

Sociology of Sex: Comparative Study (Soc 104-401)  
Spring 2003  
W 2-5  
Ewa Morawska  
McNeil 251  
[emorawsk@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:emorawsk@sas.upenn.edu)

Social scientists have argued that sexuality is not an unchanging biological reality or universal natural force, but a cultural construct, shaped by economic, social, and political processes and therefore, like society itself, historical, that is, variable in both time and space. This seminar follows this approach by exploring cultural construction of sexuality as it evolved from Greek antiquity to contemporary U.S. A., and its relationship to gender, class, political hierarchies, religion, ideology, and science. How have the meanings of sexuality, codes of sexual regulation and sexual politics varied over time with changing circumstances?

### **Reading Materials**

HOUSE OF OUR OWN, 3920 Spruce Street

1. Thomas Laqueur, Making Sex. Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud
2. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters. A History of Sexuality in America
3. Jeffrey Weeks, Sexuality and Its Discontents
4. Robert Michael et al. Sex in America: A Definitive Survey

WHARTON REPROGRAPHICS, Steinmetz-Dietrich Bldg

-Sociology of Sex Reader (Soc104)

### **Course Requirements**

-take-home midterm exam (essay-type, choice of questions), out 2/26, return 3/5 (30% of the final grade);

-final exam (essay-type, choice of questions), out 4/16, return 4/23 (30% of the final grade);

-term paper based on additional readings on a particular topic of interest or a sociological mini-survey or fieldwork conducted by a student on a selected topic related to sexuality (40% of the final grade);

-participation in class discussions--if active and regular, the final grade elevated by half (e.g., from B+ to A-).

## SYLLABUS

1/15 Course Introduction and Requirements

1/22 The Cultural Construction of Sex (Concepts, Theses, Theories)

Readings: Laqueur, Making Sex, pp.1-24; Stone, Sex in the West pp.344-55,378-82; Foucault, The History of Sexuality, pp.17-49, 92-102, 115-131; Weeks, A Sexuality@Bblkpk #1 thru #3.

1/29 The Uni-Sex Bodies of the Ancient World

Readings:; Laqueur, Making Sex, chap.2; Stone, Sex in the West (blk pck #1), pp.355-59; Halperin, Is There a History of Sexuality?; Veyne, "Homosexuality in Ancient Rome"; Aries, "Thoughts on the History of Homosexuality" ; Roberts, A Whores in History@Bblkpk # thru #6.

2/5 Sex and Christianity (Late Antiquity through Middle Ages)

Readings: Stone, Sex in the West (blk pck #1), pp.360-66; Laqueur, Making Sex, pp.59-61 from chap.2; Aries, "St.Paul and the Flesh"; Brown, The Body and Society. Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity; Flandrin, "Sex in Married Life"; Roberts, A Whores in History@Bblkpk #7 thru #10.

2/12 New Science, One Flesh

Readings: Stone, Sex in the West (blk pck #1), pp.366-70; Laqueur, Making Sex, chap.3, and pp.134-48 from chap.4; Elias, "On Behavior in the Bedroom", pp.160-91 Bblkpk #11.

2/19 Discovery of the Sexes (Western World in 18th C.: New Contexts, Transformed Meanings)

Readings: Stone, Sex in the West (blk pck #1), pp.370-71; Laqueur, Making Sex, from chap.5: pp.149-173, 194-207 ("+-" i.e., related to the 18th C); Hunt, ed., Eroticism and the Body Politic, pp.1-4, 90-104 Bblkpk #12; D'Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, Pt.1.

2/26 "Scientia Sexualis," Sigmund Freud, and Victorian Repression (Western Europe)

Readings: Stone, Sex in the West (blk pck #1), pp.373-76; Laqueur, Making Sex, pp.174-92, 207-243; Weeks, Sexuality and Its Discontents, chap.6 and pp.157-70 from chap.7. Foucault, The History of Sexuality, pp.53-73, 103-114 and Ramas, "Freud's Dora, ora's Hysteria" Bblkpk # 13 and #14.

3/5 Civilized Morality (Sexual Orders in N. America, 19th through early 20th C.)

Readings: D'Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, Pt.3, and pp.239-48 from Pt.4; Weeks, Sexuality and Its Discontents, chap.4. Levins, A Sexual (Dis)Pleasures@; Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression" pp.157-172; Seidman, Romantic Longings. Love in America, 1830-1980 (I)pp.39-61, 92-118; Robison, "Havelock Ellis" Bblkpk #15 thru #18.

3/12 The First Sexual Revolution? America in the 1920s

Readings: Fass, A The Young and the Beautiful@ and Levins, A Sexual (Dis)Pleasures@ Bin blkpk # 19 and #20.

3/19-4/9 Sex in Postwar America (1950s-1990s)

3/19 Readings: Stone, Sex in the West (blk pck #1), pp.376-78; Aries and Bejin, A The Decline of the Psycho-analyst and the Rise of the Sexologist@ and : "The Influence of the Sexologists and Sexual Democracy@ Bblkpk #21.

3/26 Readings: D'Emilio and Freedman, Intimate Matters, pp.248-274 and excerpts from chaps.12, 13, 14; Weeks, Sexuality and Its Discontents, chaps.8 and 9; "Alfred Kinsey" ; "William Master and Virginia Johnson"; Seidman, "Eros Unbound" Bblkpk # 22 thru #24.

4/2 Readings: Michael, Sex in America: A Definitive Survey (chapters tba)

4/9 Readings: Rubin, Worlds of Pain, and Rubin, Erotic Wars Bblpk #25 and #26.

4/16 Sex in Other Societies: Sweden, Russia, and China

Readings: Sweden Redefines Sexual Revolution; Kon and Riordan, Sex and Russian Society; Evans, Defining Difference: The Scientific Construction of Sex and Gender in the Peoples Republic of China Bblpk #27 thru #29.

FILM in class

4/23 What Next?

Readings: Weeks, Sexuality and Its Discontents, chaps. 3 and 10; The Latest Technology Fuels the Oldest of Drives; Padgug, Gay Villain, Gay Hero: Homosexuality and the Social Construction of AIDS; Read, (De)Constructing Pornography; Heilbrun, Toward a Recognition of Androgyny Bblpk # 30 thru 33