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 by different authors such as Foucault, Halperin, Butler, Chauncey, Warner, and others, we will explore how terms like “women” and “men,” “femininity” and “masculinity,” as well as “homosexuality” and “heterosexuality” have structured people’s experiences and their perceptions of sexuality and thus look at the central position sexuality occupies within culture. By discussing the recent scholarship by Ahmed and Puar, 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  

Butler, Judith  
*Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, Routledge, 1993

Chauncey, George  

Foucault, Michel  

Halperin, David  
*One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love*, Routledge: 978-0415900973, 1989

Jacob, Wilson Chacko  

Puar Jasbir K.  

Warner, Michael  

**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.

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 30th. An updated version will be submitted to me on Tuesday, November 6th.

IV. 10-minute presentations on the respective final research project during the two last meetings 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 Friday, December 7th. 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.

**Grading Procedure:**

- 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 4th  Introduction to the seminar

Week 2: Love, Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece
- Tuesday, September 11th  Halperin, David One Hundred Years of Homosexuality: And Other Essays on Greek Love

Week 3: Power, Identity, and Sexuality
- Tuesday, September 18th  Foucault, Michel The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction

Week 4: The City and the Making of Gendered Worlds (1)

Week 5: The City and the Making of Gendered Worlds (2)

Week 6: Sexual Autonomy Versus the Fallacy of Normalcy
- Tuesday, October 9th  Warner, Michael The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life
Week 7: Bodies, their Materiality, and other Domains (1)

- Tuesday, October 16th  Introduction and PART ONE in Butler, Judith *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, pp. 1-140

Week 8: Bodies, their Materiality, and other Domains (2)

- Tuesday, October 23rd  PART TWO in Butler, Judith *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, pp. 143-242

Week 9: The Formation of National Subjects and Bodies (1)

- Tuesday, October 30th  Introduction and Chapters One to Five in Jacob, Wilson Chacko *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870–1940*, pp. 1-155
  Two to three-Page Term Paper “Project Proposal” to be shared with peers in class.

Week 10: The Formation of National Subjects and Bodies (2)

- Tuesday, November 6th  Chapters Six to Eight in Jacob, Wilson Chacko *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870–1940*, pp. 156-262
  Updated two to three-Page Term Paper “Project Proposal” to be submitted to the instructor.

Week 11: Queer Theory and Phenomenology

- Tuesday, November 13th  Ahmed, Sara *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*

Week 12:

- Tuesday, November 20th  MESA Conference / Substitution TBA
Week 13: Sexuality in the Face of the Politics of Securitization (1)

- Tuesday, November 27th  
  Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1. and 2. in Puar Jasbir K. Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times, pp. ix-xxviii and 1-113

Week 14: Sexuality in the Face of the Politics of Securitization (2)

- Tuesday, December 4th  

Final Papers due as an email attachment no later than Friday, December 7th