

# SOCY/WGST 1006: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SEXUALITY

FALL 2019

**Instructor: Matt Rowe**

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Office: Ketchum 167

Office hours: Wednesday 1:00-2:00 pm

**Lecture**

Mon/Wed 12:00-12:50 pm

Benson Earth Sciences 185

**TA: Page Regan**

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Office hours: Wednesday 10:00-11:00 am,  
Innisfree Poetry Bookstore & Cafe

**Recitation**

201: Fri 12:00-12:50, Clare Small 207

202: Fri 8:00-8:50, Ramalay N1B75

203: Fri 3:00-3:50, Duane G2B21

204: Fri 12:00-12:50, Hellems 259

**Course Overview**

What does it mean to study sexuality from a sociological perspective? How can a person's sexual desires and identity—which feel so natural and innate—be shaped by social contexts? In this course, we will answer these questions using theoretical and empirical texts from sociology and related disciplines. We will study the historic development of LGBTQ identities and social movements, because these provide clear examples of how sexualities can (and do) change over time. But we will also look at other examples of the social construction of sexuality, including heterosexual socialization, policy controversies around sexuality, and campus “hook up culture.” By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain how sexuality is socially constructed, both institutionally and interpersonally;
- Describe the sexual hierarchy and explain how it intersects with other forms of domination (e.g., gender, race, class, and nationality);
- Explain the functions, and limitations, of sexual identity categories;
- Understand how people's positions on LGBT civil rights and other policy issues connect to widely-held cultural beliefs;
- Explain the role of religion, families, and schools in shaping sexual identity;
- Identify the institutional features that contribute to the risk of sexual assault on college campuses;
- Reflect critically on your own experience using a sociological imagination;
- Summarize empirical research articles;
- Interpret popular media sources using a sociological perspective.

**Required materials**

All students will need a clicker, available for purchase at the CU Bookstore. There are no required textbooks; I will post PDFs of all readings on Canvas.

## GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

4 short papers: 40%	100 points each
3 exams: 15%, 15%, 20%	150, 150, 200 points
Attendance (recitation and lecture): 5%	50 points
Participation (recitation and lecture): 5%	50 points
TOTAL	1,000 points

### Important dates

Paper 1 due: Sept. 13	Paper 3 due: Nov. 13	Final exam: Dec. 14
Exam 1: Oct. 2	Exam 2: Nov. 18	
Paper 2 due: Oct. 23	Paper 4 due: Dec. 11	

### Short papers

There are three kinds of papers you will write for this class. They all share the same formatting guidelines (2-3 pp.; double-spaced; 12 pt. Times New Roman font; 1" margins; page numbers, bottom right). On the first page only, list your name, the date, the course, and the assignment. No need for another title.

- Paper 1: Reading reflection. The first paper asks you to reflect on your own life experiences using one of the readings from Unit I as a guide. How does your life experience engage with these ideas (or not)? There are no right or wrong answers; the point of this paper is to get you thinking critically about how the social organization of sexuality affects your experience.
- Papers 2 and 4: Research article reviews. Write a detailed summary of one of the five \*research articles\* marked for these assignments. You can choose any of the research articles that you have read so far in the course. The paper must include the following information:
  - The research question that the author(s) seek to answer;
  - The research method the author(s) used to evaluate this question; and
  - A summary of their findings.

Do not use quotes from the article; you must discuss the topics in your own words. Note that this is a summary, not an evaluation. The point is to show that you understand what the article is saying, not to give your opinion about the topic or the evidence.

- Paper 3: Media evaluation. Identify one episode of a TV show that addresses sexuality in some way and write a critical evaluation. First, briefly describe the episode. Then explain how it engages with themes from this course. Specifically, what issues, topics, and ideas from class are addressed? What others could be addressed, but are left out? Then give your opinion: what is done well, and what could be more effective? If the character(s) give their opinions on a sexual topic, do you agree? Why or why not?

## **Exams**

Exams 1 and 2 exams will consist of 14 multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, or matching questions, as well as 4 short answer questions (you choose from 5 options). The final exam will follow the same format but it will be a bit longer: 20 questions plus 5 short answers (you choose from 7 options).

Questions will ask you to define key concepts from the course, identify an analytic approach, or illustrate a featured concept using an empirical example. The exams will cover all assigned course material. Exam 1 will cover Units I and II; Exam 2 will cover Units III and IV. The final exam will be cumulative. The first two exams will be given in class, with accommodations made for those who have a registered disability and need more time. I will distribute study guides in advance. The last scheduled lecture will be devoted to final exam review.

## **Attendance**

You will record your presence in class using your clicker during lecture, and by sign-in sheet during recitation. Attendance will be graded on a scale. You can have up to 3 absences from lecture and 1 absence from recitation and still receive full credit; any more than that, your grade reduces by 5 points, out of a total 50 possible. For example, if you miss 6 lectures and 2 recitations, you would get 30 points out of 50 (that's a D-). There are no excused or unexcused absences. (The only exceptions are student athletes and students with disabilities who are registered.) If you have a job with unpredictable hours, you may want to take another class.

## **Participation**

You will be graded for participating verbally during discussions in both lecture and recitation. Posting in an online chat on Canvas also counts as participation. The grade will be evaluated by me (lecture and Canvas) and the TA (recitation). The participation grade includes any homework or activities that the TA assigns. Participation will be graded on a 0-to-50 scale, considering both the quality and quantity of your contributions.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**My office hours** are by appointment in 15-minute slots. Please do not sign up for more than one slot. If you cannot make an appointment during the regular time, please e-mail me to find another time. During office hours, I can answer questions about the readings, clarify something from lecture, or discuss any topic related to the course. Please come to office hours with a specific question in mind.

I will use **Canvas** to post readings, report grades, and set up online discussions. You are responsible for checking the course's site on a regular basis. Please let me or the TA know if you have difficulty using Canvas.

**Lecture slides** will not be posted on Canvas. If you miss class, you must rely on your peers for any missed material. You can also come to office hours if you have specific questions.

You may use **laptops** during class for note-taking only. I will ask those who want to use laptops to sit in designated areas of the classroom to minimize distraction. This excludes cell phones—please keep your phones off during class.

**About clickers.** This class utilizes the iClicker system to enhance learning and reward participation in class discussion. Please purchase an iClicker if you do not already own one, and register it using your IdentiKey Login Name via the link on MyCuInfo. [Information on how to do this is located here.](#) Clicker fraud (sharing clickers, clicking in for someone else, or otherwise cheating using a clicker) is a violation of CU Boulder's honor code. [Learn more about the honor code.](#)

**Late papers.** Papers must be submitted before the deadline, on Canvas, in .doc or .docx format. If you submit a paper late for any reason, your grade will be reduced by 10 points (a full letter grade) for each day you are late. Extensions will only be granted in extreme, sudden, and unpredictable circumstances.

**Missed exams.** If you have a real and verifiable emergency that causes you to miss an exam, you must report it to me within 24 hours after the time of the exam. To schedule a make-up exam, you must provide appropriate documentation to verify the emergency.

**Plagiarism** means representing the work of others as your own. This includes copying papers from the Internet or other students. It also includes quoting class materials without quotation marks. Any case of plagiarism will be taken seriously and will result in you failing the course.

**Grading policy.** I am happy to discuss your grade with you in order to help you improve. If you want to dispute a grade on a paper or exam, please follow these steps: (1) write a short memo describing the specific reason that you believe the grade is inaccurate or unfair; (2) e-mail the memo to me within two days after the work is graded; (3) come to the next office hours session to discuss the issue with me. Keep in mind that if I re-grade your work, the grade could go down as well as up.

**Accommodation for disabilities.** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to me in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

**Classroom Behavior.** Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's

legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

**Honor Code.** All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

**Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation.** The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination, or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

**Religious Holidays.** Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. You should contact me by email as soon as you find about a schedule conflict, so we can work together to find an accommodation. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

### **Unit I: Sociological Perspectives on Sexuality**

MONDAY AUGUST 26, Course introduction [no readings]

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 28, Sexuality as a social issue

James, Kelly, "Sexual Pleasure" in *The New Sexuality Studies*, eds. Seidman, Fischer, and Meeks, pp. 32-37.

Stein, Arlene, "Introduction" in *Shameless*, pp. 1-15.

Christina, Greta. "Are We Having Sex Now or What?" and Kelsey K. Sewell and Donald S. Strassberg, "How Do Heterosexual Undergraduate Students Define Having Sex?" in *Sex Matters*, eds. Stompler et al., pp. 5-13.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 2 [Labor Day, no class]

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 4, Social constructionism

Lancaster, Roger N., "In the Beginning, Nature" in *The Trouble with Nature*, pp. 39-43.

Weeks, Jeffrey, "The Invention of Sexuality" in *Sexuality*, pp. 12-45.

Seidman, Steven, "Social Constructionism: Sociology, History, and Philosophy" in *The Social Construction of Sexuality*, pp. 25-39.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 9, Sexuality, gender, and power

Rubin, Gayle, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality" in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality*, eds. Parker and Aggleton, pp. 143-161.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 11, Sexual scripts

Simon, William and John H. Gagnon. "Sexual Scripts" in *Culture, Society, and Sexuality*, eds. Parker and Aggleton, pp. 29-38.

\*Ronen, Shelley, "Grinding on the Dance Floor," *Gender & Society* 24 (3): 355-377.\*

[Paper 1 due, Friday Sept. 13 at 6 pm]

## **Unit II: Sexual Categories and Identities**

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 16, Sexual categories

Fausto-Sterling, Ann, "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough" in *Sexualities*, eds. Kimmel and Plante, pp. 39-44.

Katz, Jonathan Ned, "'Homosexual' and 'Heterosexual': Questioning the Terms" in *Sexualities*, eds. Kimmel and Plante, pp. 44-46.

Blank, Hanne, "The Love That Could Not Speak its Name" in *Straight*, pp. 1-4, 15-21.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 18, Sexual fluidity

Diamond, Lisa M., "Sexual Fluidity in Action" in *Sexual Fluidity*, pp. 54-90.

Ward, Jane, "Straight Dude Seeks Same: Mapping the Relationship between Sexual Identities, Practices, and Cultures" in *Sex Matters*, eds. Stompler et al., pp. 29-35.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 23, Identity formation

\*Sherrer, Kristin, "Coming to an Asexual Identity," *Sexualities* 11 (5): 621-641.\*

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 25, Intersectionality

Collins, Patricia Hill, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought" in *Black Feminist Thought*, pp. 1-13.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 30, Racialized sexual identities

Stokes, Carla E., "Representin' in Cyberspace: Sexual Scripts, Self-Definition, and Hip-Hop Culture in Black American Girls' Home Pages" in *Sex Matters*, eds. Stompler et al., pp. 116-127.

Han, Chong-suk, "Geisha of a Different Kind: Gay Asian Men and the Gendering of Sexual Identity" in *Sex Matters*, eds. Stompler et al., pp. 128-138.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 2 [Exam 1 in class, no readings]

### **Unit III: Social Regulation of Sexuality**

MONDAY OCTOBER 7, Religion

Fischer, Nancy L. "Purity and Pollution: Sex as Moral Discourse" in *New Sexuality Studies*, eds. Seidman et al., pp. 38-44.

Grove, Joshua, "Christianity and the Regulation of Sexuality in the U.S." in *New Sexuality Studies*, eds. Seidman et al., pp. 415-420.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 9, Marriage

Ingraham, Chrys, "One is Not Born a Bride: How Weddings Regulate Heterosexuality" in *New sexuality studies*, eds. Seidman et al., pp. 303-307.

Hunter, Erica, "Change and Continuity in American Marriage" in *New Sexuality Studies*, eds. Seidman et al., pp. 308-312.

MONDAY OCTOBER 14, School

Pascoe, C.J., "Dude, You're a Fag: Adolescent Male Homophobia" in *Dude, You're a Fag*, pp. 52-83.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16, Family

\*Solebello, Nicholas and Sinikka Elliot. 2011. "'We Want Them to Be as Heterosexual as Possible': Fathers Talk about Their Teen Children's Sexuality," *Gender & Society* 25 (3): 293-315.\*

### **Unit IV: Sexual Politics**

MONDAY OCTOBER 21, Early gay and lesbian organizing

D'Emilio, John, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, pp. 9-22, 40-53, and 223-239.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 23, The fight for LGBT civil rights [Paper 2 due, no readings]

Film in class: “The Times of Harvey Milk”

MONDAY OCTOBER 28, Local struggles over civil rights

Stein, Arlene, “We Are All Queer—Or Are We?” in *The Stranger Next Door*, pp. 136-164.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 30, Queer critiques of LGBT politics

Warner, Michael, *The Trouble with Normal*, pp. 24-40.

Helm-Hernandez, Paulina and Joseph DeFilippis, “What is ‘The Queer Agenda’?” in *The Unfinished Queer Agenda: After Marriage Equality*, pp. 22-27.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 4, Sex panic

Lancaster, Roger N., “Sex Panic” and “Panic: A Guide to the Uses of Fear,” in *Sex Panic and the Punitive State*, pp. 19-38.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 6, Sexual health education

Luker, Krista, “Sexual liberals and sexual conservatives” in *When Sex Goes to School*, pp. 91-118.

Fine, Michelle and Sara I. McClelland, “Sexuality Education and Desire: Still Missing After All These Years” in *Sex Matters*, eds. Stompler et al., pp. 206-224.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 11, Abortion

Lepore, Jill, “Birthright: What’s Next for Planned Parenthood?” *New Yorker*, November 14, 2011, pp.

Haberkorn, Jennifer, “Republicans See Late-Term Abortion Bills as a Potent 2020 Political Issue,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 2019.

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 13, Reproductive health and the law [Paper 3 due, no readings]

Guest speaker in class: Attorney, advocate, and journalist Jessica Pieklo

MONDAY NOVEMBER 18 [Exam 2 in class, no readings]

## **Unit V: College Hook-Up Culture and Sexual Violence**

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 20, Hook-up culture

Bogle, Kathleen A., *Hooking Up: Sex, Dating, and Relationships on Campus*, pp. 50-95

[MONDAY NOVEMBER 25 AND WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 27, Fall break—no class]

MONDAY DECEMBER 2, Hooking up and gender

\*Currier, Danielle M., "Strategic Ambiguity: Protecting Emphasized Femininity and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Hookup Culture," *Gender & Society* 27 (5): 704-727.\*

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 4, Sexual assault on college campuses

Armstrong, Elizabeth, et al., "Sexual Assault on Campus: A Multilevel, Integrative Approach to Party Rape" in *Sex Matters*, eds. Stompler et al., pp. 612-625.

MONDAY DECEMBER 9, Male sexual victimization

\*Weiss, Karen G., "Male Sexual Victimization: Examining Men's Experiences of Rape and Sexual Assault," *Men & Masculinities* 12 (3): 275-298.\*

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11 [Final exam review, no readings; Paper 4 due]

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 [Final exam, location TBD]