Sex. In America, an obsession. In other parts of the world, a fact.
Rabih Alameddine, Lebanese-American writer and artist, 1998

Sex talk, with its forbidden overtones, was often embarrassing because it was exciting. Doing the research involved invading a private sphere. This affected the nature of the research questions and the explanations given for asking them. Surveyors rarely justified sex surveys on the grounds of interest. Instead, they used the urgent social problems of the day as an explanation for their questions. Julia Eriksen and Sally Steffen

Women and men make their own sexual and affectional history. But they do not make this history just as they please. They make it under circumstances given by the past and altered by their political activity and organization, and their vision of a valued future. Erotic and gender relationships are always under construction and reconstruction within specific historical settings. Johnathan Ned Katz

We badly need a political economy of sexuality, one which recognizes the interrelationship of political, economic, and cultural structure, and avoids the tendency to see sexuality as private and the political and economic as public. Dennis Altman

**Course Description**

How do Americans come to know themselves as sexual beings? How do individuals develop attractions, make sexual choices, define and enact their own sexuality? How do institutions and organizations influence understandings of human sexuality over time?

These are some of the questions that will guide our semester-long study of human sexuality in the United States. We will examine the processes through which the human body is sexed, from without by the society into which it is born, and from within through self-definition,
desire, and practice. Our study will be contextualized in changing cultural understandings of acceptable and deviant sexual expression, and a range of sexual behaviors.

Sexuality is a fascinating topic because it is in us, of us, between us and all around us. The sexual is both individual and cultural. Though we may perceive sex to be a natural and biologically driven behavior, sex is in fact largely shaped by social pressures, values and expectations. This semester we will examine theories, concepts, and cultural ramifications of a range of sexual practices and identities. 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. This course will provide an introduction to many issues related to human sexuality in the U.S. Some of the topics we will explore include power, violence, committed relationships, desire, sex work, socialization, sex ed, pornography and politics.

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. I hope it will be a stimulating semester. Welcome to the course.

Objectives
It is my hope that this course will:

1. Provide you with a strong foundation for your own sexual choices by providing you with an opportunity to speak frankly about sexuality, by challenging you to expand your erotic vernacular, and by stretching and developing your sexual I. Q.

2. Enable you to expand your intellectual understanding of sexuality.

3. Encourage you to develop a recognition of and appreciation of the range of human sexual behaviors.

4. Equip you to understand and critically examine the significance of how we view sexualities and sexual identities and how our own sexualities and sexual identities are perceived and evaluated by others.

5. Strengthen your general sociological sophistication through fifteen weeks of “exercise” applying the sociological imagination to the subject of sexuality.
6. Finally, I hope that you will find this to be a rewarding personal experience, one that leads to a re-examination of your own experience, values, beliefs and assumptions.

**Books & Supplies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexualities: Identities, Behaviors and Society, Sexuality, 2nd edition</td>
<td>Michael S. Kimmel and Rebecca F. Plante, eds.</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex</td>
<td>Jeffrey Weeks</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography and the Sex Industry</td>
<td>Ronald Weitzer</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulating Sex: The Politics of Intimacy and Identity</td>
<td>Elizabeth Bernstein and Schaffner, eds.</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Studying Sex: Ground Rules**

In this course we will read, observe, and discuss many explicit, sensitive, and controversial topics. It is therefore imperative that all class members treat each topic and each other with maturity and respect. The material we will be covering in this course may be embarrassing, difficult to discuss and so forth. But it can also be interesting, enjoyable and thought provoking. We’re in this together. Frank discussion of sexual questions and sociological findings will strengthen each of your sexual I.Q.s Your contributions to class discussion will be an important and valued component of our class meetings. Please come to class prepared to address this material in a straightforward manner.

Because sexuality is both individual and cultural, a sociological study of sexuality in the U.S. will raise many issues, about which we will not all agree. You are encouraged to disagree with class material, myself and each other provided that you can do so in a respectful manner. Disagreeing conveys that you have heard the other speaker, thought about her or his comments, and are offering an alternative. Disrespect suggests the converse, that you have failed to listen or address what the other speaker has offered. Your challenges should also not be moral statements. You must go beyond a “gut level” reaction to this material and engage in critical analysis.

To successfully complete the goals of this course, we must establish and develop a foundation of respect and trust. In order to benefit from this class it is essential that you come to class prepared each week. This course requires a heavy reading load as well as a substantial mental commitment to the class and class activities. If you are uncomfortable with frank and open discussions of sexual matters you may want to reconsider your enrollment in this course. If you have questions or concerns about this, please speak directly with me.

**Attendance and Deadlines**

This course requires a high level of student interaction, participation and involvement. I expect you to come to class on time, prepared and ready to discuss. Each class meeting you are expected to have read all the assigned readings and have worked in your journal beforehand, in order to come to class prepared to actively discuss the materials. The course starts
promptly at 8am (8:30 when we agree to that time); I take attendance at the start of class, so be on time.

Everyone gets one “oops” as I call it, one day off from the course while still getting full credit for attendance. Each additional absence will be reflected in your attendance and participation grade. More than three unexcused absences will lower your final grade for the course. When you do need to miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and an update from a classmate and to contact me regarding your absence.

Your written work needs to be in on time. I rarely allow late work to be handed in, and only if you contact me in advance of the deadline. All written assignments must be printed out and handed in, I do not accept emailed assignments. Whenever possible, please print double-sided. Assignments should either be handed in during class, or, when arranged in advance, to my mailbox in Carnegie 115.

Contacting Me

I expect to stay in contact with students throughout the term. Please come by during my office hours to discuss course content, your thoughts or concerns about assignments, or to get extra assistance. My office hours are posted weekly outside my door (ARH 116B). If you cannot attend my office hours, talk to me about scheduling an appointment at a different time or scheduling an email or phone discussion. I am online daily, so email is the fastest way to get in touch with me.

Course Policies

*If you have a physical or learning disability that requires you to make some adaptations to this course, please contact me to discuss arrangements. All conversations will be confidential. For help with disability services, contact Joyce Stern (3702). The Student Affairs Office offers a wealth of resources for all students. Stop in during business hours on the third floor of the JRC, or during drop-in hours, Friday 1:30-4:30.

*In any papers written for this course, you must abide by the College’s rules on plagiarism as outlined in the Student Handbook, which require you to "acknowledge explicitly any expressions, ideas, or observations that are not" your own. In addition, I expect that all formal papers will contain a footnote acknowledging any assistance
of any kind you received in producing the paper. I recommend making use of the talent and assistance of the professionals in the writing lab. If you do go to the writing lab, remember to cite the person who assisted you.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation This course will be student driven. This means that discussion and leadership by students is built into the course. I consider myself a guide for the course, whose job it is to provide you with the tools to learn. But I expect each of you to make your own way, and to work earnestly to develop your own sexual I. Q.

This course is a survey of human sexuality, as such, we have many areas to cover, and your reading load is quite extensive. I expect you to come to class with your readings done, with prepared responses and ideas, ready to discuss with your classmates, and actively engage with the ideas and challenges posed by the study of sexuality. The burden (and hopefully it will be an enjoyable burden) for reading about, assimilating, synthesizing and wrestling with a wide array of theories, research, and debates surrounding human sexuality is your number one task in the course.

I expect students to interact, ask questions, share insights, and push each other’s thinking throughout the term. I will formally ask each of you to contribute 2-4 discussion questions for one of our discussions during the term. We will sign up during the first week. You will need to read the assignment, and get the questions to me by email 4pm the previous day. The questions you contribute will factor into your participation grade for the term, although consistent, thoughtful contributions to class discussions are the most essential element of the participation component.

Your level of involvement both in terms of frequency and quality of your contributions determines your participation grade. In keeping with these high expectations for your weekly involvement in the course, participation is twenty percent of your grade. If you have any concerns about this portion of the grade, please speak to me early in the term. (20%)

Burning Question Assignments Since one of our goals for the course is to develop your abilities to communicate frankly about sexuality and to become familiar with the tools of an erotic education, several times during the term
I will ask you to address or ASK a specific “burning question.” Several times during the term, I will assign an informal writing assignment or activity to report on in written form. Informal assignments may include media analysis, website analysis, reports on conversations or interviews, or response to a particular question. You will receive specific instructions in advance of each assignment. (10%)

Exercising Your Erotic I.Q. One of the goals of the course is to give you practice and opportunity to discuss sexuality in a frank manner, both from an intellectual standpoint and at times from a personal standpoint. Furthermore, one of the ultimate goals of this course is to strengthen your sociological imagination and the practice of situating biography in history. Toward those goals, I have opened up the discussion board off of our pioneerweb site with a preliminary question. I want you to use this discussion board for your own purposes. It is a space for members of the class to communicate openly and frankly with one another. You may use it weekly, or only occasionally – my hope is that it will be a site to extend the discussions that begin in the classroom, to share resources, and to explore the sociology of sexuality in common. I will not be listening into those conversations – so say what you want to one another as long as you abide by the guidelines we establish in the first week of class.

Panel Presentation and Outline Along with several of your classmates, you will be responsible for leading one class discussion. We will discuss the panel presentation assignment and sign up for dates to present early in the semester. Your group will need to read the assigned readings in advance and meet several times outside of class to prepare your presentation. First, your group will decide which of the available readings to assign, and whether you want to assign your classmates additional materials in advance. Next, you will need to develop a preliminary plan and meet with me no later than one week before your presentation. During the class period prior to your group’s presentation you will distribute any materials necessary to your plan. You will need to present me with a written outline of your plan no later than 4pm the night before your presentation. Panel presentations may include setting up a guided debate, skits, films, music, web resources, media analysis, current events, social policy review, or a combination of any of these activities. In short, any
activity that you think will help teach the topic of the
day. The panel presentation grade will be based on your
planning and preparation as demonstrated during the class
period you lead, peer evaluation of the presentation, and
the group outline that you hand in to me on the day before
your presentation. (10%)

Journal 
This course requires a significant amount of
reading, writing and discussion. Your journal will
potentially be your greatest tool for developing and
advancing your understanding of sexuality. The purpose of
the journal is to help you prepare to participate in class
discussion, to allow you to articulate in your own words
significant concepts and ideas raised in the readings, and
facilitate connections between the readings and your own
life experiences. You should also use your journal to keep
track of freewrites in class, observations you make,
conversations you overhear, news articles or cartoons that
catch your attention. As you prepare for each class
session, you should generate key points you want to discuss
and a minimum of two excellent questions. Each of you will
be responsible for contributing questions one day out of
the term, but I hope that you will be generating questions
and conclusions each day in your journal. Your journal is a
private resource, so I will not read your thoughts or
observations without warning. However, your journal will be
your immediate source for your weekly response papers,
which I describe below. Your journal will also provide a
starting point for your final project or paper.

Response Papers 
During the first half of the term,
each of you will need to hand in a total of four response
papers. Your response papers will require you to summarize,
synthesize and react to the week’s readings and will allow
you to engage directly with one or more of the readings for
the week. Each paper must be at least one page and no more
than 2 pages in length. The short length of these papers
requires you to be concise and succinct in your responses.
All four of your papers are due prior to March 13. You
cannot hand in more than one paper each week, so you should
plan to spread the four papers out evenly over the next
eight weeks. (20%)

Final Portfolio 
On May 1, I will ask you to
turn in either your final portfolio assignment for the
course or a research paper (see below). For either of these
options, you will give a presentation on your work during the last two weeks of the semester. If you choose the portfolio option, your portfolio will include six mini-papers or projects. These six components might include additional response papers, or creative, interpretive or analytical assignments. Mini projects could include, for example, a film review, article review, news analysis, interviews, photographs, montage of images, dictionary of sexual terms, or website analysis. These mini projects and papers must be in addition to informal writing assignments completed throughout the term. We will discuss the portfolio assignment in more depth early in the term. (20%) OR

**Research Paper**

Many of you have been waiting to take a sexuality course, and may have a burning research question that you really want to get to the bottom of in regards to sexuality. If you choose the research paper option, you will conclude the course with an in-depth study of a topic of your own choosing. Final Paper: 10-12 pages. (20%)

**Exams**

Two exams based on weekly readings and discussion, are scheduled throughout the term. As a class, you will have the opportunity to decide if your tests will be take-home or in-class. (10% each, not cumulative)

**Grading**

- **Participation and Attendance** 20%
- **Burning Question Assignments** 10%
- **Panel Presentation and Memo** 10%
- **Four Discussion Papers** 20%
- **Final Portfolio or Research Paper (& presentation)** 20%
- **Exams (10% each)** 20%

**Grading Distribution**

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<td>Score Range</td>
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<td>59 and below</td>
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**Key to Reading Schedule:**

- **H2M=** *Harmful to Minors*, Judith Levine
- **S4S=** *Sex for Sale*, Ronald Weitzer, editor
- **SEX=** *Sexuality*, Jeffrey Weeks
- **Regulating=** *Regulating Sex*, Elizabeth Bernstein and Laurie Schaffner, editors
- Readings from *Sexualities: Identities, Behaviors and Society* are indicated by the chapter number followed by title, author, original publication, and page numbers for the reading.
- **E-reserve** articles are indicated in bold – these are accessed off the library webpage or pioneerweb
- **JSTOR** articles are indicated in bold and can be accessed through our pioneerweb site

### Course Schedule

*This schedule is tentative and subject to change.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Assigned Reading</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>First Day</strong>-welcome &amp; introduction to the course</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>The Languages of Sex and The Invention of Sexuality in <em>SEX</em>, 1-40</td>
<td>Studying Sex</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>TH</td>
<td>Investigating Sex: Essentialism and Constructionism, Jennifer Harding, 7-17</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Introduction, xi-xvi in <em>Sexualities</em></td>
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<td>1/2</td>
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<td>The Expurgation of Pleasure in <em>H2M</em>, 127-138</td>
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<td>View Kinsey</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1.1 Sigmund Freud, &quot;Femininity&quot; from <em>New Introductory Lectures on Psycho Analysis</em> (3)-10</td>
<td>Sex, Historically: Classic Inquiries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Richard von Krafft-Ebing, &quot;A System of Psychology of Sexual Life,&quot; from <em>Psychopathia</em></td>
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</table>
1.3 Havelock Ellis, "Analysis of the Sexual Impulse," from Psychology of Sex: Vol. III 15-19
1.5 William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson, "The Sexual Response Cycle," from Human Sexual Response 24-28

2.1 Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are Not Enough," from The Sciences (38)-44
2.2 Jonathan Ned Katz, "'Homosexual' and 'Heterosexual': Questioning the Terms," from The Socialist Review 44-46
2.3 Julia Ericksen and Sally Steffen, "Asking Questions About Sex," from Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century 46-51
2.4 Leonore Tiefer, "Historical, Scientific, Clinical, and Feminist Criticisms of 'The Human Sexual Response Cycle Model'," from Sex is Not a Natural Act 52-64

4.1 Michael S. Kimmel and Rebecca F. Plante, "The Gender of Social Construction
3.1 Barrie Thorne and Zella Luria, "Sexuality and Gender in Children's Daily Worlds," from Social Problems (73)-87
3.2 Deborah L. Tolman, "Doing Desire: Adolescent Girls' Struggles for/with Sexuality," from Gender & Society 87-99
6.2 Celia Roberts, Susan Kippax, Catherine Waldby, and June Crawford, "Faking It: The Story of 'Ohh'!" from Women's Studies International Forum 266-274

2/7 TH The Meaning of Sexual Difference in SEX, 41-67
William Rountree, Contract and the Legal Mooring of Same-Sex Intimacy in Regulating, 19-34
3.3 Anthony M. A. Smith, Doreen A. Rosenthal, and Heidi Reichler, "High Schoolers' Masturbatory Practices: Their Relationship to Sexual Intercourse and Personal Characteristics," from Psychological Reports 99-105
3.5 Ritch C. Savin-Williams,
"Dating and Romantic Relationships among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Youths," from The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals: Children to Adults 113-122

**Group 1 Presents**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>4</th>
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<th>The Challenge of Diversity in SEX, 69-90</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Regulating Sex: An Introduction in Regulating, xi-xv (you can skip the rest of the intro)</td>
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<td>Mary Bernstein, Liberalism and Social Movement Success: The Case of the United States Sodomy Statutes in Regulating, 3-18</td>
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<td>Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence, Adrienne Rich, 227-254, JSTOR</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
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<td>Letitia Anne Peplau, Rosemary C. Veniegas, and Susan Miller Campbell, &quot;Gay and Lesbian Relationships,&quot; from The Lives of Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals: Children to Adults 200-215</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>Sexuality, Intimacy and Politics, and Private Pleasures and Public Policy in SEX, 91-128</td>
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<td>The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood, Patricia Hill Collins, 388-403</td>
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<td>Is the Rectum a Grave? Leo Bersani, JSTOR</td>
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<td>Talking Sex: A Conversation on Sexuality and Feminism, Deirdre English, Amber Hollibaugh, and</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>5.1 Laura S. Brown, &quot;Lesbian Identities: Concepts and Issues,&quot; from Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identities in Families: Psychological Perspectives (170) - 183</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>5.4 Paula C. Rust, &quot;Two Many and Not Enough: The Meanings of Bisexual Identities,&quot; from Journal of Bisexuality 216-229</td>
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<td>5.2 Steven Seidman, Chet Meeks, and Francie Traschen, &quot;Beyond the Closet? The Changing Social Meaning of Homosexuality in the United States,&quot; from Sexualities 184-199</td>
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<td>4.2 M. Rochlin, Heterosexual Questionnaire, 136</td>
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<td>2/2</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>4.3 Lillie S. Ransom, &quot;Navigating Sex, Sexuality, and Christian Values,&quot; from Sexuality and Culture 137-144</td>
<td>Becoming Sexual: Biography and Social Structure</td>
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<td>3.4 Connie S. Chan, &quot;Asian-American Adolescents: Issues in the Expression of Sexuality,&quot; from Sexual Cultures and the Construction of Adolescent Identities 106-113</td>
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<td>5.5 Patricia Gagné, et al, &quot;Coming Out and Crossing Over: Identity Formation and Proclamation in a Transgender Community,&quot; from Gender &amp; Society 230-249</td>
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"We Don’t Sleep Around Like White Girls Do": Family, Culture and Gender in Filipina American Lives, Yen le Espiritu, 160-171, JSTOR

**Group 2 Presents**

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<td>6</td>
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<td>Foreword in H2M, ix-xi</td>
<td>The State of the Union:</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Introduction: Peril and Pleasure,</td>
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Parenting and Childhood in *H2M*, xix-xxxv
Censorship: The Sexual Media and the Ambivalence of Knowing in *H2M*, 3-19
No-Sex Education: From “Chastity” to “Abstinence” in *H2M*, 90-116

2/2 TH
The Facts. . . . and Truthful Fictions in *H2M*, 141-154
Good Touch: A Sensual Education in *H2M*, 178-198
Epilogue: Morality in *H2M*, 218-226

10.2 Peggy J. Kleinplatz, "'Educational' Sex Videos: What are They Teaching?" from *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 456-459

**Group 3 Presents**

7 3/4 T
5.6 E. J. Graff, "The M/F Boxes," from *The Nation* 250-253
2.5 Suzanne Kessler, "Creating Good-Looking Genitals in the Service of Gender," from *A Queer World: The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, Volume 1* 64-70

Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality, Gayle S. Rubin, 3-44
e-reserve

Paisley Currah and Shannon Minter, Unprincipled Exclusions: The Struggle to Achieve Judicial and Legislative Equality for Transgendered People in *Regulating*, 35-48
3/6  TH  Film Day: A Boy Named Sue

8  3/1  T  Manhunt: The Pedophile Panic in Therapy: “Children Who Molest” and the Tyranny of the Normal in H2M, 45-67
Kjersti Ericsson, Child Welfare as Social Defense Against Sexuality: A Norwegian Example in Regulating, 129-142

3/1  TH  Film Day: Live Nude Girls Unite

3  Midsem Exam DUE

Last Day to hand in Response Papers

3/1  Spring Break

73/  28

9  4/1  T  Grant Jewell Rich and Kathleen Guidroz, Smart Girls Who Like Sex: Telephone Sex Workers in S4S 35-48
Janet Lever and Deanne Dolnick, Clients and Call Girls: Seeking Sex and Intimacy in S4S, 85-102
Martin A. Monto, Why Men Seek Out Prostitutes in S4S, 67-84

7.1 Katherine Frank, "The Production of Identity and the Negotiation of Intimacy in a 'Gentleman's Club'," from Commercial Sex: Clients and Providers
### Human Sexuality

#### Sexualities (299)-309
Review regulations and “menu” on pages 239-243

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>TH</td>
<td>Special Guest Lecture: Dr. Peter Hennen</td>
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<td>Readings TBA</td>
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<td>Laura MªAgustín, At Home in the Street: Questioning the Desire to Help and Save in Regulating, 67-82</td>
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<td>7.3 Joanna Brewis and Stephen Linstead, 'The Worst Thing is the Screwing’ Consumption and the Management of Identity in Sex Work, from Sexualities 371-330</td>
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<td>Selections from <em>Sex Work: Writings by Women in the Sex Industry</em></td>
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8.3 Gail Dines and Robert Jensen, "Pornography and Media: Toward a More Critical Analysis," original for this volume 369-380

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9.4 Peggy Reeves Sanday, "Rape-Prone Versus Rape-Free Campus Cultures," from Violence Against Women 428-437


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<td>Janet R. Jakobsen and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, Sex and Freedom in Regulating, 247-270</td>
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5/8 TH Student Presentations
Last Day – Wrap up and evaluations

Final Exam DUE by 9am, Thursday, May 15

Congratulations, you have graduated from Human Sexuality!
Enjoy your summer!

*Many thanks to Alissa Briggs who provided her assistance and insight in designing the course the first time, to Htike Htike Kyaw Soe for helping with revisions and additional readings for the 2006 course, and to Sylvia Thorson-Smith, who taught this course for many years. I aspire, someday, to be as helpful to Grinnell students in developing their Sexual I.Q. I also benefited from the accumulated knowledge of the sex educators whose work is included in The Sociology of Sexuality and Sexual Orientation, compiled and edited by Tracy E. Ore. © 2002 The American Sociological Association