



Feminist Sexual Politics in Historical Perspective

754 Schermerhorn Extension
Wednesdays, 4:10-6:00pm

Dr. Kirsten Leng
kl2730@columbia.edu

Office Hours: TBD
757 Schermerhorn Extension



Course Description

Why, and in what ways, has sex been a central issue for feminism throughout its history? How have feminist attitudes towards sex changed over time, and how did attitudes vary amongst feminists themselves? What connections did feminists make between sexual reform, women's rights, and broader social, political, and economic change? And what are the legacies of past feminist sexual politics for the present day?

This course addresses these questions by exploring the history of feminist sexual politics in Europe over the course of the "long nineteenth century," that is, between the years 1789 and 1918, and will focus on developments in Britain, France, and Germany. We will examine feminists' writings on and activism surrounding sex and sexuality to understand how definitions of "sex," "feminism," and "sexual politics" changed over time, and how issues of class and race shaped feminist sexual politics. We will also analyze contradictions, tensions and continuities within diverse feminist approaches to sexuality, and assess similarities and differences amongst feminists from different national backgrounds. Furthermore, by adopting a focus on feminism and sexuality, this course offers a unique lens on the major "world historical" events of modern European history.



Requirements and Evaluation

Participation: 30%

Students are expected not only to complete the readings, but also to participate in class discussions. If for any reason a student is unable to participate in this manner, s/he should contact me as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements. Additionally, each student will be responsible for leading discussion of one week's worth of reading. S/he will develop five questions to guide class discussions. These questions should be emailed to the group *at least* one day in advance of class to guide our discussions. The rest of the class is then responsible for reading the questions, informally preparing responses, and bringing at least two questions of their own to class for discussion. Thus, even when not presenting each student should bring two questions for discussion each week.

Written Work: 70%

- Two Short Essays:
 - i. Essay 1, 5-6 pages (20%)—Due October 9
 - ii. Essay 2, 5-6 pages (20%)—Due November 13
- Take-Home Final Exam (30%): Exact details TBD. The Take Home Final will be due December 12 at 5pm EST via email.

Readings

Each week, we will read a combination of primary and secondary sources related to the theme at hand. The readings are complications of short selections from an array of sources. It is imperative that everyone completes the readings, every week, both to ensure individual comprehension and to foster vibrant discussion. There is one required textbook for the course (see below). All other readings are available on library course reserves.

Required:

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1885-1914* (Penguin Books, 1995)

Writing Resources

I encourage you to meet with me to workshop your papers. For further assistance, please also consult the Writing Center at 310 Philosophy, MC 4995 (see: <http://www.college.columbia.edu/core/uwp/writing-center>).

A Note on Plagiarism

Please use Chicago-style footnotes and bibliographic citations in all essays. The *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Edition (2010) is available online via CLIO. Remember: online sources must be cited! Academic honesty is taken seriously, and Columbia College rules require that all suspected infractions be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards (OJA) for disciplinary review. The Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity can be found at <http://www.college.columbia.edu/faculty/resourcesforinstructors/academicintegrity/statement>.

Students with Disabilities

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services. More information on the Disability Services registration process is available online at www.health.columbia.edu/ods. Registered students must present an accommodation letter to me as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All discussion will remain confidential. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability are invited to contact Disability Services for a confidential discussion at (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY) or by email at disability@columbia.edu.

Syllabus

Wednesday, September 4: Introduction

- Introduction to Course and its Objectives, Class Structure
- “What is ‘sex’?” “What is feminism?”
- Setting the scene: Why Europe? Why the 19th Century? Why begin in France?

Wednesday, September 11: Saint-Simonian feminism in France and Owenite feminism in Britain, 1820s-1830s: Women’s rights, Sexual Reform, and Social Change among ‘Utopian’ Socialists

Primary Sources

- Selected articles from “Tribune des Femmes,” in Claire Goldberg Moses and Leslie Wahl Rabine, *Feminism, Socialism and French Romanticism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993)

Secondary Sources

- Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984), Chs. 3 and 4

Wednesday, September 18: Utopianism as lived reality: cleavages of sex and class in Utopian and Popular Working-Class Movements, 1840s-1850s

Primary Sources

- Catherine Barmby, “The Demand for the Emancipation of Woman,” in Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*
- Articles by Sarah Leatherbarrow, Susanna Inge, and anonymous from The Northern Star, in *Women and Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century Vol. I: Specific Controversies*, edited by Mike Saunders (London: Routledge, 2001)

Secondary Sources

- Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), Introduction, Ch. 2, Ch. 6
- Anna Clark, “A Difficult Ideal: Domesticity in Popular Culture and Practice,” in *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995): 248-263

Wednesday, September 25: A Grave Social Problem? Prostitution, State Regulation, and Civil Society c. 1860-1870

Primary Sources

- Ellen Vokes, “Unjustly accused of prostitution!” in *Victorian Women*, 423-428

Secondary Sources

- Frank Mort, “Female Sexuality” and “Male Desire” in *Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2000): 60-67
- Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), Introduction, Ch. 1

Wednesday October 2: British Women's Campaigns against the state regulation of prostitution and their aftermath, 1870s-1880s

Primary Sources

- Articles by the Ladies National Association, in Sheila Jeffreys, ed. *The Sexuality Debates* (London: Routledge, 1987)
- Articles by Josephine Butler, Catherine Booth, and Elizabeth Blackwell, in Lesley Hall, ed. *Outspoken Women: An Anthology of women's writing on sex, 1870-1969* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Secondary Sources

- Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, Chs. 5 and 7
- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Sexuality and the Early Feminists* (New York: New Press, 1995), Ch. 3

Wednesday, October 9: The International Abolitionist Movement: The Spread of Agitation against the State Regulation of Prostitution Across Europe, 1870s-1900

*****Essay 1 due*****

Primary Sources

- Anna Pappritz, "Are there born Prostitutes? [Gibt es geborene Prostitutierte?]" *Der Abolitionist* 2, no. 8 (1903): 63-67 *See Courseworks "Files and Resources"
- Ghénia Avril de Sainte-Croix, in *Feminisms of the Belle Époque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, edited by Jennifer R. Waelti-Walters and Steven C. Hause (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1994): 169-176
- Case Studies of Belle Époque Prostitutes, in *Feminisms of the Belle Époque: A Historical and Literary Anthology*, 177-183

Secondary Sources

- Kerstin Wolff, "Herrenmoral: Anna Pappritz and Abolitionism in Germany," *Women's History Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 225-237
- Anne Summers, "Which Women? What Europe? Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation," *History Workshop Journal* 62 (Autumn 2006): 214-231.
- Christine Machiels, Dealing with the Issue of Prostitution: Mobilizing Feminisms in France, Switzerland and Belgium (1875-1920), *Women's History Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 195-205

Wednesday, October 16: "Is Marriage a Failure?" Feminists Debate the Fate of Marriage

Primary Sources

- Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage, and Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Women* (London: George Redway, 1897): 138-149
- Annie Besant and Jane Hume Clapperton in *OsW*, 13-15
- Louise-Marie Compain, selection from *L'Un vers l'autre*, in *Feminisms of the Belle Époque*, 202-210
- *The Late Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts* (London: Routledge, 1998): 576-86

Secondary Sources

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 4

Wednesday, October 23: New Women, New Rules? Sex and Subjectivity enter public discourse, 1890s-1900s

Primary Sources

- Selections from *The Late Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts, Vol. II*, edited by Ann Heilmann (Routledge 1998)
- Helene Stöcker, “The Modern Woman [Die moderne Frau],” in *Die Liebe und Die Frauen* (J. C. C. Brunns’ Verlag, 1906): 19-23 *See Courseworks “Files and Resources”

Secondary Sources

- Karen Offen, “Feminist Challenges and Antifeminist Responses, 1890-1914,” in *European Feminisms 1700-1950* (Stanford University Press, 2000): 188-196
- Mary Louise Roberts, “The New Woman,” in *Disruptive Acts: the new woman in fin-de-siècle France* (University of Chicago, 2002): 19-28
- Elaine Showalter, “The New Woman,” *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the fin-de-siècle* (New York: Penguin, 1990): 38-58

Wednesday, October 30: Rethinking Female [Heterosexual] Desire: Feminism, Sexual Expression, and Free Love

Primary Sources

- August Bebel, *Woman in the Past, Present, and Future*, trans. H. B. Adams Walther (London: Modern Press, 1885), 43-50
- Havelock Ellis, “The Sexual Impulse in Women.” *American Journal of Dermatology* 6, no. 3 (March 1902): 1-12.
- Jane Clapperton, Annie Besant, and Elizabeth Blackwell in *OsW*, 17-19
- Helene Stöcker, “On the Reform of Sexual Ethics [Zur Reform der sexuellen Ethik],” *Mutterschutz* 1, no. 1 (1905): 3-12 *See Courseworks “Files and Resources”

Secondary Sources

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 7
- Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and her enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930* (Pandora Press, 1985), Ch. 5

Wednesday, November 6: Birth Control: A Feminist Campaign?

Primary Sources

- Jane Hume Clapperton and Annie Besant in *OsW*, 31-33
- Frances Swiney, Maud Churton Braby, Cicely Hamilton, Margaret Stephens, Lucy Re-Bartlett, Christabel Pankhurst, Mary Scharlieb, Working Mothers, and Stella Browne, in *OsW*, 73-77
- Max Marcuse, “Survey of Abortion and Birth Control Methods,” Germany 1913, in *European Women: A Documentary History, 1789-1945*, edited by Eleanor S. Riemer and John C. Fout (New York: Schocken Books, 1980): 206-210
- Madeleine Pelletier on the right to an abortion, *Feminisms of the Belle Époque*, 253-265

Secondary Sources

- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 5
- Elinor Accampo, “The Rhetoric of Reproduction and Reconfiguration of Womanhood in the French Birth Control Movement,” *Journal of Family History* 21 (1996): 351-371

Wednesday, November 13: Maternalism, Feminism and Eugenics

*****Essay 2 due*****

Primary Sources

- Ellen Key, “The Renaissance of Motherhood,” in *European Women: A Documentary History, 1789-1945*, 171-176
- Articles by Blanche Edwards-Pilliet and Clara Linzen-Ernst in *Women, the Family, and Freedom: The Debate in Documents*, edited by Susan Groag Bell and Karen Offen, Vol. 2 (Stanford University Press, 1983): 145-47

Secondary Sources

- Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890-1970* (2005), Ch. 3 and 4
- Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, Ch. 6

Wednesday, November 20: What is ‘female homosexuality’?

Primary Sources

- Havelock Ellis, “Sexual Inversion in Women,” in Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Sexual Inversion: A Critical Edition*, edited by Ivan Crozier (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 159-180.
- Anna Rüling, “What Interest Does the Women’s Movement Have in the Homosexual Question,” in *Lesbians in Germany: 1890s-1920s*, edited by Lillian Faderman and Brigitte Eriksson (Naiad Press, 1999): 83-94
- Johanna Elberskirchen, “What is Homosexuality? [Was ist Homosexualität?]” in *Was hat der Mann aus Weib, Kind und sich gemacht? Revolution und Erlösung des Weibes. Eine Abrechnung mit dem Mann—Ein Wegweiser in die Zukunft!* (1904): 3-10 *See Courseworks “Files and Resources”

Secondary Sources

- Heike Bauer, “Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline and Gender at the fin-de-siècle,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18, no. 1 (January 2009): 84-102
- Siobhan B. Somerville, “Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body,” in *Sexology in Culture: Labelling Bodies and Desires*, edited by Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 60-76

Wednesday, November 27: CLASS CANCELLED

Wednesday, December 4: Accounting for the Past: The Legacy of Feminist Sexual Politics

- Ellen C. Dubois and Linda Gordon, “Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in Nineteenth-Century Feminist Sexual Thought,” 9, no.1 *Feminist Studies* (Spring 1983), 7-26
- Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies*, Ch. 10, Afterword