

Gay and Lesbian^(etc.) Cultures in Comparative Perspective

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Smith Research Center 140 (2805 E. 10th Street)

ANTH E600 - Seminar in Cultural and Social Anthropology (Sec. 0444)

CULS C701 - Special Topics in Cultural Studies (Sec. 1372)

FOLK F755 - Folklore, Culture, and Society (Sec. 2179)

SEMS S650 - Topics in Semiotics (Sec. 3631)

10:10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Wednesdays

Woodburn WH205

How are genders differently constituted by members of diverse cultures around the world? Which sexual behaviors are affirmed, and which condemned, by various societies? How have cultural constructions of gender and sexuality changed over time within Euroamerican intellectual tradition, and within other intellectual traditions? How do understandings of sexuality and gender interact with understandings of race, class, ethnicity, and nation? What are the bases on which sexual minority communities coalesce, and what are the means by which they communicate internally and externally? And how can the approaches of anthropology, folklore, linguistics, and cultural studies help us to answer such questions as these?

This course takes as its subject matter (non-heterosexual) sexualities and gender identities in all their polymorphous historical and ethnographic variety (including gay male, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgendered, intersexual, etc.). It takes as its approach a comparative, global, and multicultural perspective. It takes as its method the tools of ethnography, folklore, cultural studies, and semiotics. It takes as its goal to encourage students to undertake serious study of topics of interest to them. It takes as its premise that the comparative study of gay and lesbian^(etc.) cultures is a central part of the larger study of sex, gender, and sexuality, and a central part of the study of human societies.

The course will involve heavy reading, classroom discussions and presentations, independent research, and a substantial writing requirement. Graduate students from diverse disciplines are welcome as long as they are interested in serious study and committed to meeting the course requirements.

Requirements: Students will be required to keep current with readings and participate actively in seminar discussions; conduct one seminar discussion; conduct research at the library of the Kinsey Institute; and prepare a final term paper (see below).

Week 2 – September 10, 1997

Surveyors:

- Westermarck, Edward. 1906. "Homosexual love," from *The origin and development of the moral ideas*, London: Macmillan. This version reprinted in *Homosexuality: a cross cultural approach*, ed. Donald Webster Cory [Edward Sagarin]. New York: The Julian Press, 1956, pp. 101-138. [Reader 1]
- Carpenter, Edward. 1911. "On the connection between homosexuality and divination," *American journal of religious psychology* and *Revue d'ethnographie et de sociologie*. Reprinted as part 1 of *Intermediate types among primitive folks: a study in social evolution*, New York: Kennerley, 1914. This version reprinted in Carpenter, Edward, *Selected writings, vol. 1: Sex*. London: GMP, 1984, pp. 247-286, 305-310. [Reader 1]
- Opler, Marvin K. 1965. "Anthropological and cross-cultural aspects of homosexuality," in *Sexual inversion: the multiple roots of homosexuality*, ed. Judd Marmor. Pp. 108-123. New York: Basic Books. [Reader 1]
- Blackwood, Evelyn. 1986. "Breaking the mirror: the construction of lesbianism and the anthropological discourse on homosexuality," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 1-17.
- Greenberg, David F. 1988. "Homosexual relations in kinship-structured societies," Ch. 2 in *The construction of homosexuality*, pp. 25-88. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Reader 1]

Week 3 – September 17, 1997

Ethnology and the history of sexology:

- Bleys, Rudi. 1995. *The geography of perversion: male-to-male sexual behaviour outside the West and the ethnographic imagination, 1750-1918*. New York: New York University Press.
- Somerville, Siobhan. 1994. "Scientific racism and the emergence of the homosexual body." *Journal of the history of sexuality* 5:243-266. [Reader 1]
- Hekma, Gert. 1994. "'A female soul in a male body': sexual inversion as gender inversion in nineteenth-century sexology," in *Third sex, third gender*, pp. 213-239.

Week 4 – September 24, 1997

Essences and constructions 1: the constructionist case:

- Weeks, Jeffrey. 1981. "Discourse, desire and sexual deviance: some problems in a history of homosexuality," in *The making of the modern homosexual*, ed. Kenneth Plummer. London: Hutchinson. This version reprinted in Jeffrey Weeks, *Against nature: essays on history, sexuality and identity*. London: Rivers Oram Press, 1991, pp. 10-45. [Reader 1]
- Rubin, Gayle. 1985. "Thinking sex: notes for a radical theory of the politics of sexuality," in *Pleasure and danger: exploring female sexuality*, ed. Carole Vance. New York: Routledge, pp. 267-319. [Reader 1]
- Vance, Carole S. 1991. "Anthropology rediscovers sexuality: a theoretical comment," *Social science & medicine* 33:875-884. [Reader 1]
- Weston, Kath. 1993. "Lesbian/gay studies in the house of anthropology," *Annual review of anthropology* 22:339-367. [Reader 1]

Week 5 – October 1, 1997

Essences and constructions 2: cautions, comparisons, critiques:

- Dynes, Wayne R. 1990. "Wrestling with the social boia constructor," in *Forms of desire: sexual orientation and the social constructionist controversy*, ed. Edward Stein. New York: Garland Publishing, pp. 209-238. [Reader 2]
- Mohr, Richard D. 1992. "The thing of it is: some problems with models for the social construction of homosexuality," in *Gay ideas: outing and other controversies*. Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 221-242, 285-297. [Reader 2]
- Murray, Stephen O. 1996. "Social theory and the anomalous development of gay resistance," in *American gay*, pp. 13-65.
- Adam, Barry D. 1986. "Age, structure, and sexuality: reflections on the anthropological evidence on homosexual relations," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 19-33.
- Herdt, Gilbert. 1994. "Third sexes and third genders," introduction to *Third sex, third gender*, pp. 21-81.
- Herdt, Gilbert. 1991. "Representations of homosexuality: an essay on cultural ontology and historical comparison." *Journal of the history of sexuality* 1:481-504 and 1:603-632. [Reader 2]

Week 6 – October 8, 1997

Roles and identities:

- McIntosh, Mary. 1968. "The homosexual role," *Social problems* 16:182-192. [Reader 2]
- Murray, Stephen O. 1996. "'The homosexual role' and lesbian roles," in *American gay*, pp. 143-166.
- Fry, Peter. 1986. "Male homosexuality and spirit possession in Brazil," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 137-153.
- Parker, Richard. 1986. "Masculinity, femininity, and homosexuality: on the anthropological interpretation of sexual meanings in Brazil," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 155-163.
- Chauncey, George. 1994. "Introduction," "The Bowery as haven and spectacle," "The fairy as an intermediate sex," and "Trade, wolves, and the boundaries of normal manhood," in *Gay New York*, pp. 1-97.

Week 7 – October 15, 1997

Community studies: recovering history:

- Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky and Madeline D. Davis. 1993. *Boots of leather, slippers of gold: the history of a lesbian community*. New York: Routledge.
- Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky. 1996. "'But we would never talk about it': the structures of lesbian discretion in South Dakota, 1928-1933," in *Inventing lesbian cultures in America*, pp. 15-39.
- Thorpe, Rochella. 1996. "'A house where queers go': African-American lesbian nightlife in Detroit, 1940-1975," in *Inventing lesbian cultures in America*, pp. 40-61.

Week 8 – October 22, 1997

Community studies: emergent communities:

- Lockard, Denyse. 1986. "The lesbian community: an anthropological approach," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 83-95.
- Lewin, Ellen. 1996. " 'Why in the world would you want to do that?': claiming commitment in lesbian commitment ceremonies," in *Inventing lesbian cultures in America*, pp. 105-130.
- Weston, Kath. 1996. "Requiem for a street fighter," in *Inventing lesbian cultures in America*, pp. 131-141.
- Amory, Deborah P. 1996. "Club Q: dancing with (a) difference," in *Inventing lesbian cultures in America*, pp. 145-160.
- Newton, Esther. 1996. " 'Dick(less) Tracy' and the homecoming queen: lesbian power and representation in gay-male Cherry Grove," in *Inventing lesbian cultures in America*, pp. 161-193.

Week 9 – October 29, 1997

Community studies: male worlds:

- Hooker, Evelyn. 1965. "Male homosexuals and their 'worlds,'" from *Sexual inversion: the multiple roots of homosexuality*, ed. Judd Marmor. Pp. 83-107. New York: Basic Books. [Reader 2]
- Cory, Donald Webster [Edward Sagarin]. 1951. "On the gayest street in town," "Drop another nickel in," and "All that glitters is not guilt." Ch. 10-12 from *The homosexual in America: a subjective approach*. Pp. 114-134. New York: Greenberg. [Reader 2]
- Newton, Esther. 1972. *Mother camp: female impersonators in America*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Week 10 – November 5, 1997

Expressive culture and enculturation:

- Goodwin, Joseph P. 1989. *More man than you'll ever be : gay folklore and acculturation in middle America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

One-page paper proposal is due during this class (see below).

Week 11 – November 12, 1997

Language:

- Cory, Donald Webster [Edward Sagarin]. 1951. "Take my word for it," Ch. 9 from *The homosexual in America: a subjective approach*. Pp. 103-113. New York: Greenberg. [Reader 2]
- Leap, William L. 1996. *Word's out: gay men's English*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Optional:

- Leap, William L., ed. 1995. *Beyond the lavender lexicon: authenticity, imagination, and appropriation in lesbian and gay languages*. New York: Gordon and Breach.

Week 12 – November 19, 1997

Third sexes, third genders:

- Calender, Charles and Lee M. Kochems. 1986. "Men and not-men: male gender-mixing statuses and homosexuality," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 165-178.
- Williams, Walter L. 1986. "Persistence and change in the berdache tradition among contemporary Lakota Indians," in *The many faces of homosexuality*, pp. 191-200.
- Besnier, Niko. 1994. "Polynesian gender liminality through time and space," in *Third sex, third gender*, pp. 285-328.
- Roscoe, Will. 1994. "How to become a berdache: toward a unified analysis of gender diversity," in *Third sex, third gender*, pp. 329-372.
- Nanda, Serena. 1994. "Hijras: an alternative sex and gender role in India," in *Third sex, third gender*, pp. 373-417.
- Herdt, Gilbert. 1994. "Mistaken sex: culture, biology and the third sex in New Guinea," in *Third sex, third gender*, pp. 419-445.

Week 13 – Thanksgiving holiday

Week 14 – December 3, 1997

Fieldwork:

- Lewin, Ellen and William Leap, eds. 1996. *Out in the field: reflections of lesbian and gay anthropologists*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Proshan, Frank. 1992. "How is a folklorist like a riddle?" *Southern Folklore* 47:57-66. [Reader 2]
- Aronson, Jacob. 1998. "Homosex in Hanoi: sex, the public sphere, and public sex," in *Public Space/Gay Sex*, ed. William Leap. New York: Columbia University Press. [Reader 2]

Optional:

- Kulick, Don and Margaret Willson, eds. 1995. *Taboo: sex, identity, and erotic subjectivity in anthropological fieldwork*. New York: Routledge.

Week 15 – December 10, 1997

Student presentations:

Each student will present a formal 15-minute talk, in the format of a presentation at a scholarly conference, drawn from their term paper.

Each student will **lead the discussion during one seminar session** (to be assigned during the first class meeting). On the Monday or Tuesday preceding that seminar, the student should meet with the instructor to review the readings and prepare the discussion. The student should bring a set of discussion questions and topics to that planning meeting; the revised questions will be handed out to seminar participants to guide the discussion.

The **term paper, due without fail on December 17, 1997**, will be a paper of about 25 pages discussing a topic chosen by the student and approved by the professor (**one-page paper proposals are due November 5, 1997**). The paper may be based primarily on field research or library research; in either case students are encouraged to avail themselves of the collections of the Kinsey Institute library. The paper should synthesize empirical data drawn from field and library research with theoretical insights and methodological approaches drawn from the course readings and discussions. Topic, approach, disciplinary orientation, and style may vary from student to student, but the paper must demonstrate familiarity with the content of the course and must engage the course readings. Cute titles with parentheses or slashes are strongly discouraged.