Gender and Sexuality in the U.S., 1945-Present

University of Rochester

HIST 266-01/266W-01

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30pm-1:45pm

Morey 501

**Instructor:** Dr. Jed Kuhn

**Email:** jkuhn9@ur.rochester.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am-12pm, and by appointment

**Course Description:** The latter half of the 20th century was a period of dramatic societal change in the United States in which gender and sexuality played a key role. Surveying significant developments in this period including the Women’s movement and rise of feminism, the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights, the sexual revolution, the gender and sexual politics of the civil rights movement, the conservative backlash, and the AIDS/HIV epidemic, this course examines the struggle over rights, freedom, and competing worldviews that continues into our present moment. Moreover, we will consider how gender and sexuality are themselves socially constructed and historically contingent as well as deeply embedded in matters such as race and U.S. imperialism.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

• Identify and explain the significance of major figures, events, and phenomena in the post-1945 history of gender and sexuality in the United States

• Analyze historical and contemporary events in relation to relevant historical context

• Synthesize works of scholarship to make and support original arguments orally and in writing

• Demonstrate introductory-level proficiency in analyzing primary source historical documents

• Produce a historical research paper that demonstrates introductory proficiency in research design, evidence collection, historical contextualization, and analysis.

• Demonstrate increased proficiency in critical reading, writing, research, and thinking skills central to the practice of history.

• (266W) Evaluate and implement critical feedback to revise written work

**Required Texts:**

The following texts are **required for purchase** and available at the bookstore. Additional texts will be available through the library or on Blackboard:

* Nancy MacLean, *The American Women’s Movement, 1945-2000: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009)

**Requirements:**

Expectations: The success of this class depends on the quality of our classroom discussions. To ensure a rigorous intellectual environment, students must attend every class session prepared to participate. I expect students to:

• Read all assigned texts in preparation for every class session.

• Bring assigned texts with you to class for reference.

• Take notes.

• Attend regularly, missing no more than two class period for any reason other than illness or

calamity.

• Arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class session (If you must leave early, please let me know in advance).

• Refrain from distracting themselves and others (please no headphones, social media use, internet browsing, texting, etc.).

• Make thoughtful contributions to classroom discussions.

• Demonstrate **generosity** and **respect** in how you treat yourself, the professor, and especially

others in the classroom. One way to do this is to listen to and carefully consider the perspectives

of others.

I do not post PowerPoint slideshows or lectures online. Students are responsible for coming to class and taking notes. If a student misses a class, they are responsible for obtaining notes from that class period from a classmate.

Classmate names and emails:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Communication: Please communicate with the professor via your official University of Rochester email account ONLY. Note that I will not discuss grades over email. I generally read and respond to emails during regular work hours (8am-5pm, Monday-Friday) and strive to respond by the next work day.

Attendance**:**This is a discussion-intensive course. Attendance at and active participation in all classes are both mandatory. Students are responsible for all material covered in and announcements made in class. If it appears that students are not doing the readings, I will give reading quizzes without prior notice. I also reserve the right to impose a failing grade for the course after a student’s absence from seven or more class periods

Accommodating Students with Disabilities: The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [**disability@rochester.edu;**](mailto:disability@rochester.edu;) (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall; [**www.rochester.edu/college/disability**](https://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/index.html).

Classroom Environment: I am committed to providing a learning atmosphere that fosters a variety of respectful perspectives to enhance an inclusive academic experience for all students. Some of the class discussions, reading materials, and films might be difficult and sensitive in nature. I expect students to be respectful to one another and to the diversity of thoughts and opinions. You should be aware that we might discuss and view materials that deal with race, religion, gender expression, and sexuality in explicit ways throughout the semester. You will be expected to react as mature audience members in an academic setting. I strive to ensure that the classroom is an arena for the free exchange of ideas; behaviors and language that threaten to create a hostile or intimidating environment for any group of students will not be tolerated.

Strategies for Academic Success: Students can find a wealth of strategic academic success tools at the [Learning Center.](https://www.rochester.edu/college/learningcenter/index.html). All students are also highly encouraged to utilize the [Writing, Speaking and Argument Program](https://writing.rochester.edu/index.html) to help with all stages of the writing process.

Academic Integrity:

**Plagiarism, cheating, and all other forms of academic misconduct are unacceptable**. All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's [**Academic Honesty Policy**](https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy/index.html). It is your responsibility to read and understand the university’s policies regarding academic misconduct. If you have any questions about academic integrity, I encourage you to come and talk with me.

On the use of Artificial Intelligence: Learning to write well is a primary goal in this course. As such, the use of generative artificial intelligence or large language models such as ChatGPT has no place in this class and is **PROHIBITED**. Students should also note that generative AI has a tendency to invent/”hallucinate” sources and quotes. The inclusion of “hallucinated” sources or quotes constitutes a breach of academic integrity and will be dealt with accordingly. Remember that help is readily available for the work required for this class—you can visit me during office hours, you can make an appointment with the writing and speaking center, and you can meet with our subject librarian, [Lara Nicosia.](https://www.library.rochester.edu/profile/lara_nicosia)

Statement regarding credit hours: The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 266/266W are expected to devote at least one hour each week outside of class to analyzing the course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for the final paper.

**Assignments and Grading:** Students will be evaluated on their completion of the following tasks:

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| Participation and Attendance  20%--Ongoing | Students will be graded on their participation in classroom discussions. This grade will reflect the quantity and quality of student contributions (with quality ranking higher than quantity). Additionally, I may sometimes assign pop quizzes or short, in-class writing assignments. Points from these will be factored into students’ participation grades. |
| Response Papers—40% (20% each), due Mar 18 and May 11 | Students will write two 4-6 page papers responding to a prompt provided in class. Each response paper may entail one, two, or three essay questions over course readings. |
| Research Project—40%  -Proposal and Bibliography, 5%, due Mar 4  -Research Paper, 30%, complete draft due April 22; revised paper due May 11 | Students will write a research paper exploring a topic of their choice related to gender and sexuality in 20th century America. This assignment includes the following:  1) **Check-in #**1—Discuss potential topics with me by Feb 20.  2) **Proposal and Annotated Bibliography** (5%, due Mar 4) In this 1-2 page assignment, students will identify their topic and research question and propose a study to help them answer that question. Students will also include an annotated bibliography of at least five sources that they will consult. I will provide full instructions later in class.  3) **Check-in #2**—Submit a detailed outline and status report by April 3.  4) **Full Draft of Research Paper** (35%, due April 22) For students enrolled in 266, your paper must be 10-12 pages long. For students in 266W, it must be 15-18 pages long.  5) **Check-in #3**—Discuss what you can do to improve the draft of your paper (Required for students enrolled in 266W; optional for 266) on/around April 29.  6) **Revised Research Paper**—(due May 11 at 11:30am ) Re-submit your paper with revisions. Required for 266W; optional for 266. |

**Additional Details:**

All written assignments must be typed in 11 or 12-point Times New Roman or Calibri font, double spaced, with one-inch margins. The student’s name, the course call number, and date must be single-spaced and placed in the upper right-hand corner of the first page.

Citations must follow Chicago Manual of Style notes-bibliography format---available online through [Purdue OWL](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/cmos_formatting_and_style_guide/chicago_manual_of_style_17th_edition.html).

Turning in Assignments and Late Work:

Students must submit **both a hard copy** of **written assignments** and **upload the assignment to Blackboard.** Both are due at 12:30pm—the beginning of class. Assignments submitted after the beginning of class will be considered late and subject to a deduction of 5% off the total grade if submitted within the first 24 hours after the due date. An additional 5% will be deducted from the assignment’s final grade each day until it is submitted. Assignments more than 7 days late will not be accepted. Note also that I do not accept assignments via email.

Extensions will only be granted in exceptional cases, such as catastrophic illness or event.

Second Chances

Everyone in class will get one second chance. You can use your second chance to:

**•** Get a one week, no-questions-asked extension on response paper #1, the proposal and annotated bib, check-in #2, or the full draft.

**•** Revise response paper #1 for the chance to earn a higher grade. Revised version is due one week after I return the graded original.

To use the second chance for an extension, inform me by email before the paper is due. To use the second chance to revise the response paper, inform me the day I hand back the assignment and bring a hard copy of both your revised and original, graded paper to class the day it is due. Note that you only get ONE (1) second chance and that your second chance takes the place of extensions for brief illness, computer problems, etc.

Grading Scale: A=93-100; A-=90-92.9; B+=87-89.9; B=83-86.9; B-= 80-82.9; C+=77-79.9; C=73-76.9; C-=70-72.9; D+=67-69.9; D=63-66.9; D-=60-62.9; F=below 60%

\*Assignments, readings, and due dates on this syllabus are subject to change.

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| **Course Schedule** | | |
| **Week 1** | Jan 21  Jan 23 | **Welcome to Class!**  What does the history of gender and sexuality entail?  **Gender, Race, Class, and Culture**  What is gender? What do race, class, and labor have to do with gender?  • George Lipsitz, “Tradition, Turmoil, and Transformation: Three Wartime Workers” in *Rainbow at Midnight* (PDF on Blackboard) |
| **Week 2** | Jan 28  Jan 30 | **Gender and sexuality in the Post-War Period**  What is culture? What is the “feminine mystique”?  • Nancy MacLean, *The American Women’s Movement*, pp. 1-14, 47-57  • Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* “The Problem that Has No Name,” pp. 15-32, available: https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/FeminineMystique.pdf  • Joanne Meyerowitz, “Beyond the Feminine Mystique,” *Journal of American History* 79, no. 4 (Mar 1993): 1455-1482.  What are the Kinsey reports? What did they reveal about American sexuality?  • Miriam G. Reumann, “A Missing Sense of Maleness,” in *American Sexual Character*, pp. 17-53 |
| **Week 3** | Feb 4  Feb 6 | **American Sexualities**  What was life like for lesbians in the 1950s? Why did they go to bars? What are butch and femme?  **•** Kennedy and Davis, “‘A Weekend Wasn’t a Weekend If There Wasn’t a Fight’: The Tough Bar Lesbians of the 1950s,” *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, pp. 67-112.  What is the Mattachine Society? The Daughters of Bilitis?  • David K. Johnson, “‘Homosexual Citizens’: The Mattachine Society of Washington,” *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*, pp. 179-208.  • Nancy MacLean, *The American Women’s Movement*, pp. 58-59 |
| **Week 4** | Feb 11    Feb 13 | **The Color Line as a Sexual Line**  What does race have to do with gender and sexuality? What is miscegenation?  **•** Peggy Pascoe, “Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and Ideologies of ‘Race’ in Twentieth-Century America,” *Journal of American History* 83, No. 1 (Jun 1996): pp. 44-69.  • Nancy MacLean, *The American Women’s Movement*, pp. 59-62  What do gender and sexuality have to do with the civil rights movement?  • Danielle McGuire, "It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped," *The Journal of American Histor*y 91, No. 3, (2004): 906 - 931.  • Valerie Smith, “Emmett Till’s Ring,” *WSQ* 36, no. 1 &2 (Spring/Summer 2008): pp. 151-161 |
| **Week 5** | Feb 18  Feb 20 | **Trans Identities**  What does transgender mean? How does it relate to terms like queer and gay? What about Christine Jorgensen’s story appealed to the American public?  • Joanne Meyerowitz, “‘Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty,’” *How Sex Changed,* pp. 51-97  • (Recommended) Susan Stryker, “An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts,” *Transgender History*, pp. 1-29.  What role does race play in how the public perceives transness?  • Emily Skidmore, “Constructing the Good Transsexual: Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness, and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press,” *Feminist Studies* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 270-300.  • **DUE: Check-in #1** |
| **Week 6** | Feb 25  Feb 27 | **Population Control: The Pill, Immigration, and Undesirables**  What is the birth control pill? How and why was it developed? Why is Puerto Rico important in this story?  • Laura Briggs, “Demon Mothers in the Social Laboratory: Development, Overpopulation, and ‘the Pill,’ 1940-1960,” in *Reproducing Empire*, pp. 109-141  What role did race and sexual orientation play in US immigration policy? Why?  • Margot Canaday, “’Who is a Homosexual?’: The Consolidation of Sexual Identities in Mid-twentieth-century Immigration Law, 1952-1983” in *The Straight State*, pp. 214-254 |
| **Week 7** | Mar 4  Mar 6 | **The Revolution Begins**  What is meant by the term *sexual revolution?* What is second-wave feminism? Women’s liberation?  • Maclean, *American Women’s Movement,* 14-33, 66-83  • Beth Bailey, “Prescribing the Pill: Politics, Culture, and the Sexual Revolution in America’s Heartland,” *Journal of Social History* 30, no. 4 (Jan 1997):827-856.  • **DUE: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography**  What does the study of fashion offer to our understanding of history?  • Jo Paoletti, “Movers, Shakers, and Boomers” and “Feminism and Femininity,” *Sex and Unisex: Fashion, Feminism, and the Sexual Revolution*, pp. 16-58. |
| **Week 8** | Mar 11  Mar 13 | **Spring Break**  No class this week |
| **Week 9** | Mar 18  Mar 20 | **Queer and Trans Resistance: Stonewall and Beyond**  What happened at Stonewall? Was it a watershed moment in queer history? Why or why not?  • Susan Stryker, “Transgender Liberation” in *Transgender History*, pp.70-101  • *Making Gay History,* Stonewall 50, ep. 2—“Everything Clicked…And the Riot was On” (Listen on your own)  • Kevin Mumford, “The Lessons of Stonewall Fifty Years Later,” *QED* 6.2 (Summer 2019): 85-89  • **DUE: Response Paper #1**  **Roe v. Wade and Its Legacy**  • Leslie Reagan, “Radicalization of Reform” and “Epilogue” in *When Abortion was a Crime*, pp. 216-254 |
| **Week 10** | Mar 25  Mar 27 | **Gender and Cultural Nationalism**  What is cultural nationalism? Why were some groups of color suspicious of reproductive rights for women?  • Jennifer Nelson, “An Instrument of Genocide” and “Abortions Under Community Control” in *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, pp. 85-132  • Maclean, *American Women’s Movement*, 91-93, 121-124  Who are Chicana/o/xs? What roles did women play in the Chicano Movement?  • Maylei Blackwell, “Chicana Insurgencies” in *Chicana Power!* pp. 43-90  • Maclean, *American Women’s Movement*, 104-106 |
| **Week 11** | Apr 1  Apr 3 | **Rights and Backlash**  How did conservative elements in US society respond to changes in women’s and LGBT rights?  • Michael Bronski, “Revolt/Backlash/Resistance,” *A Queer History of the United States,* pp.205-235.  • Maclean, *American Women’s Movement*, 33-43, 100-103, 113-117, 124-127, 140-142, 146-149  • Readings TBD  • **Check-in #2** |
| **Week 12** | Apr 8  Apr 10 | **Women of Color Speak Back**  What does welfare have to do with race, gender, and sexuality?  • Maclean, *American Women’s Movement,* 106-113, 117-121  • Chapter 2 of “The Moynihan Report: An Annotated Edition.”  • Patricia Hill Collins, "A Comparison of Two Works on Black Family Life," Signs 14, no. 4, (Summer 1989): 875-884.  What is intersectionality? How did it engage with the feminist and cultural nationalist politics of the 1970s and beyond?  • Selections from *This Bridge Called My Back* (PDF on Blackboard)  • Maclean, *American Women’s Movement,* 134-139, 142-146 |
| **Week 13** | Apr 15  Apr 17 | **HIV/AIDS**  What is AIDS? How did the U.S. government respond?  • Jennifer Brier, “What Should the Federal Government Do to Deal with the Problem of AIDS?” *Infectious Ideas*, pp. 78-121.  Dedicated Research Time |
| **Week 14** | Apr 22  Apr 24 | **Third Wave Feminism, Masculinity, and the Queer 90s**  What is realness? Why is realness important for members of the ballroom community?  • Watch in class: *Paris is Burning* (dir.: Livingston, 1991)  • **DUE: Full Draft of Research Paper**  What is Third-Wave Feminism?  • Maclean, *The American Women’s Movement*, 149-174.  • Michael Kimmel, selection from *Guyland* |
| **Week 15** | Apr 29  May 1 | **2000-Today**  • Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *GLQ* 3, no. 4 (1997): 437-465.  • **Check-in #3**  **Final Class Discussion** |
| **Final Period** | May 11 (Sunday),  11:30am | **DUE: Revised Research Paper** via Blackboard, 11:30am  **DUE: Response Paper #2** via Blackboard, 11:30am |

*Have a safe, restful, and well-deserved Summer break!*