HIST/WGSS 3560: Constructions of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in U.S. History
University of Connecticut, Fall 2013
Professor Micki McElya
Department of History
Monday & Wednesday, 3:35-4:45, Beach Hall 443

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McElya, Monday 1:00-3:00, and by appointment
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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• Work with a variety of historical documents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:

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:**

- Participation = 15%
- Response Papers = 40%
- Midterm = 20%
- Final = 25%

**Accessibility:** To request accommodations for a disability you must first contact the Center for Students with Disabilities. Located in room 204 of the Wilbur Cross Building, you can also reach them at 860.486.2020, csd@uconn.edu, or on the web at http://www.csd.uconn.edu. You must have the appropriate forms from this office before we can arrange accommodations.

**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.

**Computers:** You *may not* use computers in the classroom—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 will ask that you sit with other computer users.

**Cell phones:** I don’t want to see or hear them in class. Please turn ringers off before we start and no texting!

**University Policy on Final Exams:** “Finals week for fall 2013 takes place from Monday, December 9th, through Sunday, December 15th. Students are required to be available for their exam and/or complete any assessment during the time stated in the Registrar's Office schedule. If you have a conflict with this time you must visit the Office of Student Services and Advocacy to discuss the possibility of rescheduling this final. OSSA REQUIRES advance notice from students who have prior knowledge of a conflict (i.e., bunched finals, religious obligation, legal/medical appointments…) Students must come to OSSA to seek permission to reschedule their final NO LATER THAN Friday, November 29th. Please note that vacations, previously purchased tickets or reservations, graduations, social events, misreading the assessment schedule and over-sleeping are not viable reasons for rescheduling a final. If you think that your situation warrants permission to reschedule, please contact the Office of Student Services and Advocacy (2nd floor Wilbur Cross) 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 copies 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 and Racial Formation**

- **M, 8/26** Introductions

- **W, 8/28**

**Week Two: Sex and Gender**

- **M, 9/2** Labor Day! No class.

- **W, 9/4**

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

**Week Three: Sexuality and Bringing it all together**

- **M, 9/9**

- **W, 9/11**

**Response Paper #2 Due [prompt provided on Husky CT]**
Week Four
M, 9/16
Joanne Meyerowitz, How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States (2004)—Intro through Chapter 5

W, 9/18
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, 9/23
• Selections from John Smith’s *Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624)
• Letter from John Rolfe to Sir Thomas Dale (1614)

W, 9/25
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, 10/30
• Thomas Jefferson, “Query XIV: Laws,” from his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781-1787)
• “The Memoirs of Madison Hemings,” (1873)

W, 10/2
*Response Paper #5 Due*

Week Seven:
M, 10/7
Midterm Exam

W, 10/9

Week Eight:
M, 10/14

W, 10/16
• 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 #6 Due**

**CASE STUDY #3: FOREIGN RELATIONS, EMPIRE, AND THE MILITARY**

**Week Nine:**  
M, 10/21  

W, 10/23  
- José Limón, “The Other American South: Southern Culture and Greater Mexico,” (1998)  

**Response Paper # 7 Due**

**Week Ten:**  
M, 10/28  
- Screening: *Carmen Miranda: Bananas is my Business* (1995)

W, 10/30  

**Response Paper #8 Due**

**Week Eleven:**  
M, 11/4  

**Note Early Due Date! Response Paper #9 Due**

W, 11/6  
- *Class Cancelled – McElya at Early Modern Masculinities Colloquium*

**Week Twelve:**  
M, 11/11  

W, 11/13  
- Anthony Swofford, *Jarhead* continued  

**Response Paper #10 Due**

**CASE STUDY #4: MARRIAGE**

**Week Thirteen:**  
M, 11/18  

W, 11/20  
- Nancy Cott, *Public Vows* continued

**Response Paper #11 Due**

**Week Fourteen:** Monday, 11/25 – Friday, 11/29—Thanksgiving Break, No Class!

**Week Fifteen:**  
M, 12/2  
• Julian Bond Testimony before the New Jersey State Legislature, (2009)
• Hollingsworth v Perry (2013), pages TBA
• United States v. Windsor (2013), pages TBA

W, 12/4
• Siobhan B. Somerville, “Queer Loving,” (2005)
• Explore the webpage for Against Equality

Final Exam (preliminary time): Wednesday, December 12, 3:30-5:30, in our regular classroom

Course Bibliography


