Columbia University  
Spring 2010

**History of Sexuality**

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Office: Heyman Center, H2-4. OH: TuTh, 11-12

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This lecture course offers a survey of influential and representative texts written on the topic of human sex. A deceptively simple question runs throughout the course: is sexuality historical? Many books written and courses offered on the history of sexuality are in fact histories of the changing contexts within which sexuality was supposedly located at different times. The central argument of this course is that sexuality itself is historical, that it emerged in the nineteenth century and that it might be in the process of disappearing. In order to make visible the historicity of sexuality, this course focuses on the different ways sex has been regulated in the Western tradition, from ancient Greece until the present.

**EVALUATION METHOD:** There are six requirements:  
1) You must attend the discussion sections, and actively participate in the discussion. (10%)  
2) Each week you must post a summary of, or commentary on, all the readings covered in the last two lectures before your discussion section. These summaries/commentaries are due on the day before your discussion section, and must be posted on Courseworks in the “Discussion” section, in the category that corresponds to the TA who leads your discussion section. (10%)  
3) First exam (February 11). (20%)  
4) Second exam (March 25). (20%)  
5) Third exam (April 29). (20%)  
6) Eight-page research paper due on May 9, sent by email both to ps2403@columbia.edu and to the TA who has led your discussion section throughout the semester. (20%)

**NOTA BENE:** No portion of this course may be recorded, audio or video, without my permission.

**TEXTS**  
The following books have been ordered at Book Culture:  
1) Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*  
2) Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction*  
All the other texts are available online on Courseworks, in the “Shared Files” folder.
January 19: Introduction

January 21: Sex in Antiquity
Plato, *Symposium* [Aristophanes’ discourse]
➢ This very famous work was probably composed in the period 385-370 B.C.
Pseudo-Lucian, *Erôtes*
➢ This text, by an imitator of the satirist Lucian, was written between the second and the fourth century A.D.

January 26: The Flesh (I)
Paul, “1 Corinthians 7”
➢ St. Paul (c.3-c.64), perhaps more than anyone else, defined Christian spirituality.
John Cassian, *The Institutes of Cenobia and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Vices*, Book 6
John Cassian, *The Conferences*, 12th conference
➢ Cassian (c.360 – c.435) was a monk. These two texts were written for other monks.

January 28: The Flesh (II)
Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, QQ. 153 and 154
➢ Aquinas (c.1225-1274) is a major figure in Christian theology. He tried to reconcile the teachings of the Bible with the philosophy of Aristotle (who is simply referred to as “the Philosopher”).

February 2: Secularizing Sex? (I)
*Onania; Or, the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and all its Frightful Consequences, in Both Sexes, consider’d, With Spiritual and Physical Advice to those who have already injur’d themselves by this abominable Practice*, pp. iii-xi, 1-32, 52-60, 105-24, 132-37
*Supplement to the Onania*, pp. 60-78
➢ *Onania* is the first book entirely devoted to the question of masturbation. The first edition, which is lost, probably came out in 1716. Historians have tried, but failed, to solve the mystery of its authorship.

February 4: Secularizing Sex (II)
S.A. Tissot, *Onanism: Or a Treatise Upon the Disorders Produced by Masturbation: Or, the Dangerous Effects of Secret and Excessive Venery*, pp. v-xii, 1-4, 20-86, 154-73
➢ Tissot (1728-1797) was one of the most respected physicians of the eighteenth century. *Onanism* was a huge success.

February 9: Secularizing Sex (III)
➢ The Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) wrote several very lengthy pornographic novels, filled with scenes of violence. He spent a good portion of his life in prison or in an asylum. Krafft-Ebing later coined the perversion “sadism” after him.

February 11:
FIRST EXAM

February 16: The Emergence of the Sexual Instinct
Pinel (1745-1826) is one of the first modern psychiatrists. This short excerpt, which is not directly related to sex, marks a break with the old conception of madness.

C.F. Michéa, “Unhealthy Deviations of the Sexual Appetite”

Michéa (1815-1882) was a psychiatrist. Here he is commenting on the case of Sergeant Bertrand, a man who was sentenced in 1849 for violating tombs and mutilating corpses.


Ulrichs (1825-1895) campaigned for sexual reform in Germany. He had degrees in law, theology, and history.

February 18: Sexuality (I): Early Sexology

Carl Westphal, “Contrary Sexual Feeling”

Westphal (1833-1890) was a German psychiatrist. This is the first major psychiatric article written on homosexuality.


Krafft-Ebing (1840-1902) was a German-Austrian psychiatrist whose Psychopathia Sexualis had a profound influence. K-E introduced the terms “sadism,” “masochism” and “pedophilia.”

February 23: Sexuality (II): The Trials of Oscar Wilde

Selections from the following sources:

Hyde, H. Montgomery, The Trials of Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde: Three Times Tried

The Shame of Oscar Wilde

Selected Newspaper Articles: London, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles

Theory:


(Suggested:) Carr, Edward H., What Is History?, pp. 3-35

Wilde (1854-1900) lectured, wrote articles, plays, and the novel The Picture of Dorian Gray. As his trials make clear, Victorians considered the homoerotic themes in his work and life immoral.

February 25: Sexuality (III): Havelock Ellis


Havelock Ellis, “The Problem of Sexual Abstinence,” pp. 196-216

Havelock Ellis, “Analysis of the Sexual Impulse,” pp. 1-22, 52-65

Ellis (1859-1939) was a British sexual psychologist who campaigned for sexual liberation.

March 2: Sexuality (IV): Sigmund Freud


Freud (1856-1939) was an Austrian neurologist who founded psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century.

March 4: The Sexual Revolution: Concepts

Wilhelm Reich, The Sexual Revolution, pp. 3-33

Reich (1897-1957) was an Austrian psychoanalyst, who began as a disciple of Freud but soon went his own way. He died in prison, ostracized by the medical profession.

Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, pp. 129-71, 197-221

Marcuse (1898-1979) was a German philosopher and sociologist, whose work had a great influence on the Sexual Revolution.
March 9: The Sexual Revolution: Facts
- Kinsey (1894-1956) wrote books on entomology before turning to human sexual behavior.

March 11: The Sexual Revolution: Legalizing the Representation of Sex
U.S. Supreme Court, “Roth v. United States, 354 U.S. 476 (1957)”
- Samuel Roth ran a literary business and had been accused of sending obscene materials through the mail for advertising. The Supreme Court upheld Roth’s conviction, but also offered a new legal definition of “obscenity.”
U.S. Supreme Court, “Miller v. California, 413 U.S. 15 (1973)”
- Like Roth 15 years beforehand, Marvin Miller had been accused of sending obscene materials through the mail for advertising. The Court of Appeals of California upheld Miller’s conviction, and offered once again a new definition of “obscenity.”
- This is a short excerpt of the 1960-page report written by the Commission on Pornography. The commission had been ordered by president Ronald Reagan in 1985.

SPRING BREAK

March 23: The Sexual Revolution: Legalizing Sex
- This Supreme Court case struck down the sodomy law in Texas.

March 25
SECOND EXAM

March 30: The Sexual Revolution: The Clitoris as Epistemological Monster
Sigmund Freud, “Femininity,” pp. 139-67
- Caprio (?-1992) was a psychiatrist and hypnotist.
Marie Bonaparte, *Female Sexuality*, pp. 1-12, 150-61
- Bonaparte (1882-1962) was a French princess and a devoted disciple of Freud. At the end of his life Freud escaped Nazi Germany thanks to her help.
- Masters (1915-2001) was a gynecologist and Johnson (1925-) is a psychologist.
Anne Koedt, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm”
- Koedt is a founding member of several radical feminist organizations.

April 1: Perverting Perversions: Rethinking the DSM
Seymour Krim, “Revolt of the Homosexual”
- Krim (1922-1989) was an author and literary critic.
- Socarides (1922-2005) was a psychoanalyst.
Robert L. Spitzer and Jean Endicott, “Medical and Mental Disorder: Proposed Definition and Criteria,” pp. 15-39
- Spitzer was chair of the task force of the DSM-III. He was instrumental in the removal of homosexuality from the list of perversions in the DSM. He is currently professor of psychiatry here at Columbia University.

April 6: Gay Science
Simon LeVay, “A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men”
- LeVay (1943-) is an American neuroscientist and an openly gay man. This article, published in Science in 1991, generated a firestorm of controversy over the existence of the “gay gene.”
Jeffrey Satinover, Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth, pp. 17-20, 37-45, 49-54, 71-117, 121-167, 221-247
- Satinover (1947-) is a psychiatrist and Jungian psychoanalyst. He also earned a PhD in physics.

April 8: The Intensity of Sexual Desire: Hyposexuality
William Masters and Virginia Johnson, “Playboy Interview: Masters and Johnson”
Helen Singer Kaplan, Disorders of Sexual Desire, pp. 55-94
- Kaplan (1929-1995) was a pioneer in the field of sex therapy.

April 13: The Intensity of Sexual Desire: Hypersexuality
Patrick Carnes, “The Presidential Diagnosis”
Patrick Carnes, Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction, pp. i-xii + 1-61
- Carnes is the executive director of the Gentle Path program at Pine Grove, located in Hattiesburg, MS. His book Out of the Shadows is a pioneer book on the question of sexual addiction. On his website (www.sexhelp.com) you can take the “Internet Sex Screening Test.”
- Starr (1946-) is an American lawyer.
Martin P. Kafka, “A Monoamine Hypothesis for the Pathophysiology of Paraphilic Disorders”
- Kafka is professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He is also the President of the Massachusetts chapter of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers.
Ginger Manley and Jean Koehler, “Sexual Behavior Disorders: Proposed New Classification in the DSM-V”
- Manley is a psychiatrist at Vanderbilt University, department of Psychiatry. Koehler is a sex therapist and professor of psychiatry at the University of Louisville Medical School.

April 15: The End of Sexuality? The Viagra Revolution
George L. Ginsberg, etc., “The New Impotence”
Solomon ‘Sam’ Julty, “A Case of ‘Sexual Dysfunction’”
Jennifer R. Fishman, “Making Viagra: From Impotence to Erectile Dysfunction”
Leonore Tiefer, “The Medicalization of Impotence: Normalizing Phallocentrism”
Meika Loe, The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America, 125-166.

April 20: Michel Foucault and the Historical Criticism of Sexuality (I)
- Foucault (1926-1984) was a French historian and philosopher. He once said that his dream would be to write a book that would be “an explosive powerful like a bomb and beautiful like a firework.”
April 22: Michel Foucault and the Historical Criticism of Sexuality (II)
Michel Foucault, “Friendship As a Way of Life”  
Michel Foucault, “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity”  
Michel Foucault, “So Is It Important to Think?”  
- Guyotat (1940-) is a French novelist. *Eden, Eden, Eden* (1970) was revered by many French intellectuals, including Roland Barthes, Philippe Solers – and Foucault. These are the first five pages of the novel, which goes on in the same vein for 181 pages (in the English translation).

April 27: Conclusion
There are no readings for today. In class we will watch excerpts from Woody Allen’s *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)*.

April 29
THIRD EXAM

May 9
PAPER DUE (no hard copy! Send your paper by email both to ps2403@columbia.edu and to the same TA who has evaluated your summaries/commentaries throughout the semester)