

NB: This syllabus is provisional and subject to change. Finalized syllabus will be provided by the first day of class

**The University of Western Ontario (Western University)
London Canada
Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research**

WS 2273E – Sexual Subjects

Lecture: Tues 4:30-7:30pm

Location:

Office hours:

Instructor: Professor Cayen

Office number: TBA

E-mail: lcayen2@uwo.ca

Course Description

This interdisciplinary course studies sexuality through three distinct but overlapping units. Beginning with history, we will look at how sexual identities and ideologies have changed throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century. Next, we will study how sexual subjects and subjectivities are produced in our unit on theory. Paying attention to feminist debates, we will conclude with an examination of how various sexual practices shape our understandings of sexual subjects.

No prerequisites

Course Perspective, Organization, and Learning Objectives

In relation to our three units – history, theory, practice – this course will enable students to:

- gain clarity on various sexual ideologies deployed in the history of sexuality
- articulate how sexual subjects and subjectivities are produced, constrained and understood through different theoretical frameworks
- gain perspective on debates concerning the politics of particular sexual practices

More generally, this course will enable students to:

- think critically about the personal and political implications of the subject area
- recognize the ways in which sexuality, sexual identity and sexual subjectivity are always contingent upon gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, ability and class
- understand how sexuality operates as both an enabling and constraining force in peoples' lives
- gain perspective on the relationships between society, sexuality and competing ideologies
- develop more advanced analytical, reading, writing and public speaking skills

Required Reading

Required readings include a textbook (see bookstore or reserve desk at Weldon):

Angus McLaren. "Introduction," *Twentieth-Century Sexuality: A History*. Wiley, 1999

Other readings are available through the course website.

Student Evaluation

Term 1:

Participation	5%
Discussion Paper A	20%
Community Org. Profile + Presentation	10%

Term 2:

Participation	5%
Discussion Paper B	20%
In-Class Debate	15%
Argumentative Essay	25%

Description of Assignments

Participation (5% per term, on-going)

All students should come to class with materials read and notes taken in order to be prepared to contribute to class and group discussion. Be curious and ask questions of the readings, the instructor, and your peers.

Discussion Paper A (20%, term 1 due Oct 16)

Write a short paper (4 pages) that identifies how sexual ideologies during a particular historical period operated as an enabling and/or constraining force in the lives of individuals and social groups.

Community Organization Profile and Presentation (10%, term 1 due Nov 27 or Dec 4)*

Alone or in pairs, identify a local or international organization (or individual) engaging in community work or activism on a sexual topic or issue. Use a course text to gain increased understanding about the goals and aims of this organization. Prepare a 2-page written analysis of the organization, plus a 5-minute informal presentation for the class.

Discussion Paper B (20%, term 2 due Jan 29)

Write a discussion paper (4-5 pages) that looks at a theoretical issue pertaining to the study of sexual subjects and subjectivities using materials from at least two weeks.

In-Class Debate (15%, term 2, Mar 5, 12, and 19 as assigned)*

Develop an argument that will prepare your team to take sides in a debate on a sexual practice that has been hotly contested in feminist history, including sex work, pornography, and BDSM. The class will be divided into six groups.

Argumentative Essay (25%, term 2 due Apr 9)

Write an essay (5-6 pages) that addresses how a particular sexual practice is productive of sexual subjects and subjectivities as well as how it can be framed through the perspectives discussed in Unit II.

***A note on presentation anxiety:** I want you to be prepared, but I do not expect you to be a “polished” presenter. Public speaking is a skill, just like writing papers, that requires practice, and these assignments will give you practice in an environment with a supportive and curious audience (me). If you show up and try, I will mark your effort and your ideas more than your delivery. You are welcome to present from your regular seat rather than at the front of the class.