

Fall 2017
Drew University Theological School

RLSC 749 Sexual Ethics

Professor Traci West
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Office: Seminary Hall 203
Office Hours: Available by appointment

Wednesday 4:10 pm - 5:55 pm

Seminary Hall 116

Introduction to the Course

This course will introduce students to a range of critical approaches to sexual ethics and contemporary debates about standards for public sexual morality. It emphasizes the role of race/ethnicity and religion in those approaches and debates. The themes that we examine will be centered primarily, though not exclusively, upon United States cultural contexts. The cultural and political questions related to sexuality include a focus on communities of African descent. With regard to religious sexual ethics, particular attention will be given to Christian religious experience and church life.

As the class examines a range of critical approaches to sexual ethics and contemporary debates about sexual morality, we will retain an ongoing concern with the following questions: What criteria should be used to establish public standards for sexual morality in religiously and politically pluralistic societies? What does religion, especially western Christianity, contribute to our understanding of how to establish public standards for sexual morality? Within their faith communities as well as the broader society, how can Christians play a constructive role? That is, how do they help to foster open dialogue as well as just moral relations that both serve the common good and oppose further harm to groups who, historically, have been politically subjugated on the basis of sex/gender mores?

One of the major objectives of the course is for students to garner resources about sexual ethics and religion and practice assessing the ethical values articulated in those resources.

This course can be submitted by UMC seminarians seeking ordination to their denominational officials to fulfill the sexual ethics requirement passed by the 2012 General Conference. The

legislation affirmed “its support of ministerial readiness regarding professional ethics, sexual ethics, healthy boundaries and self-care”. If you are planning to do this please see Professor West to discuss the focus of your written assignments on ethical ministerial leadership.

Student outcomes:

- Ability to compose a clear and detailed description of the definition of sexuality
- Ability to recognize and articulate how Christian moral values shape broader public understandings of sexuality in public life, especially related to race and gender
- Ability to identify and critically discuss cultural, social, historical and Christian sources that influence contemporary ideas about sexual ethics
- Ability to assess scholarly and/or church curriculum resources that focus on sexuality and sexual ethics

Books

- Sokari Ekine and Hakima Abbas, editors, *Queer African Reader*
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*
- Mark D. Jordan, *The Ethics of Sex*
- Patricia Beattie Jung and Darryl Stephens, eds. *Professional Sexual Ethics*

Suggested:

- Bernadette J. Brooten with Jacqueline L. Hazelton, *Beyond Slavery: Overcoming Its Religious and Sexual Legacies*

Additional articles and other resources are available on Moodle.

WHAT ARE OUR SOURCES FOR DEFINING SEXUALITY AND GENDER?

August 30 – Introduction to the course and the challenge of defining sexuality

September 6 – Science

READ: 1) Anne E. Figert, “White Coats: Boundary Disputes Between Scientific and Religious Authority,” in Beattie, Jung, and Vigen (M)

2) Joan Roughgarden, “Evolutionary Biology and Sexual Diversity” in Beattie, Jung, and Vigen (M)

3) James Calcagno, “Monogamy and Sexual Diversity in Primates...” in Beattie, Jung, and Vigen (M)

4) Lisa Jean Moore, “My Sperm in Shining Armor” from *Sperm Counts: Overcome by Man’s Most Precious Fluid* (M)

5) Anne Fausto Sterling, "Of Gender and Genitals: The Use and Abuse of the Modern Intersexual" from *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (M)

September 13 – Religious Histories

READ: 1) Jordan, *Ethics of Sex*, Chpts 3-4

2) Gail Labovitz, "The Purchase of His Money..." in
Brooten

3) Kecia Ali, "Slavery and Sexual Ethics in Islam" in Brooten

4) Mia Bay, "Love, Sex, Slavery, and Sally Hemings" in
Brooten

WRITE: Write a description of your understanding of unhealthy sexuality. Be sure to include historical/cultural/religious influences shaping that view. (two paragraphs)

Additional Resources: Kecia Ali, *Sexual Ethics and Islam*; Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, *Homosexuality in Islam, Critical Reflections on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims*; Margaret Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*; Don Browning, M. Christian Green, and John Witte Jr. *Sex, Marriage, and Family in World Religions*; Mary Hunt, and Patricia Beattie Jung, *Good Sex: Feminist Perspectives from the World's Religions*; Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*

September 20 – Scripture

1) Jordan, Chapter 2

2) Joy Schroeder, *Dinah's Lament*, Chpt 1 (M)

3) Dawne Moon, *God, Sex and Politics*, Chpt. 3 (M)

4) Miguel De la Torre, Chpt. 8 in Jung and Stephens

September 27 - Social History

READ: 1) Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*
(at least pp. 3-13; 53-114)

2) Mia Bay, "Love, Sex, Slavery and Sally Hemings" in Brooten

3) Margaret Farley, *A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*,

Additional Resources: Carolyn J. Dean, "The Productive Hypothesis: Foucault, Gender, and the History of Sexuality"; Johanna Oksala, Foucault, Phenomenology and Feminist Theory"; Chloë Taylor, Foucault, Feminism and Sex Crimes".

HOW ARE OUR ETHICS INFORMED BY SOME OF THE CONFLICTS, HYPOCRISIES, AND
DIFFERENCES CONCERNING SEXUAL MORALITY?

October 4 – Contesting Global Perspectives

- READ:** 1) *Queer African Reader*, Chpts. 8, 13, 15, 25, 32
2) John E. Goldingay, Grant R. Lemarquand, George R. Sumner, Daniel A. Westberg, "Same-Sex Marriage and Anglican Theology: A View from the Traditionalists"
3) Thelathia Nikki Young, *Queer Family Ethics*

WRITE: Write a description of your understanding of healthy sexuality. Be sure to include racial/national/cultural influences shaping that view. (two paragraphs)

Additional Resources: Marcella Althaus-Reid, "Queering God in Relationships: Trinitarians and God the Orgy," *The Queer God*; Jasbir K. Puar, "Conclusion," *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* Ramírez, Horacio N. Roque. "Mira, yo soy boricua y estoy aquí": Rafa Negrón's Pan Dulce and the queer sonic latinaje of San Francisco." *Centro Journal* 19.1 (2007): 274-313; Kailla Edger, "Evangelicalism, Sexual Morality, and Sexual Addiction Opposing Views and Continued Conflicts" *Journal of Religion and Health*, 2012; Joretta Marshall, "Proactive Intercultural Pastoral Care with Lesbian Women and Gay Men"

October 11 – Laws, Rules, Nature

- 1) *Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church*, Chpts. 3, 4, 5
- 2) Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* Chpt. 3 (M)
- 3) Christine Gudorf, *Body, Sex and Pleasure*

October 18 – Theological School Fall Break (No Class)

CASE STUDIES

October 25 – Boundaries and Church Leadership

READ: Jung and Stephens, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 10, 14, 15

Additional Resources: Anson Shupe and Janelle M. Eliasson-Nannini, *Pastoral Misconduct: The American Black Church Examined*; Glenn L. Starks, *Sexual Misconduct and the Future of Mega-churches: How Large Religious Organizations Go Astray*; Jason, Berry, *Lead us not into temptation: Catholic priests and the sexual abuse of children*.

November 1 – HIV and AIDS: Church Responses

Read: 1) Gerald West and Beverley Haddad, “Boaz as 'sugar daddy': re-reading Ruth in the context of HIV” in *Journal Of Theology For Southern Africa*, especially pp. 147-156.

WRITE: OPTION #2: Introduction to paper including thesis statement (3 pages)
Outline of entire paper
Bibliography

OPTION#1: The Bible Study is DUE

November 8 – Control of Women’s Sexual Reproduction

- 1) Sa’diyya Shaikh “Family Planning, Contraception, and Abortion in Islam” Undertaking Khilafah” in D. Maguire, ed., *Sacred Rights* (M)
- 2) Rebecca M. Kluchin, “Sterilizing Unfit Women” in *Fit to be Tied: Sterilization and Reproductive Rights in America, 1950-1980* (M)
- 3) Justice Ginsburg’s Dissent to U.S. Supreme Court Ruling Gonzalez v. Carhart April 2007 that supported a federal ban on “partial birth abortion” (M)
- 4) Justice Ginsburg’s Dissent to U.S. Supreme Court Ruling Burwell, Secretary Of Health And Human Services, et. al. v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc. (M)

November 15 – Sexual Assault

- Read: 1) Scholz, *Rape in the Hebrew Bible***
2) Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape, Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America*
3) McGuire, Danielle, *At the Dark End of the Street, Black Women, Rape and Resistance*

November 22 - Thanksgiving (No Class)

November 29 – Youth and Elderly Sexuality

- 1) Ott, Sex and Faith
- 2) Dykstra in Jung and Stephens
- 3) TBA

December 6 – Student Presentations

Write: Submit Outline of presentation.

ASSIGNMENTS

A. All students WRITE:

1. **Unhealthy Sexuality Paper - Length: two paragraphs**
DUE: September 13
2. **Healthy Sexuality Paper - Length: two paragraphs**
DUE: October 4

All students participate in six on-line (zoom) classes.

All students give a presentation to the class on the final day of class. Share one of the resources that you reviewed with the class.

B. All students choose Option #1 or Option #2:

OPTION #1:

WRITE: Two short reviews of resources that focus on religion and sexuality:

- 1) Review one website or review one church curriculum (approx. 400 words)
DUE: September 20
- 2) Review one fictional source e.g. film or book (approx. 400 words)
DUE: November 29

WRITE: a) Bible study resource - 2 pages DUE: November 1

- b) A paper that focuses on issues of power and sexuality and offers suggestions about the means for addressing problems

that arise from the misuse and abuse of them Length: 5 pages

DUE: October 25

DO: Help to lead Chapel service on sexuality and spirituality -
November 8th 6:10 pm Chapel service

OPTION #2:

WRITE: Two short reviews of resources that focus on sexual ethics and religion:

- 1) Review one recent scholarly book (approx. 400 words)

DUE: October 25

- 2) Review one popular fictional source e.g. film or book (approx. 400 words)

DUE: November 29

DO: Teach one 30 minute on-line class any topic relevant to the class.

WRITE: final research paper: 12-15 page research paper **DUE: December 13**

Requesting Accommodations at Drew

Requesting Accommodations for the First Time: students are instructed to contact Accessibility Resources, Brothers College, 119B; 973-408-3962. Although disclosure may take place at any time during the semester, students are encouraged to do so early in the semester, because, in general, accommodations are not implemented retroactively. For additional information, visit: <http://www.drew.edu/academic-services/disabilityservices>

Returning Students with Approved Accommodations: Requests for previously approved accommodations for the current semester should be sent to Accessibility Resources ideally within the first two weeks of class. This allows the office sufficient lead time to process the request.

Please call 973-408-3962, email disabilityserv@drew.edu, or complete the accommodations request at: <http://www.drew.edu/academic-services/disabilityservices/request-for-accommodations>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Drew University and Theological School have clear policies about the use of another's ideas and words without proper citation (including internet sites which should be used cautiously). Plagiarism will not be tolerated in students' written work. For the policy and guidelines for

avoiding plagiarism, see the Theological School catalogue in print or online:
<https://uknow.drew.edu/confluence/display/Handbook/Academic+Integrity+Policy>

In all your written work, you are expected to put your ideas in your own words. Whenever you do use the ideas or words of anyone else, whether a written source or a verbal one, great care should be taken to identify all quotations as such, to document the source of each quotation, and to document sources used but not quoted *verbatim* when that is appropriate. If you have questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the section “Academic Integrity” in your Theological School catalogue. For style, see *The Chicago Manual of Style* or any college handbook of style.

THE WRITING CENTER: <http://www.drew.edu/writingstudies/writing-center>

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE - Students are expected to use inclusive language according to Drew’s policies. To review the policy, see the catalogue for the Theological School and Daniel’s Dictionary: <https://uknow.drew.edu/confluence/display/Handbook/Inclusive+Language>.

