I will not encourage it. We are not lab rats.

**Latedays/Extension Days:** I use a system with my upper-level classes that works like this: You are granted **one week (seven days) of extension** at the beginning of the semester. You do not have to ask ahead of time to use these days, you may simply exercise this privilege of being a little flexible about due dates. You may divide them up however you wish -- turn one paper in a week late, or three papers in each two days late. Please note the following rules:

1. You may divide your days up however you wish.
2. When you turn in any paper that uses latedays/extension days, you MUST note at the top of the paper that "X extension days" or "Y latedays" were used. **Otherwise I will mark your paper as late, assuming that you do NOT wish to use your latedays.** You may not retroactively use latedays.
3. Papers must be turned in electronically to the class website; this will timestamp your papers automatically. **Email may only be used in the event you cannot reach the class website.**
4. **Weekend days count.** For example, if you turned your paper in on a Monday after it was due on a Tuesday, you would need to use six latedays, not four.

**Rules for Paper Turn-ins:**

All papers must be in PDF, RTF, or Microsoft Word (DOC or DOCX) format. **No exceptions.** I cannot accept links of any kind (to your work), nor will I follow them; I cannot look at GoogleDocs while they are on Google (you will need to export your document and upload it to our course site). This is for your legal protection as well as mine (regretfully). I cannot look at or share documents using any shared document platform (this is not because you and I do not
understand the technical aspects thereof; it has to do with the problems of tracking document changes and turn-in dates).

Papers must be turned into/posted to our course site, unless you have technical difficulties, in which case you may email them directly to me.

Academic course turnins tend to be very picky about time -- even if you are 30 seconds late, it will mark the paper late. I am less picky and capable of looking at the timestamp; DON'T PANIC. If you turned in your paper within a reasonable timeframe, you are fine.

I am happy to look at and comment on no more than 2 paragraphs of your paper via email (you may also ask whatever specific questions you have!). If you would like to discuss a full draft with me, please come to my office hours or make an appointment (I can give you more complete advice; also comments on a whole draft via email are "pre-grading" which I feel is unfair to your fellow students). You do not have to print out your paper to come to office hours unless you prefer to work that way; I have a computer and you may bring one too if you wish.

Class Participation and Courtesy:

We require and expect all students to treat each other with courtesy. Courtesy includes being prepared, being on time, and being respectful of the material and your colleagues' work with it. Honor the labor of the author and your colleagues, don't just dismiss work; analysis before critique.

Harassment, whether physical, sexual, or verbal, will not be tolerated in this class. We may be discussing some sensitive and sometimes upsetting topics; I expect this classroom to be a space for growth for students to express their views.

Respect confidentiality, for both our discussion and your own experience. What we share in this room is confidential. If you want to adduce examples which do not come from the texts, don't give names: we will be discussing sensitive subjects (this goes as well for your papers, if you are giving personal experiences or doing fieldwork). A friend gave me this excellent advice for talking about issues, and not individuals: "plots, not characters."

It is possible to disagree respectfully: rather than telling people that they are wrong, do what is called "reflecting" before responding. For example, "You seem to be saying that X is Y," (reflection) "however, I have a different opinion, which is that X is Z, because of A." Also, be sure not to disagree with people (i.e. "you are wrong,") but with their actual statements ("I do not agree with X equalling Y").

Don't be afraid to speak up, as everyone has something to contribute. We are all learning. Not every student must volunteer an opinion in every class, but your opinions count -- be sure to share them. As an adjunct to this, share the floor! Let others speak (and if you are afraid that you will forget your point, write it down). We also don't have to share our insights with the whole group -- let's also do smaller discussions in class, and one on one discussions as well. We can also use the forum for discussion and students are welcome to email the professor with questions or discussion points, even anonymously.

Use "I statements" for your opinions rather than assuming that what you think should be universal. This can also be helpful for distinguishing between personal opinion and facts which can be backed up by documented scholarly evidence.

Expressions of bias are hurtful even if unintended. Even if you did not mean to step on my foot, it's best if you move when I tell you that it hurts. Similarly, when someone says something that another person finds biased and hurtful, it's best to cease and apologize, even if that's not what the first person intended. Intent is not magic and will not prevent bias from happening; we all carry around unconscious misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, racism, and a host of other prejudices because of how society is. I encourage all students to try to be graceful about listening when their bias is brought up (and I promise to do my best, myself).
If you have any problems or questions, I encourage you to bring them to me, or to the Office of the Dean of Students.

These class courtesy rules were created with the help of my 2017 Graduate Feminist Theory class at Brandeis University, and Hanne Blank.

Regrade Requests: In the event of a grade dispute, I will re-evaluate the entire work according to my grading rubric. A higher grade is not guaranteed; a lower grade may result. You may always request to see my grade rubric.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is expected of all students. All work turned in must be the work of the student whose name appears at the top of the paper, except where you have specifically requested and received permission for a collaborative effort. All students are expected to cite their sources fully (whether from texts, interviews, or online). Summary information from class texts is not considered “common knowledge” and must be cited. Ignorance is not an excuse: misrepresentation of another person’s work as your own is plagiarism under any and all circumstances. If you have any questions on when or whether to cite, please do not hesitate to ask. **You may not turn in work for this class which you have previously turned in for other classes** or for this class, except in the case of an explicit rewrite assignment. Plagiarism will be dealt with according to the Academic Honesty Policy; **plagiarized work will result in a failure of the assignment and possibly the class** and further sanctions, at the discretion of the Brandeis Administrative Board, may result.

Required Statement: Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week)
Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Please note that you may need to spend more than 9 hours of study time depending the varying amount of reading, writing, assignments, etc. per week.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately with your letter from the Accessible Education Office. All communications will be kept confidential.

Credits: Many thanks to Hanne Blank and my grad students of Spring 2017, whose proposed class courtesy rules have been invaluable to the creation of this syllabus.

***Schedule of Readings and Due Dates***

**Week 1-2: Sexuality in the Social Sciences**

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>8/30</td>
<td>Introduction to the class</td>
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<td>Reading:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>In-class syllabus quiz</td>
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<td>9/4</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/6</td>
<td>Sexuality in the Social Sciences</td>
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Sign-Up for In-Class Presentations

Week 3: Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Esther Newton’s Groundbreaking Work


Week 4: Camp and Its Discontents

9/18 Anthropology Defines Camp


9/20 Camp and Identity


Weeks 5-6: When Did Indians Become Straight? Colonialism, Heterosexuality, and Queerness in Indigenous America

9/25 Introduction to the Concept of Two-Spirit


9/27 When Did Indians Become Straight?


10/2 Ontological Problems


10/4 Lived Experience

First Essay Due

Week 7: Anthropologists Never Agree: More Arguing About the Study of Sexuality
10/9 Inventing Homosexuality


10/11 No Class

Weeks 8-9: How Do We Know? Finding Queerness

10/16 But What About the Sambia?


10/18 There Are Records


10/23 Marriage and Homophobia


**Week 10:** Interrelations Between Sex and Gender: Case Study: *Travesti*

10/25  *What Does it Mean to Be ‘Modern?’*


10/30

Reading: Kulick, Don. 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Please read Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (Recommended: Introduction). TRAVESTI

11/2

Reading: Kulick, Don. 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture Among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Please read Chapters 4 and 5. TRAVESTI

**Week 11:** Further Questions of Gender

11/6  *Third, Fourth, Fifth Genders?*


11/8  Androgyny & Female Masculinity


**Week 12:** Sexuality and Sexual Practices

11/13  *How Does What We Do Matter?*


11/15 *What About What We Don't Do?*


**Week 13: Questions of Kinship**

11/20


**Thanksgiving Break: 11/22-11/26**

**Week 14: Case Study: Emerging Lesbian Voices from Japan**

11/29

Reading: Chalmers, Sharon. 2002. *Emerging Lesbian Voices from Japan.* New York: RoutledgeCurzon. Please read Chapters 1, 3, and 4. Reserve. (Please note that you can download the “notes” section for footnote references separately — you will find this in the Week 14 reserve folder)

Takashima, Rica. 2003. *Rica tte Kanji?!* ALC Publishing, online edition: http://www.yuricon.com/yuriconalc/RTKO/ Online (be sure to flip to the back of the book! Please read pages 1-93 in the scan, or, using the problematic numbers on the American-style flipbook, read backwards from 228 to 136/7. You are welcome to read the rest of it, if you like!)

12/4

Reading: Chalmers, Sharon. 2002. *Emerging Lesbian Voices from Japan.* New York: RoutledgeCurzon. Please read Chapters 8, 9, and 10. Recommended: Chapter 6. Reserve. (Please note that you can download the “notes” section for footnote references separately — you will find this in the Week 14 reserve folder)

12/6 Final Day of Class

Final Essay Due