

N.B.: Ownership and copyright of this syllabus remain with the original author, who has kindly shared this document for posting by the AAH's Committee on Teaching.



## SYLLABUS ARCHIVE

### Course and Instructor Information:

#### **Sexuality and Politics in Antiquity**

Prof. Jeremy LaBuff

Assistant Professor, Northern Arizona University

### Helpful Context:

Course first designed in Fall 2013

Average enrollment: 30

This is an undergraduate course primarily intended for majors.

It is taught completely in-person.

It fulfills both a general education and major requirements for History and WGS.

### Reflections of the Instructor:

*Q: What do you consider to be particular strengths of this course?*

A: Global (non-Mediterranean) coverage

*Q: In what ways do you think the course could still use improvements/adjustments?*

A: Emphasis on modern relevance

*Q: How generally have students responded to the course? Have there been any patterns in student feedback?*

A: Students like the material but feel intimidated by it (especially the theory and level of secondary readings). Finding accessible readings is a challenge.

College of Arts and Letters  
History Department

### **HIS/WGS 353: Sexuality and Politics in Antiquity**

Fall 2018

MW 4:00-5:15pm

3 credits, in-person

**Instructor:** Dr. Jeremy LaBuff, [jeremy.labuff@nau.edu](mailto:jeremy.labuff@nau.edu)

**Availability (Office Hours):** ---

#### **Course Description**

**Catalog:** Explores the ways in which sexual behavior and identity intersected with power relations in various ancient societies, shaping “citizen” identities and socio-political relations within democratic and other institutional contexts, as well as setting and challenging limits imposed upon non-dominant gender groups.

While a major focus of this course will be devoted to ancient Greek sexuality, equal emphasis will be placed on developing a trans-regional and comparative approach to the erotics of power. As such, we will also investigate the sexual politics of ancient Rome, China, India, Japan, and the Americas. At the same time, our study will also be attentive to the ways in which sexual identity politics also often implicated other identities such as gender, class, and ethnicity.

Finally, this course will push students to consider the material not as merely remote and different, and certainly not as the product a romanticized golden age, but as a set of practices, protocols, ideals, and structures that engage the present and thus deepen our understanding of the relationship between sexuality and power in today’s worlds.

#### **Assessment of Course Student Learning Outcomes:**

**Participation:** The format of this class is entirely discussion-based, since weekly engagement in the readings and the issues they raise is vital for you to develop a mature understanding of how to approach and think about sexuality and politics. Your participation will be assessed based on how often you contribute significantly to class discussions (see below definition). If there is something that legitimately prevents you from participating in class, you must communicate with me about alternatives.

“A”: volunteering to contribute **significantly** to lecture and discussion in at least two-thirds of the class sessions.

“B”: volunteering to contribute **significantly** in at least half the sessions.

“C”: volunteering to contribute **significantly** in more than five sessions.

“D”: regular attendance and contribution in five or less sessions.

“F”: poor attendance and no contribution in class.

**significant contribution:** comments or analytical questions that advance our collective understanding of the material

**Leading Discussion:** students will be placed in groups and assigned a set of secondary sources, on which they will lead class discussion. These discussions will be graded on the group’s ability to clarify student comprehension, initiate critical analysis of the material, and promote dialogue among the rest of the class.

**Primary Source Paper:** You will select ca. 2-4 pages of primary source material that we have NOT (and will not) read as a class and write a 1200-word analysis explaining how this evidence contributes to our understanding of the relationship between sexuality and power in Greek and/or Roman society. Options and further details on this assignment will be distributed.

**Theory Paper:** You will select one theoretical article (or a set of related articles) and evaluate its/their usefulness for interpreting and understand the ancient evidence, making sure to account for objections (both stated and potential) and competing theories discussed in class. Options and further details to be distributed.

**Extended Review:** As your final assessment, you will select and write a 10-page review of a scholarly book on ancient sexuality (list to be distributed). The review will consist of several sections: summary of main argument(s); assessment of theory and methodology; assessment of use and reading of evidence; consideration of critical responses (at least two published reviews or one published article/chapter); suggestions for alternate conclusions and/or further study of the topic.

**Grading System:** Since this is an upper-level seminar, active student engagement and participation is necessary for each class session to be successful. In addition, you will be expected to demonstrate oral and written communication skills through a presentation and written essays

Participation:	150 points
Discussion Leading:	100 points
Primary Source Paper:	200 points
Theory Paper:	200 points
Extended Review:	350 points
<hr/>	
Total:	1000 points

A=1000-895; B=894-795; C=794-695; D=694-595; F <595

### Readings and Materials:

-B. Holmes, *Gender: Antiquity and its Legacy*. Oxford, 2012.

\*\*All other readings will be available on BBLearn

### Schedule (subject to change)

Aug 27-29                      Introduction: Defining Politics, Sexuality, Gender, and "Ancient"  
Readings:                      **Holmes** 1-7, 9-13, 76-83

## **Masculinity, Erotics, and Democracy**

Sep 5 Pederasty & Citizenship  
*Readings:* Selections from Plato's *Symposium, Phaedrus, & Republic* (BBL)

Sep 10-12 Homoerotic Democracy  
*Readings:* Monday: **Holmes** 84-94 (top); Foucault, "A Problematic Relation" (BBL)  
Wednesday: Vase Paintings, Parker, "Vaseworld" 31-54 (BBL)

Sep 17-19 Roman Homoeroticism  
*Readings:* Mon: **Holmes** 94-125; Evidence for Roman masculinity (BBL)  
Wed: Myth of Pandora, Medical Views of Women (BBL)

## **Femininity and Democracy**

Sep 24-26 Models  
*Readings:* Mon: **Holmes** 14-56 (56-75 optional)  
Wed: Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (BBL)

Oct 1-3 Imagined Feminists?  
*Readings:* Mon: Faraone "The Ambivalence of Female Leadership"; Sommerstein, "Nudity, Obscenity, and Power" (BBL)  
Wed: Sophocles' *Antigone* (BBL)

Oct 8-10 Imagined Feminists?  
*Readings:* Mon: **Holmes** 148 (bottom)-180  
Wed: Evidence for female sexuality (BBL)

**Oct 12 Primary Source Paper Due on BBL**

Oct 15-17 Uncovering Female Sexual Agency  
*Readings:* Mon: Boehringer "Female Homoeroticism"; Kamen & Levin-Richardson, "Lusty Ladies in the Roman Imaginary" 231-50 (BBL)  
Wed: McGinn "Prostitution: Controversies & New Approaches" OR Joshel, "Female Desire and the Discourse of Empire" (BBL)

## **Sexuality in Ancient China**

Oct 22-24: The Culture of Sex in Ancient China  
*Readings:* Mon: Goldin, "Sex, Politics, and Ritualization in the Early Empire"; Yao, "Erotica in Tang China" (BBL)  
Wed: Hirsch, "Cut Sleeves as the Height of Fashion" (BBL)

Oct 29-31: Transgender Traditions  
Mon: Burton-Rose, "Gendered Androgyny" (BBL)  
Wed: Selections from the *Kamasutra* (BBL)

**Nov 2 Theory Paper Due**

## Sexuality in Ancient “India,” Japan, and the Americas

Nov 5-7 <i>Readings:</i>	Sexual Norms and the “Third Sex” in South Asia <u>Mon:</u> Selections from Gautam, <i>Foucault and the Kamasutra</i> ( <b>BBL</b> ) <u>Wed:</u> Sweet & Zwilling “...Queerness in Classical Indian Medicine” ( <b>BBL</b> )
Nov 14 <i>Readings:</i>	Japanese Homosexualities (No class Monday) Wed: Leupp, “The Pre-Tokugawa Homosexual Tradition”
Nov 19-21	Native American Gender Alternatives Mon: Selections from Roscoe, <i>Changing Ones</i>
Nov 26-28 <i>Readings:</i>	Make-Up Week or No Class: Book for Extended Review
Dec 3-5:	Peer-Review of Extended Review Drafts
December 10:	Extended Review Due

## University & Class Policies

- [https://nau.edu/Curriculum-and-Assessment/Forms/Curricular-Policy/Syllabus\\_Policy\\_Statements\(2\)/](https://nau.edu/Curriculum-and-Assessment/Forms/Curricular-Policy/Syllabus_Policy_Statements(2)/)

-Attendance: Missing more than 10 class sessions will result in **failing grade**. In addition, missing class when scheduled to lead discussion will result in a 0 for the assignment, except in case of emergency.

-Make-Up Work: Missed classes can be made up by coming to office hours within a week, prepared to discuss the readings. Students are responsible for contacting me to make up any missed assignments or learn of missed announcements.

-Plagiarism and Cheating: In accordance with NAU standards, this course has a **zero tolerance policy** for plagiarism. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please come see me. Any writing adjudged to be plagiarism will be given a 0% failing grade.