



INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Soc 1101: Summer 2023

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SEX & SEXUALITY

Lecture 11

LECTURE OUTLINE

- **Sex and sexuality**
 - **Beyond binaries**
- **Sexuality**
 - **Variations across time and place**
 - **as a social construct**
 - **as reflecting power relations**
- **Next class**

SEX, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

- **SEX:** socially believed biological differences that distinguish males from females
- **GENDER:** set of social arrangements and expectations that are built around normative sex categories
- **SEXUALITY:** desires, attraction, sexual preference, sexual identity, orientation and behavior

HOW WOULD YOU DETERMINE SEXUALITY?

- 1. Attraction**
- 2. Romantic interest**
- 3. Identity**
- 4. Behavior**

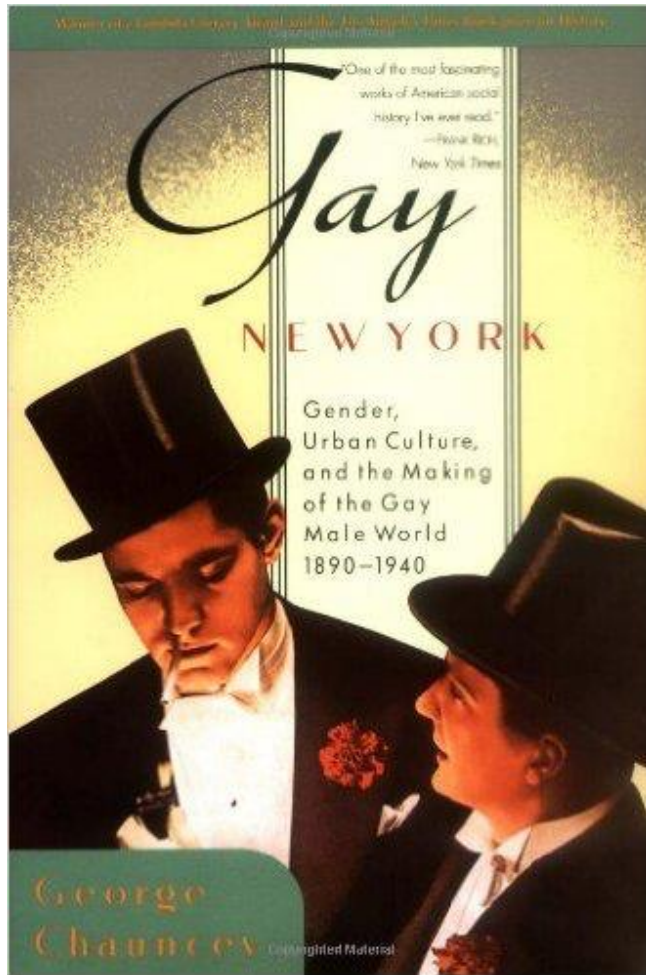
SEX ≠ GENDER ≠ SEXUALITY

- **The biological world of sex and bodies does not exist outside of a social world. The norms that govern appropriate or normative sexual behavior—how we have sex and with whom are socially constructed; they do vary by time and place, history and context**
- **First, reproductive organs do not automatically equate with gender identity – gender is performative – we're enacting the sets of behavioral norms and expectations in efforts to portray the gender we want to be seen and defined as.**

SEX ≠ GENDER ≠ SEXUALITY

- **Secondly, sex and gender identity can also be different from one's sexual orientation, sexual identity desires, and behaviors**
- **Here are a couple of examples**

SEX, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY



Sexual
orientation

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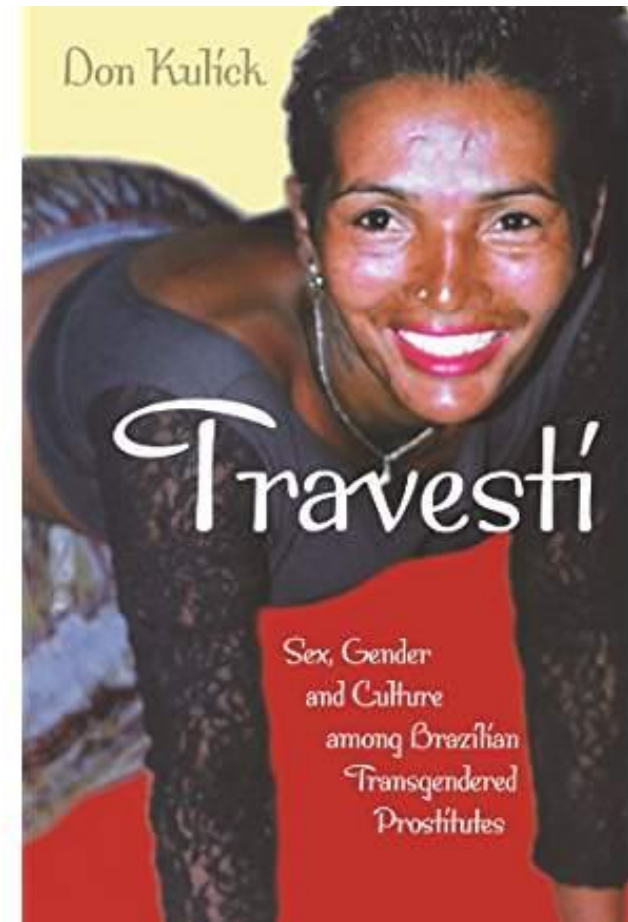
Gender
identity

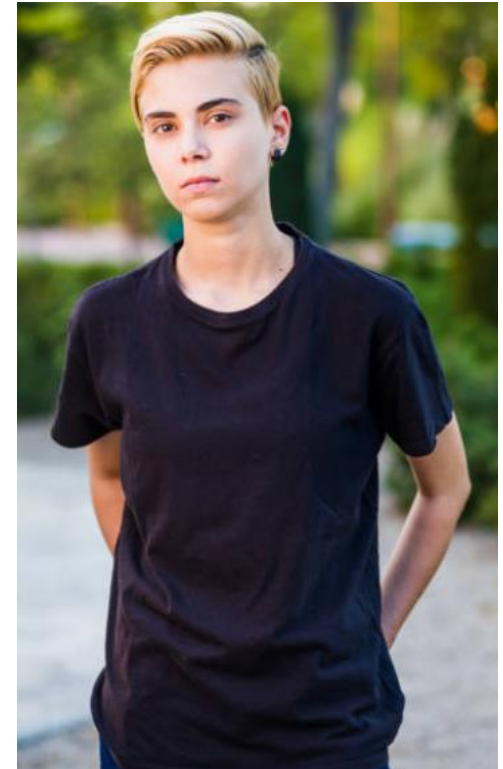
SEX, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

Gender
expression

≠

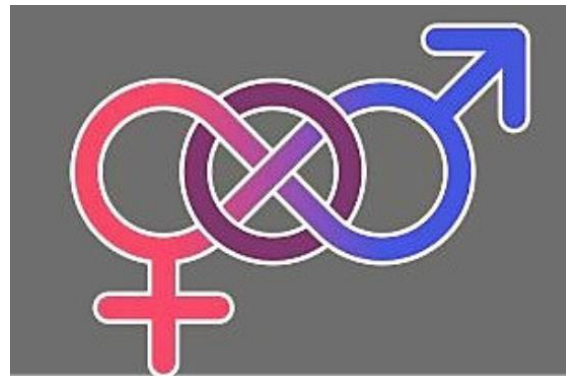
Gender
identity





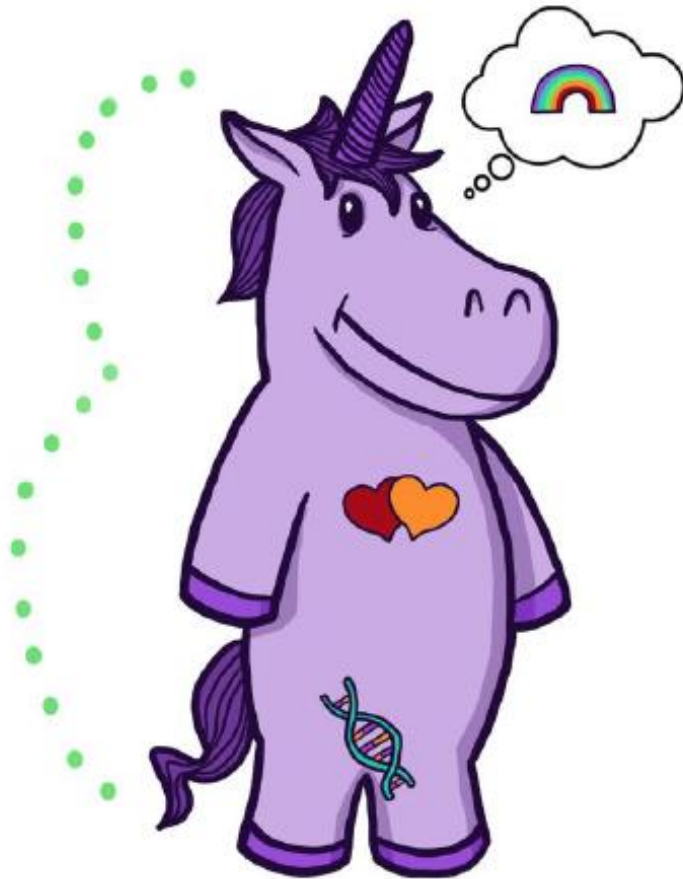
BEYOND THE BINARY

- **Biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation are all separate and unique dimensions of human sexuality**
 - **Each dimension is a continuum, not a simple binary**



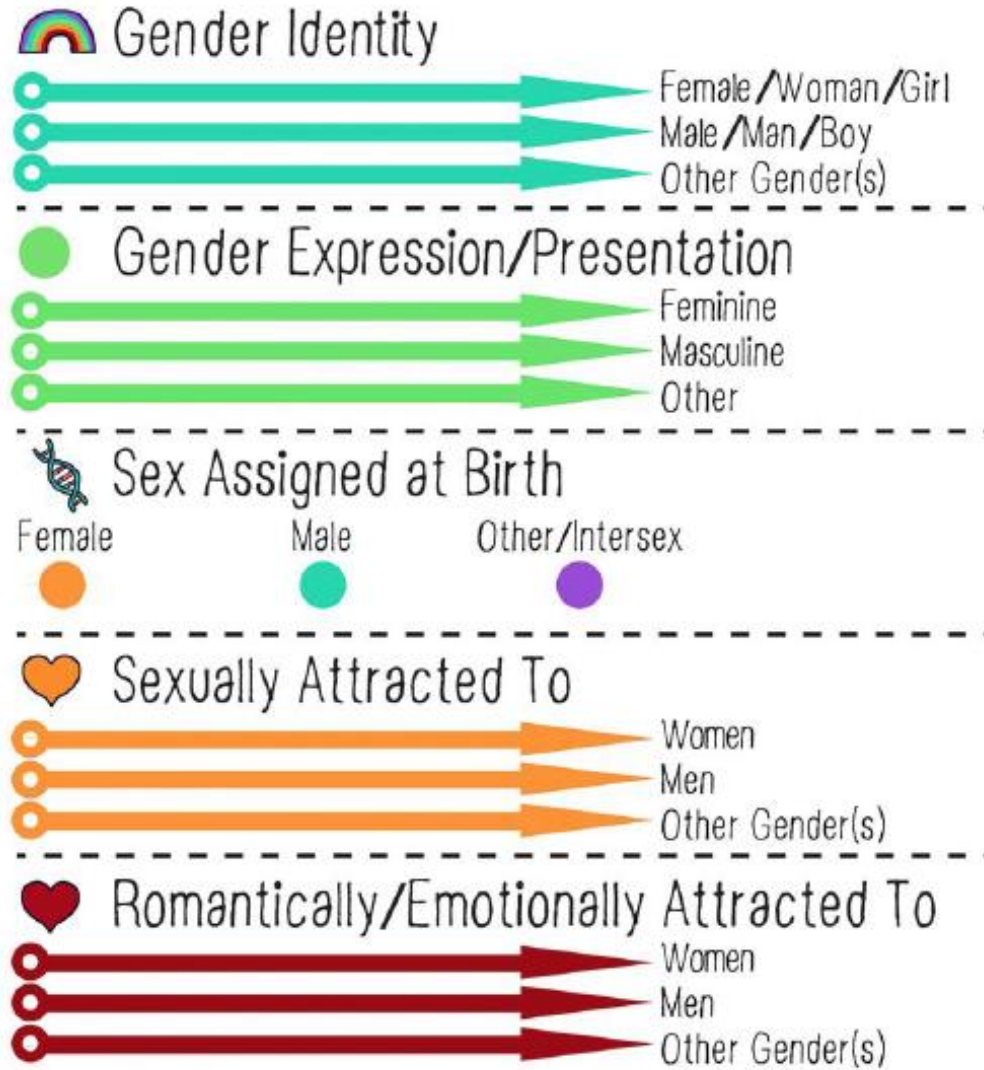
The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Educational Resources



To learn more, go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender

Design by Landyn Pan



SOCIOLOGY IN THE BEDROOM

- **Social norms dictate how we have sex and with whom**
- **Social norms encourage some practices and condemn others**
- **Such norms vary across cultures and over time**

Sexuality is socially determined and varies in its expression across culture, time, and place

VARIATION IN SEXUAL PRACTICES



Mouth-to-mouth kissing is unthinkable for the Thonga and Sirono of Southern Africa



“But that is where you put food!”

Source: Kimmell 2000
The Gendered Society. New York: Oxford University Press

VARIATION IN WHAT PRACTICES ARE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE

- **Same-sex relations**
 - **Acceptable among the ancient Greeks**
 - **Encouraged among the Siwans of North Africa and the Keraki of New Guinea**
 - **Viewed (in varying degrees) as deviant in American society**



Source: Kimmell 2000

The Gendered Society. New York: Oxford University Press 15

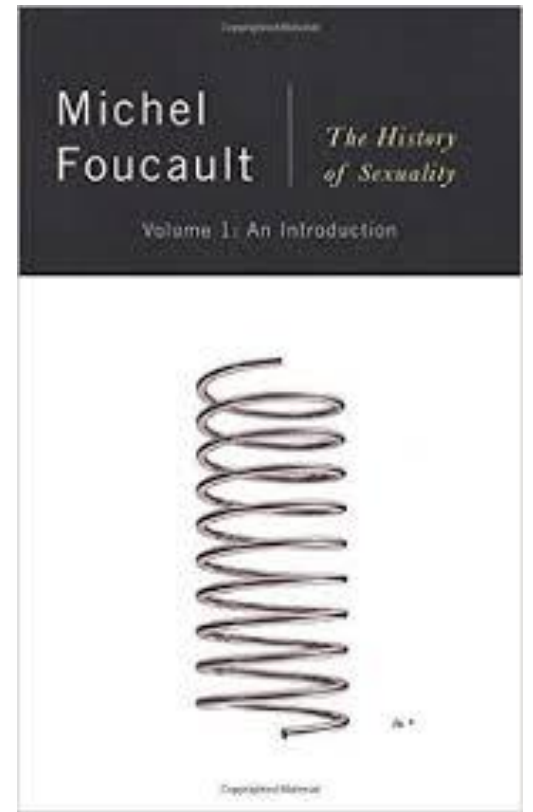


Alfred Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, 1948

- Discrepancy between public expectations and actual sexual conduct
- Most people experience both homosexual and heterosexual feelings and behaviors

HOMOSEXUAL IDENTITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

- **Societies, for various reasons, actively police or govern our bodies**
- **Having same-sex relations went from a sexual act to a defining characteristic of a person**
- **We began to police ourselves and each other with regard to sexuality**







PASCOE'S "DUDE, YOU'RE A FAG"

- **Ethnographic research on how teen boys enforce gender norms**
- **Homophobia is central in the creating of American adolescent masculinity**
 - **"Fag discourse" as a way teen boys police, regulate and affirm their burgeoning masculinity**
 - **Masculinity decoupled from sexuality**



SEXUALITY AS A REFLECTION OF POWER

- **Sexuality is shaped by social factors**
- **What we consider 'normal' changes by time and context and is defined by those in power**
- **Heterosexuality is common but not 'normal' in the sense of being dictated by some universal standard**
- **Monogamy can be seen in the same way**

NEXT CLASS

- **NO CLASS TOMORROW (WED).**
 - **Watch Congo: *White King, Red Rubber, Black Death* under Canvas-Library Reserve.**
 - **Short Essay 1 Assigned & Quiz 3**
- **Thursday lectures: Culture & socialization**
 - **Readings**
 - **Swidler 1986; Tavory & Swidler 2009**
 - **Horwitz et al. 2022; Eccles 2014**