Anthropology 165 (Online)  
Sexuality and Culture  
2015-2016  
Instructor: Angela Montague, PhD  
Email: angelam@uoregon.edu

**Course Description:** This course examines sexuality with an emphasis on understanding the historical, cultural, economic, and political factors that contribute to the construction of sexual identities, relationships, and institutions. The course relies particularly on cases and examples that defy assumptions of “norms” in gender and sexuality and encourages students to move beyond their own experience and engage in open discussion and exploration of the wide range of variations found in the expression of genders and sexualities in human cultures across time and space. With this goal in mind I ask students to enter the classroom with an open mind. You do not have to agree with everything that we study—in fact I hope you do not—but I ask that you approach the material with a scholarly attitude so that you can discover where certain notions of gender and sexuality fit within the particular cultural matrix where they are found.

Please note that this course covers certain controversial topics such as pornography and sexual violence. You are required to do all the readings and watch all the documentaries in order to succeed in the class. If you find these topics offensive or emotionally difficult, this course is not recommended.

**Learning Outcomes:** My main goal in this course is to help students break down assumptions about the given-ness of dominant notions of gender and sexuality. My hope is that as students in this course you will be able to walk away from this course with a greater appreciation of the diversity in the human experience, while at the same time gaining insight into some of the unifying experiences that we share as humans across cultures. Two terms to become familiar with:

- **Ethnocentrism:** The belief that your culture (religion, ethnicity, or race) is superior and thus judging all others based on what you value as good, normal, moral, etc.
- **Cultural Relativism:** the notion that all cultures have their own measures of what is good, normal, moral, etc. and that in order to understand individual practices we must look to the culture in which they are found.

**Required text:** *Constructing Sexualities: Readings in Sexuality, Gender, and Culture* edited by Suzanne LaFont (2003). Available through the Duck Store and many online retailers. Any other readings will be on Canvas.
Course structure: This is a non-traditional course in that there is no face-to-face interaction with the instructor. Some have a hard time being motivated to complete on-line courses because much of the work is dependent on the self-discipline of the student. As such, you have the responsibility of learning the course materials yourself by keeping up with the assigned readings, watching films, and completing thoughtful and analytic written assignments. In addition, you will need to have access to high-speed Internet in order to take timed quizzes and tests and also to watch assigned video clips. You must have access to such resources – if not at home, then on campus. If you cannot access these resources, consider taking the course in a traditional classroom setting.

Communication: I am here to facilitate your learning and to provide you with guidance, insight, and regular feedback.

> Please put ‘ANTH 165’ in the subject line for any email correspondence so that it doesn’t get lost in the millions of messages I receive. I will always attempt to get back to you within 24 hours or less.

> Please check your email frequently as I will use it and the Canvas announcements section for many class-related announcements.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Discussion Participation (1 post, 5 responses, per unit) = 15%: Everyone will post an introduction week one on the discussion board titled “Introductions.” After that, you will post at least one response for each unit based on the prompt. You will also need to respond to at least 5 threads by other students per unit.

> All posts for each unit are due by Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

> Respond to AT LEAST five other students per unit

Reading Response Journal (3) = 30%: On Canvas you will post a reading response in which you will have an opportunity to respond to information brought up in the readings for each unit. You must explore at least one reading in enough depth to show that you understand it. The best responses combine a short summary of at least one reading, connection to one other course reading/lecture/film, and a short personal exploration of the topic (I.e. What did you think of this before? How were your views changed? How have you experienced this in your own life? Etc.). Each should be around 300-500 words and be well-organized and academic quality (not stream of consciousness). You may skip one or drop the lowest score.

> Due the Wednesday following the Unit end at 11:59 pm.

Reading Quizzes = 40% [10% x 4]: Four quizzes will be administered on Canvas covering each unit falling at the end of each week. You will have the weekend to complete them. They will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false. They will take approximately 30 minutes and have 25-30 questions each on average.

> Open Friday of the last week of the Unit 8 a.m. - Monday 11:59 p.m.

Essays = 20%: Two 3-5 page essays assigned for units 2 and 4 based on readings, lecture and films.
Course Objectives:

- To illustrate the range of human sexual beliefs and behaviors;
- To help students to distinguish between biological universals and cultural variation in human sexuality;
- To examine culture’s impact on shaping and defining human sexuality;
- To explicate and compare the cultural assumptions underlying sexual behavior in both western and non-western societies;
- To stimulate a consideration of students’ own cultural assumptions about sex, sexuality and gender;
- To foster understanding of the assumptions key to other groups;
- To demonstrate the usefulness of anthropological theory and concepts in the study of human sexuality;
- To distinguish between scholarly approaches and opinion

After this course you should be able to:

- Apply anthropological theories and concepts to the study of human sexuality;
- Identify the contributions of leading scholars and researchers to the understanding of human sexuality;
- Distinguish between the terms sex, sexuality and gender;
- Evaluate the arguments offered by cultural and biological determinists relevant to human sexuality;
- Explain the biological/evolutionary basis of sex and sexuality;
- Provide a comprehensive definition of the term culture;
- Discuss the enculturation process and its consequences relevant to human sexuality;
- Discuss the real world consequences of assigning cultural meanings;
- Provide examples of the ways in which cultural meanings relevant to human sexuality may conflict and/or change;
- Demonstrate awareness of various cultural traditions and commitment to diversity and equity in society.
Class Schedule and readings:
The majority of course readings come from the text *Constructing Sexualities* abbreviated as CS. Any other readings will be on Canvas under ‘Readings’ labeled Canvas.

UNIT ONE: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality
**Key terms**: ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, sex, sexuality, gender, essentialism, social construction theory, deconstruction, sexology, discourse theory, developmental systems theory, empirical research

**Week 1**
**Lecture 1.** Defining Sex, Gender and Sexuality. Course Outline, syllabus, course requirements.
- Reading: The Syllabus
- Discussion Board: Introduce yourself (Required)

**Lecture 2.** The Social Construction of Gender
- Reading:
  - Canvas “The Social Construction of Gender” by Judith Lorber
- Discussion Board 1: Media Constructions of Gender

**Week 2**
**Lecture 3.** Researching Sexualities
- Required Film: *Kinsey Documentary*
- Readings:
  - CS p. 6 “Investigating Sex: Essentialism and Constructionism” by J. Harding
  - CS p. 18 “Sexing the Body: How Biologists Construct Human Sexuality” by Anne Fausto-Sterling
  - CS p. 23 “The Egg and the Sperm: How science has Constructed a Romance based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles” by Emily Martin
- Optional Film: *Hysteria*
- Discussion Board 2: Science and Objectivity

**Week 3**
**Lecture 4.** Human sexuality in evolutionary perspective
- Readings:
  - CS p. 41 “The animal with the weirdest sex life” by Jared Diamond
  - CS p. 48 “Bonobo sex and society” by Frans B.M. de Waal
  - CS p. 56 “Human apes” by Alison Jolly
- Optional Film clips on Canvas
- Discussion Board 3: The ‘natural’ world of sexuality

*Take quiz #1 on Canvas*
*Reading Response #1 due by Wednesday*
*At least one discussion post & 5 responses by Sunday*
UNIT TWO: Constructing Sexualities…Beyond Binaries

**Week 4**
**Lecture 5.** Gender and Sexualities cross-culturally
- **Required Film:** *Middle Sexes: Redefining He and She*
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gyoq6tdlsE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Gyoq6tdlsE)
- **Readings:**
  - *CS* p. 192 “Hijra and Sadhin: Neither man nor woman in India” by Serena Nanda
  - *CS* pg. 227 “The gender of Brazilian transgendered prostitutes” by Don Kulick
  - *CS* pg. 166 “The Five Sexes” by Anne Fausto-Sterling
  - Elizabeth Reis “Divergence or Disorder” [Canvas](#)
- Discussion Board 4: Beyond the Binary

**Week 5**
**Lecture 6.** Same-sex sexualities
- **Required Film:** *Jihad for Love*
- **Readings:**
  - *CS* pg. 202 “Lesbians, Men-women, and Two-spirits” by Sabine Lang
  - *CS* pg. 273 “Culture and Women’s Sexualities” by Evelyn Blackwood
  - *CS* pg. 285 “Redirecting Sexual Orientation…” by Timothy Murphy
- **Optional Films:** *For the Bible Tells me So; Trembling Before G_d*
- **Discussion Board 5:** Sexuality and Identity

  Take quiz #2 on Canvas.
  Reading Response #2 due by Wednesday
  At least one discussion post & 5 responses by Sunday

UNIT THREE: Rites of Passage/Marriage
Key Terms: rites of passage, FGM, incest, marriage, polygamy, polygyny, polyandry, anti-miscegenation, marriage

**Week 6**
**Lecture 7.** Rites of Passage
- **Required Film:** *The Cut* [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMCQk-TBHPA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMCQk-TBHPA)
- **Readings:**
  - *CS* p. 249 “Sambia Sexual Culture” by Gilbert Herdt
- Discussion Board 6: Rites of Passage
Week 7
Lecture 8. Cultural Regulation of Sexuality, Marriage diversity

- Required Film: The Loving Story
- Readings:
  - CS pg. 149 “Arranging a marriage in India” by Serena Nanda
  - “The Visit” by Clifford Geertz Canvas
  - “A right to marry?: Same-sex Marriage and Constitutional Law” by Martha Nussbaum Canvas
- Discussion Board 7: Regulating Marriage

Take Quiz #3 on Canvas
Reading Response #3 due by Wednesday
At least one discussion post & 5 responses by Sunday

UNIT FOUR: Sex and Self-determination
Key Terms: pornography, prostitution, trafficking, voluntary, forced, rape, rape culture, consent, violence against women, sex positivity

Week 8
Lecture 9. Sexuality and violence

- Readings:
  - “Engaging Men in Ending Men’s Violence Against Women” by Michael Flood Canvas
  - “Breaking the silence, making laughter: testimony of an Asian-American sister” by Luoluo Hong Canvas
- Optional Film: The Bro Code
- Discussion Board 8: Rape Culture

Week 9
Lecture 10. Prostitution, Sex Tourism & Sex Trafficking

- Required Film: Rent-A-Dread
- Readings:
  - CS pg. 304 “For Love and Money: Romance Tourism in Jamaica” by D. Pruitt and S. LaFont
  - CS pg. 318 “Forced to Choose” by Jo Doezema
- Discussion Board 9: Selling Sex

Week 10
Lecture 11. Pornography, The Future of Sexuality, Sex Positivity

- Required Film
- Readings:
  - CS pg. 346 “Negotiating Sex and Gender in the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography” by Carole S. Vance
  - CS pg. 376 “An Unfinished Revolution” by Jeffrey Weeks
- Discussion Board 10: An Unfinished Revolution
Take the Final on Canvas by Monday
Reading Response #4 due by Wednesday
At least one discussion post & 5 responses by Sunday

Checklist of Assignments:
Discussion Board: 5 posts (total), 5 responses (per unit)
Reading Responses (Canvas) (3 out of 4 units)
Quizzes (3)
Final Test

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