

# Queer Anthropology. Anthropology 289A

## Course Code 60550 (Fall 2009)

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Meets Tuesdays, Noon–2:50pm, SBSG 3200  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11am-noon and 3-4pm  
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First Meeting: Tuesday, September 29, Noon, SBSG 3200

### Course Description

This course explores historical and contemporary scholarship that employs ethnographic approaches to address the discursive construction of sexuality. It also examines how the discipline of anthropology has been constitutively shaped by engagements with questions of sexuality. Readings and course discussions will address questions of intersectionality and sexuality, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, labor, religion, colonialism, and globalization.

### Course Requirements

1) You must attend the weekly seminar and have prepared for it by doing the assigned reading ahead of time. You must participate actively in the seminar discussions. Eighteen percent of your grade will be based on participation. If you cannot make a course meeting, please do not send an email explaining why: simply do not show up. (Normally, you should email professors when you are going to miss a class, but since this course has graded précises keyed to attendance, it is not necessary for this course.) The seminar discussions will follow three basic guidelines:

*Generosity.* With a ten-week course there simply is not time for substandard texts. All readings selected for the syllabus are insightful and theoretically innovative. Critiquing aspects of the readings is fine, but if you find yourself rejecting an argument in toto, this indicates your reading is insufficiently generous.

*Provisionality.* You are allowed (indeed, encouraged) to think out loud, say something and then take it back, and generally speak in a provisional manner, knowing that those around you will be patient, supportive, and slow to take offense.

*Community.* Some individuals are quite comfortable speaking at length: this is desirable, but the instructor reserves the right to ask persons to wrap up their comments, or to solicit comments from persons who have not yet participated in any particular course meeting.

2) You must do eight précises (every course meeting but the first meeting and one of your choosing). The précis will take the form of a one-page generous, engaged, and critical commentary on the readings for that week, and will be graded on a three-point scale. Précises will be circulated in class to learn how others are reacting to the texts. Please note the following rules, as there will be no exceptions:

Précises must be turned in within the first five minutes of class in triplicate.

Précises can never be turned in at a later date.

You must attend any course meeting in which you turn in a précis (someone else may not turn them in for you).

3) You must write a course paper, which is due on Friday, December 11, at 5pm. It must be emailed by this time as a single Word document (not pdf) to [tboellst@uci.edu](mailto:tboellst@uci.edu).

The paper must be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length, inclusive of title, endnotes, and references (I will use the "word count" function of Word to confirm this).

The paper must cite and draw upon course texts and discussions in an extensive manner, and should also engage in some way with your own research interests. It must use American Anthropological Association formatting (see <http://www.aaanet.org/publications/guidelines.cfm>) and include full bibliographic references to course texts as they are used. You may bring in outside readings, but it is not necessary to do so. I recommend that you discuss your paper's argument with me during the course meetings or in office hours.

Your course grade will be calculated as follows: participation 18 percent; each précis 4 percent (for a total of 32 percent); course paper 50 percent.

#### REQUIRED BOOKS (placed on reserve)

Tom Boellstorff, *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*. Princeton University Press, 2005.

Matti Bunzl, *Symptoms of Modernity: Jews and Queers in Late-Twentieth-Century Vienna*. University of California Press, 2004.

Andrew Lyons and Harriet D. Lyons, *Irregular Connections: A History of Anthropology and Sexuality*. University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea*. Beacon Press, 1987 (first published in 1929).

Martin Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Duke University Press, 2003.

Megan Sinnott, *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Gloria Wekker, *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora*. Columbia University Press, 2006.

#### REQUIRED ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Florence Babb, Out in Nicaragua: Local and Transnational Desires after the Revolution. *Cultural Anthropology* 18(3):304-28, 2003.

Tom Boellstorff, Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36:1-19, 2007.

- \_\_\_\_\_. Queer Studies under Ethnography's Sign. *GLQ* 12(4):627-39, 2006.
- Jane F. Collier, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Sylvia Yanagisako, Is There a Family? New Anthropological Views. Pp. 71-81 in *The Gender/Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy*, Roger N. Lancaster and Michaela di Leonardo, ed., Routledge, 1997 (first published 1982).
- Naisargi Dave, To Render Real the Imagined: An Ethnographic History of Lesbian "Community" in India. *Signs*, 2009.
- Carol Delaney, The Meaning of Paternity and the Virgin Birth Debate. *Man* 21(3):494-513, 1986.
- Deborah Elliston, Erotic Anthropology: "Ritualized Homosexuality" in Melanesia and Beyond. *American Ethnologist* 22(4):848-67, 1995.
- E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Sexual Inversion among the Azande. *American Anthropologist* 72(6):1428-34, 1970.
- Lorraine E. Herbst, Imagined, Desired: Coming of Age with Queer Ethnographies. *GLQ* 15(4):627-41, 2009.
- Gilbert H. Herdt, Semen Transactions in Sambia Culture. Pp. 167-210 in his edited *Ritualized Homosexuality in Melanesia*. University of California Press, 1984.
- Cymene Howe, Spectacles of Sexuality: Televisionary Activism in Nicaragua. *Cultural Anthropology* 23(1):48-84, 2008.
- Karen Kelsky, Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan. *Cultural Anthropology* 14(2):229-55, 1999.
- Don Kulick, A Man in the House: The Boyfriends of Brazilian Travesti Prostitutes. *Social Text* 15(3-4):133-60, 1997.
- Edmund Leach, Virgin Birth. *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1966:39-49 (1966).
- Robert Lorway, Defiant Desire in Namibia: Female Sexual-gender Transgression and the Making of Political Being. *American Ethnologist* 35(1):20-33, 2008.
- Esther Newton, My Best Informant's Dress: The Erotic Equation in Fieldwork. *Cultural Anthropology* 8(1):3-23, 1993.
- Gayle Rubin, Studying Sexual Subcultures: Excavating the Ethnography of Gay Communities in Urban North America. In *Out in Theory: The Emergence of Lesbian and Gay Anthropology*, Ellen Lewin and William Leap, ed. Pp. 17-68. Univ. of Illinois Press, 2002.
- David Valentine, "I Went to Bed with My Own Kind Once": The Erasure of Desire in the Name of Identity. *Language and Communication* 23:123-38, 2003.
- Kath Weston, Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22:339-67, 1993.

## Course Schedule

week one, 9/29. introduction.

week two, 10/6.

- 1) Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia*.
- 2) Andrew Lyons and Harriet D. Lyons, *Irregular Connections*, pp. 1-184.

week three, 10/13.

- 1) E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Sexual Inversion among the Azande.
- 2) Edmund Leach, Virgin Birth.
- 3) Carol Delaney, The Meaning of Paternity.
- 4) Jane F. Collier, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Sylvia Yanagisako, Is There a Family?
- 5) Andrew Lyons and Harriet D. Lyons, *Irregular Connections*, pp. 185-332.

week four, 10/20.

- 1) Kath Weston, Lesbian/Gay Studies in the House of Anthropology.
- 2) Tom Boellstorff, Queer Studies in the House of Anthropology.
- 3) Gayle Rubin, Studying Sexual Subcultures.
- 4) Esther Newton, My Best Informant's Dress.

week five, 10/27.

- 1) Gilbert H. Herdt, Semen Transactions in Sambia Culture.
- 2) Deborah Elliston, Erotic Anthropology.
- 3) Don Kulick, A Man in the House.
- 4) David Valentine, I Went to Bed with My Own Kind Once.

week six, 11/3.

- 1) Tom Boellstorff, *The Gay Archipelago*.
- 2) Florence Babb, Out in Nicaragua.
- 3) Lorraine Herbst, Imagined, Desired.

week seven, 11/10.

- 1) Gloria Wekker, *The Politics of Passion*.
- 2) Robert Lorway, Defiant Desire in Namibia.
- 3) Cymene Howe, Spectacles of Sexuality.

week eight, 11/17.

- 1) Martin Manalansan, *Global Divas*.
- 2) Karen Kelsky, Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan.

week nine, 11/24.

- 1) Megan Sinnott, *Toms and Dees*.
- 2) Naisargi Dave, To Render Real the Imagined.

week ten, 12/8. (NOTE DIFFERENT DAY)

- 1) Matti Bunzl, *Symptoms of Modernity*.
- 2) Tom Boellstorff, Queer Studies Under Ethnography's Sign.

Course paper due Friday 12/13, 5pm, emailed to [tboellst@uci.edu](mailto:tboellst@uci.edu).