

Sex, Gender, and Kinship: Colonial Perspectives

Dr. Lyons

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 pm

Sign up via Calendly: <https://calendly.com/dtl412/office-hours>

Tuesdays, 2:00-4:50 pm

1155 East 60th St. #289A

Course Description: This graduate-level course analyzes the contested relationships between gender, sexuality, kinship, and European systems of colonialism from the early modern period through the twentieth century. Drawing on historical case studies, feminist theory and postcolonial studies, this course will cover a range of colonies to explore topics such as the construction of gender ideologies and how colonial systems of rule were established through changing concepts of gender, sex, and kinship—and their connections to race, colonial power, and post-colonial legacies. Our primary aim is to account for how complex and fraught notions of “gender,” “kinship,” and “sexuality” mutually emerged alongside transformative shifts in systems of western colonialism and imperial domination.

Course Policies

Communication and engagement: Students are expected to communicate promptly and professionally with me and each other. If issues arise during the quarter or with the class, it **is your responsibility** to get in touch with me and let me know what is going on. Please read all emails from me and be sure to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. I also encourage you to come to office hours to discuss any course-related matters. If you cannot make my office hours due to class scheduling conflicts, please email me and we will work out an alternative time to meet.

In class, students are required to demonstrate respect for the perspectives of others, to engage in good faith with each other, and remember that we all come from different backgrounds, positionalities, and prior learning experiences. What might be self-evident to you is not necessarily to your classmates. Give each other grace, make space for each other to participate, and actively listen to each other. As part of creating a respectful and inclusive environment, students with differing points of view are expected to listen to the ideas raised by others. No disruptive behavior (including interrupting someone, side conversations, emailing, texting, laptop or tablet use for scrolling or non-course related internet browsing) will be permitted. Anyone who violates these policies will be asked to leave.

Email policy: while I strive to respond to messages quickly, my inbox is perpetually inundated. Please give me 24 hours to respond to any emails during the week. If, after 24 hours you have not received a response, please re-send the email with “second attempt” in the subject line. While I encourage you to work during the times that best fit your own schedule, please note that I do not check email before 9 am or after 6 pm Mondays-Fridays or at all on the weekends. Therefore, please plan accordingly: do not email me the night before an assignment is due and expect an answer before the deadline. If you email me late on Friday, chances are I will not respond until Monday.

Statement on diversity: The University of Chicago believes that a culture of rigorous inquiry demands an environment where diverse perspectives, experiences, individuals, and ideas inform intellectual exchange and engagement. I concur with this commitment and believe that we can have the highest quality interactions and can creatively solve more problems when we recognize and share

our diversity. I thus expect to maintain a productive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. I view the diversity that students bring to this class as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity. Any suggestions for promoting a positive, open, and inclusive environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Student disability services and accommodations: The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. Timely notifications are required to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Please meet with me to discuss your access needs in this class after you have completed the SDS procedures for requesting accommodations. For more information: website: disabilities.uchicago.edu; phone: (773) 702-6000; or email: disabilities@uchicago.edu

Academic honesty: It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system.

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional appropriation of ideas, language, or work of another without sufficient acknowledgement that the material is not one's own. There are no distinctions between purchasing a pre-written paper, copying (even a sentence) from a published source without proper documentation, submitting as your own someone else's work (with or without permission), or recycling a paper that you have used or plan to use in another course. Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is required. If any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes "use" should be addressed to the instructor.

It is the student's responsibility to consult the University of Chicago's policies on [Academic Honesty & Plagiarism](#) as well as the [Student Manual of University Policies & Regulations](#) about what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Artificial Intelligence: Graduate school allows you to develop invaluable research and writing skills that require you to find and hone your own voice. That is impossible to do if you utilize artificial intelligence. You learn best through your mistakes (and figuring out how to remedy them). Without that crucial step, you've learned nothing. For that reason, the use of artificial intelligence of any kind (i.e. PhoenixAI, ChatGPT, Bard, Claude, Grammarly, etc.) in lieu of your own work in this course **will constitute academic dishonesty and cheating**. You are also prohibited from using AI technology to do your research, unless it is an area of inquiry in your thesis. Using the technology to create fake data or sources (i.e. fake citations, numbers, primary sources, secondary sources, materials of any kind) constitutes academic dishonesty and cheating and will result in disciplinary action.

For both these academic dishonesty and ethical reasons, I reserve the right to ask for all iterations of written assignments in the case of suspected AI usage. This includes outlines, drafts, notes, and references (including links to materials online or in library and archival catalogues). **It is your**

responsibility to maintain records of these. Failure to produce any materials other than the final draft, if requested, will be treated as indicative of dishonest use of AI under academic dishonesty guidelines and will result in a F for the assignment along with appropriate disciplinary measures.

If you have any questions about the course's AI or academic honesty policies, please ask the instructor.

Assignments and Evaluation

Participation and attendance (25%): Because much of the learning in this course results from discussion, regular attendance is expected and required. I will take attendance at every session and it will factor into your final grade. That being said, safety remains a top priority. You should not attend class if you feel unwell. If you are required to quarantine, or if you will be missing class for other reasons, please inform me as soon as possible so we can make a plan to catch you up. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to make up the work and participation for that day. You should write to your classmates, not the instructor, to ask for any notes or materials. Check Canvas Modules to see if there are discussion questions or other materials posted that were used in class.

Our time together in class is an opportunity to actively engage with the material we are exploring and to learn from each other. I encourage you all to take charge of your own participation, whether that be stepping up and speaking when you have not yet made your voice heard and knowing when to step back and make space for others to contribute if you have already had the chance to talk a lot. I take assessing participation seriously and I keep records on students' contributions to class discussion. To help alleviate some of the anxiety with this, as I am aware that speaking in class can be daunting, every student is expected to come to class with:

- The texts we are discussing (in whatever format is accessible to you)
- Your notes from readings, which should include:
 - One “question of the day:” an analytical question that the readings prompted for you. This question should reflect that you’ve critically read and thought about the texts and should engage only with the readings. While you’re welcome to bring questions of clarification, do not bring “fluff” questions (i.e. “what does this text tell us about gender today?”).
 - One “thought of the day,” which should focus on what the readings illuminated for you (or, conversely, what they may have confused for you). Again, this should reflect analytic engagement with the texts.
- While I will call on students at random to share their thought or question of the day in class, it’s my intention that this exercise help you organize your thoughts before class so that you feel prepared to jump into conversation.

If you miss a class, you can make up some partial credit by submitting an alternative participation assignment, as follows:

- Send me a 500-word email with your analysis on the text or materials for the day you missed (this email should reflect your close reading of the materials and be analytical in nature. It should also engage only with the texts and not rely on outside information).

- Send me an email with three substantive questions you have about the readings (they should reflect your close reading of the materials and be analytical in nature, like a discussion question raised in class. They should also engage only with the texts and not rely on outside information).
- Write a 500-word response to a discussion question I posed in class (you will find them on Canvas Modules for each session) and email it to me.

Regardless of which email prompt you choose, it should reflect your close reading and examination of the materials.

Discussion Policies: There is a tendency in graduate-level classes to orient discussion around criticizing the readings under consideration. While we are certainly going to critique texts and talk about what we perceive as their shortcomings, this should not be the driving force of our discussion. Try to take each author in good faith. You need not be persuaded by an author or text, but you must (1) ground your critiques in good faith arguments, rather than outright dismissal (2) engage with what is also useful in each text. You are asked to carefully consider what each text “does well,” what questions it asks, how each scholar “did” the work they set out to do, and the merits of their approach (even if they fall short in some ways). **Focusing on conceptualization, theorization, methods, evidence, argumentation, and the strengths and limitations of each text will generate more productive conversation** where we can critically evaluate each work or argument—without dismissing it out of hand.

Additionally, your support and cooperation are necessary for establishing a respectful class environment. Our classroom should be an inclusive and supportive space. Some of the material we will be reading can be sensitive, difficult, personal, and/or resonate in our current moment, so your comments should be thoughtful and considerate of others. We will debate with each other, but we have a collective responsibility to do so collegially and in good faith. Additionally, some of the language or concepts (particularly in more classic or older texts) might now be considered out of date. Language, like history, changes over time. In our discussions, we will use our contemporary language and terminology (i.e. if a text uses the term “Indians,” we will use “Indigenous peoples”). Any rude, offensive, or otherwise out-of-line comments or behavior will not be tolerated.

Individual Presentation (25%, self-selected deadline): Each student will be responsible for giving a presentation and leading discussion **once** during the quarter. You will select a class (a sign-up sheet is on Canvas Modules), and you will be responsible for delivering a 10-minute presentation that kickstarts discussion that day. If there are no other options open, you may sign up to present on the same day as someone else. In cases of multiple presentations, it is each presenter’s responsibility to divide up the readings and develop their own individual presentations on their portion of the readings. **It is your responsibility to check whether there is another presenter during your session and to get in touch with them to divide the material equitably.** You may not do a joint presentation or pose the same discussion questions, and you must be careful to not repeat similar arguments in your respective presentations (so discuss with each other your plans before your presentation).

Effective, “A” grade presentations will not merely summarize or walk us through each text on its own (we will all have read them). Instead, high-quality presentations put readings into conversation with each other by identifying a common theme or connection between them; assessing each of the

scholars' argumentation, methods, and analysis; outlining the strengths and limitations of each text; drawing on relevant (and concise examples) to prove a point; and posing compelling questions to generate an exciting conversation. Presentations should also be clear and easy to follow (PowerPoint is especially helpful for this). I'd much rather you read off notes or slides than try to speak off-the-cuff if reading keeps your discussion organized and cogent. High-quality presentations also focus on the texts under discussion without bringing in outside works that not everyone else has read.

Your discussion questions for presentations are due on Canvas **by noon on the day you present**. You must also submit your hardcopy of the presentation to me (in whatever form it takes) **by noon on the same day via Canvas**.

Book Review (20% due Monday, October 28th by midnight): You will write an 800-1,000-word (Times New Roman, size 12 font, standard formatting) review of a scholarly book on a topic regarding gender, sex, and/or kinship in a colonial context (it does not have to be one that is covered on the syllabus, you may choose to focus on whichever colony and topic you'd like). You may not use one of our common readings and the book you select must have been published within the last 30 years. The Regenstein library has a trove of digital and print scholarship that you can find. You are not permitted to write on an article, edited volume, popular history, or non-scholarly source such as a journalistic text. Your chosen work must be published by a reputable academic press. This is an opportunity to think about the final paper as well, as you may write a review of a monograph you later use for the final. If you have questions about whether a book is appropriate, ask me.

The aim of the academic book review (which is a standard genre in academia) is to succinctly convey to the reader a book's topic, critical arguments, questions, and interventions, and evaluate how well the book accomplishes its aims. Book reviews assess the analysis, evidence, organization, and argumentation of an academic monograph. They can and do vary in terms of organization and style, but they are fundamentally analytical in nature.

Model book reviews (including appropriate length, content, and organization) may be found in journals such as the *American Historical Review*, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, and *The William & Mary Quarterly*. I have also posted some examples on Canvas modules. All papers must include your name, a title, page numbers, and a bibliographic citation of the work you've selected (as well as any other material you may reference in the essay). It should be written in a standard serif size 12 font with 1" margins and submitted as a word document (I will not grade papers submitted as a pdf).

Literature/Historiographic Review Paper (30% due Monday, December 9th by midnight): Students will write a literature review style essay of 10-12 pages long for undergraduates and 13-15 pages for graduate students (Times New Roman, size 12 font, standard formatting) that examines a critical question or topic in gender, sexuality, and/or kinship in a colonial context. Each paper should cover at least 4-6 academic monographs (you are not permitted to include works of popular history, journalism, or other non-scholarly sources) published in the last thirty years (if more flexibility on this parameter is required, please talk to me first). You may use common readings for the paper, if applicable, but are also expected to find at least 3 additional books to analyze recent debates, topics, or questions in the most recent and formative literature on your topic. You may also incorporate the book you wrote on for your midterm paper as one of your works (this can count as one of your outside texts). Students are strongly encouraged to discuss paper ideas with me in office hours. For model literature review essays, see Canvas modules.

Policies on Extensions and Assessment: The quarter is only 9 weeks and, in my experience, handing in assignments late tends to compound other problems and snowballs into course incompletes. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to submit papers on time. I grant **an automatic 24-hour extension on all assignments (except for the in-class presentation)—no questions asked, or permission required.** However, if you need more time than that, you must get in contact with me and explain what is going on and we will set a new deadline together (with the caveat that my comments might be more limited, or nonexistent, on very late papers). If you do not reach out to me, I begin deducting 1/3 of a letter grade per day late after the 24-hour automatic extension has passed (an A- paper will become a B+, etc.). Please communicate any issues or struggles in advance of deadlines—I am here to help you and want you to succeed in this course.

All work—both written and verbal—in this class is graded based on quality (how well argued a paper is, how cogent and analytic a presentation, etc.) Partial credit for submitting half-baked work or for attempting to do only some of the assignment will not be given.

Required Books: All required books are available at the UChicago library, as e-books through the Regenstein library, or through Interlibrary Loan. They are also held on Library Reserves. All other readings are on Canvas Modules.

Brown, Kathleen. *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Johnson, Jessica Marie. *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy and Freedom in the Atlantic World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

Morgan, Jennifer. *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2021.

Turner, Sasha. *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

Ocobock, Paul. *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017.

White, Luis. *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Saada, Emmanuelle. *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Rahnama, Sarah. *The Future is Feminist: Women and Social Change in Interwar Algeria*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2023.

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

Reading Schedule

October 1st Frameworks and Maps

- Oyeronke Oyewumi, "Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenges of African Epistemologies," pp. 1-5.
- James Sweet, "Defying Social Death: The Multiple Configurations of African Slave Family in the Atlantic World" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 70, no. 2 (April 2013): pp. 251-272.

- Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-31 only (introduction and part of chapter 1).
- Jennifer Morgan, “‘Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder’: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 54 no. 1 (1997): 167-192.

October 8th Gender and Shaping Colonial Systems

- Ann Laura Stoler, “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender and Morality in the Making of Race,” in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002: 41-78.
- Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), chapters 1, and 5-6, pp. 13-40 and 137-211.
- Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020) introduction—chapter 4, pp. 1-152.

October 15th Kinship and Kinlessness

- Claude Meillassoux, “Introduction,” and “Kin and Aliens,” *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 1-40.
- Jennifer Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), all.

October 22nd Reproductive Politics

- Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), introduction-chapter 6, pp. 1-210.
- Nancy Rose Hunt, “‘Le bébé en brousse’: European Women, African Birth Spacing, and Colonial Intervention in Breast Feeding in the Belgian Congo” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 287-321.
- Nessette Falu, “Ain’t I Too a Mulher? Implications of Black Lesbians’ Well-Being, Self-Care, and Gynecology in Brazil,” *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, Vol. 25 no. 1, (2020): 48-66.

October 29th Masculinity, Manhood, and Constructing Power

- Paul Ocozbek, *An Uncertain Age: The Politics of Manhood in Kenya* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017), introduction—chapter 7, pp. 1-225.
- Julio Capo, “Bahamians and Miami’s Queer Erotic” in *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2017), pp. 60-95.
- Frank Proschan, “Eunuch Mandarins, Soldats Mamzelles, Effeminate Boys, and Graceless Women: French Colonial Constructions of Vietnamese Genders,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, 4 (2002): 435-467.

November 5th Colonial Politics of Sex Work

- Luis White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), introduction—chapter 4 and chapter 9, pp. 1-102; 221-229.

- Lara Putnam, “Las Princesas del Dollar: Prostitutes and the Banana Booms, 1890s-1920s,” in *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 76-111.
- Philippa Levine, “Colonial Medicine and the Project of Modernity,” in *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 61-94.
- Mark Padilla, “‘Western Union Daddies’ and Their Quest for Authenticity: An Ethnographic Study of the Dominican Gay Sex Tourism Industry,” *Journal of Homosexuality*, 53:1-2 (2007): 241-75.

November 12th Intimacies of Empire

- Ann Laura Stoler, “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 3 (July 1992): 514-551.
- Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire’s Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), introduction—chapter seven, pp. 1-206.
- Heike Schmidt, “Colonial Intimacy: the Rechenberg Scandal and Homosexuality in German East Africa,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, 1 (January 2008): 25-59.

November 19th Anti-Colonialism

- Sarah Rahnama, *The Future is Feminist: Women and Social Change in Interwar Algeria* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2023), all.
- Leila Ahmed, “The Discourse of the Veil” in *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 144-68.

November 26th

- No class. Rest and work on your final papers

December 3rd Post-Colonial Afterlives

- Gloria Wekker, *The Politics of Passion: Women’s Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), all.

Choose one (you are welcome to read both!):

- M. Jacqui Alexander, “Not Just (any) Body Can be a Citizen: The Politics of Law, Sexuality and Postcoloniality in Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas,” in *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Catherine Hall, ed. Routledge: New York, 2000: 359-376.
- Alfredo Mirandé, “Two Spirit Muxe Zapotec Identity” in *Behind the Mask: Gender Hybridity in a Zapotec Community* (Phoenix: University of Arizona Press, 2017), pp. 163-175.