Sexuality and Queer Studies
WMGS 6b,
Spring 2015; (M-W 2:00- 3:20pm)

Professor: Anahi Russo Garrido
Office: Rabb Graduate Center, 108
Office Hours: M: 10:00am-11:30pm and W: 11:30am- 12:45pm or by appointment
Phone: 781-736-3047
Email: arussoga@brandeis.edu

Course description
This course explores cross-cultural and historical perspectives on sexual meanings, experiences, representations, and activist movements in the United States, and beyond. 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. 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 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 Moodle. 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. Finally, 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 (5-8 pages total approx.)
A take-home exam will be distributed in class on February 14. You will hand in your typed double spaced, (12’ font Times New Romans) responses on February 28. The exam will cover class materials, discussions and lectures from January 14 to February 14. The second exam will cover the rest of class materials. It will be distributed on April 1 and collected on April 11. 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 3 to 5 pages.

Three reflection papers 30% total (3-4 pages)
During the semester you will be asked to reflect on your own life and surroundings 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).

Course Plan:

Introduction, Overview of Course and Expectations
January 14
What motivates you to take Sexuality and Queer studies?

January 12
-Blackwood, Evelyn and Saskia Wieringa. “Introduction” Female Desires: Same-sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Cultures”

**Histories and Memories**

**January 14**

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

**January 21**
  [Begin reading for Feb 2]

**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*

**Modern Inventions**

**February 4**

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

**February 9**

**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, Mac. (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”
- **Take-Home Exam 1 Due**

**March 2**

**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**

**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.