

History 383: Sexualities in American History

Spring 2020

Hybrid: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00-12:50, 231 CCC, and online

“People never simply have sex; at some level of consciousness, they interpret their behavior in terms of their own and their culture’s attitudes toward sex.... Thus if we are to understand past people’s experience of sex, we need to jettison our own notions of sexuality in favor of the categories they used.”

—Richard Godbeer, 1995

“History isn’t something that you look back at and say ‘oh that’s inevitable, it would have happened anyway.’ It happens because people make decisions that are sometimes very impulsive and of the moment. But those moments are cumulative realities.” —Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, 2012

“The historical record is littered with Charities and Sylvias; we need only open our eyes and see.”

—Rachel Hope Cleves, 2014

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Office Hours: Monday 3:00-3:50, Wednesday 2:00-2:50, Thursday 3:30-4:30, and by appointment

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

In this course you will investigate, discuss, and write about histories of Americans’ sexual beliefs, behaviors, identities, institutions, communities, and conflicts. We will explore many different kinds of stories, told by different kinds of people, in various formats, from many places and time periods. After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Use historical evidence to answer questions about past sexualities
- Describe how American sexualities have changed over time, with particular attention to the interweaving of sexuality with gender, race, class, and other facets of experience and identity
- Critically evaluate scholarship on a specific topic in the history of American sexualities
- Describe, and empathize with, diverse Americans’ efforts to challenge, negotiate, or subvert prevailing norms of gender and sexuality

Core Materials

- Peiss, ed., *Major Problems in the History of American Sexuality*, 2002 (MPHAS), text rental
- Cleves, *Charity and Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America*, 2014 (C&S), required for purchase
- Pori, “After a Long Battle: Congressional Response to the AIDS Epidemic, 1982-1985” (AALB), posted on Canvas: please print it out.
- Oxford English Dictionary (OED), <https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu> (bookmark it)
- All other readings and links will be posted on Canvas

Contacting Me

*Helping you learn is the **most important and most rewarding** part of my job.* If you have questions about the course, or want to improve your performance, please visit me during office hours or contact me by email at <rharp@uwsp.edu> to make an appointment. Please include "History 383" in the subject line.

How to Succeed

To do well in this class, you must attend and participate regularly, complete all assigned reading, and take effective notes on readings, lectures, and class discussions. Absences from class, either physical or mental, will bring down your grade. As with any three-credit course, you should expect to spend **6-9 hours each week** on coursework outside of class. If you are worried about your progress, please contact me ASAP to discuss how to improve.

Major themes

The history of sexuality is a wide-ranging and rapidly growing field. Even after limiting ourselves to American sexualities, there is far more material than we can cover together. Over the semester we will move back and forth among the following major themes. In your individual assignments, you will have the opportunity to explore one or more of these themes in greater depth.

1. Histories of sexual behaviors, relationships, and identities
2. Histories of gender identity/expression (including trans, non-binary, and intersex histories)
3. The intersections of sexuality with social inequality and marginalization, such as class, disability, gender, indigeneity, national origin, race, and religion
4. Histories of non-conforming families, communities, and movements
5. Gender, sexuality, and the law (including marital and family law, reproductive policy, state surveillance, criminalization, and state punishment)
6. Sex and violence (including rape, sexual abuse, lynching, sex- and gender-based violence)
7. The science and medicine (and pseudo-science/medicine) of sexuality
8. Sex and commerce (including sex work, the use of sex in marketing, entertainment, etc.)

Grading

Attendance, participation, quizzes, in-class work:	20%
Online discussion sections:	20%
Etymology reports:	10%
Review essay:	10%
"After a Long Battle":	20%
Historiographic essay:	20%

In-Class Work and Attendance

If you must miss class, please obtain notes from a classmate. You will receive a zero on any quiz or in-class work you miss. To accommodate scheduling conflicts and emergencies, your two lowest in-class work scores will not count toward the final grade. If you must miss many classes, please see me ASAP to discuss your options. During in-class quizzes, you may not consult books or electronic devices, but you may consult handwritten notes.

Online Discussion Sections

During most weeks of the semester, you will participate in a guided online discussion of course material with a small group of classmates. You may participate from any location with internet access, but you must log into the discussion at the scheduled time. The discussion schedule and guidelines will be announced in class.

Etymology reports

During the semester you will write short reports outlining the origins and history of a word that is (or was) associated with sexual identity and/or behavior. You will use one source: the online Oxford English Dictionary (OED), <https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.uwsp.edu>. Your report should total 2-3 double-spaced pages, written in your own words, with few or no quotations. A successful report will:

- Explain when, and from what source, the word entered the English language
- Describe non-sexual meanings of the word and explain how they have changed over time (rather than listing every single meaning, as the OED does, focus on the ones you find most significant or interesting)
- Identify when the word became associated with sexuality and explain how its sexual meanings have changed over time.
- Explain the word's cultural significance, as much as is possible from the information in the OED. For example, is/was the word associated with specific places or cultures? Has the word (or one of its meanings) become obsolete? Is/was it considered religious, legal, scientific, colloquial, derogatory, or obscene? Does it have different meanings for different groups?
- Discuss how the history of this word sheds light on, or is related to, interesting aspects of the history of sexuality.
- Be written in well-organized paragraphs, with effective topic sentences, free of technical errors. Include hyperlinks to the OED entry (or entries) that you used.

Review Essay

In an essay of 3-4 double-spaced pages, critically analyze and evaluate a scholarly article (or a scholarly book chapter) in the history of sexuality. The publication you analyze must be original peer-reviewed historical scholarship, based on research in primary sources, from at least one of the course subfields listed above, published after 1990, totaling at least twenty pages. A successful review essay will:

- Describe the question the author seeks to answer, any interpretations the author challenges, the author's evidence (primary sources), and the article's general structure
- Identify and explain the author's argument (not the same as the topic!)
- Critically evaluate the author's argument. You may wish to consider questions such as: how well does the evidence support the argument? Are there other possible explanations? What gets left out (there is always a lot that gets left out) and do those omissions weaken the article?
- Identify possible avenues for further research
- Be written in clear and effective prose with no technical errors
- Cite all sources in footnotes, using the Chicago (aka Turabian) note format. Here is a helpful guide: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Reacting to the Past: “After a Long Battle”

In the second unit of the course, you will take on the role of actual participant in Congressional debates over sexuality and the AIDS epidemic, 1982–85. “After a Long Battle” (AALB) is an immersive role-playing game in which each participant seeks to achieve individual and factional goals. You will read a variety of sources, complete short writing assignments, deliver speeches, and negotiate and strategize with other players (your classmates), who may or may not share your goals. To succeed, you will have to learn a great deal about the history of 1980s America, including controversies surrounding sexuality and disease as well as LGBT activism and community building.

Grades for the game will include the following components. Scoring will reflect your use of relevant source materials. Bonus points may be awarded for achieving objectives specified in your role sheet.

- Quizzes on the assigned readings
- One short paper
- The quality and persuasiveness of public speeches, and/or private negotiating
- A participation score that reflects your engagement in the game
- A short reflection paper reviewing your experience in the game

Historiographic Essay

By the end of the semester you will write a historiographic essay (also known as a literature review) of 6-8 double-spaced pages. Your essay will analyze and evaluate at least four interrelated scholarly (peer-reviewed) articles or book chapters. The publications you analyze must be at least twenty pages long, must be written by different authors, and must come from the same subfield (see above). The publications must focus on historical topics: do not use publications about contemporary issues. No more than one of the publications may have been published before 1990.

A successful essay will:

- Describe the topic and argument of each scholarly publication you analyze
- Compare and contrast the publications with one another (how you do this will vary, but possible factors include the questions each author addresses, areas of emphasis, uses of evidence, points of view, relationship to previous scholarship, etc.)
- Critically assess the publications’ strengths and weaknesses
- Identify possible avenues for further research
- Be written in clear and effective prose with no technical errors
- Cite all sources in footnotes, using the Chicago (aka Turabian) note format. Here is a helpful guide: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

Slack

We will use the Slack app for a number of activities. Please use the following link to join the class workspace. Then go to the “Introductions” channel and tell us something about yourself.

https://join.slack.com/t/hist3832020/shared_invite/enQtOTA4NDQzODMxMjgwLTkwMjQ0MjhlMzI1ZmIzZmViZDZjMTI0MjUzNWY2ZWRjZWJmMDk1MzI2MGI3MzdmOTdiMjUzN2NmZmRlNmNiZjQ

You should also download the Slack app on whichever mobile devices you would like to use during the course (either in or out of class): <https://slack.com/get>.

Students with Disabilities

I will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Any student requesting such accommodation must first meet with UWSP Disability Services staff. That meeting should take place as early in the semester as possible. No accommodation will be granted until I receive and agree to a formal plan approved by Disability Services.

Desire2Learn (D2L)

All course handouts, supplementary readings, etc. will be posted at <http://www.uwsp.edu/d2l>.

Academic Integrity

Cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will be formally reported following the policies laid out in UWSP's Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures. Plagiarism consists of submitting work created by someone else as your own. For more information on academic integrity, please ask me or consult <http://library.uwsp.edu/Guides/VRD/plagiarism.htm>. Students found to have committed academic misconduct will receive an F for the course.

Course Schedule: All readings must be completed before the Monday of the week indicated.

Week 1

Wednesday, Jan. 22: introductions

Early American Sexualities

Week 2

Monday, Jan. 27

- Read this syllabus
- Join the Slack class workspace (see above) and download the Slack app
- Weeks, "The Social Construction of Sexuality," MPHAS 2-9
- Wrathall, "Reading the Silences around Sexuality," MPHAS 16-24
- C&S, preface

Wednesday, Jan. 29

- Read Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality," MPHAS 348-56.
- Look up three of the following terms in the OED. Try to determine each word's origin, how/when it acquired a sexual meaning, and how that meaning has shifted over time:
 - Faggot
 - Inversion
 - Lesbian
 - Punk
 - Queer
 - Straight

Online discussion: etymologies

- Look up three additional terms relevant to sexual history. Share what you find with the group.

Week 3:

Monday, Feb. 3: indigenous sexualities

Etymology report #1 due on Canvas

- Read MPHAS 26-39, 56-68
- Read excerpts from Greer, ed., *Jesuit Relations*

Wednesday, Feb. 5: adaptation and innovation

- Miles, excerpt from *Ties that Bind* (2015)
- Peterson, "Great Lakes Métis" (1978)

Online discussion: Ho Chunk marriages

- Read excerpts from *Mountain Wolf Woman*

Week 4

Monday, Feb. 10: Anglo American beginnings

- MPHAS 70-80, 92-105

Wednesday, Feb. 12: Sex in early modern print culture

- Lyons, "Mapping an Atlantic Sexual Culture" (2003)

Online discussion: porn and satire

- Excerpts from Cleland, *Memoirs of Fanny Hill* (1749)
- Foster, "Antimasonic Satire, Sodomy, and Eighteenth-Century Masculinity" (2003)

Week 5

Monday, Feb. 17: Sexual violence in early America

- Warren, "Cause of her Grief" (2007)
- Block, "Means of Sexual Coercion" (2006)
- MPHAS 47-56

Wednesday, Feb. 19: Revolutions and Constraints

- Godbeer, "Martyrdom to Venus" (2002)

Online discussion: evidence of abuse

- Bailey, "Leaving an Abusive Husband" (1815)
- MPHAS 109-12, 146-52

Charity and Sylvia

Week 6

Monday, Feb. 24: the Bryants and Drakes

Etymology report #2 due on Canvas

- C&S 1-15, 36-58

Wednesday, Feb. 26: Charity looks for love

- C&S 59-91

Online discussion: courting in the early republic

- C&S 92-109

Week 7

Monday, March 2: sex and marriage

- C&S 110-41
- MPHAS 112-19

Wednesday, March 4: family and community

- C&S 142-74
- MPHAS 214-29

Online discussion: illness, medicine, legacies

- C&S 175-203
- MPHAS 187-89, 201-13

Making Sexualities Modern

Week 8

Monday, March 9: Victorian bodies and passions

Review essay due on Canvas

- MPHAS 193-201, 229-37, 252-64

Wednesday, March 11: Regulation and resistance

- MPHAS 238-44, 264-71, 273-87

Online discussion: pregnancy, childbirth, and control

- MPHAS 309-20, 414-17
- Excerpt of Freidenfelds, *Myth of the Perfect Pregnancy* (2020)

March 13–22: Spring Break

Week 9

Monday, March 23: Making gay male places

- MPHAS 345-48, 356-65
- Loftin, "Unacceptable Mannerisms" (2007)
- MPHAS 406-8

Wednesday, March 25: Making lesbian places

- Gutterman, "'House on the Borderland'" (2012)
- Davis and Kennedy, "Oral History and the Study of Sexuality" (1986)
- MPHAS 381-84

Online discussion: Compton's and Stonewall

- Watch *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (2005)
- MPHAS 419-21

After a Long Battle

Week 10: Immunity Lost

Monday, March 30

- Read AALB Game Book, 1-28
- Read excerpts from *And the Band Played On*, by Randy Shilts.
- Read "Epidemiologic Notes and Reports," from MMWR (1981)

Wednesday, April 1: The science of immune deficiency

- Read Altman, "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals," *New York Times* (3 July 1981), <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/03/us/rare-cancer-seen-in-41-homosexuals.html>

No online discussion: connect with allies on Slack

Week 11

Monday, April 6: Waxman hearing (April 13, 1982)

- Watch excerpt of *The Normal Heart* (1985), <https://youtu.be/3YuV6LedUiI>

Wednesday, April 8: Lobbying session (March 1983)

- Read Shilts, "The Strange, Deadly Diseases that Strike Gay Men," *San Francisco Chronicle* (13 May 1982), <https://www.sfgate.com/health/article/Randy-Shilts-warned-early-about-baffling-2795293.php>.
- Read Altman, "Clue Found in Homosexuals Precancer Syndrome," *New York Times* (18 June 1982) <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/06/18/us/clue-found-on-homosexuals-precancer-syndrome.html>.
- Watch CBS News clip (12 June 1982), <https://youtu.be/X23vKiBE88E>
- Watch Larry Kramer interview (28 Sept. 1982), <https://youtu.be/Lda9YhshTV4>
- Read Kramer, "1,112 and Counting," *New York Native* (14 March 1983), http://bilerico.lgbtqnation.com/2011/06/larry_kramers_historic_essay_aids_at_30.php

No online discussion: connect with allies on Slack

Week 12

Monday, April 13: Lobbying session (March 1984)

- Read Pear, "Health Chief Calls AIDS Battle 'No. 1 Priority.'" *New York Times* (25 May 1983), <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/25/us/health-chief-calls-aids-battle-no-1-priority.html>
- Read "The Denver Principles" (June 1983), MPHAS 451-52

Wednesday, April 15: Congressional session (Feb. 8, 1985)

No online discussion: connect with allies on Slack

Week 13

Monday, April 20: Lobbying session (July 1985)

Wednesday, April 22: Lobbying session and final vote (July 1985)

No online discussion: connect with allies on Slack

Week 14

Monday, April 27: AALB debriefing

AALB essays due

- Watch *How to Survive a Plague* (2012)

Wednesday, April 29: Marital matters

AALB reflections due

- MPHAS 412-14, 484-92, 497-505
- Other readings TBA

Online discussion TBA

Week 15

Monday, May 4: Sexual identities on the move

- MPHAS 494-97, 506-15
- Leland, "A Spirit of Belonging, Inside and Out," *New York Times* (2006), <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/08/fashion/08SPIRIT.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>
- Shanese, "I'm Queer And Indigenous, NOT Two Spirit," *Qveen.TO* (2019), <https://qveen.to/queer-indigenous-not-two-spirit/>

Wednesday, May 6

- Readings TBA

Final historiographic essay due at end of final exam period: Tuesday, May 12, 12:30-2:30 p.m.