

Humanities 123-B  
Winter 2010

Representations of Sexuality  
Expressing Pleasure, Controlling Culture

Syllabus

Class Information:	Sexuality in Literature Humanities 123-B TWR 1:30PM – 4:55PM (3 hours 25 minutes) Rm.
Instructor Information:	R.T. Barnhart rtbarnhart@gmail.com Department of Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies Humanities, Rm. 2127  Office hours: TWR 12:30PM – 1:25PM

Course Description

This course will explore representations of sexuality through literatures from diverse periods and cultures, asking the questions: How is sex and sexuality constructed by the texts? How do these constructs differ according to cultural context? How are such issues as gender, orientation, and sexual agency posited as normal or how is this normalcy questioned by texts? How do texts, through inclusion or exclusion, define what is and is not sexually deviant? In what ways are sexuality and power intrinsically linked? What dispositions tend to separate both? What are the multiple languages used in literature to talk about sex? While pursuing these questions, we will also constantly question how the formal and thematic genres of the texts shape what can be portrayed about sex, how these genres affect reception, and how authors, just as they can subvert sexual stereotypes, subvert genre characteristics.

Course Objectives

Students will gain knowledge of the characteristics and limitations of genres, the critical vocabulary necessary to discuss sexual representation and sexuality, and elementary literary terms and their usage. Students will develop throughout the semester the skills necessary to read texts critically, engage them in their original contexts, understand scholarly articles related to the class readings, and respond to them through critical argument. As well, students will develop the etiquette necessary to discuss texts with other students respectfully in a classroom setting.

Classroom Etiquette

Students will be held to a standard of classroom etiquette. No one will talk on the cell phone during class time. No one will use hand-held electronic devices for messaging during class time. No one will use online messaging applications during class time. The student will demonstrate the desire to address the teacher or the class in general by raising a hand during

laboratory, presentations, or lecture time. During discussion, the student may comment at will, keeping in mind that no one person should dominate the discussion. If a student wishes to speak to the instructor regarding an issue that is not for the class in general, the student will speak to the instructor after class or during office hours.

#### Attendance

The attendance policy is as follows. For each class period, you must come prepared. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the class. Tardiness of more than ten minutes will count as an absence unless you inform the instructor beforehand. If you miss more than four classes for any reason, you cannot pass the course. Students who miss the first week of class will be de-registered automatically. Each student is permitted a maximum of three excused absences. For an absence to be considered excused, the student must present the instructor with a note from a doctor or the campus counseling office within a week of the absence.

#### Disability Support Services (DSS) Statement

If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or <http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/>. They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities>

#### Academic Integrity Statement

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at <http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/>

#### Critical Incident Management

Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

#### Required Reading

The student will be responsible for the following texts.

Boccaccio, The Decameron, selections\*

Ferré, Rosario, La muñeca menor\*

García Lorca, Federico, La casa de Bernarda Alba

Ibsen, Ghosts

Plato, Symposium

Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, or What You Will

Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing  
Song of Songs\*  
 The Gospels, selections\*

All texts will be available through the university bookstore except those marked with an asterisk. For those texts not available through the university bookstore, you will be able to access them through Blackboard, under Course Documents. Many, perhaps all, of these texts are available online. You will also be responsible for all films shown in class. These films will be on reserve in the library.

Arau, Alfonso. Como agua para chocolate (1992)  
 Fickman, Andy. She's the Man (2006)  
 Hardwicke, Catherine. Twilight (2008)  
 Klotz, Nicolas. La nuit sacrée (1993)  
 Livingston, Jennie. Paris Is Burning (1990)

#### Performance Assessment

The work requirements for the course are:

1. Take and pass two quizzes.
2. Take and pass the midterm and final examinations.
3. Keep a journal of readings, completing an entry for each course text.
4. Participate in classroom discussions, group work, and writing exercises.

The student will compile the group work, writing exercises, and presentation materials in a portfolio that will be kept throughout the semester.

Grade Breakdown:	Grading Scale:
Journal of Readings, 15 points	100-90 A
Presentations, 5 points	89-80 B
Free writes, 5 points	79-70 C
Group paragraphs, 5 points	69-60 D
Quiz One, 10 points	59 - ↓ F
Quiz Two, 10 points	
Midterm, 25 points	
Final, 25 points	

#### Schedule of Readings, Discussions and Exams

January 2010

- 5 Introduction  
 Critical thought: Foucault  
 Text: Song of Songs; examples of both Scientia Sexualis and Ars Erotica
- 6 Symbols of Sex

- Critical thought: Freud  
Text: Selections from Boccaccio, The Decameron  
Film: Twilight (2008) Hardwicke, Catherine
- 7 Crazy in Love  
Assessment: Quiz 1  
Drama: Much Ado About Nothing
- 8 Sexuality, Secrets and Violence  
Drama: Ibsen, Ghosts
- 12 Sex and Food: Erotics of desires  
Film: Como agua para chocolate (1992) Arau, Alfonso  
Critical thought: Deleuze and Guattari, BwO
- 13 Midterm Examination
- 14 Power, Appearance and Sexuality  
Critical thought: Selection from Judith Butler, Gender Trouble  
Film: La nuit sacrée (1993) Nicolas Klotz
- 15 Troubled Love  
Text: Plato, Symposium; the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew
- 19 Subversion: Sexuality::Imagination:Reality  
Film: Paris Is Burning  
Assessment: Quiz 2
- 20 Sexual Control, Societal Critique  
Play: La casa de Bernarda Alba García Lorca, Federico  
Short Story: La muñeca menor, Ferré, Rosario
- 21 Negotiating Discourse: Creative Transgression  
Drama: Twelfth Night, or What You Will Shakespeare  
Film: She's the Man (2006) Andy Fickman
- 22 Final Examination

## Journal of Readings: The Basics

Each time you read or watch a text, write the following in your journal:

For a piece of fiction:

1. a brief summary of the story
2. a list of characters and their function
3. one specific thing you don't like about the story
4. one specific thing you don't understand
5. a list of themes
6. Two questions you have for your fellow students

For poetry:

1. a summary of what the poem treats
2. a list of central images of the poem
3. how you understand the structure of the poem
4. a list of themes
5. your feelings and thoughts after reading the poem—write three sentences

For an essay or secondary text:

1. a description of the author
2. the author's purpose in writing
3. who the text is useful for
4. what the text reminds you of
5. A list of themes
6. Two questions you have for your fellow students.

For a textbook or manual:

1. a list of key principles your reading covered
2. the definition of two key terms
3. how the information is immediately applicable to the class or to your writing
4. one thing you will change about your activities as a student based off of the reading.

Each numbered point requires at least one full sentence unless a list is requested. The instructor will evaluate notebooks in class on Thursday while students are participating in the writing exercises.

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ATTENTION

The subject of this course is how attitudes towards human sexuality have changed through history and how those attitudes are reflected in different forms of literature and the arts. Many of the readings in this course are sexually explicit and present points of view at odds with the morals and beliefs of many people. Students who feel that they will be so offended by these readings that they cannot study them carefully and objectively should withdraw from the class as soon as possible. On the other hand, students who are inclined to read these works purely for titillation and are unwilling to consider them thoughtfully should also withdraw from the class. If you wish to remain in this class, please sign below.

I have read the above statement, and I pledge to engage conscientiously with the readings and lectures in a spirit of intellectual inquiry.

Sign here

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Print your name here

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