

**Sexuality and Society**  
**Sociology 440**  
TTH 6:00-9:55pm  
Summer 2009 7/11/11-8/17/11  
Scott Hall: Room 216 CAC

**Instructor:** Kate Burrows  
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Office Hours: by appointment  
Office: Davison Hall, Douglass Campus, Room 012

**Course Description:**

How do we come to know ourselves as sexual beings? How do individuals develop attractions, make sexual choices, define and enact their own sexuality? What is social about sexuality, and how do institutions and organizations influence understandings of human sexuality over time? These are some of the questions that will guide our class in the sociology of human sexuality. We will examine the processes through which the human body is sexed, from without, by the society into which it is born, framed from within, through self-definition, desire, and practice. Our study will be contextualized in changing cultural understandings of acceptable and deviant sexual expression, and the range of sexual behavior.

Sexuality is a fascinating topic because it is in us, of us, between us and all around us. The sexual is both personal and social. Though we may perceive sex to be a natural and biologically driven behavior, sex is in fact largely shaped by social norms, values, and expectations. Sexuality and its components (desire, pleasure, love, the body) is something more than a personal or individual characteristic- it is socially constructed. Sexuality has been conceptualized during different historical periods as sin, as a means of fostering alliances between powerful families, as perversion, as a means to pleasure, as a symbol of love, and as personal identity. These different sexual configurations are connected with larger social historical trends such as the development of capitalism, bureaucracy, the expansion of scientific medical discourse, and social movements around issues of sexual identity. In this course, we explore how sexuality is constructed. Throughout, the course is designed to emphasize sexual diversity and to facilitate what Audre Lorde calls an erotic education. This course is sex-positive in that it assumes that knowledge is empowering, not dangerous, and will provide an introduction to many issues related to human sexuality. We will examine how categories shape our understanding of sexuality such as male/female, heterosexual/homosexual/queer, and explore a wide range of topics, including child sexuality, prostitution, intersexuality and transgender issues, power, violence, committed relationships, desire, sex work, socialization, sex ed, and pornography.

Our readings and discussions will be frank regarding the topic of sexuality, challenging you to develop a language for and comfort level with discussing a full range of sexual topics in the classroom in a respectful, and articulate way. Your assignments will ask you to build a repertoire of approaches to the topic of human sexuality.

## Required Texts:

- \*Crooks, Robert and Carla Baur. 2011. Our Sexuality. 11<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cengage Books
- \*Weitzer, Ronald. 2009. Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Routledge
- \*Foucault, Michel. 1990. History of Sexuality, Volume 1. Vintage
- \*Luker, Kristin. 2007. When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex-and Sex Education- Since the Sixties. Norton
- \*Preves, Sharon. 2003. Intersex and Identity: The Contested Self. Rutgers University Press

These texts are available at the Rutgers University Bookstore on College Avenue. Copies of each can also be found on Amazon and Half.com

Other articles and assignments will be posted on the course Sakai website. Please note that **connectivity problems are not a sufficient excuse** to not have readings done prior to the class. If you are having a hard time accessing Sakai, please let me know ASAP and connect with a fellow student to access the readings.

**Grading:** I follow Rutgers University's grading scale:

- A: 90-100 pts
- B+: 86-89 pts
- B: 80-85 pts
- C+: 76-79 pts
- C: 70-75 pts
- D: 60-69 pts
- F: below 60 pts

Grades will be based on the following class exercises:

In- class debate on Luker book:	20
Movie Analysis:	20
Consumer Products Paper:	20
Midterm:	20
Final Exam:	20
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100</b>

I do not take attendance. However, test questions will include material from lecture, as well as from readings, and in-class exercises and films, so you are unlikely to pass the tests unless you attend every course and take scrupulous notes. I will not post powerpoint slides on Sakai before the class period. If you miss your in-class presentation day, there is

no make-up unless you have a documented excuse. No late work will be accepted without a documented excuse. **I do not negotiate grades.** If you are having a problem with the coursework, **please come see me** early in the course.

**Course Format:** As an intensive 400-level summer course, we have eleven meetings of almost 4 hours each. Although the time frame is condensed, the content is not. The sociology of sexuality is a broad and complex field, and while we cannot attempt to cover all of it, we will be reading and writing intensively in the topic areas that we do cover. Therefore, we have a lot to work on in every class session, and I expect each of you to come prepared (i.e.: have read all required readings, done required homework or presentation prep, etc). For everyone's sake, I will not be lecturing for 3 ½ hours every day; your participation is critical. Daily sessions will be a combination of lecture, small discussion groups, and films. Most days we will go for the full class period- please do not ask to be let out early.

**Assignments:** There are 3 major assignments in this course.

*In-class debate on Luker Book:* Read the entire Luker book, "When Sex Goes to School." Divide into 4 teams of 4-6 people each. Two teams will take a "pro-sex ed" position, and two teams will take an "abstinence only" approach to education. We will have two debates (1 pro-sex ed team, 1 pro-abstinence ed team per debate). As a team, you are expected to prepare opening statements about the position you are taking. Each team will open the debate with opening statements. After the opening statements, the true debate begins: each person on each team will be given 5 minutes to explain a specific element of the argument, which will then be counter-debated by the opposing team. (So person A on team A will speak for 5 minutes, then person A on team B will speak for 5 minutes, etc). The debate can go on as long as you like. High grades will be awarded to the teams that fairly distribute the work between all team members, that have thoroughly researched their position, including using material besides the Luker book, and present compelling arguments. The debate will take place on Tuesday, 8/9. This assignment is worth 20 points.

*Movie Analysis:* For this assignment, you will need to watch a feature-length movie of your choice that can be analyzed with respect to sex and sexuality. You may select any movie, but you must make sure that your choice contains enough information about these issues for you to be able to write a paper about it. The purpose of this paper is for you to show me what you have learned over the course of the semester-the more information you have to analyze, the easier that will be. At the beginning of your paper, provide the name of the movie, a short description of the main characters/their relationships to each other and a one-paragraph or less summary of the movie. (These 3 parts of the paper should take up only a page or less.) The next part of your paper will consist of an analysis of how the movie relates to and illustrates topics we have covered in class. Your paper must focus on at least two, and no more than three, of these topics: the politics of sexuality, essentialism and social constructionism, what is 'sex'?, gendered sexualities, sexual identities, learning about sex/sexuality, relationships, dysfunctions and diseases, atypical sexualities, sex and the media. (3 pages minimum.) The last part of your paper

will answer the following question: What messages - explicit and implicit - does this movie give about sex and sexuality? (Write at least a page on this.) Basically, I want you to show me that you can apply what you have learned in this course. Therefore, you should clearly specify what topics you will be addressing, how the movie illustrates them and what you think about that. Be creative. There is no right answer (but there are better and worse answers). I want you to give your impressions and interpretation of the movie - its events and the people in it. There is no list of movies from which to pick. It's up to you to find a movie that offers enough information that you can adequately answer the questions outlined above. . Some people will be able to construct a paper on the slightest hints; others may need something more explicit to build a paper on. I strongly suggest that you choose an American movie rather than a foreign one, and that you use one with a contemporary rather than a historical setting - this will make your analysis easier. You may watch and analyze a porn flick if you so choose, but it is not required, and the expectations for the paper is that you will still complete all the sections. Think carefully. Do not wait until the last minute. The paper should be a minimum of 5 pages long. This assignment is due to be posted on Sakai by **6pm Thursday July 28th**. This assignment is worth 20 points.

*Consumer Products Paper:* We as Americans are fully immersed in the world of consumer culture; shopping is one of the great American pastimes. I want to give you an opportunity to analyze the sexual ideologies embodied in consumer products. First, you will need to select a type of consumer product that relates to sexuality. Good places to look for such products are catalogs, websites, drugstores, or the mall. For example, you could look at "sexy" underwear in a Victoria's Secret or International-Male catalog. Drugstores sell numerous products that relate to sexuality, such as lubricants, birth control supplies, fertility predictors, pregnancy tests, menstrual supplies, douches, herbal "libido boosters," and creams for vaginal and "jock" itching. Many websites sell sexually-related products-you might try [www.goodvibes.com](http://www.goodvibes.com) for a wide selection of videos, sexual aids such as vibrators, games for couples, and other products. Your assignment is to first pick a particular merchant you feel comfortable with, and then to pick a category of product. For example, you might go to Walgreen's to study the range of condoms available, or visit Lane Bryant to look at the brassieres they sell, or go to a GNC to see the herbal "libido boosters," or go to an adult bookstore and pick a category of magazines to peruse (for those of you who have always wanted to be able to say "it's for a college paper" as you examine the magazines filed under "bondage and discipline"). Whatever your choice, be sure to select a specific category of products. Do not try to analyze everything sold at Naughty but Nice or the Maternity Mall. Once you have selected your product category, you will need to take field notes. For example, if you chose to look at the selection of "feminine deodorants" at [www.drugstore.com](http://www.drugstore.com). you should note the types of deodorants sold (wipes, washes, suppositories, powders and sprays), and the names of the individual products (e.g. "Massengill Flower Fresh Soft Cloth Towlettes"). Describe the packaging of the products, and the descriptive language appearing on it ("helps keep you dry and clean all day long," "for use before bedtime," "pleasant baby powder scent"). Also note the prices, which give a clue toward what is considered valuable. Finally, after collecting your data, consider what messages the products send. What sexual ideologies (beliefs and opinions) underlie the products and their marketing? For example, the

existence of a wide variety of feminine deodorants indicates that vaginal odor is considered to be an embarrassing problem. Moreover, the product descriptions provide evidence of an ideology that female sexual arousal is disturbing: it is wet when a woman should be dry, apparently "unclean" since it necessitates so much cleansing, lacking in the babyish innocence which women should embody, and even repugnant to sexual partners, since deodorizing cleansers are needed "before bedtime."

You should answer the following five questions in your paper:

- What store/catalog/website did you visit, and what category of product did you select?
  - Why did you choose it?
  - To whom is the category of products you examined marketed (e.g. women generally, men generally, women who wish to become pregnant, men with a shoe fetish, urban teenagers) ?
  - What messages are sent to that population by the products you studied? What is the general sexual ideology implied by the packaging, product descriptions, and illustrations? Give specific examples, and devote the bulk of your paper to this question.
  - Critique the marketing of the category of products you selected. If you were "in charge" what changes would you make in the design and marketing of the products?
- This paper should be at least 8 pages long. This assignment is due to be posted on Sakai by **6pm Thursday August 11th**. This assignment is worth 20 points.

**Exams:** There are two exams in this course- one at midterm and one at the end of the course. These exams will be composed of multiple-choice and short answer questions and will cover concepts covered in the readings, in-class discussion, lecture, films, and student presentations. The final exam is not comprehensive- it will only cover the material covered in class since the midterm.

### **Class Schedule:**

**Please note:** All readings are expected to be completed prior to the course period in which they are listed. If you did not get a chance to read the readings for the first day, please read them by the second class session. Selections marked with a (OS) are from *Our Sexuality*, selections marked with (SS) are from *Sex for Sale*, selections marked with (HS) are from *History of Sexuality*, selections marked with (WSS) are from *When Sex Goes to School*, and selections marked with (I) are from *Intersex and Identity*.

#### **Tue, 7/12 DAY 1**

Themes: Perspectives on Sexuality  
Readings: (OS) *Perspectives on Sexuality 1-28*  
\*This syllabus!  
Other: Start reading *When Sex Goes to School*

#### **Thur, 7/14 DAY 2**

Themes: The History of Sexuality  
Readings: (HS) 41-49; 57-73; 103-111; 115-131

**Tue, 7/19 DAY 3**

Themes: Sex Research  
Readings: *(OS) Sex Research Methods and Problems 28-48*  
FILM: *Kinsey*

**Thur, 7/21 DAY 4**

Themes: Gender Issues  
Readings: *(OS) Gender Issues 111-145*  
*(I) 1-87*  
FILM: *Transamerica*

**Tue, 7/26 DAY 5**

Themes: Sex for Sale  
*(SS) 91-114; 115-138; 187-204; 325-352*

**Thur, 7/28 DAY 6**

Exercise: **Midterm Today!**  
Readings: *(OS) Sexuality and the Adult Years 373-400*  
DUE: *Movie Analysis*

**Tue, 8/2 DAY 7**

Themes: Sexual Orientations  
Readings: *(OS) Sexual Orientations 249-278*  
FILM: *Brokeback Mountain*

**Thur, 8/4 DAY 8**

Themes: Sexuality during Childhood and Adolescence  
Readings: *(OS) Sexuality during childhood and adolescence 344-372*  
FILM: *Juno*

**Tue, 8/9 DAY 9**

Themes: Sex Education  
Readings: *(WSS) When Sex Goes to School, entire book*  
Exercise: Sex Ed Debates

**Thur, 8/11 DAY 10**

Themes: Sexual Coercion  
Readings: *(OS) Sexual Coercion 515-548*  
*(OS) Love and Communication in Intimate Relationships 180-225*  
DUE: *Consumer Products Paper*

**Tue, 8/16 DAY 11**

Exercise: **Final Exam!**

### **Classroom Policies**

**Be respectful** of me, of your classmates, of the university personnel and facilities. This means, at a minimum, turning off your cell phones and minimizing disruptive behavior in class, generally paying attention in class, arriving on time, and staying for the full class period.

**Please choose your words carefully.** The classroom must be a place in which everyone can participate. This means that every person must feel safe enough to express their opinions without fear of ridicule or intolerance. Remember that in good discussions, people critique ideas and not other people. The more heated the political issue we discuss, the more important it is to keep this in mind. Please use inclusive (non-sexist) language, when speaking and in your written work. This means, at a minimum, not using “man” to refer to all humans, and not using “he” exclusively to refer to all people. If you have questions about what inclusive language is, please consult a current style guide or ask me.

**Academic Integrity.** Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) such behavior as **quoting** or **paraphrasing** without complete citation, collaborating with others on assignments or exams without the explicit permission of the instructor, submitting work for more than one course without the instructors’ permission, and presenting another's work as your own. Penalties range from a failing grade for the assignment to permanent expulsion from the University, depending on the severity of the offense. As an instructor, I am **obligated** to report all suspected violations to the suspected student’s Dean; the Dean’s Office then makes recommendations. In other words, as soon as I suspect it, it is entirely out of my hands. Don’t put me, or yourself, in this position. See the full policy (<http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/>) for details. I may use the online service turnitin.com to identify possible plagiarized papers. Please ask me if you have any questions.

**Makeup Exams.** For in-class exams, I allow make-ups **only in very rare circumstances**. Oversleeping, missing the campus bus, getting a flat tire, etc. are NOT valid reasons for a makeup. Makeup exams consist of long-answer essay questions, and the bar is set high. It is not to your advantage to take a makeup exam in this class. See me as soon as possible if you know you will miss the final exam.

**Contacting me.** The best way to contact me is via **email**: kburrows@sociology.rutgers.edu. Please read the syllabus thoroughly before emailing me with questions about the course. Don’t email me an hour before class starts to ask me questions about the reading or exams; not only will I not have time to respond to you before class, but I will also know you put off the assignment until the last minute. When you email, please put the name of the course (e.g., “Soc of Sexuality”) in the subject

heading and include your full name in the email. Otherwise, I won't be able to tell your email apart from the spam I delete without opening. I welcome anonymous emails with suggestions, critiques, or comments about the course, but I will not respond to such anonymous emails.

**Sakai.** We will use Sakai in this course for additional readings, announcements, and for posting and turning in assignments. Please let me know ASAP if you have any trouble accessing this site.

**Office hours.** Although I do not have regularly scheduled office hours, I am always available to meet with you before or after class. I generally arrive in the classroom about a half-hour before class. However, I am always available for more extensive discussions about the class material, your performance in the class, or any other topics. If you would like to have a more extensive conversation with me, please email me and we can set up a mutually acceptable time.

**Classroom Accessibility.** Please come see me no later than the third class if you have special learning needs. I will work with you to make the classroom and the material accessible. A great resource is the RU Learning Centers, where you can contact the Disability Coordinator for your school. Their website is <http://lrc.rutgers.edu/disabilities.html>.

**I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, as I see fit or necessary for the course.**