****

**HIS 353: Sexuality and Politics in Antiquity**

Fall 2017

**MW** 4:00-5:15pm, **LA 111A**

3 credits, in-person

**Instructor:** Dr. Jeremy LaBuff, [jeremy.labuff@nau.edu](mailto:jeremy.labuff@nau.edu), **LA 209D,** 928-523-4518

**Availability** (Office Hours)**: MW** 1-2pm; **Tuesday** 12:30-2:30pm; **Friday** 9-10am, or by appt.

**Course Description**

Catalog: Explores the ways in which sexual behavior and identity intersected with power relations in various ancient societies, shaping “citizen” identities and socio-political relations within democratic and other institutional contexts, as well as setting and challenging limits imposed upon non-dominant gender groups.

Additional: While a major focus of this course will be devoted to ancient Greek sexuality, equal emphasis will be placed on developing a trans-regional and comparative approach to the erotics of power. As such, we will also investigate the sexual politics of ancient, Rome, China, India, and Japan. At the same time, our study will also be attentive to the ways in which sexual identity politics also often implicated other identities such as gender, class, and ethnicity.

Finally, this course will push students to consider the material not as merely remote and different, and certainly not as the product a romanticized golden age, but as a set of practices, protocols, ideals, and structures that engage the present and thus deepen our understanding of the relationship between sexuality and power in today’s worlds.

**Course Purpose:** HIS 353 will count as a 300-level course for majors in History (B.A., B.S., B.S.Ed.) and for History minors. The course will advance their historical understanding of the impact of sexuality, gender, class, and ethnicity on events, processes, and institutions in several ancient societies, while developing their critical and analytic skills with respect to interpreting primary source evidence and evaluating/ building on secondary scholarship. In addition, the course will advance students’ understanding, first, of deeply embedded global traditions of power and oppression based on constructed male and female sexualities, second, of how such constructs related to and informed gender, class, and ethnic constructs in defining power relations in ancient societies, and third, of how to detect challenges to these constructs in the agency of the institutionally or structurally oppressed.

Furthermore, HIS 353 contributes to the **Social and Political Worlds** Liberal Studies Distribution Block designation, which explores how different empirical and theoretical strategies are used to study human behavior and social, political, and cultural systems, and fosters students’ skills in **Critical Thinking**. It does so by:

* Engaging students in the study of the patterns that characterize power relationships among socially defined sexual subjects and objects in the societies of ancient Greeks, Romans, Japanese, Chinese, and “Indians.”
* Enhancing students’ appreciation for how social, political, and cultural components of these societies shaped and were in turn shaped by sexual norms, institutions, and behaviors.
* Challenging students to critically reflect upon the historically contingent nature of their current understanding of sexual categories, in order to better appreciate the diversity of sexual self-understandings throughout history, thereby avoiding an essentializing misunderstanding of the past.
* Providing students with analytical frameworks for deciphering difficult ancient textual and material evidence without imposing modern assumptions.
* Pushing students to engage critically with modern scholarship on ancient sexuality by examining assumptions made, the logic of an argument, and the use of historical data to reach conclusions.

**Course Student Learning Outcomes:** Successful completion of this course will enable students to:

* Analyze the cultural, socio-political, religious, and economic conditions that inform the various sexual norms, practices, and identities of ancient societies through class discussion of primary source evidence and secondary scholarship (Participation), as well as in the first paper assignment.
* Critically analyze the treatment of sexuality and its intersection with gender, class, and ethnicity in various ancient societies through class discussion and all writing assignments.
* Explain the nature of power, authority, and legitimacy and their acquisition, operation, and impact on various ancient societies through the lens of sexuality, again through class discussion and all writing assignments.
* Apply philological, historical, and archaeological frameworks of analysis to study the evidence “produced” by ancient communities in order to better understand their sexual histories, through class discussion and the first paper assignment.
* Critically evaluate the major theories from sexuality studies in terms of their applicability to ancient contexts through class discussion and the second paper assignment, and then to apply those that are applicable in order to assess scholarly interpretations of a particular ancient society in the third paper assignment.

**Assessment of Course Student Learning Outcomes:**

**Participation:** The format of this class is entirely discussion-based, since weekly engagement in the readings and the issues they raise is vital for you to develop a mature understanding of how to approach and write about sexuality and politics. Your participation will be assessed based on how often you contribute significantly to class discussions OR in follow-up posts in the BBLearn Discussion Board:

“A”: volunteering to contribute **significantly** to lecture and discussion in at least two-thirds of the class sessions.

“B”: volunteering to contribute **significantly** in at least half the sessions.

“C”: volunteering to contribute **significantly** in more than five sessions.

“D”: regular attendance and contribution in five or less sessions.

“F”: poor attendance and no contribution in class.

**significant contribution:** comments (written or spoken) that advance your own and the class’ understanding of the material, OR analytical questions that lead to such advancement

**Discussion Board posts** are due by Monday at midnight, when following up on Monday discussion, and within two days of the Wednesday class session, when following up on Wednesday discussion. Late submissions will receive NO CREDIT.

**Leading Discussion:** students will be placed in groups and assigned a set of secondary sources, on which they will lead class discussion. These discussions will be graded on three criteria: clarifying student comprehension; guiding students in a critical analysis of the historical significance of the material; and promoting dialogue among the rest of the class.

**Primary Source Paper:** You will select ca. 2-4 pages of primary source material that we have NOT (and will not) read as a class and write a 1200-word analysis explaining how this evidence contributes to our understanding of the relationship between sexuality and power in Greek and/or Roman society. Options and further details on this assignment will be distributed.

**Theory Paper:** Based on the theories on ancient Greco-Roman sexuality that we have studied, select one theoretical article (or a set of related articles) and evaluate their usefulness for interpreting and understanding the ancient evidence, making sure to account for objections (both stated and potential). Further details on this assignment will be distributed.

**Extended Review**: As your final assessment, you will select and write a 10-page review of a scholarly book on ancient sexuality (list to be distributed). The review will consist of several sections: summary of main argument(s); assessment of theory and methodology; assessment of use and reading of evidence; consideration of critical responses (at least two published reviews or one published article/chapter); suggestions for alternate conclusions and/or further study of the topic.

**Grading System:** Since this is an upper-level seminar, active student engagement and participation is necessary for each class session to be successful. In addition, you will be expected to demonstrate oral and written communication skills through a presentation and written essays

Participation: 150 points

Discussion Leading: 100 points

Primary Source Paper: 200 points

Theory Paper: 150 points

Extended Review: 400 points

Total: 1000 points

A=1000-895; B=894-795; C=794-695; D=694-595; F <595

**Readings and Materials:**

-B. **Holmes**, *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy.* Oxford, 2012.

\*\*All other readings will be available on BBLearn

**Schedule** (subject to change)

Aug 28-30 Introduction: Defining Politics, Sexuality, Gender, and “Ancient”

*Readings:* **Holmes** 1-7, 9-13

**Complete BBL Discussion by midnight, Sept. 1st**

**Masculinity, Erotics, and Democracy**

Sep 6 Pederasty & Citizenship

*Readings:* Selections from Plato’s *Symposium, Phaedrus, & Republic* (**BBL)**

Sep 11-13 Homoerotic Democracy

*Readings:* Monday: **Holmes** 79-94 (top); Foucault, “A Problematic Relation” (**BBL)**

Wednesday: Vase Paintings, Comedy selections, Sappho (**BBL)**

Sep 18-20 Non-philosophical Homoerotics

*Readings:* Mon: Parker, “Vaseworld” 31-54, Boehringer “Female Homoeroticism,” & Hubbard “Peer Homosexuality” (**BBL)**

Wed: Myth of Pandora, Medical Views of Women (**BBL)**

**Femininity and Democracy**

Sep 25-27 Models

*Readings:* Mon: Holmes 14-56 (56-75 optional)

Wed: Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (**BBL)**

Oct 2-4 Imagined Feminists?

*Readings:*  Mon: Faraone “The Ambivalence of Female Leadership”; Sommerstein,

“Nudity, Obscenity, and Power” (**BBL)**

Wed: Sophocles’ *Antigone* (**BBL)**

Oct 9-11 Imagined Feminists?

*Readings:* Mon:Holmes 148 (bottom)-180

Wed: Evidence for *cinaedus* & Roman masculinities (**BBL)**

**Oct 13 Primary Source Paper Due on BBL**

**Roman Masculinity and Femininity**

Oct 16-18 Being a Roman Man or Not

*Readings*: Mon: Holmes 94-125; Olson, “Toga & *pallium*: Status, Sexuality, Identity”

Wed: Evidence for Female Sexuality (**BBL)**

Oct 23-25 Uncovering Female Agency

*Readings:* Mon: Holmes 181-183; Kamen & Levin-Richardson, “Lusty Ladies in the Roman Imaginary” 231-50; McGinn “Prostitution: Controversies & New Approaches” (84-91 optional) (**BBL)**

Wed: Joshel, “Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire” **(BBL)**

**Sexuality in Ancient China**

Oct 30-Nov 1: The Culture of Sex in Ancient China

*Readings:* Mon: Goldin, “Sex, Politics, and Ritualization in the Early Empire”

[Search “Sex in Ancient China” on Library website; Ch. 3 of e-text]

Yao, “Erotica in Tang China” (**BBL)**

Wed: Hinsch, “Cut Sleeves as the Height of Fashion” (**BBL)**

**Nov 3 Theory Paper Due**

Nov 6-8: Transgender Traditions

Mon: Burton-Rose, “Gendered Androgyny” (**BBL**)

Wed: Selections from the *Kamasutra* (**BBL**)

**Sexuality in Ancient “India” & Japan**

Nov 13-15 Sexual Norms and the “Third Sex” in South Asia

*Readings:* Mon: Selections from Gautam, *Foucault and the Kamasutra*

Wed: Sweet & Zwilling “…Queerness in Classical Indian Medicine” (**BBL**)

Nov 20-22 Japanese Homosexualities

*Readings:* Leupp, “The Pre-Tokugawa Homosexual Tradition”

Nov 27-29 Make-Up Week or No Class:

*Readings:* Book for Extended Review

Dec 4-6: Peer-Review of Extended Review Drafts

December 11: Extended Review Due

**University & Class Policies**

-<http://nau.edu/OCLDAA/_Forms/UCC/SyllabusPolicyStmts2-2014/>

-Attendance: Missing more than 30% of class sessions will result in **failing grade.** In addition, missing class when scheduled to lead discussion will result in a 0 for the assignment, except in case of emergency.

-Make-Up Work: Students are responsible for meeting with or contacting me to make up any missed assignments or learn of missed announcements.

-Plagiarism and Cheating: In accordance with NAU standards, this course has a **zero tolerance policy** for plagiarism. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me. Any writing adjudged to be plagiarism will be given a 0% failing grade.