

Note: Previous Course Outline

GSWS 2273 Sexual Subjects The University of Western Ontario (Western University) Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

Course Description

This interdisciplinary course focuses on sexuality as a subject of study and considers how marginalization and discrimination has been structured, imposed, and resisted through the 20th and 21st century. Students will examine a variety of primary documents and theoretical texts – informed by radical, sex-positive, and anti-racist feminism, queer theory, and psychoanalysis, among others – to question the construction or nature of sexual identity and experience.

Learning Outcomes and Course Perspectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain the socially constructed nature of sexuality, identity, and practice while considering the political opportunities of identity politics
- Re-imagine historical progress and growing socio-political acceptance of gender and sexual diversity as the result of human action and activism, not the mere passage of time
- Be empowered to participate in this activism and progress
- Evaluate and apply theoretical work and key debates in feminism, sexuality studies, and queer theory
- Assess the ways in which sexuality, sexual identity and sexual subjectivity are always contingent upon gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, ability and class
- Discuss sexual practices through the lens of sex positivity, decolonization, anti-racism, and anti-imperialism

Evaluations and Assignments

Term 1

5% *Participation*
 Ongoing

This mark is the smallest in the course but the most important to your learning. Come to class with materials read and a willingness to contribute to discussion and in-class activities. Ask

questions about anything you are unsure of; I am thrilled to help clarify content and expectations. You will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of ways, including oral discussion, small group discussions, short written reflections, and ungraded reading quizzes.

Academic Consideration: This course requires weekly participation across 12 weeks each term. Up to 2 absences will be forgiven per term. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for weekly participation will be denied.

20% *Burn it Down*
Oct 23

Using discipline-specific research (e.g., ~3 sources from journal articles or academic books in LGBTQ+ studies), offer a contextualization of the issues, anger, and/or calls for change from a manifesto of your choosing in *Burn it Down*. 3-4 pages.

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 4-day grace period. This means that you can submit this assignment up to midnight on Sunday, Oct. 27 without penalty. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this paper will be denied. Papers will still be accepted past the extended deadline with a late penalty of 2% per day.

10% *Manifesto for Sexual Liberation*
Nov 27 (due date) & Dec 4 (in-class gallery presentation)

In small groups, and through discussion and debate, develop a manifesto for a sexual issue of importance to you. Be creative! Consider, though do not feel restricted by, the norms of the manifestos we have studied in class. We will discuss as a class our priorities for public distribution: live manifesto reading, gallery display, or class website?

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 4-day grace period. This means that you can submit your manifesto up to midnight on Sunday, Dec. 1 without penalty. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this assignment will be denied. Papers will still be accepted past the extended deadline with a late penalty of 2% per day.

Term 2

5% *Participation*
Ongoing

As above.

20% *Theory v. Theory*
Jan 29

Identify a key question, concept, or argument from one of the theoretical perspectives covered in Module 2. Explore this question from the perspective of at least two theoretical perspectives (the original author plus at least one other). Form an argumentative thesis that identifies how your selected theoretical perspectives, together, allow you to better or differently understand this key question. 4-5 pages.

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 4-day grace period. This means that you can submit your theory paper up to midnight on Sunday, Feb. 2 without penalty. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this assignment will be denied. Papers will still be accepted past the extended deadline with a late penalty of 2% per day.

10% *Sex Wars Debate*
Feb 26, Mar 5, Mar 12

Alone or with 1-2 other students, prepare an outline of the key arguments, as you see them, in one of the three “sex war” debates represented in our readings (BDSM, pornography, or sex work). Present your assigned “side” during a lively in-class discussion!

Academic Consideration: This assignment is dynamic and requires the presence and co-operation of all debate members to be successful. Supporting documentation is required: consult with your academic counsellor if you need to miss your assigned class.

30% *Theorizing Sexual Practice*
Apr 2

Offer an assessment of how one or two theoretical perspectives can inform your understanding of a sexual practice. 5-6 pages.

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 4-day grace period. This means that you can submit your final paper up to midnight on Sunday, Apr. 6 without penalty. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this assignment will be denied. Papers will still be accepted past the extended deadline with a late penalty of 2% per day; papers more than one week late will require a consultation with the professor and/or your academic counsellor to ensure that university regulations around final grade submission can still be met.

Readings

Fahs, B. (2020). *Burn it down!: feminist manifestos for the revolution*. Verso Press.

- Available from the publisher: <https://www.versobooks.com/books/3151-burn-it-down>
 - Paperback + e-book: 33.95\$
 - E-book only: 13.99\$

- Or from The Bookstore At Western (39.95\$): https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2024&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/GSWS2273E

All other readings available via the Course Readings portal linked in OWL, at no charge.