# Teacher Notes

* 6-7 pages, double spaced

## Background

* The course was about several theorists that developed arguments to the effect that our beliefs, attitudes, and practices of sexuality have complicated psychological, cultural, social, political, and economic roots, oftentimes of which we are unaware.
  + Freud: holds that sexuality manifests itself differently, e.g. is explicitly expressed or is sublimated to satisfy different social needs

## Essay questions

1. explain what **mackinnon is saying about gender, relating it as appropriate to the views developed by Foucault** in volume 2 of the history of sexuality
2. what follows from mackinnon’s insight about what an earlier generation called **sexual liberation for women**?
3. If mackinnon is correct, is removing **the onus placed upon the sexual expressiveness of women** a **hollow victory** because **the sexuality they become freer to enjoy remains the old one that converts women into objects**

# Answers to questions

1. What is mackinnon saying about gender
   1. Find quotesd
   2. Downloaded the PDF in the folder
2. How does MacKinnon’s views relate to Foucault’s view
   1. compare this section to key parts of #1
   2. Foucault in volume 2 of *The History of Sexuality:* this book is all about how Greeks viewed sexuality
3. What does MacKinnon mean by “sexual liberation for women” and what are the consequences of this
4. Is removing the social construct/sexual burden on women a hollow victory?
5. If you remove the burden, will women resort to being sexual objects?

## Theorists notes: don’t use any quotes!

### Mackinnon

* might be broadly categorized as social constructivist;
* feminism is a theory of power and its distribution, inequality, or more bluntly the relations in which some *fuck and others get fucked*, are the *prime moment of politics*
* for her, this means that gender is defined in terms of power over sexuality:
* what *defines woman as such is what turns men on,*
* *gender socialization is the process through which women come to identify themselves as sexual beings, as beings that exist for men.*
* *It is that process through which women internalize/make their own a male image of their sexuality as their identity as women;*
* *similarly, men are to be understood not as individuals nor as biological beings, but as a gender group characterized by maleness as socially constructed, of which this pursuit, i.e. the male pursuit of control over womens sexuality is definitive*
* question 3,4,5 is the below text
* <http://books.google.com/books?id=JbqvVVXncqMC&pg=PA31&lpg=PA31&dq=the+onus+placed+upon+the+sexual+expressiveness+of+women&source=bl&ots=h1Fyx3846H&sig=hgHx4ukLknCVGYBrGHnI1L2Z8dY&hl=en&sa=X&ei=HvtvU8H6LY6JogT-0YKgAw&ved=0CCYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=the%20onus%20placed%20upon%20the%20sexual%20expressiveness%20of%20women&f=false>
  + it is difficult to decide when *sexually explicit material is a source of sexual liberation and general freedom for humans and when it is a source of sexual oppression and general unfreedom.*
  + Many feminists endorce pornography but admit that it can be a bastion of sexism, and also a vehicle of rebellion against repressive, oppressive, and depressive sexual and moral norms.
  + *Society has the pornographic imagination to thank for the new openness about nudity, lesbianism, oral genital sex or even non marital sex*, and they insist that anyone who is for sexual liberation must also be for pornography. Therefore, to be a liberated woman is to enjoy sex is to enjoy pornography
  + *Merely to remove the onus placed upon the sexual expressiveness of women is a hollow victory if the sexuality they become freer to enjoy remains the old one that converts women into objects…. This already freer sexuality mostly reflects a spurious idea of freedom: the right of each person, briefly, to exploit and dehumanize someone else*. Without a change in the very norms of sexuality, the liberation of women is a meaningless goal. Sex as such is not liberating for women, neither is more sex
  + The path to freedom is not through playgirl or thorugh male striptease joints; that is, women will not come into touch with their own sexuality bey exploiting and dehumanizing men, or by trading the role of masochist for that of sadist, or by creating men-degrading pornography.
  + If women are to understand what female sexuality means apart from men as well as in relation to men, then they must shatter the old sex roels and drown out this society’s dominant, if not exclusive, discourse on sexuality; name, sex = violence = death
  + *But if women are to succeed, they must say something more than sex = nonviolence = life; for to say this is only to negate what men have said in the past.*
  + It will take women to free their imagination from the definitions and concepts men have, because of certain social conditions, constructed for it. If they can free their imaginations, they will drown out gyno-thanatic discourse not with andro-thanatic discourse, but with multiple vices celebrating the incarnation of woman as woman.
  + The more women learn to love their bodies, the less power men will have over women. Once women rever their bodies, and once they rejoince, revel, and relax in them, they will refuse to hand them over to anyone who would treat them cruelly and contemptuously.
  + Once men as well as women realize that woman’s sexuality is not “for man” a real sexual liberation will be effected. Men and women will be able to relate to each other as sexed beings who sexuality is an expression of personal uniqueness, rather than the reflection of any unilateral vision or universal prescription of how one sex should relate to the other
* <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/>
  + *domination is closely bound up with her understanding of gender difference*
  + *gender difference is simply the reified effect of domination. As she puts it, “difference is the velvet glove on the iron fist of domination. The problem is not that differences are not valued; the problem is that they are defined by power”*
  + If gender difference is itself a function of domination, then the implication is that men are powerful and women are powerless by definition
  + *As MacKinnon puts it, “women/men is a distinction not just of difference, but of power and powerlessness….Power/powerlessness is the sex difference”*
  + *MacKinnon glosses over the distinction, articulated by many second-wave feminists, between sex — the biologically rooted traits that make one male or female, traits that are often presumed to be natural and immutable — and gender — the socially and culturally rooted, hence contingent and mutable, traits, characteristics, dispositions, and practices that make one a woman or a man*
  + sex/gender distinction, thinks that sex difference, no less than gender difference, is socially constructed and shaped by relations of power.) If men are powerful and women powerless as such, then male domination is, on this view, pervasive
  + *MacKinnon claims that it is a basic “fact of male supremacy” that “no woman escapes the meaning of being a woman within a gendered social system, and sex inequality is not only pervasive but may be universal (in the sense of never having not been in some form”*
  + For MacKinnon, heterosexual intercourse is the paradigm of male domination; as she puts it, “the social relation between the sexes is organized so that men may dominate and women must submit and this relation is sexual — in fact, is sex”
  + As a result, she tends to presuppose a dyadic conception of domination, according to which individual women are subject to the will of individual men. If male domination is pervasive and women are powerless by definition, then it follows that female power is “a contradiction in terms, socially speaking”
* Mackinnon PDF from original teacher directions
  + Sexuality is to feminism what work is to marxism: that which is most one's own, yet most taken away. Marxist theory argues that society is fundamentally constructed of the relations people form as they do and make things needed to survive humanly. Work is the social process of shaping and transforming the material and social worlds, creating people as social beings as they create value. It is that activity by which people become who they are. Class is its structure, production its consequence, capital its congealed form, and control its issue.
  + *Implicit in feminist theory is a parallel argument: the molding, direction, and expression of sexuality organizes society into two sexes women and men-which division underlies the totality of social relations.*
  + Sexuality is that social process which creates, organizes, expresses, and directs desire,' creating the social beings we know as women and men , as their relations create society
  + As work is to marxism, sexuality to feminism is socially constructed yet constructing, universal as activity yet historically specific, jointly comprised of matter and mind. As the organized expropriation of the work of some for the benefit of others defines a class-workers-the organized expropriation of the sexuality of some for the use of others defines the sex, woman
  + Heterosexuality is its structure, gender and family its congealed forms, sex roles its qualities generalized to social persona, reproduction a consequence, and control its issue.
  + Marxism and feminism are theories of power and its distribution: inequality. They provide accounts of how social arrangements of patterned disparity can be internally rational yet unjust.
  + In marxism to be deprived of one's work, in feminism of one's sexuality, defines each one's conception of lack of power per se
  + I also hope feminism, a politics authored by those it works in the name of, is never named after an individual. Black is conventionally (I am told) regarded as a color rather than a racial or national designation, hence is not usually capitalized. I do not regard Black as merely a color of skin pigmentation, but as a heritage, an experience, a cultural and personal identity, the meaning of which becomes specifically stigmatic and/or glorious and/or ordinary under specific social conditions
  + "Desire" is selected as a term parallel to "value" in marxist theory to refer to that substance felt to be primordial or aboriginal but posited by the theory as social and contingent.
* PDF on the onus
  + A woman is a being who identifies and is identified as one whose sexuality exists for someone else, who is socially male
  + Women's sexuality is the capacity to arouse desire in that someone. If what is sexual about a woman is what the male point of view requires for excitement, have male requirements so usurped its terms as to have become them?
  + If being for another is the whole of women's sexual construction, it can be no more escaped by separatism, men's temporary concrete absence, than eliminated or qualified by permissiveness, which, in this context, looks like women emulating male roles
  + As Susan Sontag said: "The question is: what sexuality are women to be liberated to enjoy? Merely to remove the onus placed upon the sexual expressiveness of women is a hollow victory if the sexuality they become freer to enjoy remains the old one that converts women into objects .... This already 'freer' sexuality mostly reflects a spurious idea of freedom: the right of each person, briefly, to exploit and dehumanize someone else.
  + Without a change in the very norms of sexuality, the liberation of women is a meaningless goal. Sex as such is not liberating for women. Neither is more sex.
  + Does removing or revising gender constraints upon sexual expression change or even challenge its norms?42 This question ultimately is one of social determination in the broadest sense: its mechanism, permeability, specificity, and totality.
  + If women are socially defined such that female sexuality cannot be lived or spoken or felt or even somatically sensed apart from its enforced definition, so that it is its own lack, then there is no such thing as a woman as such, there are only walking embodiments of men's projected needs.
  + For feminism, asking whether there is, socially, a female sexuality is the same as asking whether women exist.

### Foucault

* *Foucault: theory of sexuality is usually understood as social and historical, so that our very concepts of sexuality take quite different forms in different historical and social circumstances, and are shaped by various configurations of power*
* Foucault‟s ethical framework for an empirical genealogy of sexuality enables him to explicate the nature of human freedom
* At the heart of Foucault‟s framework is the need to find an ethical system in which the nature of establishing ethical tendencies is different from the Judeo-Christian West where the emphasis is on sin and death; on the prohibition of sexual acts rather than the cultivation of sexual virtue. Foucault finds such a situation in the ancient Greeks who assert traditional norms of behavior not as a way of strictly prohibiting certain actions but rather of encouraging the complete development of the virtues of the individual
* The first point is the sexual act: “For example the meaning of the sexual act itself: it will be said that Christianity associated it with evil, sin, the Fall, and death, while antiquity invested it with positive symbolic values.”
* The second point is homosexuality: “Or the disallowance of relations between individuals of the same sex: it would seem that Christianity strictly excluded such relationships, while Greece exalted them, and Rome accepted them, at least between men.”
* the third point is the lack of attention paid to certain issues: “In short, regarding all these points that have been considered for such a long time to be so important—the nature of the sexual act, monogamous fidelity, homosexual relations, chastity—it would seem that men of ancient times were rather indifferent, and that none of this claimed much of their attention or constituted very serious problems as far as they were concerned.” (quote is from Foucault)
* **Implicit in this framework is the idea of power and the freedom attached to this power structure,** 
  + **These include the power one exercises over oneself, the power one exercises over social inferiors (for the ancient Greeks, boys, girls, and women), and the power one exercises over a given dominion.**
* ***While women would achieve sophrosyne (****i.e. freedom****), their attainment of it was always described in relation to the ideal of the masculine fullness of the virtue.***
* Foucault states that “one could not form oneself as an ethical subject in the use of pleasures without forming oneself at the same time as a subject of knowledge.”
* Foucault speaks to the fact that the Greeks did not codify their sexual ethical framework, which is itself a stark contrast to what later Christians will say on the same topic.
  + Foucault notes that for the Greeks sexual pleasure was not of the “realm of death and evil,” as it became for Christianity several centuries later.
  + Foucault notes that the Greeks were urged to respect the proper time or kairos at which to engage in procreation.
  + . If a Greek couple wanted to produce the finest and most virtuous offspring, then they must wait for the right time and not exceed its upper bounds.
  + , the kairos for men was between the ages of thirty and thirty-five while for women it was between the ages sixteen and twenty
  + it is important to note that women were bound to their husbands completely but did have safe guards against the mistresses of a husband. Wives derived their authority from their position in the household, and while men could have sexual relations with whomever they chose, they could not deprive their wife of her position.
* In discussing sexual ethics and morality, Foucault presents a culture that was able to preserve these areas without prohibiting certain sexual practices in codes of law
  + “for classical Greek thought, this force (pleasure) was potentially excessive by nature, and the moral question was how to confront this force, how to control it and regulate its economy in a suitable way.
  + rather than strictly forbidding certain actions, the Greek ethic sought to regulate some actions in order to achieve moderation, which, as a mean, was a state of earthly perfection.
* Foucault furthers his argument by establishing that men were expected to resist submission. This is a claim about a man‟s ethical duty to cultivate virtue and attain freedom
  + The first principle here is the idea of aphrodisiasthenai which was understood as the time at which a girl could accept a sexual relationship with a man and “it is the role that could be imposed by force on someone who was thus reduced to being the object of the other‟s pleasure; it is also the role accepted by the boy or man who let himself be penetrated by his partner.”
  + But the ancient Greek man had to resist more than just the submission implicit in being sexually penetrated; he had to rule over his desires. A man was essentially meant to be a warrior against his pleasures
  + Signs of a man who had given into his pleasures included idleness, insolence, refusal to engage in rough sports, fondness of perfumes, and softness. Hence, the man who had given into his pleasures and desires would be seen as feminine but only in relation to himself
  + The same held true for two adult men who were known publically as homosexuals. Boys could engage in homosexual conduct publically, but it seems that the Greeks saw this type of conduct as developmental for a boy rather than for adult men who should have learned the proper ways in which to live a virtuous life

# My essay structure

* Background on both authors
* “in this essay, my argument is that….”
* “I will build this argument based on….”
* “I will also explore the possibility of the validity against my argument….”