

SEX, MONEY, AND POWER IN THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD

Freshman Seminar 70S / Spring 2018

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Class meets on Tuesdays between
1:00 and 3:00pm in Tozzer 102.
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-
3:00pm (please sign up in advance).

With globalization, sex—everywhere—has become more central to who we are as citizens and consumers, how we gain rights and resources, and how we relate to others as members of a specific race, ethnicity, region, or culture. Worldwide, states invest or disinvest in people according to how they have sex, adopt gender identities, or sustain sexual morality. Terrorist organizations claim to use violence to reestablish bastions of piety and sexual propriety; various populist movements imagine immigrants and refugees to threaten their societies, in part, by failing to uphold the sexual norms of adopting countries; and transnational NGOs and activists seek to rescue and rehabilitate sex workers, gays, lesbians, transsexuals, and other people who are vulnerable because of their sexualities. The growing importance of sex to a global consumer culture only heightens the rush to secure societies from the so-called “perversions of globalization.” Tourists now travel for sex to various destinations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean; poor, unemployed men and women, in former colonies, sometimes use sex as a means of enrichment and empowerment; and amidst the rise of religious fundamentalisms, commodity ads incite youths to consume sex along other goods to build authentic selves. In this seminar, we ask: Why does sexuality become so central to how we imagine our world and futures? Why is sex so important in defining us, as subjects and populations? And how do older colonial stereotypes of race, ethnicity, and culture shape sexuality politics in the new global order? To address these questions, we read about how sex relates to politics and the economy in countries such as Brazil, India, Kenya, Namibia, or Nigeria; watch documentaries about queer people in Africa; and jointly curate a small museum exhibit about sexuality in the postcolonial world.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all classes, do the readings, and participate actively in class discussions. Assignments for this course, include the following:

- ❑ *Reading Journal:* Please keep notes, whether handwritten or typed, of the important topics, concepts, and theories you come across in the readings and that you wish to remember or to discuss in class. Your reading journal can also include an artistic component: drawings, schemes, tables that help you reflect on the materials in this seminar. For each class, prepare two short questions on the readings and submit them online on our Canvas discussion board.
- ❑ *Introducing the Readings in Class.* Each week two students will initiate discussion by raising a set of issues and questions related to the readings. Students will briefly introduce the main points of the readings assigned for that day and pose some questions for class discussion. A sign-up

sheet will be circulated during the first class. I expect that each student will present at least twice during the semester. A presentation should last no more than 10 minutes.

- ❑ *Mid-term and Final Response Essays:* For each essay, you must choose one recurrent concept you encountered in the readings and follow it through two or more of the texts we read in the respective part of the semester. Each paper should be no longer than 5 pages, double-spaced. Mid-term papers are due *March 6*. Final papers are due *May 3*.
- ❑ *Short Research Essay.* At the beginning of the semester, you should consult friends, newspapers, or the internet in order identify a current event, movement, activist group, NGO, or artistic production focused centrally on sexuality and gender in some postcolonial context (this may include former colonies but also metropolises, former settler colonies, ex-Soviet countries, etc). Once you identified your *case*, think about why it is interesting, how it might speak to the themes of the course, and why your friends and colleagues might want to know about it. Once the topic has been approved by your instructor or TF, you will research it, read up on the context in which it takes place and write an engaging, yet critical blog entry of no more than 1000 words. Then, find a suitable photograph to accompany your blog entry. You will submit two drafts of this essay throughout the semester and will also comment on the draft of a classmate. (An assignment sheet with further instructions will be distributed at a closer date). First draft is due *February 20*; review of classmate's draft due *February 27*; final draft due *April 3*.
- ❑ *Exhibit.* Based on the topic of your short research essay, you should take or choose a photograph or drawing that offers us a “window” into the phenomenon you described. Then, write a 150-word caption for an exhibit that will display your image. Please submit a high-resolution image with the caption by *April 17*. On the last day class, we will display your images in class as part of our attempt to draw conclusions on the work of this seminar. (An assignment sheet with further instructions will be distributed at a closer date)

Required Texts

The following texts are available for purchase at the Coop Bookstore and for consultation on a three-hour reserve at the Lamont Library.

- ❑ Kulick, Don. 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgender Prostitutes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ❑ Lorway, Robert. 2015. *Namibia's Rainbow Project: Gay Rights in an African Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- ❑ Meiu, George Paul. 2017. *Ethno-erotic Economies: Sexuality, Money, and Belonging in Kenya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ❑ Puri, Jyoti. 2016. *Sexual States: Governance and the Struggle over the Anti-sodomy Law in India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

All other readings will be available on the course website (on Canvas).

Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION – *overview of the seminar*
January 23

No readings

Film: “Stories of Our Lives” (2014) directed by Jim Chuchu (62 min)

PART I GLOBAL SEX: *Thinking Sex, Sexuality, & Gender from the Global South*

WEEK 2 THE INVENTION OF SEX – *historical contexts, working definitions*
January 30

- ❑ Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónké. 1997. “Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects.” In Oyěwùmí, O. *The Invention of Woman: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Pp. 1-30. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- ❑ Pigg, Stacy Leigh. 2005. “Globalizing the Facts of Life.” In V. Adams and S. Pigg (eds) *Sex in Development: Science, Sexuality, and Morality in Global Perspective*. Pp. 39-65. Durham: Duke University Press.
- ❑ Ouma, Christopher and Mphati Mutloane. 2014. “Performing Queer ‘in Time and Space’: A ‘Politics of the Event.’” In Matebeni Z. (ed.) *Reclaiming Afrikan: Queer Perspectives on Sexual and Gender Identities*. Pp. 37-43. Athlone: Modjaji.

WEEK 3 BECOMING A SEXUAL SUBJECT – *gendering bodies, embodying gender*
February 6

- ❑ Kulick, Don. 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgender Prostitutes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Read pp. 1-95)

WEEK 4 INTIMACY AND SOCIALITY – *sex, work, love, and relationships*
February 13

- ❑ Kulick, Don. 1998. *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgender Prostitutes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Read pp. 96-133; 141-147; 191-238)

PART II THE RACE OF THE COMMODITY: *Belonging & Ethno-Capital*

WEEK 5 RACE AND REPRESENTATION – *the colonial encounter*
February 20

Note: This class will be held in the Study Gallery of the Harvard Art Museum at 32 Quincy St, Cambridge, MA (on the fourth floor).

- ❑ Lewis, Desiree. 2011. "Representing African Sexualities." In Tamale S. (ed.) *African Sexualities: A Reader*. Pp.199-216. Oxford: Pambazuka Press.
- ❑ Najamabadi, Afsaneh. 2005. *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Read pp. 1-60)

February 20 *Short Research Essay – First Draft Due*

WEEK 6 ETHNO-SEXUALITY AND BELONGING – *living with/ through alterity*
February 27

- ❑ Meiu, George Paul. 2017. *Ethno-erotic Economies: Sexuality, Money, and Belonging in Kenya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Read Introduction, & Ch. 1, 2).

February 27 *Review of Classmate's Research Essay Due*

WEEK 7 MONEY, INTIMACY, AND SOCIAL VALUE – *moral conversions?*
March 6

Note: This class is scheduled to meet outside the usual time slot.

- ❑ Meiu, George Paul. 2017. *Ethno-erotic Economies: Sexuality, Money, and Belonging in Kenya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 3, 4, 5).

March 6 *Mid-term Paper Due*

March 10-18 *Spring Break*

PART III SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP: *Rights & Resources in the Postcolony*

WEEK 8 TECHNOLOGIES OF CITIZENSHIP – *sexuality, desire, and subjectivity*
March 20

- ❑ Lorway, Robert. 2015. *Namibia's Rainbow Project: Gay Rights in an African Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Read Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2)

WEEK 9 THE CITIZEN'S INVERSE – *women, violence, and the Other*
March 27

- ❑ Lorway, Robert. 2015. *Namibia's Rainbow Project: Gay Rights in an African Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Read Chapter 3, 4, 5, and Conclusion)

March 30 QUEERING THE CUSTOMARY – *queer moments in the rituals of masculinity*
3-5pm

Movie: "The Wound" (2017); directed by John Trengove (108 min)
Class meets in Tozzer 203. Tea, coffee, and pastries will be served.

WEEK 10 SEX PANICS IN THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER – *liberalism, populism, terrorism*
April 3

- ❑ Graff, Agnieszka. 2014. “Report from the Gender Trenches: War Against ‘Genderism’ in Poland. *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 21(4): 431-435.
- ❑ Weber, Cynthia. 2016. “The Out-of-Place and On-the-Move ‘Perverse Homosexual’ in International Relations: The ‘Unwanted Im/migrant and the ‘Terrorist.’ In Weber C. *Queer International Relations: Sovereignty, Sexuality, and the Will to Knowledge*. Pp. 72-103. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ❑ Mack, Mehammed Amadeus. 2017. “The Banlieue Has a Gender: Competing Visions of Sexual Diversity.” In Mack M. A. *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*. Pp. 35-78. New York: Fordham.

April 3 *Final Draft of the Short Research Essay*

PART IV THE STATE – *Law, Regulation, Queer Tactics*

WEEK 11 THE BIOPOLITICAL STATE – *sexuality, discipline, regulation*
April 10

- ❑ Puri, Jyoti. 2016. *Sexual States: Governance and the Struggle over the Anti-sodomy Law in India*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Read Chapters 1 & 2)

WEEK 12 THE CRIMINALIZATION OF SEXUALITY – *specters of the law*
April 17

- ❑ Puri, Jyoti. 2016. *Sexual States: Governance and the Struggle over the Anti-sodomy Law in India*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Read Chapters 4, 6, & “Afterlives”)

WEEK 13 THE HUMAN-SECURITY STATE – *rescue, policing, militarization*
April 24

- ❑ Amar, Paul. 2013. “Policing the Perversions of Globalization in Rio de Janeiro and Cairo: Emerging Parastatal Security Regimes Confront Queer Globalisms.” In Amar P. *The Security Archipelago: Human Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*. Pp. 65-99. Durham: Duke University Press.
- ❑ Amar, Paul. 2009. “Operation Princess in Rio de Janeiro: Policing ‘Sex Trafficking,’ Strengthening Worker Citizenship, and the Urban Geopolitics of Security in Brazil.” *Security Dialogue* 40(4-5): 513-41.

May 3 *Final Paper Due*