SEXUALITY AND SOCIAL THEORY  
SOC 6119, Fall 2022
University of Toronto, St. George Campus
Friday, 4:10-6 pm. Room 240

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Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Perhaps few topics have had as complex a treatment in social theory as sexuality. The sublimated engine of civilizations, the last retreat from the iron cage and technological dystopia, the “truth” of the self, the somatization of late capitalist relations, the nexus of race and class domination, the margins of a scholarly center, and the center of a queer margin; sexuality is a protean object of study that runs through theories of the social.

This seminar will explore some of the major theoretical approaches that feature sexuality as a focal point of analysis over the past century of social theory. The course will follow, roughly, a chronological scheme, including a consideration of traditional and critical psychoanalytic works on sex and sexuality, analysis of some key radical feminist, social learning/social constructionist and critical race theories, examination of Foucault and his detractors, a review of queer theory and its detractors, and finally an examination of some of the most recent, cutting edge, post-queer theoretical work in the sociology and anthropology of sexuality, including work focused on the relationship between sexuality and state building, sexuality and late-modern, flexible capitalism, and the work of Bourdieusian field theorists in the study of sexual stratification.

EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated on three dimensions. First, each student will conduct two presentations (see below) and will provide the instructor with a memo (see below) on the readings of their presentation no later than twenty-four hours in advance of class. The two memos will count for 40% of the grade (20% each). Second, class participation will count for 10% of the grade. Third, a final paper (see below) will count toward the remaining 50% of the grade.

Presentations: Each of the two presentations should consist of approximately fifteen but not more than twenty minutes of discussion. The first half of each presentation, roughly, should establish what in a particular reading or set of readings was most interesting or noteworthy to the student. The second half of each presentation, roughly, should consist of analytical responses to the readings, including critical perspectives, synthetic readings of the work, or significant tensions between readings. The presentation should conclude with between 3-5 concrete questions posed to the class for further discussion. These questions should be typed and printed out for distribution to the class.

Memo: Each of the two memos (approximately 5 double-spaced pages) will provide a critical response and/or analytic reflection on the day’s readings. They are not to consist of a mere overview of the reading(s). The memos need not address each of the day’s readings, though breadth of analysis
is always appreciated. A copy of the memo should be sent to me **no later than 24 hours in advance** of class.

**Class Participation:** It is expected that students will be **fully** prepared to discuss the readings and will bring all texts to class. Class participation includes both a quantitative and qualitative measure: students are expected to participate regularly; and students are expected to demonstrate a serious, active and critical engagement of course materials.

**Final Paper:** There are two options for the final paper. In the first, students will apply a given theorist or approach reviewed in the class to a particular gender or sexual phenomenon, including a sexual practice, identity, community or discourse. In the second, students will provide a rigorous comparison of at least two theoretical perspectives reviewed in the course.

The paper will be evaluated on the clarity and soundness of ideas* and the acumen of the analysis, including the ability to use, critique, contrast or synthesize disparate approaches. It is unlikely that satisfactory completion of this requirement can be fulfilled in under fifteen, double-spaced pages, yet a paper much longer than twenty-five pages is equally suspect.

*WARNING: Students will not score points in this course by using a convoluted rhetorical style. I view the latter as a smoke screen for intellectual insecurity. Hence, if you cannot distinguish between hard thinking and clever writing, your grades will suffer accordingly.

**Readings:** All readings are available on Quercus in the course reserve.

In addition, students will need to purchase:


**Academic Integrity**

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean’s office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well: (http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize). According to Section B.1.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence “to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.” By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university’s rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019) and Code of Student Conduct (https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/students/#codeconduct) which spell out
your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

All of your submitted assignments will automatically be run through a new plagiarism detection tool, Ouriginal, for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. (Ouriginal replaces Turnitin.) In doing so, you will allow your assignments to be included as source documents in the Ouriginal reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Ouriginal service are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website: https://uoft.me/pdt-faq

**Accessibility Services**
It is the University of Toronto’s goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council “Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities” at https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/statement-commitment-regarding-persons-disabilities-february-25-2021.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you.

Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

**Equity and Diversity Statement**
All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated; please alert me to any behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any person in this course or otherwise creates an intimidating or hostile environment.
You’ll find additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University
of Toronto online at http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

* = optional reading

**Sep 16**  
**Sexuality and Social Theory**

Welcome! Introductions and review of the syllabus.

**Sep 23**  
**Sexuality: Classical & Critical Psychoanalytic Theory**


**Sep 30**  
**Sexuality, Critical Psychoanalytic and Social Theory**


**Oct 7**  
**Social Constructionism in Post WWII British & American Sociology**


Oct 14 Radical Feminist Perspectives


Oct 21 Foucault


Oct 28 Foucault Revisited


Nov 4  The Late Modern Transformation of Intimate Relations


Nov 11  Fall Reading Week: No Class

Nov 18  Political Economy and Modern Intimate Relations


Nov 25  Queer Theory


Dec 2 Queer Theory & Sociology?


Dec 9 The Sexual Fields Framework


**Final Paper Due:** Friday, Dec 16, 4:00 p.m., in hard copy, stapled, in my mailbox.