

**SEXUALITY AND SOCIAL THEORY**  
**SOC 6119, Fall 2024**  
**University of Toronto, St. George Campus**  
**Friday, 3:10-5:00pm.**

**Course Director:** Adam Isaiah Green  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment

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**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. Late memos will be docked 10 points per day late.

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 follow the link in the syllabus to Foucault, Michel, 1980. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*. Vintage.

Academic Integrity Clause 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.I.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* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>)

which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

AI: Use of generative artificial intelligence is strictly prohibited.

### 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

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

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](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca).

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

### Equity and Diversity

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

\* = optional reading

### **Sep 13      Sexuality and Social Theory**

Welcome! Introductions and review of the syllabus.

### **Sep 20      Sexuality: Classical & Critical Psychoanalytic Theory**

Freud, Sigmund. 1920. "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Female Homosexuality." *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. 1:125-149

Freud, Sigmund. 1927. "Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes". *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*. 8, 2:133-42.

Marcuse, Herbert. 1955. "The Transformation of Sexuality into Eros", Pp. 197-221 in *Eros and Civilization*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Weber, Max. 1946. "The Erotic Sphere" (excerpt), Pp. 343-360 in Gerth, H. H. And C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

### **Sep 27      Sexuality, Critical Psychoanalytic and Social Theory**

Chodorow, Nancy. 1994. "Individuality and Difference in How Women and Men Love," Pp. 70-92; 107-114 in *Masculinities, Femininities, Sexualities: Freud and Beyond*. University of Kentucky Press.

Lewes, Kenneth. 1995. "Chapter II: Freud", Pp. 12-35 in *Psychoanalysis and Male Homosexuality*. New Jersey and London: Jason Aronson Inc.

McIntosh, Mary. 1968. "The Homosexual Role." *Social Problems*. 10:182-92.

### **Oct 4      Social Constructionism in Post WWII British & American Sociology**

D'Emilio, John. 1983. "Capitalism and Gay Identity". In Snitow, Ann, Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson (eds.), *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, New York: Monthly Review Press

Simon, William and John Gagnon. 1986. "Sexual Scripts: Permanence and Change," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 15, 2:97-120.

Whittier, David Knapp and William Simon. 2001. "The Fuzzy Matrix of 'My Type' In Intrapsychic Sexual Scripting" *Sexualities*, 4, 2:139-164.

Plummer, Ken. 1996. "Symbolic Interactionism and the Forms of Homosexuality", Pp. 64-82 in Seidman, Steven (ed.), *Queer Theory/Sociology*. Massachusetts: Blackwell

### **Oct 11**      **Radical Feminist Perspectives**

Rich, Adrienne. 1993. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", Pp. 227-254 in Abelove, Henry, Michele Aina Barale and David M. Halperin (eds.), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. New York and London: Routledge.

MacKinnon, Catharine. 2002. "Pleasure Under Patriarchy." Pp. 33-43 in Williams, Christine L. and Arlene Stein (eds.), *Sexuality and Gender*. Malden Mass.: Blackwell

Moraga, Cherrie and Amber Hollibaugh. 1983. "What We're Rollin' Around in Bed With," Pp. 394-405 in Snitow, Ann, Christine Stansell, Sharon Thompson (eds.), *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Bunch, Charlotte. 1975. "Lesbians in Revolt", Pp. 29-37, *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement*. Oakland, CA: Diana Press.

### **Oct 18**      **Foucault**

Foucault, Michel. 1980. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*. New York: Vintage Books

<https://suplaney.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/foucault-the-history-of-sexuality-volume-1.pdf>

### **Oct 25**      **Foucault Revisited**

Halperin, David. 2002. "Forgetting Foucault" Pp. 24-47 in *How to Do the History of Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Adam, Barry D. 2000. "Love and sex in constructing identity among men who have sex with men." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 5, 4: 325-339.

Giddens, Anthony. 1992. "Foucault on Sexuality," Pp. 18-36 in *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

Stoler, Ann Laura. 1995. *Race and the Education of Desire* (Chapters 1-2). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

**Nov 1**      **READING WEEK: NO CLASS**

**November 8**    **The Late Modern Transformation of Intimate Relations**

Giddens, Anthony. 1992. Chapters 3, 4, 10. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.

Gross, Neil. 2005. "The Detraditionalization of Intimacy Reconsidered". *Sociological Theory*. 23, 3:286-311.

\* Valverde, Mariana. 2006. "A New Entity in the History of Sexuality: The Respectable Same-Sex Couple." *Feminist Studies* 32, 1:155-162.

**Nov 15**      **Political Economy and Modern Intimate Relations**

Bailey, Beth. 1988. "Introduction"; "Chapter 1: Calling Cards and Money"; and "Chapter 3: The Worth of a Date" in *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hamilton, Laura and Elizabeth Armstrong. 2009. "Gendered Sexuality in Young Adulthood: Double Binds and Flawed Options." *Gender & Society*. 23:589-616.

Weiss, Margot. 2011. "Introduction"; "Chapter 3: The Toy Bag: Exchange Economies and the Body at Play" in *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

\*Bailey, Beth. 1988. "Chapter 3: The Worth of a Date" in *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

\*Weiss, Margot. 2011. "Chapter 4: Beyond Vanilla: Public Politics and Private Selves" in *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

**Nov 22**      **Queer Theory**

Warner, Michael. 1993. "Introduction," Pp. vii-xxxi in *Fear of a Queer Planet: Politics and Social Theory*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Butler, Judith. 1993. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." Pp. 307-320 in Abelow, Henry et al. (eds.), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. Routledge.

Jagose, Annamarie. 1996. "Limits of Identity" Pp. 58-71 and "Queer" Pp. 72-100 in *Queer Theory: An Introduction*. NY: New York University Press.

Stein, Arlene and Ken Plummer. 1996. "'I Can't Even Think Straight': 'Queer' Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology," Pp. 129-144 in Seidman, Steven (ed.), *Queer Theory/Sociology*. Massachusetts: Blackwell

\*Eng, David, with Judith Halberstam and José Estaban Muñoz. 2005. "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" *Social Text* 23.3:1-17

## **Nov 29**      **Queer Theory & Sociology?**

Gamson, Josh. 2000. "Sexualities, Queer Theory and Qualitative Research," Pp. 347-365 in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Edwards, Tim. 1998. "Queer Fears: Against the Cultural Turn", in *Sexualities*, 1, 4:471-484.

Green, Adam Isaiah. 2007. "Queer Theory and Sociology: Locating the Subject and the Self in Sexuality Studies." *Sociological Theory* 25, 1:26-45

Valocchi, Stephen. 2006. "Not Yet Queer Enough: The Lessons of Queer Theory for the Sociology of Gender and Sexuality." *Gender and Society*. 19, 6:750-770.

## **Dec 6**      **The Sexual Fields Framework**

Green, Adam Isaiah. 2014. "Introduction: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life" Pp. 1-23; and "Chapter 1: The Sexual Fields Framework" Pp. 25-56 in Adam Isaiah Green (ed.), *Sexual Fields: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martin Weinberg and Collin Williams. 2014. "Chapter 2: Sexual Field, Erotic Habitus and Embodiment at a Transgender Bar" Pp. 57-69 in Adam Isaiah Green (ed.), *Sexual Fields: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hennen, Peter. 2014. "Chapter 3: Sexual Field Theory: Some Theoretical Questions and Empirical Complications" Pp. 71-99 in Adam Isaiah Green (ed.), *Sexual Fields: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Green, Adam Isaiah. 2008. "The Social Organization of Desire: The Sexual Fields Approach." *Sociological Theory*. 26:25-50.

\* Farrer, James. 2014. "Chapter 6: Sexless in Shanghai: Gendered Mobility Strategies in a Transnational Sexual Field." in Adam Isaiah Green (ed.), *Sexual Fields: Toward a Sociology of Collective Sexual Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

\* Green, Adam Isaiah. 2008. "Erotic Habitus: Toward a Sociology of Desire." *Theory & Society*. 37:597–626

**Final Paper Due:** Friday, Dec 13, 5:00 p.m., by email.