Sex and Sexuality in Latin America

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Office Hours: Th, 12-1 and 3-4pm

What have sex, gender, and sexuality meant across time and space in the Americas? In this class, we will cheerfully confront the daunting task of exploring, comparing, and challenging approaches to the history of gender and sexuality in Latin America. Our principal questions will include the following: How do people think about sex and social relations? What can we know about how people thought about or “felt” gender in the past—and how can we know it? What makes the way that gender and sexual norms work peculiar to specific places, times, and groups of people—and what makes them broader than that? Can we identify peculiarly “Latin American” approaches to sex and gender? How have gender and sexuality in this hemisphere changed over time, broadly speaking?

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING
1. Attendance, Readings and Discussion (45%): Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students must come to each class having read the assigned material corresponding to that particular date and having prepared to participate actively in discussion. We will discuss reading strategies in our introductory class, but students who find it difficult to complete readings on time should visit me during office hours for additional assistance. All hard-copy readings will be available in the bookstore and on reserve at the library; electronic readings will be available via the course blackboard site (denoted by “ER”), or via access to online publications. Films are on reserve at the library.

2. Response Papers (15%): Students will be responsible for submitting responses to each week’s reading. These responses should be submitted to Prof. Cowan via email by Wednesday evening at 7pm. The responses should devote one paragraph to each assigned reading from the week. That paragraph should address the following: “What is the central or most important question this reading seeks to answer?” Response papers should cite from the texts, using the Chicago (footnote) format.

3. Midterm (10%): A short, take-home midterm will cover material from the first half of the course.

4. Papers (30%): Each student will submit a historiographical essay on the relevant topic of each student’s choice. This means that students will do a limited amount of research into a particular topic and write an essay describing the state of scholarship on the subject and potential avenues for future research. We will discuss potential topics and strategies during our first meeting.

Students should keep in mind that their papers will not be accepted should they fail to conform to the following standards: word-processed; double-spaced; in 12-point, Times New Roman or Cambria font with standard (1-inch and 1.25-inch) margins; and proofread until free of spelling and grammar errors. Citations should be in Chicago (footnote) format. Except in the case of an extreme emergency or with an extension granted by me in advance, late papers will be penalized one full letter grade (A to B) for each day they are late. If you fear that your work will be late for any reason, please contact me within the first two weeks of the semester. Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any material, idea (transcribed or paraphrased), or turn of phrase that has come from someone else’s work must be properly documented. Ignorance of the exact definitions of plagiarism will not be considered an excuse. Should you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, do not fail to consult the university’s guidelines on academic ethics, available at http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS—SEX, GENDER, AND LATIN AMERICA
- 27 AUG—Course introduction
- 29 AUG—Film: *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman* (Watch before class.)

WEEK 2: PRECONQUEST SEXUALITIES
- 3 SEP—Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away* (pp. xvii-36)
- 5 SEP—Pete Sigal, ed., *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America* (pp. 10-16; 25-29; 40-59; 70-92)

WEEK 3: SEX AND COLONIZATION I
- 10 SEP—Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away* (pp. 46-54, 66-78, 89-90)
- 12 SEP—Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun* (pp. 3-80) (optional: Introduction)
  - Film (optional): *Yo, La Peor de Todas*

WEEK 4: SEX AND COLONIZATION II
- 17 SEP—Steve Stern, *The Secret History of Gender* (pp. 3-20; 70-98) (optional: pp. 98-111, 151-188)
- 19 SEP—Asunción Lavrin, “Sexuality in Colonial Mexico” (pp. 47-80); and Ruth Behar, “Sexual Witchcraft, Colonialism, and Women’s Powers (pp. 178-208) in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*

WEEK 5: SEX OF THE NATION I: Republican Madonnas and Magdalenes
- 3 OCT—Donna J. Guy, “Mothers Alive and Dead,” in *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America* (pp. 155-173)
  - Film (optional): *Lesbians in Buenos Aires*

WEEK 6: SEX OF THE NATION II: NATIONAL MASCULINITIES.
- 24 SEP—Thomas Klubock, “From Welfare Capitalism to the Free Market in Chile: Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Copper Mines,” in *Close Encounters* (pp. 369-399)
- 26 SEP—Víctor M. Macías-González, “The Bathhouse and Male Homosexuality in Porfirian Mexico,” in *Masculinity and Sexuality in Modern Mexico* (pp. 25-52)
  - Film: *Plata Quemada*

• 8 OCT—Sandra Lauderdale Graham, *Caetana Says No*, 1-72; Documents on Slave Prostitutes and Wet Nurses (ER)
• 10 OCT—Sue Ann Caulfield, “The Birth of Mangue” in *Sex and Sexuality in Latin America* (pp. 86-100)
  ○ **Midterm distributed in class.**

WEEK 8: Sex and Work
• 15 OCT (NO CLASS: COLUMBUS DAY RECESS)
• 17 OCT—Excerpt from Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, *Gendered Compromises: Political Cultures and the State in Chile, 1920-1950* (ER)
  ○ **Midterm due in class.**

WEEK 9: SEX AND WORK II:
• 24 OCT—Excerpt from Kamala Kempadoo, *Sun, Sex, and Gold: Tourism and Sex Work in the Caribbean* (ER)

WEEK 10: SEX AND THE CITY
• 29 OCT—Luis Zapata, *Adonis Garcia: A Picaresque Novel*
  ○ Film: *Madame Satã*
• 31 OCT—Charles Klein, “Making a Scene”: Travestis and the Gender Politics of Space in Porto Alegre, Brazil” in *Gender’s Place: Feminist Anthropologies of Latin America*, ed. Rosario Montoya, Lessie Jo Frazier, and Jessie Hurtig (ER)

WEEK 11: SEX AND THE MILITARY
• 7 NOV—Eric Roorda, “The Cult of the Airplane among U.S. Military Men and Dominicans during the U.S. Occupation and the Trujillo Regime,” in *Close Encounters* (pp. 269-310)

WEEK 12: SEX AND THE COLD WAR
• 12 NOV—Eric Roorda “McCarthyite in Camelot: The ‘Loss’ of Cuba, Homophobia, and the Otto Otepka Scandal in the Kennedy State Department” Diplomatic History 31 (2007): 723-754; Chapter Seven from Robert Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (ER)
WEEK 13: SEX IN THE US


Film: *Rope* or *Strangers on a Train* (Alfred Hitchcock)

WEEK 14: SEX AND U.S. EMPIRE


28 NOV (NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING RECESS)

WEEK 15: SEX AND REVOLUTION

3 DEC—Stephanie Smith, “‘If Love Enslaves... Love Be Damned!’: Divorce and Revolutionary State Formation in Yucatán” (pp. 99-111); and Anne Rubenstein, “The War on Las Pelonas: Modern Women and Their Enemies, Mexico City, 1924” (pp. 57-80), in *Sex in Revolution*; (optional: Jocelyn Olcott, “The Center Cannot Hold: Women on Mexico’s Popular Front,” pp. 223-240)

5 DEC—Excerpt from Ian Lumsden, *Machos, Maricones, and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality* (ER)

Film: *Antes que Anochezca*

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAYS DUE 10 DECEMBER VIA EMAIL.