Sexual Science and Subjective Politics, c. 1880-2011
Gender Studies 321-20

Kresge Centennial Hall 4-310
MoWe 11:00AM - 12:20PM

Dr. Kirsten Leng
k-leng@northwestern.edu

Office Hours: Mo 3:30-4:50PM
Harris Hall 235
847 467 2670
Course Description

Why and how has science assumed such a central role in defining secular ‘truths’ about sex? Why and how have scientific ‘facts’ become compelling resources for grounding and asserting a sense of sexual selfhood, and for expressing political demands on behalf of marginalized sexual subjects? In this seminar, we will explore the entangled twentieth century histories of sexual science, sexual subjectivities, and sexual politics, focusing in particular on how same-sex desire became the focus of medical and scientific attention and, subsequently, definitive of individual identity. Our course will move chronologically from the late nineteenth century to the present moment, and will cover Europe and the United States. In addition to working with historical documents, we will engage theoretical approaches to analyze the relationship between scientific knowledge, subjectivity, and politics.

Course Objectives

• Reflect on the role science has played in shaping contemporary understandings of sexuality, particularly same-sex desire
• provide students with a different take on contemporary sexual knowledge production and sexual politics
• Analyse the relationship between science and its subjects in the construction of knowledge and understanding of selfhood
• Assess how the relationship between science and its subjects has changed over time
• Explore the role of scientific knowledge within emancipatory sexual politics in modern democratic polities
• Evaluate the role of gender, class, and racial difference in shaping these dynamics
**Requirements and Evaluation**

**Participation: 30%**

Students are expected not only to complete the readings and attend class meetings, but also to regularly participate in class discussions. If for any reason a student is unable to participate in this manner, s/he should contact me as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements. Aside from regular involvement in class discussion, participation will consist of two additional components.

i) **Leading Class Discussion**

Each student will be responsible for leading discussion of one week’s worth of reading, possibly as part of a group of two. Presenters will develop five questions to guide class discussions. These questions should be posted as a new forum on Blackboard’s Discussion Board (under Course Tools) at least one day in advance of class to guide our discussions. The rest of the class is then responsible for reading the questions, informally preparing responses, and bringing these to class for discussion. Presenters are welcome to meet with me to discuss the readings and proposed questions prior to posting them.

ii) **Reading Response Papers**

Each student will post two (2) one-page double-spaced reading response papers on the course blog section of Blackboard that reflect on the readings assigned for a particular session. Students should post responses on Blackboard at least 24 hours before the class meets to discuss the readings. The following prompts may be used to guide the reading responses:

1. What kinds of questions did the readings raise for you?
2. What other issues, events, or subjects did the readings make you think about?
3. Were the analyses presented in the readings convincing to you? Why or why not?

**Written Work: 70%**

The major assignment for the term will be a 12-15 page research paper (not including references and bibliography) on a course-related topic of your choosing. All written work submitted prior to the submission of the research paper at the end of the quarter will build up to this final assignment, and will consist of the following:

- a 250-word project proposal (10%)
- a primary source analysis (10%)
- an annotated bibliography (15%)
Additionally, each student will meet with me twice: once following submission of the project proposal to discuss a research plan, and once at mid-term to discuss his/her progress on her/his research project.

The final paper will be worth 35%, and will be due MONDAY, JUNE 4 at 5pm CST.

Readings

Most of the course readings will be compiled into a Coursepack, available from Quartet.

The following texts are available for purchase at Northwestern University Bookstore and are available via Library Reserves:


Writing Resources

I encourage you to visit me during office hours to workshop your papers. For further assistance, you can visit the History Writing Center, located in the Main Library. Contact: historywriting@northwestern.edu. Further details are available on Blackboard. I also recommend Purdue’s writing center: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

A Note on Plagiarism

Please use Chicago-style footnotes and bibliographic citations in all essays. The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition (2010) is available online via NUCat. Remember: online sources must be cited! Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and Weinberg College rules require that all suspected of such infractions will be referred to the Dean’s Office for formal disciplinary proceedings.
**Students with Disabilities**

Any student with a documented disability requiring accommodation is requested to speak directly to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (Evanston campus: 847-467-5530), and to meet with me as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All discussion will remain confidential.

**Course Overview**

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<td>2 Early Sexology and Homosexuality (1890s-1930s)</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>April 4 (Project Proposal due)</td>
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<td>3 Sexual Subjects and the Creation of Sexual Knowledge (1890s-1930s)</td>
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<td>4 The Politicization of Sexual Knowledge (1890s-1930s)</td>
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<td>7 Challenging Pathology; Examining Lesbian Lives (1960s-1970s)</td>
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***FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL MONDAY, JUNE 4, AT 5PM CST****
Gender Studies 321-20: Syllabus

WEEK 1

March 26: Introduction
Course Overview
Library Visit

March 28: Conceptual Tools
Michel Foucault, “Domain,” The History of Sexuality, Vol. I, 103-114
Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” Critical Inquiry, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer, 1982), pp. 777-795

WEEK 2

April 2: Early Sexology and Homosexuality (1890s-1930s)

April 4: Early Sexology and Homosexuality (1890s-1930s)
“Homosexualities,” in Sexology Uncensored, 39-59

[Project Proposal due]
WEEK 3: Meet with the Instructor!

April 9: Sexual Subjects and the Creation of Sexual Knowledge (1890s-1930s)

Henry L. Minton, “The Relationship between Homosexuals and Sex Researchers,” *Departing from Deviance*, 7-32


April 11: Sexual Subjects and the Creation of Sexual Knowledge (1890s-1930s)


WEEK 4

April 16: The ‘tactical polyvalence’ of sexology: Sexual subjects respond to early sexual science (1890s-1930s)


Available on Blackboard under “Documents”

Anna Rüling, “What Interest Does the Women’s Movement Have in the Homosexual Question?” in *Lesbians in Germany, 1890-1920*, 83-94


M.F, “As I See It,” in *Lesbians in Germany: 1890s-1920s*, 49-52

April 18: The Politicization of Sexual Knowledge in Germany: Magnus Hirschfeld and the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (1890s-1930s)


“Paragraph 175 of the German Imperial Penal Code,” “Petition to the Reichstag,” and “The Social Problem of Sexual Inversion,” in *We Are Everywhere*, 63, 135-142

Film: “Anders als die andern” (1919)
WEEK 5

April 23: The Politicization of Sexual Knowledge in the US: Henry Gerber and the Society for Human Rights (1890s-1930s)


Parisex (Henry Gerber), “In Defense of Homosexuality (1932),” We Are Everywhere, 220-227


[Primary Source Analysis due]

April 25: Unsympathetic Science: Psychiatry and Homosexuality (1930s-1950s)

Jennifer Terry, “Policing Homosexuality,” American Obsession, 290-296

Vernon A. Rosario, “From the Gay Twenties to Homosexual Panic” and “Screening Out Homosexuals,” in Homosexuality and Science: A Guide to the Debates, 59-102

[[Freud’s Letter to an American Mother, April 1935, in Rosario, Homosexuality and Science: A Guide to the Debates, 81]]


Film: “Decoding Alan Turing” (17 minutes)

WEEK 6: Meet with Instructor!

April 30: Sympathetic Science? The Kinsey Reports (1940s-1950s)


May 2: The Politicization of Sexual Knowledge, Part II: The Rise of “Homophile” Movements (1950s-1960s)

Ronald Bayer, “The Emergence of Homosexual Protest,” in *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry*, 67-88

Kirsten Leng, “Expertise, Respectability, and Dissent in the Homosexual Law Reform Society, 1958-1967” (draft; 12 pages)

[Available on Blackboard under “Documents”]

Selected Primary Sources from *We Are Everywhere*, 320-335

**Film: Before Stonewall Documentary**

**WEEK 7**

May 7: Challenging Pathology: Evelyn Hooker (1950s-1960s)


Henry Minton, *Departing from Deviance*, 220-237

**Documentary:** “Changing our minds: The Story of Evelyn Hooker”

[Annotated Bibliography due]

May 9: Examining Lesbian Lives: Charlotte Wolff (1960s-1970s)

WEEK 8

May 14: Challenging Pathology: Franklin Kameny and the radicalization of ‘homophile’ politics (1960s-1970s)

Henry Minton, Departing from Deviance, 238-256

Ronald Bayer, Homosexuality and American Psychiatry, 88-100

Franklin Kameny, in We Are Everywhere, 335-339, 366-379

May 16: “Diagnostic Politics” (1970s)


Chicago Gay Liberation Front, “A Leaflet for the American Medical Association (1970),” We Are Everywhere, 394-396

Dennis Altman, “Liberation: Towards the Polymorphous (1971),” in Sexual Revolution 616-642

WEEK 9

May 21: Beyond Psychiatry: The Search for New Etiologies (1980s-2000s)


May 23: Can Sexuality Be Studied? (1980s-2000s)

Ed Stein, “Critique of the Emerging Research Program,” Mismeasure of Desire, 190-228

P. Hegarty, “It’s not a choice, it’s the way we’re built: symbolic beliefs about sex orientation,” Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology 12, no. 3 (2003): 153-66
WEEK 10

May 28: Holiday

May 30: Reflections—The Troubled Relationship of Sexual Science and Sexual Subjects


Ed Stein, “Should Scientific Research on Sexual Orientation Be Done?” Mismeasure of Desire, 328-341

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