

Sex, Gender, Culture

Anthropology 215

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Course Description

This course examines gender, sex, and sexuality as powerful forces in people's lives that are loaded with cultural significance. In this class, we will explore the construction of gender and sexuality both in the United States and international contexts by asking some of the following questions: How has contemporary anthropological theory shaped the ways we think about gender and sexuality? Why is the management of sexuality such an important component for maintaining certain forms of social hierarchy both in the US and abroad? How do international differences and inequalities manifest in understandings of gender and sexuality around the world? and How does sexuality intersect with race, gender and class in various cultural contexts?

We will address these questions by looking at both obvious and less visible dimensions of power, culture, gender, and sexuality. Students should leave the course with an increased understanding of the historical development of gender and sexuality, as well as understand these concepts beyond "normative" definitions. Specifically, should engage with the ways gender and sexuality intersect with race, class, religion, location and other forms of social distinction or exclusion

Course Objectives

This course will

1. define and complicate concepts such as gender, sex, sexuality, identity, and culture
2. expose students to the study of human diversity and similarity, understanding the role of inequalities
2. make course content and class discussion relevant to the students' lives in order to develop students' capacity to "make the familiar strange and the strange familiar"
3. teach students how to read texts and author's arguments critically through class discussions
4. inspire students to think comparatively by asking them how the particular behavior, issue or reality they are reading about or discussing in class compares across countries, regions, and time
5. encourage students to participate actively in class and overcome their fears about speaking publicly.
6. make students aware of being different from one another, while simultaneously recognizing the obvious fact of our common humanity – that we are more alike than we are different

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the semester, each student should be able to:

1. describe the main principles of sex, sexuality, gender, and queerness;

2. describe the relevance and value interrogating the formations of gender and sexuality in the contemporary world;
3. describe how personal characteristics such as gender, race, and class impact a person's worldview and how the world sees the individual.
4. discuss and connect concepts such as gender, sexuality, race, class, inequality, capitalism and globalization to current events and processes
5. critically examine their own positions in these global processes, including notions of reflexivity.
6. demonstrate the ability to critically engage with literature, support arguments with research, critically examine the views of others and produce coherent conclusions regarding class themes.
7. evaluate the practical relevance and applicability of gender studies and its methods to contemporary problems and issues.
8. understand and be able to articulate, not just philosophically but politically, how to make a world where difference is less threatening and conflict less likely.

Requirements

Participation	15%
Blog Posts	10%
Midterm Essay	15%
Group Assignment 1	20%
Group Assignment 2	20%
Representation Project	20%

(In depth explanations of the Representation Project follows the course schedule)

Grading Standards

- A Superior: Student shows excellent critical analysis in oral contributions and writing; all assignments turned in on time. 90-100 (A+ 100, A 93-99, A- 90-92)
- B Very Good: Solid work evidenced by careful synthesis of reading, timely contributions to class discussion, and clear, logical writing; all or most assignments turned in on time. 80-90 (B+ 87-89, B 83-86, B- 80-82)
- C Satisfactory: Work demonstrates some understanding of materials and an average performance in written assignments and class discussion; some assignments turned in on time. 70-80 (C+ 77-79, C 73-76, C- 70-72)
- D Inconsistent: Meager performance in all assignments and class discussion; late in turning in written work. 60-70
- F Failing: Student makes minimal effort, shows little understanding of assignments, and turns in incomplete or unacceptable work. Below 60

About Participation

Participation in class is part of the final grade, and one can not participate without being present. Anthropology is a discipline that is constantly in motion, building off of old ideas and incorporating new ones. Thus, class time will not consist of monolithic lectures about concepts that must be memorized. Instead, they will be discussions in which we practice applying ideas of the authors we read to new situations and contexts. The class will be expected to offer opinions and examples, and pose challenges to some of what we discuss. Stereotypes and prejudices often exist in reference to material that is new, unusual, and foreign. Our challenge is to become aware of these stereotypes and to question our assumptions so that our ability to analyze and understand new material is not impaired by our biases. This is an important time to explore ideas and learn new ways of understanding the world. Therefore participation is not only part of the final grade, but will also be necessary to building the kind of understanding necessary to successfully complete other assignments. To make sure you are in the best possible position to get a good participation grade:

1. Complete the required reading. You do not need to worry that you understand absolutely everything you read, but take notes about parts that strike you as especially intriguing, important, or disconnected. Think about how it relates to things you have experienced in different contexts. Think about when it was written and by whom. Think about whether you agree or disagree and why.
2. Be prepared to ask questions. Whether they are about something you don't understand in the reading, or are simply about how other people reacted to a specific detail, questions help move class discussion along.
3. Be open to new ideas. Anthropology often challenges our assumptions about the world. Newer readings in anthropology often challenge older ideas that were common in anthropology. And hopefully, you will even challenge some of the readings that you think miss the point. You don't have to agree with everything that you read or hear, but take the time to think about it carefully before you decide. Or allow yourself to not decide. But most importantly, be respectful to all the opinions offered in class, and think about why someone might agree or disagree with them.
4. Participate in ways that make you comfortable. Some people love to talk in class and others are intimidated. I hope to create an environment where intimidation is minimal, but don't fret if you're not a "talker." Feel free to come to office hours or email me to find out other ways you can make your opinions known. And if you are a "talker" please remember that you may have a funny story related to the class discussion, but unless it advances our thinking on an anthropological topic, your anecdote might not move discussion in a productive manner.
5. Be respectful. Perhaps most importantly, respecting the classroom, your fellow classmates, and the instructor will help you succeed. Spending class time on facebook, texting, whispering to friends, or doodling excessively in your notebook are not conducive to anyone learning about the

topic at hand. Paying attention to the discussion and finding thoughtful ways to contribute will make everyone's experience more pleasant.

If you have a major medical problem or family concern that requires you to miss several classes, please provide documentation and we will do our best to help you stay involved. Additionally, please make every effort to come to class on time so as not to disrupt discussion once it has begun. Leaving early is also disruptive, so please limit bathroom breaks and leave class early only when absolutely necessary, providing a reason beforehand.

About Assignments

All students are required to complete written assignments by the due date. I cannot accept assignments for credit after they are due.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden. All work you turn in must be your own. This means no borrowing of ideas or wording from friends' work, other author's work, or the internet. Any time another person's work is used, it absolutely **MUST** be cited properly. All instances of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the appropriate academic Dean for administrative action.

Required Books

Most readings will be available online through Blackboard.

I will also assign some short blog or news type articles (less than 2000 words), for which the links will also appear on Blackboard.

Course Schedule (readings DUE on the date listed)

PART 1: FOUNDATIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUALITY

- Week 1 A What is Sex? What is Gender? What is Culture?
Define all the terms: culture, sex, sexuality, gender, intersex, hermaphrodite, transvestite, drag, passing, transgender, cisgender, transsexual, mtf, ftm, queer, genderqueer, identity, subjectivity, intersectionality, etc
- Week 1 B Relationships between Gender and Sexuality
Richardson, *Patterned Fluidities: Reimagining the Relationship between Gender and Sexuality*

- Week 2 A Sex & Science
View Film: Sex, Lies, and Gender
Martin, The Egg and the Sperm
Short Blog Reading: NPR, Fruitflies
- Week 2 B Sex & Science
Kessler, The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants
Fausto-Sterling, The Five Sexes, The Five Sexes Revisited
- Week 3 A Doing Masculinity and Femininity
Review last week's field notes
Judith Butler Lecture
Sells, Where Do the Mermaids Stand?
Paechter, Masculine Femininities/Feminine Masculinities
- Week 3 B Doing Masculinity and Femininity
Film: But I'm a Cheerleader
- Week 4 A The History of Sexuality
Review last week's field notes
Katz, Invention of Heterosexuality
Lecture on Foucault
- Week 4 B Sexuality and Political Economy
D'Emilio, Capitalism and Gay Identity
- Week 5 A Non-normativities
Rubin, Thinking Sex
- Week 5 B Non-normativities
Halberstam, Queer Time and Place
- Week 6 A "Trans" "Natives"
Towle and Morgan, Romancing the Transgender Native
- BEGIN GROUP PROJECT 1
Besnier, Fakaleiti, Tonga
Blackwood, Tombois, Indonesia
Blackwood, Unreal Women and the Men who Love Them (Nigeria)
Elliston, Mahu, Tahiti
Epple, Nadleehi, Navajo
Kulick, Travestis, Brazil
Manalansan, Bakla, Philipines
Reddy & Nanda, Hijras, India
Salamone, Yan Daudu, Nigeria

Sinnot, Toms & Dees, Thailand
Smith Oboler, Female Husbands, Kenya
Thomas, Two Spirit, Apache

Week 6 B Film in Class: Woobie Cheri

Week 7 A In Class Presentations

Week 7 B In Class Presentations

Week 8 A Review in Class

Week 8 B Midterm Essay

Part 2: GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN CONTEXT

Week 9 A Intersectionality, Multiple Jeopardy, Co-Constitution
Wing, Critical Race Feminism Introduction

Week 9 B Intersectionality, Multiple Jeopardy, Co-Constitution
Goldstein, Interracial Sex & Democracy in Brazil: Twin Concepts

Week 10 A Regulating Bodies: Migration
Review last week's field notes
Cantú, The Sexuality of Migration

FINAL PROJECT DISCUSSED

Choose a form of media or performance (film, play, music, performance art, visual art, literature, advertising, etc.—either contemporary or historical) and analyze the ways that gender and/or sexuality are constructed and represented. Pay attention to concepts we discussed in class such as race, class, globalization, biologization, beauty, and regulation. This make take the form of a paper, video, poster, blog, graphic novel/zine, or podcast. Please consult with the professor about both your subject and the form the project will take.

Week 10 B Regulating Bodies: Criminalization
Edelman, Walking While Transgender

Week 11 A Global Sexual Identities
Review last week's field notes
Stychin, The Globalization of Sexual Identities: Universality, Tradition, and the (Post)Colonial Encounter

GROUP PROJECT 2 BEGINS

Boelstorff, Dubbing Culture

Chou, Tongzhi
Heng and Deven, State Fatherhood
Howe, Pink Collar Workers
Lancaster, Male Homosexuality and Stigma in Nicaragua
Manalansan, Global Divas
Paulson, Familia Galán
Povenelli, Sex Acts and Sovereignty
Schein, White Skin in Post-Mao China
Zavella, Playing with Fire

Week 11 B Use class time for group projects

Week 12 A Sex, Gender and the Nation
Review last week's field notes
Banet-Weiser, Miss America, National Identity, Whiteness
Gustafson, Bulls and Beauty Queens

Week 12 B In Class Presentations

Week 13 A Group Project 2 Presentations

Week 13 B Corporeal Representation
Wolff, Reinstating Corporeality
Williams, Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, Excess
Young, Throwing Like a Girl

Week 14 A Muslim Women
Review last week's field notes
Time Magazine, Afghan Women and the Return of the Taliban
Lopez, The real story behind Time's Afghan Woman Cover
Abu Lughod, Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?

Week 14 B Creative Project Presentations

Final Exam Period-Creative Project Presentations
CREATIVE PROJECT DUE (Presentations)

Assignments

Blog Posts

Each week you will write a short blog post to be posted to the class blog discussing something you have observed or experienced in daily life that relates to the week's themes. We will discuss in class each week what might make a good topic. In addition to providing comments to others' blogs, during the first class of each week, we will devote a short discussion to issues that have arisen in the blogs.

Group Assignments

In groups of 2-4 you will read an in-depth article discussing particular gender or sexual identities from outside of the United States. The groups will then prepare a class presentation (preferably using Powerpoint or a similar software so the presentation may be shared in its electronic form with classmates) discussing the main points of the reading, the context for these identity formations, and the ways they relate to class concepts.

Creative Project

This project allows students to engage with class concepts in a creative way. The purpose is to practice presenting knowledge of gender, sexuality, and queer theory in ways that engage a broader (non-academic) audience without sacrificing theory, critique, and context.

The project may take a number of forms: video/film, photography, radio story, painting, drawing, map, zine, theater, performance art, dance, musical piece, website, or blog. If you have additional ideas for forms you'd like your project to take, I encourage that, but please speak with me first.
SEE EXAMPLES BELOW

Performance or audio pieces should be less than 10 minutes. Video or film should be less than 5 minutes. Photography should include 15 photos with captions. Please see me to discuss specific length requirements for other forms of presentation.

Requirements:

- reflects class concepts
- incorporates your knowledge of gender and queer theory
- acknowledges the context of the subject
- presents material in a way that general audiences will understand and will help them learn about gender and queer theory (hopefully without being boring!)

The creative work should be accompanied by a 2 page (double spaced) paper, explaining both the content of the project, and your reasoning for presenting the information in the form that you do. You will introduce and then present the creative project to the class, in a 5-10 minute presentation (depending on the type of project you create).

Examples to Inspire Creative Projects

Photography:

<http://www.penn.museum/current-changing-exhibits/658-righteous-dopefiend.html>

<http://www.sas.upenn.edu/home/SASFrontiers/bourgeois.html>

Graphic Novel/Zine:

<http://anthrocomics.wordpress.com/>

<http://cosmarxpolitan.tumblr.com/>

Performance/Theater:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KR8SwPmCFd4>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhrpSW_pnck&feature=related

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIUQ2sUti8o&feature=related>

Art:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzTuPEg015M&list=PLB6A6082D545E8D15&index=7>

Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ie57sKZPptQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa4yQJSSdLY>

Podcast

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives>