FOLKLORE AND SEXUALITY/Folklore 270
SUMMER 2019

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Sexuality is usually thought of as being biological or social, divided into categories of natural and unnatural. Often missed are its creative and communicative aspects. Examining the constructed social elements of sexuality requires attention be paid to folklore in groups, between individuals and on the larger platform of popular technological media. The most interesting locations for exploration are those places where borderlands or margins, occur between genders, orientations and other cultural categories.

A field-based paper will be required that must include documentary research. The references in the bibliography and readings can serve as the basis of the documentation. The paper will be divided into three parts: 1) introduction and published materials 2) description of fieldwork 3) a reflection on what was learned and experienced from the process. Surveys are not allowed for the fieldwork portion. Each part will be 7-10 pages written in Times New Roman, 12 point type. Brief presentations (five minutes or so) by each student on their topics may be required toward the end of the semester, if time allows. Provisional grades on the papers will be given as the first two sections are handed in.

Class attendance is mandatory and will be taken into account in the final grade.

There are two or three quizzes as well as two fieldwork exercises.

Grade breakdown: Papers: 75%  Class attendance and participation: 25%

WARNING: Some class discussions involve subjects that are very sensitive to many people—matters that are often labeled “explicit.” No one is obligated to participate and permission is readily granted to those choosing not to attend if they feel uncomfortable. In fact, I am often uncomfortable myself and will say so. But I have no intention of trying to control discussions to conform to my values, though I reserve the right to make a few exceptions.

SECOND WARNING: I recognize that there is a lot of reading in this class. It will not all be discussed in class, though I expect the material to be read and thought about, since the quizzes are about the readings. Complaints about the quantity should be mitigated by the fact that they are (mostly) fairly easy. The other piece of bad news here is I may also assign additional reading as the semester progresses.

Books will be available at the University Bookstore (36th and Walnut) and also on reserve at Van Pelt
Rosengarten.


Recommended:

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be part of the course Canvas site.

July 9 - Introduction of terms: sex, sexuality, gender, folklore


*Noyes, Dorothy. “Folklore” in Social Science Encyclopedia, ed. by Adam Kuper and Jessica Kuper.


July 11 - Sexuality in classic folklore texts: Decameron, 1001 nights

Bible: to be read aloud in class.

**Arabian Nights:** "The Jewish Physician's Tale"

**July 16**—Sexual Folklore in Dyads

*Bendix, Regina. "Marmot, Memet and Maroset."

A list of memoirs or diaries of relationships will be handed out in advance. Each student will be expected to talk about the material they read in light of the Bendix article.

**July 18**—The Body Sexual/ Field Work

Polhemus, Ted. **Customized Body.** (also available online though I have a hard time finding it)


**July 23**—The Body Sexual, part 2

Representations of Femininity/Masculinity


Pascoe, C.J. **Dude You’re a Fag.** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).


Bring material representations or suggestions for web sites to look at.

July 25—Folklore and Sexual Minorities

Brown, Richardo J. The Evening Crowd at Kirmser’s: A Gay Life in the 1940s.


July 30—Folklore and Sexual Minorities, part 2

Feinberg, Leslie. Transgender Warriors.


August 1—Film: Paris is Burning


August 6—Sexuality and belief systems

Film: the Polygamists


August 8—Material Culture and Technology/ Guest speaker—