The University of Texas at Austin – Department of Anthropology

Fall 2013

ANT 391 SEXUALITY AND CULTURE

Unique	Day	Time	Location
31605	T	2:00 - 5:00	SAC 5.124

WGS 393 SEXUALITY AND CULTURE

Unique	Day	Time	Location
48085	T	2:00 - 5:00	SAC 5.124

Instructor: Sofian Merabet
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Office Hours: Thursday 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. or by appointment in SAC 5.164

Course Description:

This graduate seminar deals with the cultural analysis of sexuality. Its aim is to evaluate critically formative concepts and theories that have been subject to debates within Anthropology, History, Philosophy, and Gender Studies/Queer Theory. Through the reading of a variety of texts, we will explore the central position sexuality occupies within culture. By discussing recent scholarship covering Affect Theory and Critical Gender Studies, we will examine the ways in which the nation and the state are closely tied to the politics of sexuality, gender, race and class and consider how bodies marked by those concepts are situated in space and time. One of the basic themes of the material for this course concerns the extent to which both realities and their perceptions are socio-cultural constructs that are subject to constant change and, therefore, need historical contextualization.

Required Texts: (in alphabetical order)

Ahmed, Sara	*Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects*, Others, Duke: 978-0-8223-3914-4, 2006
Amar, Paul	*The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*, Duke University Press, 978-0-8223-5398-0, 2013
Berlant, Lauren	*Cruel Optimism*, Duke University Press, 978-0-8223-5111-5, 2011
Cvetkovich, Ann	*Depression: A Public Feeling*, Duke University Press, 978-0-8223-5238-9, 2012
Gregg, Melissa and Gregory J. Seigworth	*The Affect Theory Reader*, Duke University Press, 978-0-8223-4776-7, 2010
Inhorn, Marcia C.	*The New Arab Man: Emergent Masculinities, Technologies, and Islam in the Middle East*, Princeton University Press: 978-0-691-14889-2, 2012
Puar Jasbir K.	*Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Duke: 978-0-8223-4114-7, 2007

Course Requirements for Registered Graduate Students:

The class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. It will be run primarily as discussions within a seminar format. In order for the course to be effective, all students must have the reading assignments completed and ready for in-depth discussion for each class. Regular attendance is required. Attendance in class, however, does not constitute participation. You must come to class having carefully read all materials and be prepared to discuss, question, and argue about issues raised in the readings. It will be beneficial for you to take excerpts/notes on any material that you find enlightening, controversial, or objectionable. You should also take notes in class on themes, key terms, and debates we tackle. These note-taking strategies will be crucial when you write your research/term paper. In short:

I. Do all assigned readings (while taking excerpts/notes!) by the date indicated on the syllabus and participate actively in the general class discussion.

II. Regular two 15-minute presentations on the weekly readings to be assigned to students. They are intended to launch the general seminar discussions. The goal of the 15

minutes oral presentations is two-fold: one, identify and explain the argument(s) that the author is making, and two, provide your own take on that argument. Begin with a short summary of the work and then focus on the author's argument(s). Try to be concise in all parts of your analysis. An outline can help to remain focused on your analysis and avoid a mere summary and irrelevant description. Following is a sample outline for your assignment:

1. Introduction (includes the author's and, if applicable, your own argument[s]).
2. Short summary of the text (focus on one or two central aspects of the work).
3. Development and substantiation of your constructive critique based on a set of key questions to be submitted to the class during your presentation for wider discussion.

While not required, presentation handouts are generally helpful.

III. Two to three-page description of the research/term paper ("Project Proposal") to be brought in and shared in class with peers for feedback on **Tuesday, October 29th**. An updated version will be submitted to me on **Tuesday, November 5th**.

IV. 10-minute presentations on the respective final research project during the last meeting (or last two) of the semester.

V. 15 to 20-page (no more, no less!) term paper on any relevant topic dealing with the study of sexuality and culture due on **Wednesday, December 4th**. Focused topics that raise a central research issue or query are best. Avoid general or overview topics. You **must** include/discuss roughly 25% of the previously assigned readings in your paper.

The writing assignment is designed to develop and enhance your critical reading, analytical, and writing skills. Evaluation criteria include: critical and integrative analysis of texts, clarity of thought, ability to synthesize readings and, occasionally, class discussions into your own argument, and ability to formulate a theoretical grounding for it.

<u>Grading Procedure:</u>

- Term paper: 70%.
- General participation and presentations of weekly readings: 20%.
- Presentations of own work (in process as well as final): 10%.

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives.

Reading Schedule: (this schedule is tentative and subject to possible revision)

Week 1: Sexuality and Culture

- Tuesday, September 3rd — Introduction to the seminar

Week 2: Queer Theory, Space, and Phenomenology (1)

- Tuesday, September 10th — Introduction, Chapter 1 and 2 in Ahmed, Sara *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects*, Others, Duke, 2006, pp. 1-107

Week 3: Queer Theory, Space, and Phenomenology (2)

- Tuesday, September 17th — Chapter 3 and Conclusion in Ahmed, Sara *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects*, Others, Duke, 2006, pp. 109-179

Week 4: Sexuality in the Face of the Politics of Securitization (1)

- Tuesday, September 24th — Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 in Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Duke, 2007, ix-xxviii and pp. 1-113

Week 5: Sexuality in the Face of the Politics of Securitization (2)

- Tuesday, October 1st — Chapters 3 and 4 and Conclusion in Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Duke, 2007, ix-xxviii and pp. 114-222

Week 6: Affect Theory

- Tuesday, October 8th — "An Inventory of Shimmers," "ONE Impingements," "FIVE After Affect," and "Afterword: Worlding Refrains" in Gregg, Melissa and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds. *The Affect Theory Reader*, Duke, 2010, pp. 1-90 and 289-353

Week 7: The "Good Life" and its Fantasies (1)

- Tuesday, October 15th — Introduction and Chapters ONE to THREE in Berlant, Lauren, *Cruel Optimism*, Duke, 2011, pp. 1-119

Week 8: The "Good Life" and its Fantasies (2)

- Tuesday, October 22nd — Chapters FOUR to SEVEN and Note on the Cover Image in Berlant, Lauren, *Cruel Optimism*, Duke, 2011, pp. 121-267

Week 9: Public Feelings (1)

- Tuesday, October 29th — Introduction and Part I in Cvetkovich, Ann *Depression: A Public Feeling*, Duke, 2012, pp. 1-82

  Two to three-Page Term Paper "Project Proposal" to be shared with peers in class.

Week 10: Public Feelings (2)

- Tuesday, November 5th — Part II and Epilogue in Cvetkovich, Ann *Depression: A Public Feeling*, Duke, 2012, pp. 85-211

  Updated two to three-Page Term Paper "Project Proposal" to be submitted to the instructor.

Week 11: The Politics of Male Infertility in the Arab World

- Tuesday, November 12th — Inhorn, Marcia C. *The New Arab Man: Emergent Masculinities, Technologies, and Islam in the Middle East*, Princeton, 2012

Week 12: Sexuality, Security, and Neoliberalism (1)

- Tuesday, November 19th — Introduction and Chapters ONE to THREE in Amar, Paul *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*, Duke, 2013, pp. 1-138

Week 13: Sexuality, Security, and Neoliberalism (2)

- Tuesday, November 26th — Chapters FOUR to SIX and Conclusion in Amar, Paul *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*, Duke, 2013, pp. 139-252

Week 14: Student Presentations

- Tuesday, December 3rd — **Student Presentations**

Final Papers due as an email attachment no later than Wednesday, December 4th!