

The Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies
Western University
GSWS 2273E: Sexual Subjects
2025/2026

Weekly Meetings: Monday 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm **Location:** UCC 53

Instructor: Dr. Amy Keating; akeatin@uwo.ca

Western University is situated on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples who have longstanding relationships to the region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. In close proximity to Western, there are 3 local First Nations communities: the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region of southwestern Ontario, there are 9 First Nations and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western recognizes the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America) to the development of Canada.

Course Description

This interdisciplinary full-year essay course focuses on sexuality as a subject of study and considers how marginalization and discrimination have 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 Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a breadth of knowledge and understanding of the history of sexuality and how it functions as a social practice
- Evaluate and critique normalizing discourses of sexuality within our society and beyond
- Understand how the categories of sexuality, race, class, gender, ability, and further identities can intersect
- Analyze and critique the numerous ways that sexuality and gender are constructed through hegemonic discourse
- Recognize their own “subjectivity” through understanding how these relational discourses function in our daily lives
- Approach writing critical and effective essays on issues related to gender and sexuality through an interdisciplinary lens

Required Texts: Weekly readings will be posted on Brightspace.

Evaluation: Detailed Instructions will be posted on Brightspace

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| 1. Attendance and Participation | 20% |
| 2. Discussion Facilitation | 10% |
| 3. Essay One: “You” | 15% |

4. Essay Two: “Me”	15%
5. Outline	5%
6. Peer Feedback	10%
7. Essay Three: “Us”	20%

1. Attendance and Participation: Ongoing (20%)

Participation and attendance are mandatory for success in the course. Students are expected to show up prepared to each class and to engage in the collective conversation on the week’s topics.

2. Discussion Facilitation and Reflection: Dates TBD in Week 2 (15%)

Students will each lead one week of class discussion and write a reflection on their approach to be submitted the following week.

3. Essay One “You” (15%): Due November 17, 2025.

Students will complete their first essay prompted by the subject of “you:” they will meaningfully consider an issue that directly affects *someone else* or another group of people.

4. Essay Two “Me” (15%): Due January 12, 2026.

Students will complete their second essay prompted by the subject of “me,” by exploring a topic that has personal stakes students will learn how to discuss *personal* issues and perspectives in an academic setting.

5. Outline (5%): February 9, 2026.

The final paper will be a scaffolded project: students will present a *work-in-progress* outline in a class workshop to solicit feedback from peers.

6. Peer Feedback (10%): March 2, 2026.

Students will provide productive and respectful feedback to their peers’ final paper outlines.

7. Essay Three “Us” (20%): April 6, 2026.

Students will complete their final essay prompted by the subject of “us:” what does it mean to be a “sexual subject” in relation to other people? This purposely broad category will allow students to explore the topics and issues most interesting and relevant to them.

GSWS 2273E – Sexual Subjects ***Course Topics and Schedule (2025-2026)***

Week 1: September 8, 2025. *Introduction to the Course*

Week 2: September 15, 2025. *Gender, Sexuality, and Identity Formation*

Week 3: September 29, 2025. *Feminist Approaches to Sexuality Part I*

Week 4: October 6, 2025. *Feminist Approaches to Sexuality Part II*

Week 5: October 13, 2025. **HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Week 6: October 20, 2025. *Writing in Gender and Sexuality Studies*

Week 7: October 27, 2025. *Queer Theory Part I*

Week 8: November 3, 2025. **READING BREAK. NO CLASS.**

Week 9: November 10, 2025. *Queer Theory Part II*

Week 10: November 17, 2025. *Colonization and Sexuality.* **Essay One Due**

Week 11: November 24, 2025. *Marriage and Institutions of Heterosexuality*

Week 12: December 1, 2025. *Bodily Autonomy and Reproductive Rights*

Week 13: December 8, 2025. *HIV/AIDS History and Sexuality*

WINTER BREAK!

Week 14: January 5, 2026. *Foucault and Postmodernism*

Week 15: January 12, 2026. *Psychoanalysis and Sexuality.* **Essay Two Due**

Week 16: January 19, 2026. *Transnational and Postcolonial Feminism*

Week 17: January 26, 2026. *Subversive Sexual Practices: BDSM, Kink*

Week 18: February 2, 2026. *Sex Work and Sexualized Labour*

Week 19: February 9, 2026. *Final Paper Peer Workshop* **Outline Due**

Week 20: February 16, 2026. **READING BREAK. NO CLASS.**

Week 21: February 23, 2026. *Resisting Normativity I: Polyamory and Relationship Anarchy*

Week 22: March 2, 2026. *Resisting Normativity II: Asexual Identities* **Peer Feedback Due**

Week 23: March 16, 2026. *Power and Control: Gender-based and Sexual Violence*

Week 24: March 23, 2026. *Sex Sells: Identity Formation and Sex in the Media*

Week 25: March 30, 2026. *Approaches to Sex Education and Research*

Week 26: April 6, 2026. *The Future of Sexuality* **Essay Three Due**

Course Policies

Formatting Policy: All written assignments must be formatted in a document (PDF or .docx) with 1-inch margins, in 12 point, Times New Roman Font, double-spaced. The date, your name, the course title, and instructor name must be visible on the first page.

Email Policy: The instructor will respond to any emails within 48 hours during regular business hours. Please be aware that emails sent after 5 pm on Friday might not receive a response until Monday at the earliest.

Email Etiquette: You are expected to email your TAs and instructors *respectfully* and *professionally*. While you might email us from your phone, contacting your instructor or teacher is not the same as texting with your friend. It is good practice to strive for a level of appropriateness suitable for the workforce and your future career.

Medical Policy: Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components, and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness see:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2011/pg1117.html>

<http://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of help options.

Turnitin: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between the University and Turnitin.com.

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>
<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf>

Plagiarism and Generative AI: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The usage of anyone else's work without proper scholarly attribution is considered cheating and can have severe academic consequences. Using generative AI programs (such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc) to complete assignments in this course is considered plagiarism.

Note for students with disabilities: Please contact ws-ugrad@uwo.ca if you require any information in plain text format, or if any other accommodation can make the course material and/or physical space accessible to you. You may also contact ssd@uwo.ca to find out the full range of services available to you.

Late assignments: All assignments must be submitted through the appropriate assignment tab via the course website (OWL) by 11:59 pm on the due date. Hard copies are not required at this time. Late assignments without a valid reason will be deducted a 2% penalty per day (exclusive of weekends).

Missed assignments and academic accommodation: Academic Accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment. Please consult your instructor if an assignment is missed.

Grading Policy: A grading rubric for the Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies department will be available on the course website. The instructor/grader will be happy to discuss any grading concerns. **However**, if you plan to reach out regarding your grade, please follow the **"24/7" rule:** review all comments provided and allow yourself a minimum of **24 hours** to digest this feedback before contacting the instructor/grader. Connect with the instructor/grader regarding any lingering concerns within **7 days** of receipt of the assignment grade.

Remember: A grade that is lower than you expected is an opportunity to reflect on how to improve. Your worth as a human being cannot be determined by a number! The capacity to learn and grow as a student cannot be quantified through a GPA. Be gentle with yourself and please seek help whenever needed.