Course Description
Sociologists study the social origins of sexuality; how shared beliefs shape our desires, what is taboo or what shames us. Historical and cross-cultural research illuminate the emergence of modern sexuality and the ways it transformed systems of dating, marriage, homosexuality, government and racial classification. Learn why sociologists are skeptical of essentialist explanations that rely on biology and favor theories that recognize sexuality as a diverse, ever-changing function of culture and institutions.

This course fulfills a gateway course requirement in Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies and counts toward the anthropology major.

Contact info
Office hours: M 11-noon; W 3:30-4:30; F 11-noon or by appointment
Mailbox on my door in King 305c
gregor.mattson@oberlin.edu
The best way to get in touch is in office hours. The second best way is to leave me a note in my box. The worst way to get in touch is to send me an e-mail less than 24 hours before you need a reply.

Goals
1) learn how sociologists study sexuality
2) use empirical data to apply sociological concepts
3) analyze research pieces, both book-length monographs and articles
4) locate sociology’s approach to sexuality in relation to other sciences and the humanities

Assessment
Participation 10%
Homework 10%
Quizzes 10%
3 papers 45%
Final paper 25%

Participation
• come to class on time
• be engaged (NO phones, laptops, knitting, grooming)
• having done the readings and brought them to class
• bring your reading notes
• volunteer answers to others’ questions
• come to office hours to discuss thoughts and ideas

Required books
Office hours
Office hours are for you to have one-on-one time with me. They are the only place I will discuss grades or what you missed in class during an absence. You should visit my office hours at least twice during the semester as a matter of habit: it helps you get the most out of the course, cement your learning, and build relationships.

Reading notes
It’s better to skim each text than get stuck on a difficult page. Try skimming the whole selection in 5 minutes. Notice section headings, bold words, or highlighted quotations to get a sense of the story the author is telling. Then when you read the entire piece, you’ll already know where the argument is going. To ensure your comprehension, answer the following questions:

- what are the main concepts this author is using?
- what is the point of this article—what is the author trying to explain?
- how convincing is the argument?
- how does it relate to the others we have covered?

Attendance & homework
Homework is not accepted late and quizzes cannot be made up. I will drop your 2 lowest grades. If you will be missing class events for approved College events, provide documentation two weeks before your absence. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from a colleague and come to office hours to discuss what you missed.

Disability Accommodations
If you are a student with a disability, make sure you’ve registered with the Office of Disability Services (Peters G-27/28 x55588) to develop a plan to meet your academic needs. Bring their recommendations to me at least two weeks before any due date or exam.

Grading rubric
Assignments will be graded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insight</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventions</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
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- Thesis: 30 (argument suitable for essay length, recapitulated in conclusion)
- Concepts: 30 (synthesizes a variety of sources, in-text citations in APA format)
- Organization: 20 (ideas grouped in paragraphs, evidence for main points)
- Insight: 10 (creativity, connections between texts, use of language, sparkle)
- Conventions: 10 (stapled, grammar, 1” margins, spelling, punctuated, 12-pt. font)

Grading policies
No late assignments or quizzes. No extra credit.

Off-campus Assignments
Assignments may invite you to make observations or attend events off campus. Off-campus assignments are done at your own discretion; alternate assignments are available if you prefer.

Honor Code: [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/honorcode.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/honorcode.html)
Remember to sign each assignment—it is your pledge to know the boundaries of cheating (not doing your own work) plagiarism (taking credit for someone else’s work) and fabrication (making up sources, quotations or observations). All quotations must be attributed properly:

Final paper: Due Thursday, December 16th at 3:45pm to my office.
Extend one of your three assignments into an 10-page paper. Incorporate discussions from the rest
of the course into your arguments and add one more empirical component (another analysis of institutional change, another interview, another set of observations). Ensure that you are making one single argument using your two sources of data. Synthesize relevant course readings and use them to analyze and contextualize your data. Be sure to address both Freud and Foucault, either to discuss how they would interpret your results or report what they wrote about the angle of sexuality you analyzed. A checklist for how to expand your initial assignment:

- incorporate relevant discussions from the entire course
- conduct new empirical component
- one thesis unifies the paper
- cite relevant texts from the entire course
- incorporate theoretical perspectives from Freud and Foucault

Sources & Citations (APA format)
You need not make a works cited for course readings but you must cite them properly in the text in APA format. Wikipedia is not an academic source, but may lead you to primary sources.

Paraphrasing primary sources (preferred):
Media in the 1950s catered to the rising middle class, giving a misleading impression of America’s families (Coontz 1990, p. 31).

Direct quotations (use sparingly) must be introduced:
Stephanie Coontz cites the enduring power of the media for creating a new American tradition during the baby boom: “The happy, homogenous families that we ‘remember’ from the 1950s were... a result of the media’s denial of diversity” (1990, p. 31).

Assignments: 4 pages max.
Assignments are evidence of your comprehension of the course materials, your ability to synthesize them with our discussions, and your contribution to the intellectual discussion. Do not mistake the length of these assignments for their importance. Each is worth 15% of your grade and deserves attention over several days, not a last-minute dash on the night before they are due. Use the writing center or friends to develop your ideas, hone your writing, and edit your final draft.

1) Film response due Sept. 23rd
Analyze your responses to one of the two documentary films in terms of the relevant readings. Connect at least 5 concepts that gave you added insight to what you saw, what surprised you, or what connections you observed between the two films. Ensure that your observations have a single thesis that unites them into essay form.

2) Courtship norms interview, due October 14:
Interview an elder about the courtship norms when they were teenaged. How did they know someone was interested in them? How did they let someone know they were interested? What were acceptable and unacceptable courtship activities? How closely were these norms followed by their friends? What did the community think of someone who broke the rules? Openly? Use at least four concepts from the readings to interpret and contextualize the experiences of your interviewee.

3) Observing sexuality, due November 18th:
Make observations of a public or semi-public place to analyze how institutional factors shape sexuality. These could involve observations of courtship norms, heteronormativity, abstinence, marriage, etc. The scene you choose to analyze may be a party, furniture store, sports event,
TOPIC: Social constructionism and the sociology of sexuality
This unit introduces the key terms by which social scientists understand sexuality today. Examples from other cultures and subcultures within our own illustrate the utility of thinking of sexuality as socially constructed rather than an essential part of the human experience.

Sept 8: Welcome
Course guidelines, syllabus, announcements
Key concepts: sex, gender & sexuality; social constructionism vs. essentialism.

Sept 10: Gender & sexuality: The Dayak of New Guinea

Sept 13: Sexual cultures and cultural institutions
What do we mean by sexual cultures? Connecting what we know: how does Dayak society illustrate Weeks’ discussion about sexual difference in the West? What is special about our concept of sexuality (and of sex, and gender, and economy...)?
Weeks: Chapter 3, esp. 41-44; 47¶2-51, 53--60¶2

Sept 15: Gender & sexuality: The Sambia of New Guinea
Back to New Guinea: Sambia sex, gender and sexuality. What does Herdt mean when he refers to Sambia sexual economy? On what is it based? On what is Western sexual economy based?

Sept 16: DOCUMENTARY FILM NIGHT

Sept 17: Social constructionism and hormones
Connecting what we Know: What is sexuality anyways? What is the relationship between gender, sexuality, and sex for young Black transgendered women? How do essentialist (biomedical) and constructionist (multiple cultural meanings) ideas interplay in their lives? What does this study contribute to our understanding of dominant American sexual norms?
Weeks: Chapter 2 pp. 11-21
Eyre et. al. (2004) p. 150¶2-166. "‘Hormones is not magic wands:’ Ethnography of a transgender scene in Oakland, California.” Ethnography 5:2, pp. 147-172.

EXTRA FILM: Paris is Burning