

Laurie Essig
70 Wright Avenue
Burlington, Vermont 05401
Tel: 802/324-3875
Email: lessig@middlebury.edu

Education:

- 1996 Ph.D. Columbia University, New York, New York. Department of Sociology.
Awarded with Distinction.
- 1993 M.A. Columbia University, New York, New York. Department of Sociology.
- 1990 M.I.A. Columbia University, New York, New York. School of International and
Public Affairs.
- 1987 B.A. Franklin and Marshall College. Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Academic Positions:

- 2014-2015 Director, Gender, Sexuality & Feminist Studies, Middlebury College,
2016-2018 Middlebury, Vermont.
- Fall 2015 Visiting Professor, Gender Studies, European University at St.
Petersburg, Russia.
- Graduate Seminar Taught (in Russian with Anna Temkina) on Gender
Theory: Intersectionality
- 2006- Assistant and then Associate Professor of Sociology, Middlebury College,
Middlebury, Vermont.
- Undergraduate courses: "Topics in Sociological Theory," "Social
Psychology," "Sociology of Gender," "Sociology of Freakishness,"
"Sociology of Heterosexuality," "Feminist Blogging," and "White
People."
- 2003-2006 Assistant Professor of Sociology, University of Vermont, Burlington,
Vermont.
- Undergraduate courses: "Foundations of Sociological Theory," "Social
Problems," "Sociology of Heterosexuality," "Sociology of Freakishness." :
"Social Problems," "Sociology of Heterosexuality," "Sociology of

Pleasure,” “Introduction to LGBTQ Studies,” “Introduction to Sociology,” and an independent study on the “Sociology of Sport.”

2000-2001 Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology & Lesbian and Gay Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

Undergraduate courses: “A Sociology of Pleasure,” “Introduction to Lesbian and Gay Studies,” “A Sociology of Heterosexuality.” Organized a lecture series on “The Power of Pleasure.”

2000 Adjunct Assistant Professor of Sociology, Barnard College, New York, New York. Undergraduate courses taught: “Gender and Deviance,” “Gender, Class, and Race.”

1996-1997 Adjunct Assistant Professor of Sociology, Columbia University, New York, New York.

Undergraduate courses: “Gender and Deviance,” “The Sociological Imagination.”

Graduate course: “Sociology of Gender.”

1995 Instructor of Sociology, Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut.

Undergraduate courses: “Sexuality and Gender.”

1991-1993 Teaching Assistant, Columbia University, New York, New York.

Undergraduate courses: “Sociology of Gender,” “Sociology of Culture.”

Honors and Awards:

2015 Fulbright Scholar. Taught a graduate seminar at European University at St. Petersburg in the Gender Studies Program (in Russian). Continued to help supervise and advise PHD students. Brought in scholars from the US to participate in the program.

2014 Whiting Foundation Grant to travel to Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia to collaborate with gender studies colleagues there.

2011-12 Mellon Foundation Grant, received with Sujata Moorti for a multi-college initiative on “Queering the Curriculum.”

2007 Feminist of the Year Award, Chellis House, Middlebury College.

- 2006 Rainbow Award for Leadership with LGBTQ students at University of Vermont.
- 1997 Harriman Institute for Post-Soviet Studies Postdoctoral Fellowship, Columbia University, New York, New York.
- 1995 Social Science Research Council Dissertation Writing Grant.
- 1994 International Research and Exchange (IREX) board (supported by the National Endowment for Humanities) Dissertation Research Grant, 1994.
- 1991-1993 Lazarsfeld Fellowship, Columbia University, New York, New York.
- 1988-1990 Dean's Fellowship, Columbia University, New York, New York.
- 1987 Phi Beta Kappa.

Books:

- 1999 *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and the Other* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press). *Queer in Russia* was the first book-length academic study of sexual otherness in Russia. I used extensive field research (e.g. interviews, surveys, participant observation) and cultural analysis (e.g. of theater, music, graffiti) to examine how Russian queers imagine themselves and how they are imagined in Russian culture at large.
- 2010 *American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards and Our Quest for Perfection* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010). This book explores the intersection of plastic identities with a plastic (credit-based) economy and the plastic surgery industry. I argue that the American belief in infinite malleability blended together with an obsession with the “beauty project” and how all of this has been fueled by changes in the economy, specifically the easier and easier access to credit even as incomes for most Americans have declined.
- 2019 *Love, Inc, Dating Apps, the Big White Wedding, and Chasing the Happily Everafter* (Berkeley: UC Press). The notion of “happily ever after” has been ingrained in many of us since childhood—meet someone, date, have the big white wedding, and enjoy your well-deserved future. I invite readers to flip our feelings about Romance and see it for what

it really is—an ideology that we desperately cling to as a way to cope with the fact that we believe we cannot control or affect the societal, economic, and political structures around us. From climate change nuclear war, white nationalism to the worship of wealth and conspicuous consumption—as the future becomes seemingly less secure, Americans turn away from the public sphere and find shelter in the private. I argue that when we do this, we allow Romance to blind us to the real work that needs to be done—building global movements that inspire a change in government policies to address economic and social inequality.

Special Issues:

QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking. Special issue co-edited with Sujata Moorti. “Queering Liberal Arts” explores whether queer theory can find a place in the increasingly monetized realm of knowledge by showcasing how queer theory can infuse other disciplines with new, queerer ways of seeing. Summer 2016.

Book Chapters and Articles

- Forthcoming A Cold War for the 21st Century: Homosexuality vs. Heterosexuality,” with Alexander Kondakov, in Richard Mole, ed. *Post-Soviet Sexualities* (London: Routledge).
- 2016 “‘All the World was There’ and Other White Lies of the Royal Wedding of Kate and William,” *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking*, Summer 2016.
- “Communism in Russia,” *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* 1-2 (March 2016).
- 2014 “Bury their hearts: thoughts on the homosexual spectre haunting Russia, *QED*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 2014. (NB: article based on my Russian article “Serdtsa geev nado zaryvat” with updated information and written for a North American/Western European audience in mind)
- “‘Serdtsa geev nado zaryvat’ v zemliu’: pazmysleniia ob okhote na gomoseksyalov v Rossii,” *Na pereput’e: metodologii, teorii i praktika LGBT i kvir-icchedovaniia* (Sankt-Peterburg: Tsentr nezavimimykhsotsiologicheskikh issledovaniia, 2014)
- 2011-

- 2012 “What if Marriage is Bad for Us?” with Lynn Owens (from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September, 2009) in: *Feminist Frontiers*, Verta Taylor, Leyla Rupp, and Nancy Whittier, eds. McGraw Hill, 2011. Also, in the Sixth Edition of *Cases and Materials on Family Law*, Foundation Press, of Thomson Reuters, 2012.
- 2008 “Phallus Envy,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 12:1.
- 2008 Foreword to *Love has Four Arms*, by Lida Yusopova and Margarita Meklina in Russian, Kver, Moskva.
- 2008 Foreword to *How did a Sexual Minorities Movement Emerge* by Mikhael Nemtsev, Vdm Verlag, Saarbrücken, Germany.
- 2007 “Burlesque Then and Now,” *Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender* (Farmington Hills, Michigan: Thomson Gale)
- 2005 “The Pleasure of Freaks,” *Proteus*, Fall.
- 2004 “The Mermaid and the Heterosexual Imagination,” *Thinking Straight: The Power, Promise, and Paradox of Heterosexuality*, Chrys Ingraham, ed. (New York, Routledge).
- 2003 “I Miss Lesbian Reproductive Sex,” in Jennifer Foote Sweeney, *Life as We Know It*, (New York: Washington Square Press).
- 1998 “Queer Subjects and Subjectivities” in *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society Since Gorbachev*. Adele Barker, ed. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press).
- 1993 “Perestroika for Women?” in *Perestroika from Below*, Judith Seditis and James Butterfield, eds. (Boulder: Westview Press).

Book Reviews of:

- 2015 *Lesbian Lives in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia: Post/Socialism and Gendered Sexualities*. In *Slavic Review* (vol. 74, no. 4, Winter 2015)
- Media and the Rhetoric of Body Perfection* by Deborah Harris-Moore. In *Cultural Sociology* (9:3, 2015)

Conceiving Masculinity: Male Infertility, Medicine and Identity by Liberty Walther Barners. In *Medical Humanities* (October 2015)

- 2008 *Dude, You're a Fag* by C.J. Pascoe. In *Social Forces*, 86, no. 4, 1859-1861.
- 2008 *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* by David Valentine. In *American Journal of Sociology*, November (vol. 114, no. 3).
- 2008 *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia* by Aleksandar Stulhofer and Theo Sandfort, eds. In *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 17, Number 3, September.
- 2002 *Eros and Pornography in Russian Culture* by M. Levitt and A Torporkov, eds. In *Slavic Review*.
- 2001 *Transmen and FTMs* by Jason Cromwell in *American Journal of Sociology*.
- 1998 *Cracks in the Iron Closet* by David Tuller in *Journal of Homosexuality*.

Popular Press Commentary

- 2018 "Fewer People Are Getting Married. Here's Why," NBC THINK, <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/video/fewer-people-are-getting-married-here-s-why-1236231747777>
- 2016 "A Conversation with Sociologist Laurie Essig," *The Chauncey DeVega Show*, May 2016. <http://www.chaunceydevega.com/2016/05/a-conversation-with-sociologist-laurie.html>
- 2012-present Regular commentator on HuffPo Live:

<http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/segment/mount-holyoke-bans-vagina-monogluers-for-lack-of-inclusion/54b97a3278c90a076d000213>

<http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/segment/princess-industrial-complex/50f35f5efe3444768d0000b2>

<http://live.huffingtonpost.com/r/segment/new-study-shows-straight-men-are-more-likely-to-suffer-depression-than-gay/510be8732b8c2a138500051c>

- 2013-present Regular commentator on WCAX The: 30.
- <http://www.wcax.com/story/22697966/doma-rulings-role-in-the-evolution-of-marriage>
- <http://www.wcax.com/story/23283036/professor-explains-the-fascination-with-freakishness>
- 2012-present Contributor to “The Conversation” at the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September.
- 2010-present “Love, Inc.” a blog at *Psychology Today*.
- 2012-2013 Blogger at *Forbes*.
- 2010-2012 “Brainstorm” contributor at the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- 2008-2010 “Class Warfare” at *True/Slant*.
- 2003-2004 Contributor to *Legal Affairs*.
- 2003-2004 Contributor to NPR’s “All Things Considered.”
- 1998-2002 Regular contributor to *Salon* magazine.
- 2001-2002 Contributing Editor to *7 Days Vermont*.

Recent Journalistic Essays

- 2018 “In the US, fairy-tale weddings clash with reality,” *The Conversation*, May 17, 2018.
<https://theconversation.com/in-the-us-fairy-tale-royal-weddings-clash-with-reality-94719>
- “Hate Crimes Won’t End Until Toxic ‘Bro’ Culture is Reformed,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 8, 2018.
<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Hate-Crimes-Won-t-End-Until/243046>
- “Why are fewer and fewer Americans fixing their noses?” *The Conversation*, April 5, 2018.
<https://theconversation.com/why-are-fewer-and-fewer-americans-fixing-their-noses-94010>
- 2017 “Talking Past Each Other on Free Speech,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 15, 2017.
- 2016 with Suzanna Danuta Walters. “4 Ways to Keep the Peace When Your Partner Is Voting for Hillary- or Bernie,” *The Nation*, April 18, 2016.
- 2015 “We’ve Got Gender All Wrong,” *Medium*, September 14, 2015.
- “Russia, Land of Free Speech,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 11, 2015.
- 2014 “Avoiding Speech Slippery Slope,” *The New York Times*, May 19, 2014.
- “Queer Russia,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February.
- 2013 “How Russia’s Science of Sex Threatens Gays,” the *Washington Post*, August 11.
- “It’s MOOAs, Not MOOCs, That Will Transform Higher Ed,” the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March.
- “Profs Fail iEtiquette 101,” the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February.

- 2011 "In Plastic We Trust: America's Love of Cosmetic Surgery and Credit Cards," the *Washington Post*, January 7.
- "How Reaganomics Fueled the Boob Job Boom," *The Atlantic*, January 18.
- 2009 "What if Marriage is Bad for Us?" with Lynn Owens, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September.
- "Ordinary Ugliness: The Hidden Cost of the Credit Crunch," the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Selected Recent Presentations:

- 2016 "Love Inc., On the strange marriage of romance and neoliberal capitalism," Instituto de Investigaciones Feministas, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid, Spain.
- 2015 "American Plastic: How Neoliberal Economic Policies Shaped Our Bodies," Moscow State University, Philosophy Faculty (Part of the Festival of Sciences, Moscow, Russia, October 2015
- "Love, Inc.: The strange marriage of romance and Neoliberal Capitalism," The European University at St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, Russia, November 2015.
- 2014 "Love, Inc." Ted X Main Conference, Vienna, Austria.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2l0sZrrWlrU>)
- 2013 "'We Should Bury Their Hearts': Thoughts on the Spectre of Homosexuality Haunting Russia," Keynote at Conference on Queer Studies in Russia, St. Petersburg, Russia.
- 2013 "Forbes, Fired, Feminism! Mass shootings, masculinity and the media" American Studies Conference, Washington, DC.
- 2013 "Celebrity Weddings," Eastern Sociological Society, Boston, MA, March.
- 2011 Common Hour Speaker, "American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards and Our Quest for Perfection," Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA, September.

- 2011 “Manning Up: Thoughts on Sports, Sex and Power,” Middlebury College Museum of Art in conjunction with the exhibition of *Mixed Signals*, March 2.
- 2011 Keynote, “Coloring Outside the Lines: Creative Approaches to Queer Sociology,” a mini-conference in conjunction with the 2011 Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting,” February 24.
- 2010 “Love is in the Air: Romance as Ideology,” University of East London, London, UK, February.
- 2010 “Global Plastic: How the American Quest for the Perfect Body Infected the World,” “What’s Your Gender and How Do You Know?” and “The Mirror and the Porn Star,” University College London, London UK, January-February.
- 2009 “American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards, and the Spirit of Our Time,” and “Queer Theory: An Epistemology” at Lafayette College, Easton, PA, October.
- 2008 “American Plastic: Boob Jobs, Credit Cards, and the Spirit of Our Time,” The British Museum, London, UK, October.
- 2008 “The Mirror and the Porno Star: Ideal Forms, Everyday Aesthetics and Cosmetic Surgery,” Leeds University, Leeds, UK, July.
- 2008 “Weber’s Charisma as Sexual Potentialities or Why Obama Will Be Our Nominee,” Association of American Geographers Convention, Boston, MA, April.
- 2007 “Plastic Surgery TV and the Implantation of Surgical Desires,” Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, October.
- 2007 “The Cultural Economy of Plastic,” Manchester University, Manchester, UK, September.
- 2007 “Plasticity: On the Queer Uses of Plastic Surgery,” Leeds University, Leeds, UK, September.

Community Service:

2011-

- 2014 Secretary/Treasurer American Association of University Professors, Middlebury College.
- 2011-2013 Appeals Committee, Chair, Middlebury College.
- 2012-13 Chaired curriculum review and move to three concentrations, Sociology/Anthropology.
- 2007/08 & 2010-11 Thesis Director, Sociology/Anthropology Department, Middlebury College.
- 2010-11 Admissions Advisory Committee, Middlebury College.
- 2008-2012 Center for the Comparative Study of Race and Ethnicity (CCSRE) steering committee.
- 2006-present Women and Gender Studies (now Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies) Steering Committee, Middlebury College.
- 2008-present Queer Studies House Faculty Committee, Middlebury College.
- 2007-08 Faculty Working Group on Diversity Initiatives, Middlebury College.
- 2005-06 Commissioner, President's Commission on LGBT Issues, University of Vermont.

Member faculty committee for Sexuality and Gender Identity Studies, University of Vermont, Fall 2004-Fall 2006.

Outside reviewer for *American Ethnologist*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *GLQ*, *Journal of Time*, *Journal of Communication Inquiry and Society*, *Signs*, *QED* as well as Fulbright, *National Science Foundation*, and Duke University Press.

References:

Verta Taylor
Department of Sociology
3005 SSMS Building

Stephanie Coontz
History, The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington 98505

University of California
Santa Barbara, California
805/893-7459
vtaylor@soc.ucsb.edu

(360) 867-6703
coontzs@msn.com

Sujata Moorti
Women and Gender Studies
Carr Hall, 206
Middlebury College
Middlebury Vermont 05753
802/443-5674
smoorti@middlebury.edu

Robin Bernstein
Department of African & African
American Studies
12 Quincy Street
Quincy Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
617/495-9634
rbernst@fas.harvard.edu