

Sex and Society

BLHV 263-01, Spring 2023

Dr. Michelle Ohnona
Georgetown University
BA in Liberal Studies

Class time:	Wednesday, 5:20p.m.-7:50p.m.
Class location:	Zoom
Office hours:	Tuesday, 10a.m.-11a.m., and by appointment
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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the vibrant and interdisciplinary field of sexuality studies, and investigates the ways in which sex and sexuality are shaped by society, and the ways in which they are connected to power and inequality in our world. We will begin the course by exploring some key theories and concepts within the field, and situate them alongside the history of LGBTQ activism in the United States and elsewhere. We will then consider how these concepts can be applied to a variety of contemporary issues such as sexual identity and the state, same-sex marriage, representations of sexuality in popular culture and the media, transnational sexualities and sexual identities, and consumerism. Throughout the course, we will examine how sexuality intersects with other social categories such as gender, race, class, nationality, age and ability/disability.

Course Learning Goals

- Differentiate between the concepts of sex, gender and sexuality as socially produced, historically contingent phenomena;
- Analyze the legal, religious, social and economic frameworks in which these phenomena are produced;
- Demonstrate analytical thinking skills in the preparation of an oral presentation and facilitation of a class discussion on an assigned reading;
- Participate in debate and discussion on the assigned reading materials for the course;
- Collaborate with colleagues on group assignments requiring the formulation of a critique of assigned reading;
- Prepare a final research paper involving the conducting of independent research, the articulation of a research question and the application of concepts learned in class.

Required Readings and Course Materials

Required readings for the class will be available on the course Canvas site. Any audiovisual materials will be available for streaming on the Canvas site, or links will be provided. Additional resources and materials may be posted on Canvas as suggestions for further reading and secondary sources for research papers and presentations. All of the course materials will be listed under the modules for each week.

Note on Class Expectations

This is a seminar-based course that requires each of us to contribute our thoughts and creativity. I value scholarly trouble-making and problem-solving, and invite you to take intellectual risks, to challenge yourselves and your colleagues, and to make mistakes. I expect each of us to

show appreciation for the work involved in taking risks, and to be respectful of each other's time and contributions.

Occasionally, we may share our class time with other students, faculty, and staff as guest speakers and collaborators. I hope that you will extend curiosity and engagement to those who visit our class as well. If you anticipate obstacles to your participation in the course that I and/or your colleagues can help mitigate, please reach out.

Assignments and Grading

<i>All Assignments</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Attendance and class contribution	40%
Discussion facilitation	20%
Final paper proposal and annotated bibliography	20%
Final paper	20%
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Attendance and Class Contribution

Your attendance and class contribution grade reflects attendance, timeliness of assignments, the amount of time in which you make a good-faith effort to participate in class and group discussions, the degree to which you make an effort to work with other students, and your level of preparedness for class. I hope that you will engage with the concepts we discuss in class and that you will push yourself and your colleagues to look critically at course material. I also expect that we leave room for everyone to contribute as well as "getting something out of" the class experience.

Discussion Facilitation

Students will be assigned the role of discussion facilitators, typically in pairs, for one class session. You may include activities, discussion prompts, audio-visual material, and/or supplementary written material into your facilitation plan. I expect to have about 45 minutes for each discussion, though this can vary based on other class activities. Please check with me in advance if you have concerns about the amount of time needed for your discussion and facilitation plan.

Midterm Assignment: Due March 14, 2022

The midterm assignment is a take-home assessment consisting of two essay questions whose responses must be 450-600 words in length. The assignment is based on the preceding weeks of course materials. Students will have access to the midterm questions beginning on March 2, 2022.

Final Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: Due March 31, 2022

The annotated bibliography should consist of 6 sources, with three sources drawn from our course readings, and three scholarly sources identified through your own research. Each annotation should be roughly 150 words in length, and the bibliography should be accompanied by a summative statement of 200-400 words that offers insight into the ways in which the sources will support your paper.

Final Paper: Due May 8, 2022

Final papers should be 6-8 pages in length, double-spaced, not including the bibliography. You may use either MLA (9th edition) or APA (7th edition) citation format.

Academic Integrity and the Georgetown Honor System

You may find it helpful to look at the [tutorial on academic integrity](#) provided by the library.

I strongly believe in adherence to the Georgetown honor system and expect that you do, too. As a mandatory reporter, I comply with all reporting requirements. That said, *do* collaborate with your classmates in study or conversation groups, *do* give credit to your fellow students when appropriate, and *do* familiarize yourself with the Georgetown [honor system booklet](#).

Accessibility & Observance of Religious Holidays

If you believe that you have a disability that will affect your performance in this class, please contact the Academic Resource Center at arc@georgetown.edu. You can also visit their website for further information: <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/>. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies. If you have an undocumented disability that you wish to discuss with me in relation to your participation in the course, please let me know as soon as possible.

If the course schedule coincides with a major religious holiday that you wish to observe, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to give you the time and space that you need.

Our Learning Environment

In the words of Adrienne Rich, the classroom is a space where we each “claim our education” and endeavor to learn with and from each other. Everyone

brings a unique set of experiences and knowledge to the conversation. One of the premises of feminist, antiracist inquiry is that “the personal is political”, meaning that living and learning are inseparable. The ideas and issues we discuss will often have direct bearing on our day-to-day lives and personal philosophies. It is appropriate to share these connections, but discussion should remain connected to our course readings. *In this class, you are under no pressure to share personal experiences, and you should only share experiences you are comfortable discussing in a public forum such as this classroom.* I expect students to engage course readings and class discussions with open-mindedness and curiosity, and to debate ideas respectfully and with scholarly integrity.

I hope that the classroom for LDES 713 will be an anti-racist and feminist space that strives to be free of discrimination, including but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, religion, class, sexual orientation, gender expression, age, and disability - to name only some of the axes of identity that shape our relationships to the world and one another. As your instructor, I take instances of discrimination in the classroom seriously, and I also encourage students to bring any issues to my attention if they feel comfortable doing so. Please refer to the student handbook for more information regarding [Georgetown's policies regarding bias and discrimination](#).

It is important that each of you understand that as a faculty member, I am a mandatory reporter under Title IX. I will do my best to support each of you in the event of a complaint of sexual harassment and/or assault. For a confidential counselor, contact sarp@georgetown.edu. For more information about sexual assault resources at Georgetown, visit: sexualassault.georgetown.edu.

Course Schedule

Week 1 January 18	Introductions, syllabus review, student resources
Week 2 January 25	Constructions of Sex and Gender
Week 3 February 1	Sex and Science
Week 4 February 8	Sexuality and the Law
Week 5 February 15	Sexuality and Individual Freedom
Week 6 February 22	Sex, Gender, and Education
Week 7 March 1	Sex, Gender, and Relationships <i>Midterm review</i>
March 8	<i>SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS</i>
Week 8 March 15	Sex, Gender, and Popular Culture <i>Midterm Assignment due March 14</i>
Week 9 March 22	Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality
Week 10 March 29	Morality and Controversy
Week 11 April 5	Repression, Speech, and Silence
Week 12 April 12	Reproduction, Parenthood, and Family
Week 13 April 19	Paper Presentations and Workshopping

Week 14
April 26

Paper Presentations and Workshopping
Class Wrap-up