Course Description:
This course surveys important recent work in the history of sexuality, and seeks to understand sexuality both as a topic of historical inquiry and as a category of analysis. The focus of the seminar is on U.S. history (from the colonial period to the present), but the final paper may be written on any geographical region.

At this point in the development of this subfield, there is no way to tackle it other than selectively. I have assigned books that offer a range of approaches, and are also embedded in a variety of other subfields—not only women’s/gender history, but legal history, political history, urban history, family history, African American history, intellectual history, and the history of medicine are among some of the subfields represented below. For those of you who are serious about engaging the history of sexuality in your own research, a more extensive list of suggested reading is included at the end of this syllabus. (This is also necessarily selective.) If you would like me to point you in the direction of texts that are especially canonical, I am happy to do that (as long as you promise to maintain a healthy skepticism about the whole concept of a canon).


Likewise, you might also benefit from examining the following works before we begin, which will provide you with some of the theoretical underpinnings for the field. (Some of these selections will also surface in weekly reading.)
In no particular order:


--Gayle Salamon, entries for “Performativity” and “Identity and Identity Politics” in *LGBTQ America Today* (Greenwood Press, 2007).

--Siobhan Somerville, entry for “Queer” in *Keywords in American Cultural Studies* (NYU Press, 2007).


**Course Requirements:**

--You should come to class every week having read the assigned material closely and prepared to discuss it. Part of your preparation for class discussion will involve a one paragraph response to some aspect of the reading. (Ideally this would be a question or a series of questions, but it should be an authentic and carefully thought-out reaction—not something forced or dashed-off.) Please email me your response by 7 a.m. on Monday morning. This will help me to set the agenda for discussion.

--Once during the semester, you will be responsible for providing the class with a historiographical framework for discussion. This means you should read reviews if available, consult other important related works (see me if you need some hints), read state-of-the-field essays, and take a stab at suggesting how the week’s reading fits into a larger historiography. This should be presented to me the night before class in a 5-6 page essay. You will also have 15 minutes to
present your ideas orally to the class. In addition, you should pose 2 or 3 big questions for discussion.

---Finally, at the end of the semester (dean’s date), you will turn in a longer (15-20 page) paper. You have four options:

a) A historiographical essay.
   -or-

b) A research proposal.
   -or-

c) Select an established historian of sexuality and read their “canon.” Write an intellectual biography describing what you see as their central preoccupations, methodologies, and contributions. What are the questions their work raises and does not answer? How do they exemplify (or fail to exemplify) the broader development of the subfield? What is the relationship between earlier and later work? Note that in order for this exercise to be successful, you will need to select someone who has written at least two books and several articles in the field. (See me for suggestions.)
   -or-

d) Chose a “keyword” in the history of sexuality and write an essay describing its importance. How do you see your keyword as both reflecting and shaping a particular historical moment? See Raymond Williams, Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society (1976). Some good examples of keyword essays by historians include: Daniel Rodgers, Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics (1987); Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, “A Genealogy of Dependency: Tracing a Keyword of the U.S. Welfare State,” in Fraser, Justice Interruptus (1997); or, more recently, Kate Masur, “‘A Rare Phenomenon of Philological Vegetation’: The Word ‘Contraband’ and the Meanings of Emancipation in the United States,” Journal of American History 93 (March 2007).

**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1 (Introduction)**


--Lynn Hunt, “How Writing Leads to Thinking (and not the other way around),” Perspectives 48 (February 2010).
Week 2 (Early America)

Week 3 (Friendship)

Week 4 (Violence)

Week 5 (Identities?)

Week 6 (Law)
**I will only be with you for half of this session so your discussion of the book can be totally unrestrained!

Week 7 (Law II)

**Week 8 (Intellectual Histories of Sex)**

**Week 9 (Politics, Left and Right)**

**Week 10 (Medicine)**

**Week 11 (Family)**

**Week 12 (Sexual Liberation?)**
A Selective List of Some Important Works in the History of Sexuality

Readers/Anthologies/Special Issues
--Fout, John and Martha Tantillo, eds. *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender, and Race since the Civil War* (University of Chicago Press, 1993).
--William and Mary Quarterly 60 (January 2003). [Special issue on sexuality in early America.]

Articles
--Bardaglio, Peter. “Rape and the Law in the Old South: Calculated to Excite Indignation in Every Heart.” *Journal of Southern History* 60 (1994).
--Duggan, Lisa. “Queering the State.” *Social Text* 39 (Summer 1994).
--Hansen, Karen. “‘No Kisses is Like Yours’: An Erotic Friendship Between Two African American Women During the Mid-19th Century.” *Gender and History* (August 1995).

--Vicinus, Martha. “‘They Wonder to Which Sex I Belong:’ The Historical Roots of the Modern Lesbian Identity.” *Feminist Studies* 18 (Fall 1992).


**Books**


--Dean, Robert. Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).
--Duberman, Martin. Stonewall (Plume, 1994).

--Foster, Thomas. Sex and the Eighteenth Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America (Beacon, 2006).
--Friedman, Andrea. Prurient Interests: Gender, Democracy, and Obscenity in New York City, 1909-1945 (Columbia University Press, 2000.)
--Gutierrez, Ramon. When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846 (Stanford University Press, 1991).
--Herman, Ellen. Kinship by Design: A History of Adoption in America (University of Chicago, 2008).
--Hodes, Martha. White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the 19th Century South (Yale University Press, 1999).
--Horowitz, Helen. Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in 19th Century America (Knopf, 2002).
--Keire, Mara L. For Business and Pleasure: Red Light Districts and the Regulation of Vice in the United States (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).


