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**Course time:** Monday & Wednesday 1:00 - 4:00pm  
**Office hours:** before or after class, or by appointment

### *Description*

This course is an introduction to the anthropology of gender and sexuality. Cultural anthropology is centrally focused on how people create and define distinct ways of living in places near and far, Western and non-Western. This course will explore what we can learn by comparing sexuality and gender across cultural divides.

We will ask: How do meanings and expressions of gender, sexual identity, and desire vary across different cultures? What do we learn when we don't take those categories (sex, gender, and sexuality) for granted? How does the study of sexuality, perhaps surprisingly, reveal important dimensions of power, mobility, community, and globalization today? And what are the ethical issues entailed in studying people unlike—or like—ourselves?

We will tackle these questions by reading critical essays in the anthropology of sexuality and gender alongside four contemporary ethnographies that explore the lives of transgendered sex workers in Brazil, American men who seek “mail order marriages” with Chinese and Filipina women, young queer kids in rural Appalachia, and wealthy Vietnamese businessmen and Ho Chi Minh City’s sex workers in the context of Asia’s rising economic ascendancy. Throughout the course, we will seek to “make the strange familiar and the familiar strange”—the goal of Cultural Anthropology—so that we can develop a more critical perspective on questions of gender and sexuality that, in our own culture, are often taken for granted.

### *Books to purchase*

1. Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (University of Chicago Press, 1997)
2. Nicole Constable, *Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography & "Mail Order" Marriages* (University of California, 2003)
3. Mary L. Gray, *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America* (New York University Press, 2009)
4. Kimberly Kay Hoang, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* (University of California, 2015)

### **Course assignments**

- \* Attendance and Participation: 20%
- \* 4 book précis (3-page critical summary of ethnography): 10% each | 40% total
- \* Final research paper (10 pages) – 40%

#### **Attendance and Participation.**

Your daily preparation and in-class participation is 20% of your grade. I expect you to be active in discussion and to shape the course with your own interests. There is a lot of reading for this class, so coming to class ready to talk and think together about the readings is essential. You don't need to have figured it all out: asking questions is a great way to participate. Your participation should be grounded in the reading—pointing us to relevant sections of an article or to a particular page in the ethnography is most productive. Remember, participation does not just mean talking; it means contributing to our collective learning.

#### **Book Précis.**

For each of the **four** ethnographies that we read, you will write a 3 page (give or take) précis. Each précis is 10% of your course grade. A précis is akin to an academic book review. It is intended to help you develop your own analysis of each ethnography, and ethnographic writing and theorizing in general. It is an occasion to have an intellectual conversation with each author. At the end of the course, you will have a handy set of précis for each ethnography.

It should begin with a one paragraph overview of the main point of the ethnography. Make sure you indicate the method, location, and theme/topic in this first paragraph. The remainder of the précis (1 ½ - 2 ½ pages) should be an analysis of the content, structure, and form of the text. Ask yourself: What is the author arguing? How do each of the chapters contribute to the argument? Think about the author's goals and motivations, their writing (and research) strategies, the intellectual context within which they situate their argument. How does the structure of the text work with its conceptual and analytical content? What parts of the book make the most important points? You may also want to connect the ethnography to other essays or texts we've read in the course, but this is not required. The précis is a step beyond a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book as it requires you to locate overarching themes and ideas, and draw out what you think are the most salient points. But it should also convey the main points of the ethnography, so that a person who hadn't read the book would get a sense of it from your précis.

**The précis is due in class on the day we discuss the ethnography.**

#### **Final research paper.**

Your final assignment is a research paper on the aspect of the anthropology of sexuality of your choice. The paper should be 10 typed, double-spaced pages (give or take). Choose a topic in which you are particularly interested, and integrate the concepts and frameworks you have learned in the course with new perspectives you have researched on your own. Be sure to come meet with me to discuss / brainstorm ideas. I will also provide a list of excellent ethnographies you may wish to explore at the start of the semester (on the Moodle).

## Course schedule

### 1. Introduction to Anthropology of Sexuality

#### Monday, June 29: histories of the anthropology of sexuality

- Kath Weston, “The Bubble, the Burn, and the Simmer”
- Fran Markowitz “Sexing the Anthropologist”

in class:

Anne McClintock, excerpt from “The Lay of the Land”

Horace Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacerima”

### 2. Sex, Gender, Sexuality

#### Wednesday, July 1: identities and desires

- Kendall, “Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia”
- David Valentine, “I Know What I am”
- Jane Ward, “Dude-Sex: White Masculinities and ‘Authentic’ Heterosexuality Among Dudes Who Have Sex With Dudes”

**Monday, July 6:** Don Kulick, *Travesti*

Précis 1 due

### 3. Circuits of Desire

#### Wednesday, July 8: exotic / erotic

- Deborah Pruitt and Suzanne LaFont, “For Love and Money”
- M. Jacqui Alexander, “Imperial Desire/Sexual Utopias: White Gay Capital and Transnational Tourism”
- Karen Kelsky, “Intimate Ideologies: Transnational Theory and Japan's ‘Yellow Cabs’”

possible in class film: *Heading South*

**Monday, July 13:** Nicole Constable, *Romance on a Global Stage*

Précis 2 due

### 4. Community and Identity

#### Wednesday, July 15: capitalism, cities, community

- Kath Weston, “Get Thee To a Big City”
- John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity”
- Nan Boyd, “San Francisco's Castro District: From Gay Liberation to Tourist Destination”

**Monday, July 20:** Mary L. Gray, *Out in the Country*

Précis 3 due

### 5. Globalization and Sexuality

**Wednesday, July 22: transnational sexual politics**

- Margrete Aarmo, “How Homosexuality Became Un-African”
- Tom Boellstorff, “The Politics of Similitude: Global Sexuality Activism, Ethnography, and the Western Subject”
- Christine Walley, “Searching for ‘Voices’”

**Monday, July 27:** Kimberly Kay Hoang, *Dealing in Desire*  
Précis 4 due

**Wednesday, July 29:** wrap-up  
discussion and presentations

**Final paper due: TBD**