Anthropology and the Erotic Other

GENS 5014
MA Level Class
Fall 2015

Hadley Z. Renkin
renkinh@ceu.edu
Office: Zrínyi 412
Office Hours: TBA
Class Time: MW 3:30-5:10pm
Place: Z412

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to explore how our understanding of the meanings of sexuality and the erotic have been and continue to be produced through the concrete conjunctions of sexual desires and practices with a range of gendered, raced, classed, and geopolitical differences, and how this has shaped the definition and disciplining of a wide variety of internal and external erotic Others, with critical consequences for people’s lives, and senses of identity, community, and politics. From the United States to New Guinea to Eastern Europe, and from Foucault to Fascism to (post)Fordism, the class will draw upon material from anthropology, history, and cultural studies, to investigate and compare these understandings of erotic difference and their consequences across time and space, focusing on how different understandings of sexual identities, communities, and politics constitute, intersect with, and support or contest, broader systems of power and meaning, inclusion and exclusion. The course is meant both to destabilize our often unquestioned assumptions about sexuality and the erotic, and render more visible their mutual constitution with other critical vectors of social, cultural economic, and political difference. Discussion topics will include: colonial sex and exotic others; erotic outlaws and social control; national sexualities; erotic spatialities past and present; class erotics; HIV/AIDS; global sexual frictions; and transgender Others.

Learning outcomes: This course will acquaint students with a wide range of analytical approaches to the study of sexuality as a cultural phenomenon, and will provide them with the intellectual knowledge necessary to perceive and articulate more effectively its varied, complex, and subtle connections to relations of power, inclusion, and exclusion. Through its emphasis on the close reading of texts, as well as the continual linking of scholarly analysis to current, concrete manifestations of sexual practices and politics, the course will strengthen students’ skills in critical scholarship. Participation in discussion and writing for the course will train students to hone their effective expression of thoughts and reactions in analytical and scholarly terms.

Student Responsibilities and Requirements

This is a discussion-based course, not a lecture course. It will, therefore, require a great deal of responsibility on the part of all of you. For each class, I will first introduce and contextualize the week’s topic. We will then, as a class, map out the central theoretical and analytical moves presented by the day’s readings, their specific arguments, and the relationships between them. The remainder of the class will be an open discussion of these arguments and their implications –
in which I will occasionally mediate or intervene. Thus, all of you will be expected to analyze, express your opinions about, and debate the assigned materials in depth.

Requirements:

Short article summary presentation

After the first week of class, each of you will be required to present a SHORT (5 minute MAXIMUM) presentation summarizing the main argument of one of the readings for the course, and offering a couple of questions for discussion. This will be considered 10% of your class participation grade.

Final research paper (12-15 pages, typed, double-spaced)

A final research paper is required for the class:

This must be a critical research paper, exploring in depth one or more of the key issues examined in this course. Around the middle of the semester, each of you will meet with me in order to choose an appropriate topic and discuss possible readings for and approaches to the paper.

N.B.: The paper will be due on the last day of class; late papers will not be accepted.

Grading: General participation in class discussions will count for 50% of your grade (including 10% for your summary presentation). The Final Research Paper is worth 50% of the total course grade.

Class Schedule:

Part One: Setting Things Up

I. Sex: why, where, and when it matters


II. Colonizing the Erotic Self


III. Sexuality/Power


Part Two: Sites and Situations

IV. Panicking, Sexualizing, Bordering


V. National Erotics


VI. Othering Spaces


VII. Out-classed


VIII. Acting/Being: Erotic Selves and Others


IX. Globalocal Meanings, Localglobal Others. Pt. 1


2. Hadley goes to the American Anthropological Association (AAA) meetings - no class!

X. Globalocal Meanings, Localglobal Others. Pt. 2


**XI. Others of Fear and Desire: HIV/AIDS**


**XII. Trans?**
