In 1889 G. Frank Lydston, a Chicago doctor made the bold assertion, “There is in every community of any size a colony of male sexual perverts; they are usually known to each other, and are likely to congregate together and characterized by effeminacy in voice, dress and manner.”

Lydston’s observation raises a number of questions that are central to this course: Were the men that Lydston described “homosexuals”? Were the behaviors he witnessed always considered deviant? Have men who engaged in same-sex sexual practices always gendered themselves or been gendered differently? How did those who loved and desired other of their sex define themselves? How have concepts of same-sex sexual identity and sexual community changed over the past 150 years? How has sexual variance been racialized and classed?

This course focuses on the history of same-sex sexuality in the United States from 1850 - present. We consider the changing meanings of same-sex desires, acts, identities, and relationships; the social definitions and regulations same-sex love and sexuality; the emergence of sexual subcultures, identities, and social movements; and sexual science. We will further explore how racial, geographic, class and gender identities informed same-sex sexuality. By focusing on same-sex sexuality, we examine how non-normative behaviors have been the site of social struggles, regulation and resistance and in so doing rethink the histories of our identities, desires and politics.
Aims:

- To introduce you to historical approaches to studying sexuality in American society.
  
  *How? By examining a range of relevant secondary and primary sources.*

- To encourage you to think deeply and critically about the central role of sexuality in shaping American culture.
  
  *How? By having an ongoing discussion about how sexuality has transformed America in the past.*

- To help you identify, analyze and respond to major topics in sexuality in a culturally sensitive and historically informed manner.
  
  *How? Through class discussions, reflective writing, structured written responses and course readings.*

Required Texts: The majority of course readings will be available for download from blackboard. Students must print these readings and bring them to class. Students should obtain copies of:

- Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues: A Novel*

Electronic Availability: I recognize that many of you probably use e-mail very frequently. However, I do not engage in detailed conversations over e-mail. For all *non-urgent* questions about assignments and for other class-related inquiries, please visit me during my office hours or make an appointment. Thank you for your careful attention to this matter.

Participation: Many classes will be conducted as discussions. Therefore, careful preparation in addition to lively and informed participation is essential to your success in this class. If you are uncomfortable talking in class or otherwise concerned about your participation, please consult with me by the second week of the course and we will find alternative means for you to participate.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all of their classes and are responsible for any work missed. Failure to attend four classes (without an excused absence) will result in a failing grade. Absences up until this point will lead to a warning and penalties to your participation and attendance grade. Class starts promptly and students who are late will receive warnings and grading penalties.

Grading: You must complete all assignments in order to pass this class.

- Attendance and Participation – 15%
- Questions and Responses – 35%
- Midterm Exam (take home) – 25% Due Monday, October 10.
- Final Exam (take home) – 25% Due Monday, December 12.

Discussion Questions: As part of your grade you will be required to prepare one comprehensive and substantive question for discussion sections every other week. Your submission will help shape the direction of our class discussion. It will also help develop your analytical and writing skills by allowing you to critically engage with our course readings. Your question therefore must be carefully edited, thought provoking, and relevant to the readings for that day. Please see the announcement on our course website for the discussion question schedule. The schedule will be posted on the second week of class. See the document on our course website for instructions on how to format your discussion questions.

When it is your turn to post discussion questions, your questions must be posted on our website by 10 pm the day before our class meets. This timing is to ensure that your peers are able to respond to your questions. Be sure to bring a copy of your discussion question with you to class.
Discussion Responses: As part of your grade you will be required to prepare one comprehensive and substantive response every other week. If you closely follow the instructions on how to write your response-paragraph, this assignment will help prepare you for constructing your take-home exams. Your submission also will help develop your analytical and writing skills by allowing you to critically engage with our course readings. To that end, you will answer one question posted online by your classmates every other week. This response must be carefully edited, thought provoking, and relevant to the readings for that day and to the question posted online. Please see the announcement on our course website for the discussion response schedule. The schedule will be posted during the second week of class. See the document on our course website for instructions on how to format your discussion responses.

When it is your turn to post discussion responses, you must post your response on our course website by noon the day after class meets.

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, Room 128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

Academic Integrity and plagiarism: All forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and will be treated as such in this course. Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Any suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand the definition of academic dishonesty and plagiarism. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introductions

Tuesday, August 30:

- Introduction
- Keywords: Gender and Sexuality
- “The Heterosexual Questionnaire” (1977)

Thursday, September 1: Introducing Social Construction Theory


Week 2:
Tuesday, September 6: Female Worlds

- Primary Source: “Letter from a concerned mother,” *Saturday Evening Post*, January 1870
- Karen V. Hansen, “‘No Kisses Like Youres:’ An Erotic Friendship between Two African American Women during the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *Gender & History* 7 (August 1995), 153-82.

Thursday, September 8: Masculinity and Intimacies

- Primary Source: Walt Whitman, “Calamus”

Week 3:

Tuesday, September 13: Medicalized Identities


Thursday, September 15: Identity Formation, Popular Culture and Science


Week 4:

Tuesday, September 20: Subcultures and Resistance

- Explore the following links from “The Emergence of Queer Networks in Bronzerville (1900-1940)”: http://outhistory.org/wiki/Bronzerville%27s_Vice_District http://outhistory.org/wiki/Ernest_Burgess:_Exploring_Sexual_Systems
Thursday, September 22: Urban Pleasures and Dangers


**Week 5:**

Tuesday, September 27: Urban Cultures and Spaces


Thursday, September 29: Rosh Hashanah – No Classes

**Week 6:**

Tuesday, October 4: Coming Out Under Fire


Thursday, October 6: Out in Culture

- Primary Source audio-clip: “Christine Jorgensen Reveals” (1957)

**Week 7:**

Tuesday, October 11: Straight States

Thursday, October 13: Southern (dis)Comfort (Part 1)


**Week 8:**

Tuesday, October 18: Butches and Their Discontents


Thursday, October 20: Stone Butch Blues


**Week 9:**

Tuesday, October 25: Queerness and Obscenity

- Primary Sources: “Boys Beware” (1961)

Thursday, October 27: Queerness and Respectability


**Week 10:**

Tuesday, November 1: African American Civil Rights and Queer Politics

Thursday, November 3: Queer Sixties


Week 11:

Tuesday, November 8: Trans-Politics


Thursday, November 10: Movements For Sexual Liberation


Week 12:

Tuesday, November 15: Sexual Revolutions

- Marc Stein, “Boutilier and the U.S. Supreme Court’s Sexual Revolution” Law and History Review 23, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 491-536.

Thursday, November 17: Gay Rights and the New Left


Week 13:
Tuesday, November 22: Lesbian Politics in the 1970s


Thursday, November 24: No Classes. Thanksgiving.

Week 14:

Tuesday, November 29: Right Wing Responses


Thursday, December 1: Spaces, Places / Pleasures, Dangers


Week 15:

Tuesday, December 6: Southern (Dis)comfort (Part 2)


Thursday, December 8: LAST DAY OF CLASS!

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How To Write Discussion Questions and Responses:

Successful discussion questions will enable you and your peers to think critically about the reading. The following are suggestions on how to prepare provocative and critical discussion questions. The sample question below begins with a statement that interprets the article. The question then offers examples or supporting quotations. Examples are followed by a series of short and provocative questions. The question helps us to understand the text better; analyzes how the text works and what it assumes; enables us to evaluate a text’s evidence or arguments; and highlights the implications of the text.

Sample question:
In “Sex Change and the Popular Press,” Joanne Meyerowitz presents the history of Christine Jorgensen, an ex-GI who sought to change her sex from male to female in the 1950s. Her article explores how transsexuals constructed their identity through popular culture and uses Jorgensen’s story to show how “marginalized subjects used available cultural forms to construct and reconfigure their own identities.” Meyerowitz tries to emphasize the agency of transsexuals in creating their own identity. Does Meyerowitz argue that anyone could easily change sex? Who or what does Meyerowitz think had the most power to construct a transsexual identity: doctors, individual seeking sex changes, or popular culture? Do you agree with her assessment? According to the gender norms of the 1950s, when did Christine Jorgensen become a woman?

Discussion Question Formatting Checklist:

Clarity:
_ Have I carefully proofread my question for typographical and grammatical errors?
_ Have I focused my question on a specific theme or topic that is essential to the text?
_ Will the question be clear to my intended reader?

Provides a context for analysis:
_ Have I begun with a statement that interprets the article?
_ Have I offered relevant examples or supporting quotations from the text?
_ Have I clarified essential terms and the meaning of what I am querying?
_ Is there an obvious relationship between my quotation and the questions I ask?

Allows for debate:
_ Have I presented a series of short and provocative questions?
_ Have I asked questions that are genuinely debatable and for which there are a number of possible answers?
_ Do my questions enable readers to analyze how the text works and what it assumes?
_ Do my questions enable readers to evaluate a text’s evidence or arguments?
_ Do my questions highlight the implications of the text?
_ Is this question relevant to the text and to our course discussion? Is it worth arguing about?

Comparative Questions (optional):
_ Do my questions allow us to relate a text to an issue we've been discussing in previous classes?
_ Do my questions makes us compare one text to another text?

Successful discussion responses will demonstrate critical thinking about the reading and the question. Your response should be 250-350 words in length (1-2 paragraphs). Each of your paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence that operates as the thesis of your paragraph. The topic sentence will tell the reader what you will argue and why that argument is significant. The topic sentence should be followed by evidence that supports the topic sentence. Be sure to introduce your evidence and explain why this evidence is relevant to your larger argument. Evidence should be followed by analysis that expands upon or clarifies the implications of the evidence. Finally, the paragraph should end with a sentence that either allows for an easy transition into the next paragraph or explains the broader significance of your overarching argument.

Discussion Response Formatting Checklist:
Your response should be between 250-350 words in length.

Clarity:
Have I carefully read and understood the discussion question?
Have I carefully proofread my own response for typos and grammatical errors?
Have I focused my response on a specific theme or topic that is essential to the question or the text?
Will my response be clear to my intended reader?

Content:
Have I begun my response with a thesis statement?
Is my thesis well developed and clearly focused?
Does my thesis acknowledge the complexity of the question itself?
Have I offered relevant examples and supporting quotations from the texts?
Have I explained the significance of my examples or supporting quotations to the overall argument?
Have I clarified essential terms and the meaning of what I am arguing?
Have I kept narrative and description to the minimum needed for analysis?
Does my conclusion emerge logically from my argument and evidence?