



## Sexing the Past: Course Policies and Schedule of Readings

This seminar is for those who want to better understand and analyze gender and sexuality prior to the 20th century. We ground the course in debates in formative work on gender and sexuality, and then we look at more recent work that revises foundational work and offers new paradigms for understanding sex and gender in the past, prior to modern categories of cisgender, homosexuality, and heterosexuality. While primary texts will be drawn from literary, medical, and cultural archives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the course welcomes students with diverse period and archival interests. This course is also cross-listed in WST. Throughout the class, we will explore wider questions about archives: What key ideas emerge about archives: what do we do with the archive, if not to excavate the past or recover elided voices?; What might we instead ask of the archive?

### **Required books and materials (in order of assignment):**

- **Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud*** (Harvard UP, 1992)
- **Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*** (U Penn Press, 2016), paperback.
- **Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* Vol. 1: An Introduction**, trans. Robert Hurley (either the 1978 or 1990 paperback editions are fine)
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### **Assignments and Weighting:**

50% Regular preparation, engagement, participation, including periodic small group work, discussion boards, show and tells, etc. (You will get feedback on this 6 times in semester; I will count your top 5 assessments for 10% each.)

5% Assignment 1. Visual analysis of an illustration from a medical manual or medical archive (2 pages), to be shared in course and submitted afterwards

10% "Entering the conversation" precis (2 pages): Identify an important issue, interpretive problem, critical question or field debate emerging directly or indirectly from the readings, illustrate the issue briefly, then summarize some of formative scholarly claims that help readers see what is at stake and think through the issue. End with a reflection on where these questions leave you or what this helps you to think through, or how you might apply it to a text or issue that interests you. (A reflective voice is fine in this piece). Conference papers, seminar papers, dissertations, articles: all are built on a variation on this technique.

35% Final Seminar Paper, 13-17pp, adaptable to a conference paper (9 pages) w. cover letter and 500-word abstract (delivered orally during reading day or early finals week).

100%

Covid-19 adaptation: I emphasize showing up and participating more than previous semesters, in which students submitted a series of graded small assignments, then did an archival analysis project and final paper in the end.

### **Grading Expectations for Papers:**

A-range: Papers marked excellent are thoughtful, careful, developed, and clearly presented in legible prose. They show clear engagement with the course (or the specific unit's) themes and contexts, strong engagement with your chosen text(s), whether primary or secondary, and they offer innovative ideas and sustained analysis, argument, close reading, and examples/support that successfully illuminates your thinking about the topic.

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B-range: These are competent and capable, but would benefit from **either** more complex development, narrower focus, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original arguments/examples), more precise explanation or illustrative examples, more substantial engagement with readings, clearer relevance/significance, **or** clearer presentation (structure, prose style, etc).

C-range: Promising, but has **multiple** areas that require improvement: far more rigorous or accurate engagement with the assignment or readings, far more complex development, notably improved focus (in identifying the issue, its relevance, or guiding the reader through your analysis), increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original arguments/examples), more precise explanation or illustrative examples, more substantial engagement with readings, clearer relevance/significance, **or** substantially clearer presentation (structure, prose style, etc).

D or below: Off track or inadequate, either because it is too brief, lacks comprehension, or presents a superficial response to the topic.

A+, 97-100  
 A, 93.0-96.9  
 A-, 90.0-92.9  
 B+, 87.0-89.9  
 B, 83.0-86.9  
 B-, 80.0-82.9  
 C+, 77.0-79.9  
 C, 73-76.9  
 C-, 70.0-72.9  
 D, 66-69.9  
 F, under 66

Participation:

S (95), Satisfactory engagement and contributions/preparation  
 G (85), Good but step it up in terms of engagement, effort, contributions/preparation  
 U (75), Unsatisfactory engagement/marginal contributions  
 NA (65 or less), No substantive contribution

### **Attendance Policy, Participation & Engagement:**

A strong class doesn't just happen: it involves each of us committing to creating a learning community attentive to each other's ideas and attentive to the readings. For this reason, participation and preparation are essential. Be conscious of what you can do to facilitate your peers' discussion and your peers' engagement.

I expect you to be prepared for all sessions, on time, having thought about the readings, ready to speak about things you noticed or thought about as you read, and ready to listen and respond to care with others. Having an off week is understandable. But if you have a pattern (i.e. consecutive weeks) of unpreparedness, or you seem to be expecting others to carry the weight of the seminar discussion, expect to talk to me in office hours; we can usually find solutions to boost confidence or engagement, but if your participation doesn't improve, expect your grade to be lower than that of your peers. I expect you to be at all sessions, since the success of a seminar requires your active presence.

Please speak to me if you are having issues that are affecting your attendance or performance. Please speak to me if there is something about the seminar that is bothering you and you feel it could be productively addressed or modified. I welcome a constructive exchange of ideas and your input.

**Missing one session is allowable;** if you miss seminar, I expect you to follow up with me in the interim and make arrangements with a colleague to get notes. **Missing two weeks of seminar with unexcused absences** will lower a borderline grade, especially if semester participation is borderline or substantially uneven. **Missing three weeks of seminar** will lower your final grade at least one letter grade.

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To assist peers with the videoconference format and its limits, please consider the following

- Video on (preferred) each week. Otherwise (see #2)
- In UF zoom, upload a profile photo of your choice, in which you are making eye contact with the camera. This may sound silly, but it helps your colleagues imagine they are conversing with you rather than a black screen.
- In UF Zoom, log in using the authenticated user feature; this will be sure your name appears as it does on the roster. (You can use a preferred name still, of course. But it eliminates a roster of contributors like "iphone" and other mystery figures)
- Mics off, and to talk: raise hand button, OR use sidebar chat feature (instructor will moderate) to signal to the moderator that you have a question.
- Watch distracting behaviors and visuals when on video or sound and do your best to eliminate distractions that can be controlled (i.e. adjust your screen to trim out the ceiling fan swirling overhead; keep mic off; don't type loudly if mic on; don't be texting on phone; do your best to maintain eye contact with peers, etc. That having been said, everyone is human and this format can be hard. Treat it like you would a seminar room and do what you can to minimize distraction to help your peers maintain focus.

### FERPA

Anyone, including instructor, who wishes to record a class or meeting must notify participants before recording. UF's [FERPA Confidentiality page](#). Faculty have been told by the Provost's Office, UFIT and the General Counsel that UF e-mail is not a secure medium to communicate regarding their grades. Canvas has an internal e-mail system that meets the FERPA standard to communicate with students regarding grades.

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

[UF Graduate Catalog](#)  
[Grades and Grading Policies](#)

### **Students Requiring Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### **Course Evaluation**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing [online evaluations](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students on the [Gator Evals page](#).

### **University Honesty Policy**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Software Use**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules,

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disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### **Student Privacy**

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

### **Campus Resources:**

#### **U Matter, We Care:**

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** [counseling.ufl.edu/cwc](http://counseling.ufl.edu/cwc), and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

#### **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)**

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

**University Police Department** at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or [police.ufl.edu](http://police.ufl.edu).

Academic Resources

[E-learning technical support](#), 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:Learning-support@ufl.edu).

[Career Resource Center](#), Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

[Library Support](#), Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

#### [Student Complaints Campus](#)

#### [On-Line Students Complaints](#)

## Sexing the Past: Course Policies and Schedule of Readings

### Weekly Schedule of Readings (9.1)

Week 1, Sept 3

Course Introduction. Keywords and their historical modulations. Ahead of class, read:

- **Eva Cherniavsky**, "Body"; **Jack Halberstam**, "Gender"; **Bruce Burgett**, "Sex", (<https://keywords.nyupress.org/american-cultural-studies/>)
  - As you read, consider: how do these entries differ from dictionary definitions? From etymologies? What is each most seeking to illuminate?
  - In class: activities with Noah Webster, American Dictionary (1828) and the OED online (no materials needed in advance); Webster pdfs on file.

Week 2, Sept 10

Many genders, one sex.

- **Thomas Laqueur**, *Making Sex* (pp. 25-134, meaning Chapter 2 (Destiny is Anatomy), 3 (New Science One Flesh), and the first half of Chapter 4, ending ahead of the subsection "Sex, genders, doctors..").
  - We'll review key takeaways including early explanations of sex difference, orgasm, fungible fluids, and above all the maxim that "believing is seeing."
  - *Discussion starter*: If you were leading a pre 18<sup>th</sup> century sex ed class, what session would you like to especially teach?
  - *Likely in-class activity*: on medical models & Renaissance verse.

Week 3, Sept 17

Revising One Sex Two Sex.

- **Thomas Laqueur**, *Making Sex*, pp. 149-163
- **Kathleen Park and Robert Nye**, *Destiny is Anatomy* (1991), pdf
- **Elizabeth Maddock Dillon**, "Nursing Fathers and Brides of Christ" (2001), pdf.
- two poems by Puritan poet **Rev. Edward Taylor**, *Meditation* 80, 32.
  - In class, we'll explore this influential critique of Laqueur and how knowledge of 'one sex' models can help unpack some complicated Puritan ontologies. Discussion board (see announcement.)
  - *Placeholder for future research/advanced work*: other influential critiques of Laqueur include Lorraine Dashden and Katherine Park, "The Hermaphrodite and the Orders of Nature: Sexual Ambiguity in Early Modern France" in Fradenburg and Freccero, *Premodern Sexualities* (1996): 117-36; Katharine Park, "Rediscovery of the Clitoris," in Hillman and Mazzio, *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (1997): 171-94; Valerie Traub, "The Psychomorphology of the Clitoris; or The Reemergence of the Tribade in English Culture" in Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (2002): 188-228.

Week 4, Sept 24

Exploring Archives: Medical Manuals

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- **Lauren Kassell**, "Medical Understandings of the Body to 1750". (note, if useful, see also excerpt from Cleminson, "Medical Understandings of the Body, 1750 to the present," from *Routledge History of Sex and the Body, 1500 to the present* (2013), pdf
- Possible archives: Aristotle's Master-piece, all the medical texts cited thus far....
- **Presenters Group A:** One page response (and visuals) to a concept of interest from medical manuals. Use to reflect on past week's readings, takeaway, possibly contestations.

Week 5, Oct 1

Exploring Archives: Erotica

- **Karen Harvey**, "The Substance of Sexual Difference" Change and Persistence in Representations of the Body in Eighteenth-Century England" (2002)
- **Julie Peakman**, "Medicine, The Body and the Botanical Metaphor in Erotica" (or "Erotica and Science," from *Mighty Lewd Books: The Development of Pornography in Eighteenth-Century England*, 2003)
  - Possible archives: Edward Ward, *The Riddle Or a Paradoxical Character of an Hairy Monster* (1725); Thomas Stretser, *Natural History of the Arbor Vitae* (1732) and *Natural History of the Frutex Vulvaria* (1732); Teague-Root Display'd (1746); *Lucina Since Concubita* (1750), *The Torpedo* (1774), *The Electrical Eel* (1777)
- **Presenters Group B:** One page response (and visuals) to a concept of interest from pornography.
- **Assignment 1 Due Friday to Dropbox.**

Week 6, Oct 8

Archives as Sites of Violence and Erasure

- **Saidiya Hartman**: "Venus in Two Acts" (*Small Axe* 26 (12:2), 2008. We will use this to pause at the halfway point and consider the archive, its violence, its erasures
- **Anjali Arondekar**, "Without a Trace, Sexuality and the Colonial Archive" (*JHS*, 2005), pdf
- **Heather Vermeulen**, "Thomas Thistlewood's Libidinal Linnaen Project; Slavery, Ecology, and Knowledge Production" (*Small Axe* 22:1, 2018).
- Excerpts, *Thistlewood Diaries?*

Week 7, Oct 15

New Approaches to Archives

- **Marissa Fuentes**, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, book. (Introduction, Chapter 2, Epilogue and one other of your choice)
- **Creolana**, excerpt
- *Of interest:* Jessica Marie Johnson, from *Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (2020)

Week 8, Oct 22

New Work in Pre 20<sup>th</sup> century Trans Studies

- **C. Riley Snorton**, from *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (2017)
- **Jen Manion**, from *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (2020)
- *Female Husband*, primary.

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Week 9 , Oct 29

Working with Untimely Texts

- Anon. "The Man Who Thought Himself a Woman" (1858)
- **Chris Looby**, "The Literariness of Sexuality: Or, How to Do the (Literary) History of (American) Sexuality" (ALH 25.4, 2013), this is a brief think piece about how we tell literary history; pay attention to his methods and why he uses "Man Who Thought Himself a Woman" as example, and what he pays attention to most in the tale to build his arguments.
- Either: **Jordan Alexander Stein**, "American Literary History and Queer Temporalities" (ALH 25:4, 2013); a brief think piece about how we tell literary history; while not about the tale, it may offer additional avenues for queering a tale that feels "out of time" to some, i.e. written before transgender became a category of modern subjectivity.
- Or: **Valerie Rohy**, from *Anachronism and its Others* (2009), pdf.

### Assignment 2 Due by Friday

Week 10, Nov 5

Foucault, *History of Sexuality*

- **Foucault, *History of Sexuality, vol. 1*** (Vintage Books, trans. Robert Hurley). To help ground your reading, focus esp. pp. 1-75 (Parts One through Three) and pp. 103-114 ('four strategic unities'), and pp. 135-145 (biopower); readings located in purchased book.

Week 11, Nov 12

Reassessing Foucault

- **Eve Sedgwick**, from *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990),
- **Ann Laura Stoler**, from *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Duke UP, 1995), pdf on ELS.
- **Roderick Ferguson**, Normative Strivings

Week 12, Nov 19

New Histories of Sexuality

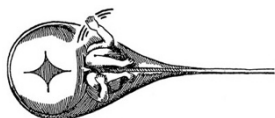
- **Greta LaFleur**, from *Natural History of Sexuality*, on gender's radical contingencies
- **TBA**

TG holiday; no class Nov 26

Week 13, Dec 3 (last class)

- Present on final projects
- Reading, makeup session

Reading Days Dec 10/11



**Homunculus bidding farewell.** Image adapted from Nicolaas Hartsoecker's original sketch from 1694. A homunculus, or mini-man, was popularized in 17<sup>th</sup> century alchemy and is here depicted inside a drop of male semen in order to imagine how human reproduction was possible.