**Course Description**

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to the critical study of gender and sexuality with a focus on queer theory. Using an interdisciplinary and transnational perspective, we further consider the impact of psychoanalytic theories on queer theory and upon the field of transgender studies.

The range and sequence of readings is designed to first orient students to the emergence of sexology in the late nineteenth century and to the writings of Sigmund Freud in particular. We will then read Michel Foucault’s (1978) *History of Sexuality: Volume One*. This work challenges Freud’s repressive hypothesis as it pertains to human sexuality in eighteenth century Victorian culture. We then consider how the history of sexuality in the west is, also, a history of empire and colonization and, finally, a history of the modern gendered body. Feminist psychoanalytic theories will also be used to critique foundational ideas about sex and gender in psychoanalysis and in modern histories of sexuality. Using the example of childhood sexuality, and its queer manifestations, we will consider how ideas about childhood sexual innocence have been productive and instrumental to the policing of families, citizens and nations in western, industrialized advanced capitalist nations.

We will then read key works by Judith Butler to orient ourselves to her theory of gender performativity. Special attention will be devoted to her theory of gender melancholia, to her discussion of ‘excitable speech acts,’ and to her conception of the ‘lesbian phallus.’ Following this, we will read transgender theories of the body, gender, identity, and embodiment along with the critiques of gender performativity integral to these works. Special attention will be devoted to the psychoanalytic work of Oren Gozlen and Patricia Gherovici.

The final section of the course will focus on critical race theory and postcolonial critiques of queer theory in the West. Sexuality figures prominently in the building of empires, in histories of colonization, in globalization, migration, militarism and sex tourism. Focusing on a range of postcolonial writings, we will consider how what
Edward Said (1978) calls Orientalism operates in contemporary cultures. We will also focus on the Queer Diaspora and consider how bodies are racialized and sexualized concurrently. Lee Edelman’s (2004) analytic of white reproductive futurism will also be used to understand the deployment of race, gender and sexuality in heteronormative and imperial projects. We conclude the course with psychoanalytic reflections on the psychic life of race in white, western imperial fantasy-formations.

**Evaluation:**
Presentation: 25%
Participation: 25%
Essay: 50%

**Required Texts**

**Recommended Texts**
*NOTE:* If you are new to queer theory read:

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Introduction to Critical Sexualities Course**
*September 11*
*No Readings Assigned*
Presentation Sign-Up and Administration.

**Queer Theory: An Introduction**
*September 18*

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings:**
Sigmund Freud and Sexology

September 25

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Michel Foucault and the History of Sexuality

October 2

Required Readings:
Film: An Autobiography of Michel Foucault

Recommended Readings:

Judith Butler: Gender Performativity
*October 9*

Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Queer Toilet Talk
*October 16*

Required Readings:

Childhood Sexualities
*October 23*

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Co-Curricular Week (no classes on October 30th)

The Queer Art of Failure
November 6
Required Readings:

Recommended Readings:

Transsexuality and Jacques Lacan
November 13
Required Readings:
**Transgender Theory and Psychoanalysis**

**November 20**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Postcolonial Sexualities: I**

**November 27**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


