This introduction to sexuality studies is an examination of the historical origins, social functions, and conceptual limitations of the notion of “sexuality” as a domain of human experience and a field of power relations. Sexuality is often taken to be a natural and unchanging element of individual life. In this course, we seek to examine the ways in which sex is both social and political. We will consider how sexuality has been socially constructed, paying careful attention to the ways these ideas relate to other social forces such as gender, race, and class. Our readings are organized around four key questions:

1 - *What is sexuality?*
2 – *How did sexuality emerge, that is, how did it come to be thought of as a “phenomenon?”*
3 – *How are sexualities organized, manifested, and enacted?*
4 – *How is sexuality used for political domination, mobilization and contestation?*

**READINGS:**
Books are available for purchase from Book Culture at 536 W. 112th Street, 212-865-1588, and are on reserve in the Barnard library. All other readings will either be posted online in the “Files and Resources” section of the class Courseworks site, or will be handed out in class.

**Required books**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
**Attendance and participation** – You are expected to attend all sessions and actively participate in the discussions and in-class assignments. No unexcused absences.
**Short response papers** – Two times in the semester, you will be assigned a brief (3 page, double spaced) paper that engages the assigned readings in response to questions that are provided to guide your reading. (Due September 25 & **November 13—revised date**)
**Sexuality in the City: Fieldtrip & Mid-term Essay** – Your midterm assignment is an 8-10 page analytic essay linking a “find the sexuality” field trip (e.g., to a neighborhood, museum, or local institution) to the readings you’ve completed up to that date. No outside reading or research will be required. More details will be provided as the assignment nears. (**Due October 25—revised date**)
**Subtext/Pretext Presentation** – During the last weeks of the semester, you will meet two times in small groups to identify specific ways in which sexuality is involved in political discourse, even in issues that are not ostensibly “about” sexuality, like the war on drugs, terrorism, or the economy. Your group will make a brief (about 10 minutes) in class presentation on 3 linked articles or news clips that you
identify as examples of sexuality as a subtext or pretext in political discourse. More details will be provided as the assignment nears. (Due dates: November 29, December 4, and December 6)

**Final exam** – You will have an in-class final exam that will consist of essay responses to one or more questions we will provide in advance.

**GRADING**

Attendance, participation, and discussion – 20%
Short response papers – 20% (10% each)
Midterm fieldtrip & essay – 25%
Presentation – 10%
Final exam – 25%

**NOTE:** All written assignments must be submitted on time unless you make a prior arrangement and provide documentation from a doctor or a dean. Late assignments will be marked down one grade per day, and no unexcused late assignments will be accepted more than 2 days after the due date.

**PRELIMINARY READING SCHEDULE** – Bring assigned readings to class each session.

**PART 1: SEXUALITY AS A CONCEPT**

**WEEK 1:** Intro & Overview; Concepts of Social Construction (Readings are online)

* 9/4 – Introduction & overview

**WEEK 2:** Concepts of Social Construction cont’d


**WEEK 3:** Sexuality and the making of the self


**WEEK 4:** Sexuality and the self, continued


* Short response paper due Tuesday 9/25 in class.


**WEEK 5:** A three ply yarn - untangling sex, gender, sexuality


PART 2: MAKING DISTINCTIONS/MAKING POPULATIONS THROUGH SEXUALITY

WEEK 6: Making Sex: heterosexual bodies

WEEK 7: Making Empires, Races, Nations

WEEK 8: Erotics and Racialization

*Sexuality in the City mid-term essay due Thursday October 25 in class—revised date.*

PART 3: SEXUALITY, POWER, AND POLITICS

WEEK 9: Feminist Theories and the Sex Wars

WEEK 10: (11/8 only. No class for Election holiday) Feminist Theories and the Sex Wars cont’d

WEEK 11: Heteronormative masculinity

*Short response paper due Tuesday 11/13 in class—revised date.*


WEEK 12 (11/20 only. No class for Thanksgiving) – Sexuality & Global Politics


WEEK 13: Sexuality & Global Politics cont’d


*Subtexts & Pretexts presentations will be divided over the last 3 class sessions.*


WEEK 14: Desiring Change


IN CLASS FINAL EXAM – December 18 (date to be confirmed by registrar)