RELS 236* Religion and Sex

Fall 2015; Fridays, 8:30-11:30; Room 001 Macdonald Hall plus tutorial rooms

Instructor: Pamela Dickey Young, 402 Theological Hall, 533-6000, ext. 74324
youngpd@queensu.ca

TAs: Maxime Charest 15mc47@queensu.ca (Tutorials 2 and 4)
Brynn Harlock 0bmh2@queensu.ca (Tutorials 3 and 5)


Tutorial Rooms: Tutorial groups 2 and 4 Mac-Corry E230; Tutorial groups 3 and 5 Mac-Corry E202

The aim of this course is to provide an overview of some topics where issues of sex and sexuality intersect with particular religious traditions. The course is selective rather than comprehensive.

Throughout the course, the instructor will:
- provide content material that will contribute to gaining a knowledge of some of the ways in which the intersections of religion and sexuality have been approached and explained by scholars;
- provide opportunities for student discussion of some of the ways in which the intersections of religion and sexuality have been approached and explained;
- construct learning opportunities so as to involve multiple learning styles that exist among students;
- provide opportunities to synthesize the learning over the course of the student’s degree program.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of this course the instructor and students should:

- develop an understanding of the various ways that religious traditions and religious individuals have understood and responded to issues of sexuality;
- develop an understanding of scholarly interpretations of the intersections between religion and sexuality;
- be able to analyze texts where religion and sexuality are central themes.

Student Outputs:

During the course students will:
- demonstrate a knowledge of the basic terminology and concepts for the academic study of religion;
- demonstrate comprehension of some of the differing ways of seeing the mutual interaction between religion and sexuality;
- demonstrate comprehension of different theories and analytical methods that can be used to study religion and sexuality;
- undertake critical analysis of the theories and analytical methods that can be used to study religion and sexuality;
- undertake critical analysis of specific concrete manifestations of the intersection of religion and sexuality.
Texts:

There are two texts for the course. The rest of the course material is on e-reserve for the course.

If you have trouble accessing the e-reserves through the course Moodle site, you can access them directly with this url: https://ereserves.library.queensu.ca

The two texts are available in the Campus bookstore.

The texts are:


Outline of classes and readings:

Classes will normally proceed as follows: 8:30-10:20--lecture and discussion; 10:30-11:20 tutorial or film/discussion. The class will be divided into 4 tutorial groups.

1. **Sept. 18** Introduction to the course; introduction to discussions of sexuality
   Tutorials at 10:30 for groups 2, 3 in assigned tutorial rooms; Film or discussion for groups 4, 5 in Macdonald 001

2. **Sept. 25** Sex and Religion-scholarly conversations about religion; Overview of Sexuality in Judaism
   Tutorials at 10:30 for Groups 4, 5 in assigned tutorial rooms; Film or discussion for groups 2, 3 in Macdonald 001

Readings: *Sex and Religion* 1-18; 93-116.

3. **Oct. 2** Overviews of Sexuality in Christianity and Islam
   Tutorials at 10:30 for groups 2, 3; Film or discussion for groups 4, 5

Readings: *Sex and Religion* 117-141; 181-197.

4. **Oct. 9** Overviews of Sexuality in Hinduism and Buddhism
   Tutorials at 10:30 for Groups 4, 5; Film or discussion for groups 2, 3

Readings: *Sex and Religion* 18-59


5. Oct. 16 Menstruation and Virginity
Tutorials at 10:30 for groups 2, 3; Film or discussion for groups 4, 5
Proposal and Bibliography due by 8:30 am

Readings:

6. Oct. 23 Youth sexuality/sex education
Tutorials at 10:30 for Groups 4, 5; Film or discussion for groups 2, 3

Readings:

7. Oct. 30 Heterosexuality/Contraception
Tutorials at 10:30 for groups 2, 3; Film or discussion for groups 4, 5
First Reading Reflection Assignment due by 8:30 am.

Readings:
Paul VI, Humanae Vitae (On the Regulation of Birth).
8. **Nov. 6** Homosexuality/same-sex marriage  
*Tutorials at 10:30 for Groups 4, 5; Film or discussion for groups 2, 3*

Readings:  
- Pamela Dickey Young, “Same-Sex Marriage and the Christian Churches in Canada.”  

9. **Nov. 13** Celibacy/Asexuality  
*Tutorials at 10:30 for groups 2, 3; Film or discussion for groups 4, 5*

Readings:  

10. **Nov. 20** Trans issues: Hijras  
*Term Paper due by 8:30 am.*  
*Posters: times tba; no tutorials*

Readings:  

11. **Nov. 27** Trans issues: Hijras continued  
*Posters: times tba; no tutorials*

12. **Dec. 4** Evangelical Sex Manuals; and a Few Final Thoughts  
*Tutorials at 10:30 for Groups 4, 5; Film or discussion for groups 2, 3*

Readings:  

December 7. **Note this is a MONDAY. Classes over. Second Reading Reflection Assignment due by 10 am in Theological Hall, Room 403.**
Assignments:

Reading reflection assignments x 2; 2 x 25% = 50%—due October 30, 2015 and December 7, 2015.


Poster plus brief commentary OR Paper due on Nov 20, 2015; posters presented on Nov 20 and 27 and brief commentary due on day of presentation of poster as assigned by professor.

Tutorial 10%

4 Poster Evaluations: no mark value, but unless they are completed, 5% will be deducted from your final grade.

Except for posters, assignments can always be handed in early.

With the exception of the final Reading Reflection assignment, assignments should be handed to your TA in class by 8:30 am on the day they are due. The final reading reflection assignment should be handed in to 403 Theological Hall by 10:00 am on December 7, 2015.

A WORD ON DUE DATES

For the poster, the due date of poster and commentary is the day on which you are assigned to present. The feedback sheets are due the day you view the poster(s) in question. For the proposal, reading reflection assignments, and paper, the due dates are as stated. Procrastinators can have another week beyond the due date without the instructor's permission, but the penalty will be 10 (out of 100) marks for assignments handed in any time during that week. Beyond that first week's grace, students must negotiate late papers with the instructor or TA and such papers will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. Remember that, at times, a penalty is appropriate even in extenuating circumstances and the instructor reserves the right to assess a penalty of up to 10 marks for every week (or part thereof) that the paper is late.

With the exception of the final Reading Reflection assignment, assignments are due by 8:30 am on the due date. They should be brought to class on days when class is meeting. After classes are over in December, assignments should be brought to 403 Theological Hall by 10:00 am on the appropriate due date. Early and late papers should be put in the box for papers on the 2nd floor of Theological Hall.

Assignments (except posters) can always be handed in before the due dates.

Details about Assignments:

1. Reading Reflection Assignments (2 x 25=50 %)

You must complete 2 reading reflection assignments.

Please note: This assignment requires you to comment on ALL the given readings for each week you choose, not just one reading from each of those weeks.

The reading reflections assignments are an ongoing engagement with the material of the course, especially engagement with the assigned readings. For each assignment you must deal with AT LEAST 3 sets of class readings from the period covered by the assignment. For EACH SET of readings you should seek to answer briefly in sentence form AT LEAST the following questions: What were the main themes of the readings this week? If I were raising one issue for discussion in class what would it be? And, in brief, what would I say about that issue? You can also include your reactions to the films,
discussions, etc. and questions and issues that arise for you as you proceed in the course. Each reading reflection assignment should be about 1500-1800 words (about 500-600 words per assigned set of readings). Because the reading reflection assignments are to be graded, the expectation is that the student will not only share his/her personal thoughts, but will share these thoughts in direct relation to the readings and class content.

The reading reflection assignments will be graded on how well a student articulates the issues and answers included in the assignment (communication), what understanding the student shows about ways to think about the material under consideration and whether the reading reflection assignment shows an actual engagement with the course material (knowledge). The assignment should demonstrate that a student truly has done the readings for the class and thought about them critically and in some depth (critical thinking). See rubric for the assessment of reading reflection assignments on Moodle.

The first reading reflection assignment (on material from weeks 1-6) is due October 30, 2015 by 8:30 am. The second reading reflection assignment (on material from weeks 7-12) is due December 7, 2015 by 10 am.

2. Proposal and Bibliography Assignment (10%)

Students must choose either the poster or the paper option and communicate this to the professor on the Proposal and Bibliography Assignment. If you choose the poster option, please state whether you prefer to present on Nov. 20 or Nov. 27. Once you have chosen an option you are expected to stick to it. The professor reserves the right to assign students to a specific date in order to even out the number of posters to be presented in each week.

Provide a 1-2 page proposal and bibliography for your poster or paper. In this proposal, say whether you are choosing the poster or paper option. Include the proposed title for the poster/paper. Write one paragraph detailing what you propose to do in this poster/paper. Include the topic of the poster/paper and, insofar as you know it now, your general approach to the topic.

Provide a preliminary bibliography of at least 5 items directly relevant to your topic. At least one of these items must be a book, at least one must be a scholarly article and at least one must be a website which is not just the reproduction of print material (i.e., not an article from a source like JSTOR). These bibliographic resources cannot be taken from the list of course readings.

Provide a full bibliographic citation for each entry in an acceptable scholarly style (e.g., Chicago, MLA, APA, etc.) and state which style you are using.

Finally, provide one paragraph that explains how you will decide whether your sources are good scholarly sources for a university poster/term paper. The objective of this exercise is to introduce you to finding both web and print resources and to determining how to evaluate their relative worth.

The Proposal and Bibliography Assignment is due on October 16, 2015 by 8:30 am.

See rubric for assessment of the proposal and bibliography assignments on Moodle.

3. Poster plus brief commentary OR Paper (30%)

Students must choose either the poster or the paper option and communicate this to the professor on the Proposal and Bibliography Assignment. If you choose the poster option, please state whether you prefer to present on Nov 20 or Nov 27. Once you have chosen an option you are expected to stick to it. The professor reserves the right to assign students to a specific date in order to even out the number of posters to be presented in each week.

Posters: Posters are meant to communicate your research to the class and the professor.
Posters should be approximately 66 centimeters by 1 meter (or 2 feet by 3 feet). They should be no more than 1 meter by 1 meter. They can be prepared and printed electronically or by hand.

A poster should present a single message. Every poster should have a clear title and thesis or subject statement. It should include images. It should be well organized and easy to read and understand. It should be designed to contribute to a conversation. It should include a title; a thesis; a summary of your research findings; some visual aids to make the topic understandable to the class; your conclusions. It should make clear the criteria you are using for assessing or evaluating your topic.

There are a number of excellent websites on posters. A particularly good web site (even though it is aimed at scientific posters) is: [http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/](http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/)

The Queen’s Library website has an excellent video on creating Academic posters using Powerpoint. [http://library.queensu.ca/qlc/video/Academic_Posters/Academic_Posters.htm](http://library.queensu.ca/qlc/video/Academic_Posters/Academic_Posters.htm)

The posters will be presented on November 20 and 27 during class time. Specific times will be assigned to each poster. Students are expected to stand with their poster and explain their research to other students as they come along.

A brief commentary on the poster (3-5 double-spaced pages, about 750-1250 words) is required. In this commentary you should explain the reason you chose the topic and expand on the thesis, research findings and conclusions of your poster.

Posters plus commentary will be evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness at conveying your argument; your evident mastery of the material (ideas); your critical analysis of sources and capacity to present cogent interpretations of those sources (connections); your ability to bring critical and original thinking to the defense of your conclusions (extensions); your creative combination of the visual and the textual, and your capacity to use articulate English prose (written and spoken) in presenting your findings. Posters will be evaluated on the basis of both appearance and content, but a stunning appearance does not make up for lack of content. The text must be your own written work and you must provide proper citation and attribution where you use the work of others. You must provide a bibliography including sources for all images (can be on the back or appended to the brief commentary).

Posters should be tasteful—no gratuitous depictions of graphic sexuality

**Posters plus commentary must be handed in the day of the presentation (Nov. 20 or 27).**

**Paper.** A 10 page paper (2500 words) is expected. A bibliography is required (include the entries from your proposal assignment if they are still relevant, plus other resources that you have used). For more information on how to write a paper in Religious Studies, consult Scott Brown, *A Guide to Writing Academic Essays in Religious Studies* New York: Continuum, 2008.

Papers will be evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness at conveying your argument; your evident mastery of the material (ideas); your critical analysis of sources and capacity to present cogent interpretations of those sources (connections); your ability to bring critical and original thinking to the defense of your conclusions (extensions); and your capacity to use articulate English prose in presenting your findings. The text must be your own written work and you must provide proper citation and attribution where you use the work of others. You must provide a bibliography.

See rubrics for assessment of posters/commentaries and papers on Moodle

The paper is due November 20 by 8:30 am.

4. **Tutorials (10%).** Each student has been assigned to a tutorial group which will meet every second week (unless otherwise announced). Each student will be assessed a tutorial grade by the TA in
consultation with the professor. The tutorial grade will be based on attendance, participation and the completion of brief written and oral assignments for the tutorials.

5. Feedback Sheets. Every student is required to provide feedback sheets on at least 4 different posters done by classmates. (Forms will be provided. The form is posted on Moodle.) The sheets are to be handed to the TAs on the day of their completion. The sheets will not be graded, but whether or not they have been handed in will be recorded. If you do not hand in at least 4 feedback sheets 5% will be deducted from your final grade. If possible, the sheets will then be provided for feedback to the students whose posters you have evaluated.

Possible topics for bibliography, poster and paper:

Topics have to be in the general area of religion and sexuality. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

One specific sacred text and sexuality (Bible, Talmud, Qur’an, Vedas, etc.)

Sex and the sacred in a particular religious tradition (e.g., Tantra, God as Divine Lover, Sex as a vehicle for the Sacred, etc.)

Sex and Religion in a specific time period in a particular religion

A specific topic like masturbation, premarital sexuality, contraception, homosexuality, celibacy, extramarital sexuality, transgendered sexuality, transsexuality, sexual violence, sex workers, in a particular religious tradition at a particular historical time.

Disease (HIV/AIDS, STIs), sexuality and a particular religious tradition.

Resistance to the dominant views of sexuality in a particular religious tradition.

Grading:

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

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Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/2011-2012-calendar/academic-regulations/regulation-1), on the Arts and Science website (see http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Copyright of Course Materials:

The material on this syllabus and on the course website is copyrighted either by the instructor or by the copyright holders of various assigned readings and is for the sole use of students registered in RELS 236. The material on the course website may be downloaded for a registered student’s personal use, but shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in RELS 236. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.

Learning Hours:

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<th>Average hours per week</th>
<th>Number of weeks</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
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