

Gender and Sexualities

Sex, gender, and sexuality have a profound impact on our lives, and are important facets of our identities, entangled with our social relations, one's position in society, as well as instrumental in defining opportunities and constraints for mobility. Too frequently—and inaccurately—sex and gender are conflated and considered through the register of biological determinism. In this course, we will critically examine this biological determinism and emphasize instead the cultural formations of sex, gender, and sexuality.

This course examines how people experience gender and sexuality in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Drawing from disciplines across humanities and social sciences, this course introduces students to the major concepts in gender studies, including biological determinism, social constructionism, power and inequalities, sexuality, and queering categories of difference. We will explore how gender and sexuality relate to other categories of social identity, such as caste, class, race and ethnicity, and are intertwined with local and global economic and political processes. Since popular media plays an important role in reflecting, disrupting, and shaping local understanding of gender and sexuality, the course will engage with films, advertisements, soap operas, and influential media figures to discuss different aspects of gender and sexualities.

The aim of this course is to emphasize gender and sexuality as fields of knowledge and power that are contested, dynamic and varied. Students will gain a greater sense of the diversity of human social practices and beliefs pertaining to gender and sexuality around the world. They will also learn how to critically assess media and other popular representations of gender roles and stereotypes.

Assessment:

Class Participation: 15
Mid-term Assessment: 30
Presentation: 15
End-term Written Assignment: 40

Topics and Readings

Concepts and Themes– An Introduction

- Introduction to the course and curriculum
- Judith Butler on Sex and Gender (13 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UD9IOIIUR4k>
- Alex, Bridget. "Worldwide Survey Kills the Myth of 'Man the Hunter'"
<https://www.science.org/content/article/worldwide-survey-kills-myth-man-hunter>

Module 1: Gender and Sexuality– Roles, Regulations, and Assumptions

The Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality

- Ortner, Sherry. “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” *Feminist Studies* 1: 5–31, 1972.
- Lorber, Judith. “‘Night to His Day’– The Social Construction of Gender.” In Rothenberg, Paula, S. ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States– An Integrated Study* (6th edition). Pp. 54-64. New York: Worth Publishers, 2004.
- Recommended Watch: *Village Rockstars*. Netflix.

Challenging Notions of Femininity and Masculinity

- Krishnan, Sneha. “Where do Good Girls have Sex? Space, Risk and Respectability in Chennai.” *Gender, Place and Culture* 28, no. 7 (2021): 999-1018.
- Kimmel, Michael S. “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity.” In Rothenberg, Paula, S. ed. *Race, Class and Gender in the United States– An Integrated Study* (6th edition). Pp. 81–93. New York: Worth Publishers, 2004.
- Recommended: Guttman, Matthew. “The Animal Inside– Men and Violence.” *Current Anthropology* 62, no. S23 (2021): 182–192.

Module 2: Major Institutions

Sex, Gender, and the Global Economy

- Frohlick, Susan. “Fluid Exchanges: The Negotiation of Intimacy between Tourist Women and Local Men in a Transnational Town in Caribbean Costa Rica.” *City & Society* 19 (2007): 139–168.
- Lan, Pei-Chia. “Jealous Madams and Anxious Mothers.” In *Global Cinderellas: Migrant Domesticity and Newly-Rich Employers in Taiwan*. Ch. 3, 94–124. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

- Nanny work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9452mR2orE> (from Paris, I love you. Also on Amazon Prime)

Medicalizing and Marketing Desire

- Edmonds, Alexander. In *Pretty Modern*. Pp. 183–194. Edmonds, Alexander. “Aesthetic Medicine and Motherhood.” In *Pretty Modern: Beauty, Sex, and Plastic Surgery in Brazil*. Duke University Press, 2010.
- Loe, Meika. “Fixing the Broken Male Machine.” In *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*. Ch 3, Pp. 63–94. New York: New York University Press, 2004.

Gender and Sexuality in Popular Culture

- AIB Video on Sexual harassment through the ages (8 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5ZPg4TE3h8&list=PPSV>
- Anjaria, Ulka. “Gender and Sexuality.” In *Understanding Bollywood: The Grammar of Hindi Cinema*. Ch. 7, Pp. 168–190. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Discuss films watched (*No City for Women*; *Fire in the Mountains*; *Bulbbul*)
- Recap with in-class activity on finding and discussing pop culture references that either reify or subvert topics discussed till date.
- Release midterm prompt

Module 3: Transgressing Gender and Sexuality– Power, Politics, Resistance

De-essentializing Sex, Gender, Kinship

- Making a “family tree”
- Weston, Kath. Selection from *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Decena, Carlos U. “Tacit Subjects.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008): 339–359.

Queer Paradigms

- Queer Anthropology: <https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/queer-anthropology>
- Watch: *Paris is Burning*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl7EhpY2yaA>
- How to find your voice and be a drag queen? (19 mins):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qE1oSK7PpM4>

Queer Community– Solidarities & Exclusions

- Dasgupta, R.K. (2017). “‘Imagined’ Queer Communities.” *Digital Queer Cultures in India: Politics, Intimacies and Belonging* (1st ed.). Routledge India. Pp. 69–94.
- Dasgupta, R.K. (2017). “Dissident Citizenship.” *Digital Queer Cultures in India: Politics, Intimacies and Belonging* (1st ed.). Routledge India. Pp. 124–153.
- Group presentation prep time (1st class). Presentation and discussion (2nd class)

Living in/with Contradiction

- Boellstorff, Tom. “Between Religion and Desire: Being Muslim and Gay in Indonesia.” *American Anthropologist*, 107 (2005): 575–585.
- Decena, Carlos U. “Tacit Subjects.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14, no. 2-3 (2008): 339–359.

Towards Change

- Ahmed, Sara. Selection from *Complaint!* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021.
- Course wrap-up.
- Individual Presentations