HIST/WGSS 3560: Constructions of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in U.S. History
University of Connecticut, Spring 2015
Professor Micki McElyea, Department of History
Monday & Wednesday, 4:40-5:55
Castleman Building, Room 201

Office Hours/Contact Info:
McElyea, Monday 9:00-10:30, and by appointment 226 Wood Hall
e-mail: micki.mcelya@uconn.edu

Course Description and Expected Outcomes:
This course examines the development, interconnections, and complexities of race, gender, and sexuality in U.S. history from European conquest to the present. After laying solid historical and theoretical foundations, we will consider a series of case studies that reveal how these categories are produced and contested over time while paying particular attention to political, social, economic, and cultural mechanisms of power, oppression, and resistance. We will analyze a variety of texts and primary sources, including legal and governmental documents, memoir, documentary and feature film, literature, material culture, visual cultures, and historical and theoretical works.

Students in this class will:
• Understand race, gender, and sexuality as components of identity and experience that have multiple histories
• Explore race, gender, and sexuality (along with class, region, and nation) as interdependent categories of identity, experience, and analysis
• Become more conversant with a range of historical and theoretical approaches to the study of race, gender, and sexuality
• Work with a variety of historical documents
• Hone critical reading, verbal expression, and writing skills

Requirements and Class Policies:

Content: The material discussed in this class engages with complex and sensitive issues concerning bodies, power, sex, and violence. You should be aware that some material might be troubling or upsetting. This awareness also means that you should come to all discussions with the understanding that other people might view the material in different ways; we must always be mindful and respectful of one another.

Participation: This course is a mix of lecture and discussion. Your success requires thoughtful participation and the completion of all readings and assignments. Each student is expected to attend every class meeting, to be on time, to have read completely and with care all assignments, and to engage actively and intelligently in our conversations. While attendance does not comprise a numerical part of your grade, it bears noting that you cannot participate if you are not in class.
The assignments are:

• This course has a good deal of **reading**, some of it complex and time consuming. You are expected to complete all of the readings for each day and be prepared to discuss them. Don’t worry if something doesn’t make sense—bring your questions and issues to the class for discussion—but make sure to always work your way through the readings.

• **Response papers** of no more and no fewer than two pages that engage the week’s readings and link them to the larger themes of the course will be due most weeks in class. I will provide prompts for the first three responses, after that you will respond in a manner of your choosing. Barring extenuating circumstances, late responses will not be accepted after the due date, nor will I accept e-mailed responses. I expect response papers to reflect a thorough reading of the assignments and thoughtful consideration of ideas, problems, and/or issues they raise in the context of the course as a whole and our discussions. These will be graded on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest possible grade. Over the course of the term, you can drop one response paper grade, meaning you can choose not to do one or I will drop your lowest grade. Please see the Response Paper Guidelines for more information on content expectations and grading.

• **Midterm and Final Examinations** on essay questions provided in advance.

**Grades will be calculated in the following manner:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Final</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Accessibility:** To request accommodations for a disability you must first contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) CSD engages in an interactive process with each student and reviews requests for accommodations on an individualized, case-by-case basis. Depending on the nature and functional limitations of a student’s documented disability, he/she may be eligible for academic accommodations. CSD collaborates with students and their faculty to coordinate approved accommodations and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability for which you wish to request academic accommodations and have not contacted the CSD, please do so as soon as possible. The CSD is located in Wilbur Cross, Room 204 and can be reached at (860) 486-2020 or at csd@uconn.edu. Detailed information regarding the process to request accommodations is available on the CSD website at [www.csd.uconn.edu](http://www.csd.uconn.edu).

**Academic Integrity and Misconduct:** I take academic honesty and integrity very seriously, and expect everyone in my classes to do so as well. Plagiarism, which includes the misrepresentation of another’s ideas as your own as well as copying word-for-word from another source, will not be tolerated. Any case of misconduct will be handled in accordance with the guidelines established in *The Student Code* as they are outlined at: [http://www.dosa.uconn.edu/student_code_appendixa.html](http://www.dosa.uconn.edu/student_code_appendixa.html).

**The Unplugged Classroom:** You may not use computers or cell phones during lecture or discussion—please leave them at home or in your bag. If a disability necessitates computer use
for note taking, documentation from CSD must be provided and I may ask that you sit with other computer users.

**University Policy on Final Exams:** From the Dean of Students—“Finals week for Spring 2015 takes place from Monday, May 4th through Saturday, May 9th. Students are required to be available for their final and/or complete and assessment during the stated time. If you have a conflict with this time you must visit the Dean of Students Office to discuss the possibility of rescheduling your final. DOS is REQUIRING that students who have a conflict about which they have or should have had advanced notice (bunched finals, religious obligation, legal/medical appointments…) MUST seek permission to reschedule their assessment NO LATER THAN April 24th. Please note that vacations, previously purchased tickets or reservations, graduations, social events, misreading the finals schedule and over-sleeping are not viable excuses for missing a final. If you think that your situation warrants permission to reschedule, please contact the Dean of Students Office, Wilbur Cross Building, 2nd floor, room 203 to meet with a staff member.”

**Readings:**
The following books are required for the course. All are available for purchase at the Co-op and all but *Map of Ireland* are on reserve at Homer Babbidge Library.


In addition, students are required to read a number of articles, chapters, and documents marked on the syllabus with a (*) that can be found on electronic reserve via HuskyCT. Full citations for these readings appear at the end of the syllabus.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**GETTING STARTED:**
**HISTORICIZING & THEORIZING RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY IN THE U.S.**

**Week One: Introductions**
W, 1/21 Introductions

**Week Two: Racial Formation, Sex, and Gender**
M, 1/26

W, 1/28
• Michael Messner, “Ah, Ya Throw Like a Girl,” (1992)

Response Paper #1 Due [prompt provided on Husky CT]

Week Three: Sexuality and Bringing it all together
M, 2/2
• Anne Fausto-Sterling, “Thinking About Homosexuality.” (2012)
• Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” (1993)

W, 2/4

Response Paper #2 Due [prompt provided on Husky CT]

Week Four
M, 2/9
Joanne Meyerowitz, How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States (2004)—Intro through Chapter 5

W, 2/11 Joanne Meyerowitz, How Sex Changed—finish

Response Paper #3 Due [prompt provided on Husky CT]

CASE STUDY #1: CONTACT AND COLONIAL FANTASIES
Week Five
M, 2/16
• Letter from John Rolfe to Sir Thomas Dale (1614)
• Selections from John Smith’s Generall Historie of Virginia (1624)

W, 2/18
Screening: clips from Disney’s Pocahontas (1995) and The New World (2005)

Response Paper #4 Due [No prompt, design your own]

CASE STUDY #2: SLAVERY, SEGREGATION AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY
Week Six:
M, 2/23
• Thomas Jefferson, “Query XIV: Laws,” from his Notes on the State of Virginia (1781-1787)
• “The Memoirs of Madison Hemings,” (1873)

W, 2/25

Response Paper # 5 Due

Week Seven:
M, 3/2 MIDTERM

W, 3/4
• Meghan E. Irons, Shelley Murphy, and Jenna Russell, “History Rolled in on a Yellow School Bus,” (2014)

No response paper due this week

Week Eight:
M, 3/9
Stephanie Grant, Map of Ireland, A Novel (2009)—pages TBA
W, 3/11
Stephanie Grant, Map of Ireland, A Novel—finish

Response Paper #6 Due

Week Nine: SPRING BREAK!

Week Ten:
M, 3/23
Screening: Sex and Justice: Anita Hill vs. Clarence Thomas (1993)

W, 3/25
• Patricia J. Williams, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Katha Pollit, and Jessica Valenti, “Twenty Years Later ... We Still Believe Anita Hill,” (2011)
• Jeffrey Toobin, “Partners,” (2011)

Response Paper #7 Due

CASE STUDY #3: FOREIGN RELATIONS, EMPIRE, AND THE MILITARY
Week Eleven:
M, 3/30
• Screening: Corpus, A Home Movie for Selena (1999)
W, 4/1
• José Limón, “The Other American South: Southern Culture and Greater Mexico,” (1998)
• Deborah Paredez, “Selenidad and Latinidad in the 1990s,” (2009)

Response Paper #8 Due

Week Twelve:
M, 4/6

W, 4/8

Response Paper #9 Due

Week Thirteen:
M, 4/13

W, 4/15
Anthony Swofford, *Jarhead*—finish
• Anthony Swofford, “Prologue” to *Hotels, Hospitals, and Jails: A Memoir* (2012)

Response Paper #10 Due

CASE STUDY #4: MARRIAGE

Week Fourteen:
M, 4/20
Nancy Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (2002)—Intro through Chapter 6

W, 4/22
Nancy Cott, *Public Vows*—finish

Response Paper #11 Due

Week Fifteen:
M, 4/27
• George Chauncey, “The Present as History,” (2005)
• Julian Bond Testimony before the New Jersey State Legislature, (2009)
W, 4/29
• Siobhan B. Somerville, “Queer Loving,” (2005)
• Explore the webpage for Against Equality [http://www.againstequality.org]

Final Exam (preliminary time): Tuesday, May 5, 3:30-4:45

Course Bibliography


José Limón, American Encounters: Greater Mexico, the United States, and the Erotics of Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).


Patricia J. Williams, et. al., “Twenty Years Later ... We Still Believe Anita Hill,” The Nation (October 24, 2011): 11-17.