Sexuality and Healthcare:  
Constructing Sexuality, the Sexed and Gendered Body, and Medical Access  
WMGS 156b

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Office Hours: Wed 1-3  
Office: Brown 220  
Location: Olin-Sang American Civ Center 104  
Class Site: https://moodle2.brandeis.edu/course/view.php?id=3839

Course Description
Current debates over queer issues in the mainstream media have largely focused on same-sex marriage. Yet at the same time, some have argued that the greatest benefits to the queer community under the Obama administration come not from the rapidly increasing spread of same-sex marriage, but from the expansion of health care benefits. How does the increased provision of health care benefit the QUILTBAG/LGBT community in particular? Why has health care been historically denied to this population? Is queer health different from straight health? What issues do queer populations encounter with healthcare and medicine?

In this class, we will explore both detailed issues within healthcare for the queer population, and ways in which social ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality have shaped medicine and healthcare itself. Using history, anthropology, sociology, queer studies, epidemiology, and feminist methods, we will explore such issues as the construction of heteronormativity and the creation of "the homosexual" and "the transsexual" as medicalized categories; the rise of mental health treatment and how "normal" came to be defined; and the use of medicine to define and control particular "misbehaving" bodies. The course will consider the ways in which medicine has differently impacted gay, lesbian, and bisexual bodies, trans and genderqueer bodies, and intersex bodies, and the different ways these bodies have both been defined and made invisible through medical intervention. We will also examine current issues such as universal access to health care; queer and trans parenting; the vulnerability of queer and trans youth; and the aging QUILTBAG/LGBT population. The course will also consider the intersectional impact of race, bodily status, ethnicity, cultural background, class, and gender on how queer issues are considered and addressed in healthcare situations.

Required Readings: Books will be available at the bookstore and on reserve at the library. For purchasing, I 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 also be available to students via the library and via our course website. These articles are essential to the course. A link to the library reserves is available via our course website.
Required Books (will also be on reserve in the library):

Recommended Books (portions on reserve):

Reserve readings available through the library and on our course iSite. (Listed on the syllabus)

Course Requirements:
Attendance and participation in class discussion: 10%
In-class assignments/reading responses 20%
Health Initiative Investigation 20%
Midterm Essay: 20%
Final Research Paper: 30%

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. Also, this is a seminar class, and so it is necessary to do the reading beforehand to participate in the discussion. It also makes the class more engaging if we have things to talk about. 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.

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

In-class assignments: Students will either bring assignments to class or will do short class exercises responding to the reading. These exercises will vary from a short writing exercise about the reading, to assignments asking the students to collect abstracts from medical journals or prepare short speeches.
Health Initiative Investigation: For this assignment, students will research a sexual health initiative of their choosing (governmental, NGO, activist, etc.) and write a short report about the goals, techniques, ethos, and ethics of the program and organization.

Midterm Essay: Halfway through the semester, students will write a 4-5 page essay using some of the theoretical material we have been exploring via our reading.

Final Project: Students may choose to do either direct fieldwork (and write a paper about it) or to write a traditional research paper for the final 10-12 page project. A research proposal will be required early in the semester. Students will also be required to turn in an annotated bibliography in Week 11, in order that I may comment on their research track and make comments and suggestions.

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 will not be accepted via email except through prior arrangement or if LATTE is down. We will be using LATTE as our space to turn in assignments.

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 specified time the due date (usually midnight) will be lowered by a third of a grade for each day late, except in cases of illness, emergency or the use of extension days (see below). 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 citation.

Be sure to include the works cited page. All papers must be word-processed, spellchecked, double-spaced, with twelve-point font and reasonable margins. Please include 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!

Extension Days Policy: Students in my upper-level classes are given five automatic extension days to use as they wish. I understand that due dates tend to fall together on the academic calendar and this is a courtesy to you so that you can arrange your obligations more comfortably. You do not need to consult with me about the use of extension days. Follow this procedure:

--Mark on the front page of the paper that you are using extension days and how many;
--Turn your paper in to LATTE on the day you wish to turn it in.

Please note that you can choose to use as many or as few as you like at a time. Weekend days count; for example if a paper is due on Friday and you wish to turn it in on Monday, you must
use three extension days, not one. Extension days, of course, apply only to written work, and not to in-class assignments, "quick homework" (such as bringing examples to class), or extra credit work.

Class Participation and Courtesy:
--I 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.
--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 safe space for students to express their views.
--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").
--Speak up in class. I don't expect every student to volunteer an opinion in every class, but your opinions count -- be sure to share them in most classes. 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).
--Respect confidentiality. 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."
--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. However, 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, 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 Director of Studies of the WGS department.

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.

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). 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. Plagiarism will be dealt with according to the Academic Honesty Policy; plagiarized work will result in a failure of the class and further sanctions, at the discretion of Brandeis University, may result.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record and wish to have accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately with your letter from Academic Services. All communications will be kept confidential.
Credits: Many thanks to Hanne Blank, whose proposed class courtesy rules and many suggested readings have been invaluable to the creation of this syllabus.

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Week 1: Science Discovers Sexuality
1/12  Introduction to the class

1/14  Studying Sexuality

1/15  Locating Sexual Orientation in the Body

Week 2: Diagnosing Sexual Orientation/The Birth of the Clinic
1/19  Martin Luther King Day: No Class

1/21  Sexual Orientation and the DSM

1/22  What's Wrong With Normal?

Week 3: Medical Controversies
1/26  "The Gay Gene"
1/28 "The Gendered Brain"
Fine, Cordelia. 2010. *Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference.* New York: W. W. Norton. Please read: Introduction, Chapter 1 ("We Think, Therefore We Are"), Chapter 14 ("Brain Scams"), and Chapter 15 ("The 'Seductive Allure' of Neuroscience"). reserve


1/29 The Ethics of Medical Research on Sexuality


Week 4: Transgender Narratives, Part I: Medicalization
2/2 Medicalizing Gender Experience

2/4 GID of Children and Adolescents

2/5 The Disorder in Gender Identity

Week 5: Transgender Narratives, Part II: Bodies and Medicine
2/9 Creating the Transgender Body


2/11 Politicizing Medical Access
Film: Davis, Kate. 2002. "Southern Comfort" (documentary film). Q-Ball Productions. (View before class via LATTE)

2/12 Resisting Medical Narratives
Bornstein, Kate, and S. Bear Bergman. 2010. *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation.* Please read:
Serano, Julia. "Performance Piece"
Allen, Mercedes. "Trans-ing Gender: The Surgical Option"
Wall, Sean Saifa. "I am the 'I'"
Lukoff, Kyle. "Taking Up Space"
**Recommended:** Diamond, Katie, and Johnny Blazes. "transcension"
Wallace, J. "The Manly Art of Pregnancy"
Beyer, Tamiko. "Marsha P. Johnson: ten suns the transformer::"
Al-Walid, Zev. "Pilgrimage"

2/16-- 2/20 : Midterm Recess, No Class

**Week 6: The Medical (Mis)Management of Intersex**

2/23  
**A History of Medical Management**
Guest Speaker: Judith McLaughlin on The Biological Basis of Sex Differentiation

2/25  
**Infant Intervention and Adult Repercussions**
**Recommended (if you have not read this before):** Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "How to Build A Man," in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader.* reserve

2/26  
**Medical Activism**

**Midterm Essay Due**

**Week 7: Activism & Health Care, Part I: ACT UP**

3/2  
**AIDS and the Gay Community: A Short History**
3/4  **Stigma, Activism, and Politics**

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3/5  **Survival and Beyond**
(View before class via LATTE)

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3/9  **Week 8: Activism & Health Care, Part II: The Rebirth of the Clinic**

**The Politics of Lesbian Health**

**Guest Speaker: Hanne Blank on the History of Lesbian and Feminist Clinics**

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3/11  **AIDS Outreach, the Hospice, and Survival**


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3/12  **Blood and Identity: The Cultural Politics of Body Fluids**

**Health Initiative Investigations Due**

**Week 9: Activism & Health Care, Part III: The Clinic Abroad**

3/16  **Global Medicine?**


3/18  **The Geography of Blame**

3/19 **The Geography of Blame (cont.)**


**Week 10: The Clinic Abroad Becomes the Clinic at Home**

3/23  **Vulnerable Populations, Deviant Populations**


3/25  **Understanding HIV Care: Research Methods (Vulnerable Populations, Deviant Populations, continued)**


students assigned in-class to sides of PrEP/Truvada debate

**Research Paper Proposal Due**

3/26  **The PrEP/TRUVADA Controversy**


**Recommended:** Haire, Bridget G. and John M. Kaldor. 2013. "Ethics of ARV-Based Prevention: Treatment-as-Prevention and PrEP." *Developing World Bioethics* 13(2): 63–69. reserve

in-class debate on PrEP

**Week 11: Sexual Education in the United States**

3/30 **The Virgin Birth of Abstinence-Only Education**


4/1 **The Missing Discourse of Female Desire**


4/2 **Activism, Sex Education, and Queer Teens**
Gowen, L. Chris, and Nicole Winges-Yanez. 2014. "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Youths' Perspectives of Inclusive School-Based Sexuality Education."
*Journal of Sex Research* 51(7): 788-800. reserve

Garcia, Lorena. 2009. “‘Now Why do you Want to Know about That?: Heteronormativity, Sexism, and Racism in the Sexual (Mis)education of Latina Youth.” *Gender & Society* 2009 23: 520. reserve

**Recommended:** Fisher, Christopher. 2009. "Queer Youth Experiences with Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Sexuality Education: 'I can’t get married so where does that leave me?'" *Journal of LGBT Youth* 6: 61–79. reserve

Bibliography for Research Paper Due

4/3-4/10: Spring Break, No Class

**Week 12: Fertility Technology, Queer Parenting, and Aging**
4/13 **Fertility Technology & Single Sex Parenting**

**Recommended:** Hayden, Corinne P. 1995. "Gender, Genetics, and Generation: Reformulating Biology in Lesbian Kinship" *Cultural Anthropology* 10(1): 41-63. reserve

4/15 **Fertility Technology & Single Sex Parenting cont.**

4/16 **LGBT Aging: Aging in Place, Community Initiatives, and the Specter of the Closet**


**Week 13: Topics Chosen by the Class: Sexuality and Mental Health**

4/20 **Understanding Mental Health for Minority Sexualities**


4/22 **Researching Mental Health and Illness in the Context of Sexuality**


4/23 **Treatment, Ethics, and Contexts of Mental Health and Illness**


**Week 14: Wrapup and Student Presentations**

4/27 **No reading/Final Research Papers Due**