**Course Description**

This course introduces you to basic tools and concepts in the sociological study of sexuality. We start with the assumption that humans are sexual beings and that our histories, cultures, genders, races, classes, and other social factors shape our sexualities. Our broad goal for the semester is to understand how social factors influence the ways we think about and experience sexual desire, behaviors, and identities. We will investigate how norms regarding sexuality are rooted in structures of power and how power is negotiated within the realm of sexuality. The course is divided into four sections, each of which is grounded in systematic empirical studies and examples. First, we ask what sexuality is and how it is studied and measured by social scientists. Second, we consider the ways social ideologies and social structures shape our ideas about sex, sexuality, and sexual bodies. Third, we explore how people develop senses of themselves sexually as individuals and in communities. Finally, we examine sexuality in the broader context of social institutions, including education, law and social policy, medicine, and the media.

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, research, etc.).

**Learning Goals**

By the conclusion of this course students will:

- Be familiar with a range of ways of thinking about and conceptualizing sexuality
- Be familiar with the assumptions underlying different theoretical approaches to the study of sexuality
- Be able to articulate, verbally and in writing, how researchers in the United States have tried to measure aspects of sexuality and what the strengths and weaknesses are of their approaches
- Understand how (and why) people’s assumptions and ways of learning about sex and sexuality have changed over time in the United States
• Be able to describe verbally and in writing how people learn about sex and sexuality and provide an example of a tool that might help in these processes
• Be able to articulate how different communities shape people experiences of sex and sexuality
• Have had the opportunity to reflect on how the materials covered in this class relate to the ways broader groups students are a part of (families, friends, campus organizations, etc) think and talk about sex and sexuality

Course Materials

The following books are available in the university bookstore, and through the library.


Other required readings are available through LATTE or online.

Course Requirements

10% Attendance and Class Participation
25% Reading Response Assignments (5 Posts worth 5% each)
15% Discussion Facilitation Assignment (Handout, Discussion)
50% Paper Paper/Presentation Assignment (Mid-term paper & Final paper/presentation)

100%

10% Attendance and Class Participation
This is not a lecture class but primarily a discussion seminar based on your careful reading and preparation for class. To that end, everyone is expected to attend and participate actively in class discussion. You can earn up to 10 points for participating in class discussions (in-person and on LATTE) over the course of the semester. Your class attendance counts as 5 points towards your final grade. You have one excused absence (you do not need to tell me what’s going on) but after that you will lose one point for every missed class. The only absences after that will not influence your grade are those for religious holidays that you email me about at least one week in advance. If you are too ill to attend class and must miss more than one class during the semester due to illness, I will excuse the absence only with a note from your doctor.

25% Reading Response Assignments (5 posts worth 5% each)
Over the course of the semester, you are expected submit 5 short (one page) reading responses to LATTE. These responses must be posted to LATTE in the correct discussion forum by 5 p.m. on the Monday before the class(es) we are scheduled to discuss those readings.
You are encouraged to make connections between course readings and class discussions. Each response should pose a discussion question that we may use to explore the readings in class. You should refer to at least two books or articles assigned for that week.

Your response needs to make clear that you read the material and grasped the central arguments. If you submit each of these 5 entries on time as outlined, you will receive the full 25 points. You will lose points for each entry you do not complete thoroughly and on time. I will only accept responses that are posted to LATTE by 5 p.m. on Monday (for responses to readings due Tuesday or Thursday of that week). Late responses cannot be accepted. You cannot turn in responses via email, in class, or after class is over. Please plan now to ensure you will not run out of time to submit these assignments as they cannot be made up.

15% Discussion Facilitation Assignment
Each student will co-facilitate part of a class discussion at least once during the semester. You can earn up to 15 points for facilitating class discussion. We will map out a schedule for facilitation assignments during the second week of class. Your goal in facilitating class discussion is to find a way to talk about the required reading that engages everyone, applies the ideas to their lives, is fun, and is comfortable. There are two parts to this assignment:
(1) Each team must create a 1 page handout (one side only) with (a) a brief overview of the key concepts of their assigned reading, (b) and a list of three discussion questions.
(2) Each team will facilitate a discussion (plan for 30 minutes). You may focus on your discussion questions, create games or exercises around key themes, read parts of texts out loud in class (or act them out), show film clips that illustrate central themes and might help students apply the ideas… be creative. You are encouraged to find ways to apply what we are learning to your life and the lives of your classmates in a way that makes this material real, relevant and worth reading.

50% Mid-term paper and Final Paper/Presentation Assignment (25% each)
You will complete two 5-7-page papers. The second paper will accompany the in-class presentation each student will construct for a date assigned during last two weeks of class. I will distribute detailed instructions for each assignment well in advance of the deadline. I expect you to properly cite and reference any articles you refer to when completing your paper.

If you have any questions at any point, please do not hesitate to ask. You are encouraged to visit the Writing Center for additional support and guidance.
(http://www.brandeis.edu/programs/writing/writingcenter/index.html)

All written work must be completed to receive a passing grade in this class

Final grades will be calculated using the following point distribution

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<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<td>94-99</td>
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<td>90-93</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>67-69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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* Please remember that members of this class are straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, not sure... transgender, genderless, women and men... We are racially, ethnically, religiously, politically, culturally, and economically diverse. We are all in the process of learning, developing, and becoming, and as a class we want to respect and honor those processes. We can do this by listening carefully to each other, making an effort to include everyone, letting each other try out ideas we are not certain about, disagreeing respectfully, and striving to discuss gender and sexuality in as mature a manner as possible. Sexuality is both highly personal and highly politicized - the reason why many of us were taught not to discuss it at the dinner table! Some of what we read and discuss will likely make you uncomfortable. I ask you to be patient, to reserve judgment, and to remember the commitment Brandeis makes in its mission statement to be “a center of open inquiry and teaching.”

Communications:
The best way to contact me is using e-mail: lsmollin@brandeis.edu. I typically respond to e-mail within 48 hours. If you do not receive a response within this time frame, please check the address and resend your message. Any announcements regarding changes to the course plan, or emergencies that may require the rescheduling of class will be made through LATTE. If there are any changes to the course plan, I will also make an announcement in class.

University Policy on Academic Accommodations:
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. More information about policy and procedures relating to academic accommodations can be found at http://www.brandeis.edu/acserv/disabilities/undergradstudents.html.

University Policy on Academic Integrity:
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities (http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit some work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides (http://guides.library.brandeis.edu/c.php?g=301723).
**COURSE PLAN**

*(S)= Sexualities text *(L)= Available on LATTE

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**WEEK 1: Introduction to the Sociology of Sexualities**

**Thursday, August 25**

**WEEK 2**

**Tuesday, August 30**

- *(S)#1.1. Jackson, Stevi and Sue Scott. "Conceptualizing Sexuality"

**Thursday, September 1**

- *(S)#5.2. Seidman, Steven. "Critique of Compulsory Heterosexuality"

**WEEK 3: Contextualizing Contemporary Sexuality Studies**

**Tuesday, September 6**


**Thursday, September 8: NO CLASS**

**WEEK 5: Exploring the Intersections of Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality**

**Tuesday, September 20**


**Thursday, September 22**


**WEEK 6: Intra-Racial Rape in Black Communities: Contextualizing Sexual Violence**

**Tuesday, September 27 and Thursday, September 29**

→ In-class Film: No! The Rape Documentary

[No assignment/ no reading due * you may post in the discussion forum for class participation credit]

**WEEK 7: Sexual Identity and Communities**

**Tuesday, October 4: NO CLASS**

**Thursday, October 6**

- *(L)Brown-Saracino, Japonica. "From the Lesbian Ghetto to Ambient Community: The Perceived Costs and Benefits of Integration for Community"
- *(L)Moore, Mignon R. 2006. "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in
Black Lesbian Communities. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32(1):113-129

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 8</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, October 11 and Thursday, October 13</strong></td>
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<td>• Ward, Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men (first half Tue. and second half Thurs.)</td>
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<th>WEEK 9: Sexual Discourses and Sexual Health</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, October 18</strong></td>
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| • (S) #2.2. Carpenter, Laura. "The Ambiguity of "Having Sex"
| **Thursday, October 20** |

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<th>WEEK 10: Medicalization</th>
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<td>Optional film- View at home: <em>The Business of Being Born</em> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvlyvU_2GE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvlyvU_2GE</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, October 25:</strong> NO CLASS</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday, October 27</strong></td>
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| • (L) Women and Medicalization, Sociologists for Women in Society Fact Sheet

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<th>WEEK 11: Asexuality and Trans* Gender and Sexuality</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, November 1</strong></td>
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| • (S) #7.1 Carrigan, Mark. "There's More to Life than Sex?... Asexual Community"
• Film viewing (at home): *(A)Sexual* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4rdRQtsiTQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4rdRQtsiTQ) |
| **Thursday, November 3** |

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<th>WEEK 12: Learning about Sexuality</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, November 8 and Thursday, November 10</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fields, Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality (first half Tue., second half Thurs.)</td>
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<th>WEEK 13 Media, Popular Culture, and the Commercialization of Sex</th>
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<td><strong>Tuesday, November 15</strong></td>
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Thursday, November 17

→ **In-class group-work**: Be prepared to discuss your final project with your peers during class.

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**WEEK 14**

Tuesday, November 22 and Thursday, November 24: NO CLASS

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**WEEKS 15 and 16**

Tuesday, November 29  |  Thursday, December 1  |  Tuesday, December 6 (12/06: Last day of class)

→ Student Presentations