

History 2181A
Sexual History:
Expression, Regulation, and Rights in the West Since 1800
Fall 2026

Instructor: **Monda Halpern, Professor**

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ZOOM Office Hours: Thursday, 10:00 AM-11:30 AM (EST), and by appointment

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description:

Not solely a biological expression that is static and fixed, sexuality is ever-changing and has a dynamic and vibrant history. This lecture course will examine the history of sexuality from the nineteenth century to the present day. It will investigate sexual desire and behavior, and sexual and gender ideologies, and will explore how they relate to a variety of topics, including perceptions of the body, marriage, reproduction, prostitution, same-sex relations, pornography, disease, and religious, medical, and psychiatric intervention. All of these issues will be studied to underscore the concept that sexuality is both biological and social, and that sexuality and the connected notions of masculinity and femininity (gender) have been the object of intense social scrutiny and political regulation.

Course Syllabus:

Students should be able to:

analyze the ways in which gender and sexuality are partly socially constructed, and thus vary over time, place, class, and cultures.

examine the ways in which the history of sex and sexuality intersect with other historical trends and movements.

explore the ways in which discourses about sex and sexuality have often been used as a tool of oppression and as a way to promote the status quo.

In order to achieve the Learning Outcomes, students are required to complete all three assessments, read the weekly articles, and participate in all of the course activities (including surveys, polls, and discussion questions). See the course site on Brightspace for further details.

This is a draft outline. 2026-27 version. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Methods of Evaluation:

TEST 1 (one session, 30 minutes (maximum 65 minutes), 30 multiple-choice questions), Thursday, October 1, 9:00 am-Sunday, October 4, 9:00 am (EST), worth 25%, covers the course materials of the first 3 units (Weeks 1-3, Units 1-3)

TEST 2 (one session, 40 minutes (maximum 85 minutes), 40 multiple-choice questions), Thursday, November 5, 9:00 am-Sunday, November 8, 9:00 am (EST), worth 35%, covers the course materials of the next 3 units (Weeks 4-6, Units 4-6)

FINAL EXAM (one session, 60 minutes (maximum 150 minutes), 60 multiple-choice questions), December TBA (3-day window), worth 40%, covers the course materials of the last 4 units (Weeks 8-11, Units 7-10)

PLEASE NOTE THESE VERY IMPORTANT POINTS:

1. Students are required to complete all three assessments. An unwritten test will receive a mark of 0.
2. Each assessment is designed to be completed within the indicated duration; however, **all students will be afforded double the designated time, meaning that for students with time accommodations, these are already built into the time allowance.** Both the designated time and the allowable maximum time are indicated in the description of each assessment.
3. Try to write the assessment as soon as possible within the three-day window as you could be faced with technical problems that require time to address or with conflicts/commitments that arise in the latter period of the window. Write the test within your first available hours.
4. If you have a disability, please ensure that your accommodations for this course are active on the Accommodated Exams website, even with the universal accommodations described in point 2 (the request should be made at least 10 days prior to your test/exam). See <http://studentservices.uwo.ca/Accommodatedexamssignup/>
5. Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Advising. Please see https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams. Accommodations and makeup assessments (tests and the final exam) will only be provided for students who first receive academic accommodation from an academic advisor.
6. **Barring exceptional circumstances or documented medical reasons, the guaranteed, universal accommodation (see point 2) AND the flexibility already built into the three-day submission window will preclude further accommodation (including make-ups) regarding the two tests and final exam. In most cases, an “undocumented” absence (in the Student Absence Portal) will not be approved. Moreover, TEST 2 is a “Designated**

Assignment,” meaning that students are not permitted to submit an “undocumented” absence (in the Student Absence Portal) for this assessment.

7. All assessment times are in Eastern Standard Time (ET). Confusion or neglect regarding the date(s) of an assessment or of its assigned window, including issues related to regional/global time disparities and to AM/PM distinctions, will not warrant a make-up test.

8. During the writing of tests and exams, the use of course lectures, readings, activities, and forums, as well as other online (and offline) resources and communication, including AI, is strictly prohibited.

9. The use of cameras and recording devices for the purpose of replicating/distributing any course content, whether spoken or written, is strictly prohibited.

Course Materials:

Accessible (free) online articles are cited in the syllabus.

All articles can be found on JSTOR. Click on the article link or go to <https://www.jstor.org/> Click on “**Log in through your school or library.**” Type in Western Ontario and then click on “University of Western Ontario.” This will take you to the “Off-Campus Access” page where you will fill in your username and password. Then search for your article!

Course Schedule and Readings:

The designated weeks cited below serve as a guide that allow you to complete the course content in an organized and consistent fashion in anticipation of tests and the final exam. Please note that the schedule also accommodates assessments, as well as official university holidays. **Please be aware of your test dates – you will want to reserve studying time in the weeks prior to these dates.**

WEEK 1 (Wednesday, September 9-Thursday, September 15), UNIT 1 INTRO: THEORIES OF SEXUALITY; BACKGROUND: THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF SEXUALITY (PART 1)

INTRO: THEORIES OF SEXUALITY

Vern L. Bullough, “Teaching the History of Sex,” *The History Teacher*, 12, 3 (May 1979): 329-336.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/491141>

BACKGROUND: THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF SEXUALITY (PART 1)

Vern L. Bullough, "Sex Education in Medieval Christianity," *The Journal of Sex Research*, 13, 3 (August 1977): 185-196.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3811777>

**WEEK 2 (Wednesday, September 16-Thursday, September 22), UNIT 2
BACKGROUND: THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF SEXUALITY (PART 2);
BACKGROUND: THE SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTION OF SEXUALITY**

Karen Harvey, "The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal*, 45, 4 (December 2002): 899-916.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3133533>

**WEEK 3 (Wednesday, September 23-Thursday, September 29), UNIT 3
CLASS, RACE, AND VICTORIAN IDEOLOGY; THE POPULARITY OF
"FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS"**

CLASS, RACE, AND VICTORIAN IDEOLOGY

Nancy F. Cott, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," *Signs* 4, 2 (1978): 219-36.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3173022>

Vicki Howard, "The Courtship Letters of an African American Couple: Race, Gender, Class, and the Cult of True Womanhood," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 100, 1 (1996): 64-80.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30240221>

THE POPULARITY OF "FEMALE FRIENDSHIPS"

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1, 1 (1975): 1-29.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3172964>

****Wednesday, September 30: NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION**

**WEEK 4 (Thursday, October 1-Friday, October 9), UNIT 4
TEST 1 (see EVALUATION above); THE CAUSES OF URBAN, MIDDLE-CLASS REFORMERS (PART 1)**

OBSCENITY AND CENSORSHIP:

Shirley J. Burton, "Obscene, Lewd, and Lascivious: Ida Craddock and the Criminally Obscene Women of Chicago, 1873-1913," *Michigan Historical Review*, 19, 1 (1993): 1-16.

www.jstor.org/stable/20173370

John S. Sumner, "Comstock and Sumner," *The Journal of Education*, 82, 17(November 11, 1915): 458-59. (John S. Sumner (1876-1971) led the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, succeeding founder Anthony Comstock.)

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42824771>

****Saturday, October 10-Sunday, October 18: FALL READING WEEK (THANKSGIVING)**

**WEEK 5 (Monday, October 19-Sunday, October 25), UNIT 5
THE CAUSES OF URBAN, MIDDLE-CLASS REFORMERS (PART 2):**

PROSTITUTION AND VENEREAL DISEASE:

The Contagious Diseases Act, or, A Few Suggestions for the Controlling Men as Well as Women (1875), 1-15.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/60244247>

Eric C. Crimino, "The Travelers' Aid Society: Moral Reform and Social Work in New York City, 1907-1916," *New York History*, 97,1 (2016): 34-54.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/90018205>.

EUGENICS AND REPRODUCTION:

Molly Ladd-Taylor, "Coping with a 'Public Menace': Eugenic Sterilization in Minnesota," *Minnesota History*, 59, 6 (2005): 237-48.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20188483>

Russell L. Johnson, "Clara Bow in 'Free to Love' (1925): Feature Films and Eugenics in the 1920s," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 27, 1 (2008): 1-15.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41054097>

**WEEK 6 (Monday, October 26-Sunday, November 1), UNIT 6
HOMOSEXUALITY, HETEROSEXUALITY, AND THE RISE OF**

SEXOLOGISTS

Catherine Dollard, "The Alte Jungfer as New Deviant: Representation, Sex, and the Single Woman in Imperial Germany," *German Studies Review*, 29,1 (2006): 107-26.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27667956>

Vern L. Bullough, "Krafft-Ebing: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of Sex Research*, 38,1 (2001): 75-76.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3813264>

**WEEK 7 (Monday, November 2-Sunday, November 8)
TEST 2 (see EVALUATION above)**

**WEEK 8 (Monday, November 9-Sunday, November 15), UNIT 7
SEXUALITY, NATIONALISM, AND THE STATE**

Robert G. Waite, "Teenage Sexuality in Nazi Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 8, 3 (1998): 434-76.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704872>.

Jeffrey Vacante, "Writing the History of Sexuality and 'National' History in Quebec," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, 39, 2 (2005): 31-55.

<https://muse-jhu-edu-proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/article/200630>

**WEEK 9 (Monday, November 16-Sunday, November 22), UNIT 8
WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GAY RIGHTS, AND THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION**

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Carey Lovelace, "Optimism and Rage: The Women's Movement in Art in New York, 1969-1975," *Woman's Art Journal*, 37,1 (2016): 4-11.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/26452049>

GAY RIGHTS

Colin P. Ashley, "Gay Liberation: How a Once Radical Movement Got Married and Settled Down," *New Labor Forum*, 24, 3 (2015): 28-32.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24718619>

THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

W. Andrew Achenbaum, "The Summer of Love: From Fantasy to Fallout," *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 41, 2 (2017): 6-14.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26556277>

**WEEK 10 (Monday, November 23-Sunday, November 29), UNIT 9
GLOBAL PROTEST IN THE 1980s AND 90s (AND TODAY)**

HIV/AIDS:

Jennifer Power, "Rites of Belonging: The AIDS Memorial Quilt," in *Movement, Knowledge, Emotion: Gay Activism and HIV/AIDS in Australia* (ANU Press, 2011), 145-58.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24hd2p.9>

FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING:

Courtney Smith, "Who Defines 'Mutilation'? Challenging Imperialism in the Discourse of Female Genital Cutting," *Feminist Formations* 23, 1 (2011): 25-46.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41301637>

Charlotte Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 12, 4 (1990): 486-98.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/762496>

WARTIME RAPE:

Jonathan Gottschall, "Explaining Wartime Rape," *The Journal of Sex Research*, 41, 2 (May 2004): 129-36.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3813647>

Claudia Card, "Rape as a Weapon of War," *Hypatia*, 11, 4, *Women and Violence* (Autumn 1996): 5-18.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3810388>

**WEEK 11 (Monday, November 30-Wednesday, December 9), UNIT 10
TRANSGENDER LIVES; ASEXUAL LIVES; THE NEW HYPERSEXUALITY?****TRANSGENDER LIVES**

Patricia Gagné and Richard Tewksbury, "Conformity Pressures and Gender Resistance among Transgendered Individuals," *Social Problems*, 45, 1 (February 1998): 81-101.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3097144>

Sam Bullington, "Transgendered Feminist Body Issues," *Off Our Backs*, 34, 11/12 (November/December 2004): 34-36.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20838217>

ASEXUAL LIVES

Karli June Cerankowski and Megan Milks, "New Orientations: Asexuality and Its Implications for Theory and Practice," *Feminist Studies*, 36, 3 (Fall 2010): 650-664.

<http://www.jstor.org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/27919126>

THE NEW HYPERSEXUALITY?

Mark Griffiths, "Sex on the Internet: Observations and Implications for Internet Sex Addiction," *The Journal of Sex Research*, 38, 4 (November 2001): 333-42.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3813457>

Heather Hartley and Leonore Tiefer, "Taking a Biological Turn: The Push for a "Female Viagra" and the Medicalization of Women's Sexual Problems," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 31, 1/2 (Spring-Summer 2003): 42-54.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40004551>

POSTSCRIPT: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

-Do the activities (including the readings) that you might have missed – how much more do you now know?

-Peruse the comments of your classmates and TA on FORUMS – do you agree or disagree with their opinions? Why?

-Ponder your views of various topics – have they changed or remained the same?

-Consider all of the weekly lessons – which topic/reading affected you most profoundly? Why?

-Revisit course lectures and readings for your final exam – do any of the issues that they raise intersect with those in your own life? In what ways?

-Finally, re-examine the course's banner photograph! Are your impressions of the image any different than they were four months ago? In what ways?

END OF TERM

FINAL EXAM, December TBA

Additional Statements:

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at halpern@uwo.ca

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at:

https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.