

Prof. Margot Weiss**Office:** Center for the Americas (255 High Street), Room 211**Email:** mdweiss@wesleyan.edu**Office phone:** 860-685-5754**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 1-2pm**Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the anthropology of sexuality. Our focus will be on the relation between sexual difference and epistemology – systematic knowledge about people, culture, and the world. In the first part of the course, we will explore the ways anthropologists have described, analyzed, and theorized sexual and gendered differences from the 1920s to today, focusing especially on the anthropological method of cross-cultural comparison. Our aim is to understand how sexual and gendered differences create enduring analytical categories, such as gay, homosexual, queer, and heterosexual – as well as the ways cross-cultural difference (including culture, nation, and race) challenges, perhaps fatally, the coherence of these categories.

In the next part of the course, we will turn to the transnational, a turn that emphasizes mobility – the flow of people, capital, and ideas. We'll consider local (often understood as “traditional”) genders and sexualities in dynamic relation to the global (often understood as “Western”), exploring this relation as one that generates new sexual knowledges, desires, and practices that have both positive and negative consequences. Finally, we will ask after the politics of transnational sexuality. What is revealed and what is concealed through the epistemological frameworks we've explored throughout the course? How does sexual and gendered difference map on to cultural, racial, and national difference? What happens when our analytical concepts travel across temporal, national, and cultural boundaries? What does thinking sexuality transnationally allow us to ask – about politics, globalization, or power?

Our readings will range from the classic to the contemporary, and draw on case studies from across the globe (this semester we will pay special attention to the Americas). Our aim is two-fold: to unsettle U.S.-centric approaches to gender, sexuality, and queer studies; and to track how the anthropology of sexuality illuminates larger projects of knowledge, difference, and power.

Course texts

- Esther Newton (1979), *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226577609
- Don Kulick (1998), *Travesti: Sex, Gender and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226461007
- Mark Padilla (2007), *Caribbean Pleasure Industry: Tourism, Sexuality, and AIDS in the Dominican Republic*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226644363
- Evelyn Blackwood (2010), *Falling Into the Lesbi World: Desire and Difference in Indonesia*. University of Hawaii Press. ISBN: 9780824834876
- Scott Morgensen (2011), *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. University of Minnesota Press. ISBN: 9780816656332

Books are available at Broad Street Books and on reserve at Olin library. All other readings are available on the course Moodle.

Course Assignments

- Attendance and Participation ----- 15%
- 3 Group Projects ----- 20%
- 2 Short Papers (4-5 pages) ----- 30%
- Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography ----- 5%
- Final Paper/Project ----- 30%

Attendance and Participation ---15%

You are expected to come to class on time and to contribute to class discussion in a positive, relevant, and respectful way. I expect you to be active in discussion and to help shape the course with your own interests. Participation in this course means coming to class ready to ask questions, to think about what is at stake, and to begin to forge your own analysis. Your comments and questions should be grounded in the reading; pointing us to relevant sections of an article or book, or to a particular quote is most productive. The quality of your participation in the workshops will also factor into this grade.

If you like to take notes on your laptop, you may bring it to class; however, any use of your computer for non-class purposes will result in suspension of this privilege. You may miss two classes without explanation or penalty. If you think you have a valid reason for missing class (emergency, health problem, etc), please contact your class dean/other relevant Wesleyan official and have that person contact me. Excused absences are **only** granted when a Wesleyan official contacts me on your behalf (**not when you send me an email**).

Group Projects --- 20%

Three times during the semester you will work in a small group on a class project. These projects will give you the chance to reflect on the readings and course material collectively, working through a key concept or problematic (e.g., comparison, difference and desire, positionality and voice, etc.). You will write your project collectively and share it with the rest of the class by posting to the Moodle blog. Your grade for this portion of the class will be based on your group contribution, as well as any comments you make on other groups' work.

Short papers – 30%

You will turn in two 4-5-page double-spaced papers during the semester on the days listed on the syllabus. Your paper should be an analytical, argumentative essay, and reflect a critical engagement with course materials – it does not require additional research. Be sure to use specific examples backed by precisely chosen textual evidence. Prompts will be distributed in advance of each deadline. There will be an in-class workshop before the first paper is due.

Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography --- 5%

You will turn in a proposal for your final paper (see below) that outlines your research question in 300-500 words, and includes an annotated bibliography of at least three sources (one paragraph per source) that you have consulted. Ask me if you have any questions on appropriate sources; you may include one source from class. Your proposal should be as detailed as possible in terms of the specific arguments and material you wish to consider. Likewise, bibliography entries should not be generic summaries, but should explain how each source specifically illuminates or takes a position on your research question. The point is for you to do some

preliminary research on your paper topic so that you understand the scholarly conversation around it, and get a jump-start on the final paper. After you turn in your proposal, we will meet to discuss it so that I can give you additional recommendations and assistance.

Final Paper --- 30%

Your final paper is an 8-page essay on the topic of your choice, as long as it is relevant to the themes and questions raised in this course. You should choose a topic in which you are particularly interested, and integrate the concepts and frameworks you have learned in the course with new perspectives, case studies, and analysis you have researched on your own. Be on the lookout throughout the semester for something you want to examine. If you are having trouble coming up with a topic, be sure to meet with me early in the term so that we can brainstorm together. On the last day of class, you will give a very short presentation on your topic in order to share your research with the rest of the class and also receive comments and/or advice from your classmates. Final papers are due Thursday, 5/16 by 5pm by email (please send as a .pdf).

*Extra credit

You may post a review of any of the recommended readings on our course's Moodle for extra credit (up to two). The review should include a brief summary (so that your classmates can glean the key points and methodologies of the essay) and explain how the reading connects to our main reading for the day (or other course material). If you are feeling especially inspired, you are also welcome to review a relevant article or essay not listed on our syllabus – but you must clear it with me before doing so.

Class Policies

I do not accept late papers, nor give extensions.

Please come see me in office hours if there is any course material you do not understand, or if you need guidance on my expectations for papers, presentations, group projects, or any other aspect of this course.

Students with Disabilities:

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at:

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/index.html>

Honor Code:

All work must be done in compliance with the Honor Code. If you need help with proper citations or you have questions on how to avoid plagiarism, let me know or contact the Writing Workshop: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/>

Course Schedule

Course Introduction: Sexuality and Ethnography
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Monday, January 28: Course introduction

- Horace Miner. "Body Ritual Among the Nacerima"

(Rec: Michael Kimmel. "Ritualized Homosexuality in a Nacirema Subculture")

Wednesday, January 30: Histories of Sexuality in Anthropology

- Carole Vance, "Anthropology Rediscovered Sexuality"
- Kath Weston, "The Bubble, the Burn, and the Simmer"
- Esther Newton, "Of Yams, Grinders, and Gays: The Anthropology of Homosexuality"

(Rec: Andrew and Harriet Lyons, *Irregular Connections: A History of Anthropology and Sexuality* and Tom Boellstorff, "Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology")

Group Project 1: "Classic Anthropology" (post by Friday, Feb 1)

Monday, February 4: Public Politics of Anthropology and Sexuality

- Excerpt from Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*
- From the 2003 *Scholar and Feminist* issue on Margaret Mead: Leslie Sharp's "Guest Editor's Note," Rayna Rapp's "After Mead," Micaela di Leonardo's "Margaret Mead vs. Tony Soprano," and Nancy Lutkehaus's "Mead as Public Intellectual"

(Rec: links and resources on the *S&F* page and Esther Newton's "My Date with Phil Donahue")

Wednesday, February 6: Ethics and Reflections

- Laud Humphries, excerpt from "Tearoom Trade"
- Kath Weston, "The Virtual Anthropologist"

Cross-Cultural Comparison I: Sexual Difference and Cultures

Monday, February 11: Sexual Subcultures

- Esther Newton, "Introduction" to *Margaret Mead Made Me Gay*
- Begin Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (1-96)

(Rec: Gayle Rubin, "Studying Sexual Subcultures")

Wednesday, February 13: Mother Camp

- Finish Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (97-136)

(Rec: John D'Emilio, on Drag on OutHistory.org)

Monday, February 18: Gender, Sex, and Sexuality

- Begin Don Kulick, *Travesti* (Intro - Chapter 3), pp. 1-133

Wednesday, February 20: Travesti

- Finish Don Kulick, *Travesti* (Chapter 3 - 5), pp. 134-238

Group Project 2: Sexual Cultures (post by Friday, Feb 22)

Cross-Cultural Comparison II: "Homosexuality" as a Category

Monday, February 25: Classic debate: "ritualized homosexuality" in Melanesia

- Gil Herdt, "Semen Transactions in Sambia Culture"
- Deborah Elliston, "Erotic Anthropology"

(Rec film: *Guardians of the Flute*)

Wednesday, February 27: Female "Homosexuality" across culture

- Kendall, "Women in Lesotho"
- Gloria Wekker, "What's Identity Got to do with It?"
- Evelyn Blackwood, "Falling in Love with an-Other Lesbian"

Monday, March 4: Identities and/vs. Categories

- David Valentine, "I know what I am"
- Tom Boellstorff, "But Do Not Identify as Gay: A Proleptic Genealogy of the MSM Category"
- Naisargi N. Dave, "Indian and Lesbian and What Came Next"

Wednesday, March 6:

In-class Workshop

Short Paper 1 Due: Friday, March 8 by 5pm (via email – as .pdf)

SPRING BREAK

Transnational Circuits I: Sex Work and Racialized Difference

Monday, March 25: Sex Tourism

- Deborah Pruitt and Suzanne LaFont, "For Love and Money"
- Jasbir Puar, "Circuits of Queer Mobility: Tourism, Travel, and Globalization"
- M. Jacqui Alexander, "Imperial Desire/Sexual Utopias: White Gay Capital and Transnational Tourism"

Wednesday, March 27: Sex Tourism

In-class FILM: *Heading South*

Monday, April 1: Sex Work/Sex Tourism

- Begin Mark Padilla, *Caribbean Pleasure Industry: Tourism, Sexuality, and AIDS in the Dominican Republic* (1-105)

Wednesday, April 3: Caribbean Pleasure Industry

- Finish Mark Padilla, *Caribbean Pleasure Industry: Tourism, Sexuality, and AIDS in the Dominican Republic* (106-216)

Group Project 3: Difference and Power (post by Friday, April 5)

Transnational Circuits II: Global Gays / Local Desires

Monday, April 8: Global / Local

- Dennis Altman. “Global Gaze/Global Gays”
- Martin Manalansan. “In the Shadows of Stonewall”
- Tom Boellstorff, “Dubbing Cultures”

Wednesday, April 10: Gender and Queer Desire

- Begin Evelyn Blackwood, *Falling Into the Lesbi World: Desire and Difference in Indonesia* (1-87)

(Rec: Deborah Elliston, “Negotiating Transnational Sexual Economies” in *Female Desires*)

Monday, April 15: The Lesbi World

- Finish Evelyn Blackwood, *Falling Into the Lesbi World: Desire and Difference in Indonesia* (88-209)

Wednesday, April 17: The “traditional,” the “modern,” and the state

- Evan Towle and Lynn M. Morgan, “Romancing the Transgender Native”
- Don Donham, “Freeing South Africa: The ‘Modernization’ of Male-Male Sexuality in Soweto”
- Peter Jackson, “*Kathoey*><Gay><Man” in *Sites of Desire*

(Rec: Naisargi N. Dave, “To Render Real the Imagined: An Ethnographic History of Lesbian Community in India”)

Short Paper 2 Due: Friday, April 19 by 5pm (via email – as .pdf)

Transnational Politics of Sexuality

Monday, April 22: Gay Rights?

- Robert Lorway, “Defiant Desire in Namibia”
- Joseph Massad, “Re-Orienting Gay Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World”
- Bruce Knauft, “What Ever Happened to Ritualized Homosexuality?”

Wednesday, April 24: Settler Genealogies

- Begin Scott Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (1-90)

Monday, April 29: Queer Decolonization

- Finish Scott Morgensen, *Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (91-230)

Due: Final Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography**Wednesday, May 1: Homonationalism**

- Jin Haritaworn, Tamsila Tauqir and Esra Erdem, “Gay Imperialism: Gender and Sexuality Discourse in the ‘War on Terror’”

- Jasbir Puar, “Mapping U.S. Homonormativities” – or -- Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai, “Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots”
- Margot Weiss, “Rumsfeld! Consensual BDSM and ‘Sadomasochistic’ Torture at Abu Ghraib”

(Rec: Sara Ahmed, “Problematic Proximities: Or Why Critiques of Gay Imperialism Matter” and Adi Kuntsman, “The Soldier and the Terrorist”)

Monday, May 6: Anthropology, Queerness, Epistemology

- Tom Boellstorff, “The Politics of Similitude: Global Sexuality Activism, Ethnography, and the Western Subject”
- Margot Weiss, “The Epistemology of Ethnography: Method in Queer Anthropology”
- Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, “Queer Ethnography in Theory and Practice: Reflections on Studying Sexual Globalization and Women’s Queer Activism in Beijing”

Wednesday, May 8: course wrap up

In-class presentations on final paper

Final Paper due: Thursday, 5/16 by 5pm by email (please send as a .pdf).