Course Description
“Biological sexuality is the necessary precondition for human sexuality. But biological sexuality is only the precondition, a set of potentialities, which is never unmediated by human reality.” -- Robert Padgug, 1979

Our genders and sexualities are not simply something we possess; they are constructed, performed, restricted and controlled all within the historical and cultural setting in which we live. This course will examine the intersections among sexuality, culture, gender, and the body. The course will explore a variety of sexualities and genders emphasizing the multifaceted nature of power, privilege, and oppression.

Course Outcomes/Learning Objectives

1. Learning Objective One: Learn about theoretical frameworks, theories, and concepts.
   a. There will be quiz questions on the definitions of a sociological theoretical framework, theory, or concept from reading.
   b. There will be short case studies analysing cultural memes demonstrating the student’s ability to apply theoretical frameworks.
   c. Students will be expected to participate in online discussion groups generating questions and critiques of theoretical frameworks.

2. Learning Objective Two: Learn about other scholars’ sociological empirical research
   a. Students will read original works of sociologists and social psychologists on the topics of gender and sexualities.
3. **Learning Objective Three: Learn how to collect and analyze data using sociological research methods**
   
a. Students will take part in online, anonymous surveys to learn how the class represents a microcosm of the broader picture depicted in course readings.
   
b. Students will be expected to interview someone outside the class for a research paper on gender and sexual politics.

4. **Learning Objective Four: Learn about inequality through a sociological lens**
   
a. Students will be taught how to use an intersectional approach to all course readings, paying particular attention to the wide range of experiences depicted in the course reading material.

**Required Materials**


**Major Assignments**

1. Three exams each worth 30 points (**total of 90 points**)
   
a. See [Exam Description](#) for more information and due dates
   
b. See [Practice Test Questions](#) for sample questions

2. Class Research Paper worth **70 points**
   
a. See [Writing Assignment Requirements](#) for more information
   
b. See [Class Research Paper Details](#) for more information

3. Online Group Discussions worth **170 points**
   
a. See [Cultural Memes as Dominant Discourses](#) for more information
   
b. See [Group Discussion Netiquette](#) for more information
   
c. For every individual post, you must reply to two other posts
   
d. See [Discussion Group Deadlines](#) for more information

**Class Grade**

Your grade is based on a total of 330 possible points. There are two extra credit options each worth 15 points for a total of 30 points (equivalent of one exam).
Grading Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Final Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Final Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Discussions</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>Final Grade</td>
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Final Grade Based on 330 Possible Points

Flexibility Statement
The instructor reserves the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional, weather, or class situations.

Remote learning is new to me and many of you. Therefore, flexibility is key! I will work with the class to make any changes that will improve the learning (and teaching) experience.

Course Calendar/Schedule
Due to COVID-19, this class has been quickly adapted for remote learning. A rough outline of the course calendar can be found by clicking on the following link: Weekly Pedagogical Flow.

Please Note: the Weekly Pedagogical Flow is a Google Doc
The course outline is a living document meaning the reading schedule, required work, and due dates may change. The Weekly Pedagogical Flow will be kept as a Google Doc so changes can be shared instantly.

Exam Description
Exams will be posted on D2L for one week. Students will have two hours to take the exam and will only be allowed one attempt.

All exams will consist of 30 fill-in-the-blank, true/false, or short vignettes questions testing students on vocabulary and the ability to identify sociological frameworks.
Exam Due Dates
First Exam: opens 4/27 and closes 5/1
Second Exam: opens 5/18 and closes 5/24
Third Exam: opens 6/7 and closes 6/14

Practice Test Questions
On D2L, there will be practice quizzes with roughly 5 questions for students to become familiar with the kind of questions they will find on the three exams. These practice quizzes are designed for the exams, not for reading quizzes.

Writing Assignment Requirements
All written assignments should be submitted on D2L using the assignment’s dropbox which can be found by clicking on Activities, then Assignments. Please do not email course work.

Assignments must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, using one inch margins on all sides. Please include a title at the top of the first page just before the first paragraph.

All submitted papers need to be checked and corrected for spelling errors and grammar. Be sure to answer writing assignment questions in complete sentences. If you require assistance in this area, the PSU Writing Center can help. Papers with high numbers of spelling, grammatical, or sentence structure errors will be penalized 25% of assignment grade.

Class Research Paper Details
Choose one of the following options below. Papers must be no shorter than three full pages and no longer than four. Written Analysis - Due May 22nd

1. Personal/Social Observation: You are to go to a social event such as dancing, a date, out with friends, and observe the interactions of all participants (specifically yourself). Given the current requirement of “shelter in place,” these events can be online. The goal is to identify a social interaction that is important to you and group focused.

The purpose of this project is to focus on the implicit gender and sexual norms that heavily guide our behavior during such “outings.” Specifically, this assignment is an opportunity for “othering yourself” or “queering your performance” meaning to observe yourself as object (see symbolic interactionism or queer theory-proformativity). For example, what are the ways you move through the space using gendered and sexual norms that may be different than when you are alone or around family? How do those around you shape your behaviors? When a performance/interaction breaks down, how do you renegotiate the experience?

Please Note: this project is not about naming The Other or researching a subculture/counterculture; instead, you are exploring your own social location and its effect on your interactions. For example, if you were to go see a drag show at Darcelle XV, your paper should focus on your reaction to the show: What jokes were funny to you? Was anything uncomfortable? If so, why?
2. Breaching Experiment: A breaching experiment, sometimes referred to as "Garfinkeling,” is a social experiment seeking to examine peoples’ reactions to the violation of commonly accepted social norms (see Breaching Experiment: Definition & Examples for ideas). Such an experiment can be a powerful way to explore how dogmatically we follow normative protocol. You will need to find a social setting where you can subvert taken-for-granted norms about gender/sexuality. For example, “doing gender” goes on in every part of our daily life—especially when buying clothes. So what would happen when a person read as male goes into the “women’s section” and asked to put on their clothing? How would the salesperson react? How do you react? Would the same be true if a person read as female went into the “men’s section”?

3. Discourse Analysis: Discourse is a specific type of practice through which we communicate messages to and about one another. These messages lay the foundation of what is normal and abnormal (Alavi, p. 157) You are welcome to explore the discourse around gender/sexuality. To do this, read Alavi’s article, Little White Lies: Race, Dildos and American Culture, and think about a setting where there’s a strong/loud discourse about gender/sexuality. For example, go to an erotica store and look at where, what, and how everything in the store is displayed. Are the “sex toys” in the front of the store or in the back? Whose sexuality is on sale? Whose sexuality is being focused on?

To all students I am looking for a paper in which you explore the concepts covered in the class. Using the example above of a drag show, you might write about why you reacted to the drag performance in the way you did. Explore the attitudes, norms, values and beliefs that you think shaped your experience. It is important to define the concepts you apply in the paper, their significance, and please use quotes to earn full credit. If you choose to use a constructionist’s perspective, ask questions like: How is gender/sexuality constructed in this context? What are the historical connections?

**Cultural Memes as Dominant Discourses**

We embody our cultural stories, narratives, and norms. For example, why do you find or feel some memes resonate more than others? Sociologically, memes are a great way to analyze what narratives and norms are popular at a given historical moment. More importantly, your reaction to memes can be a powerful way to explore what you have internalized and how it shapes the choices you make.

Students will need to find three memes that really resonate for them and relate it to the course material. Memes will be posted in a group discussion for the class to analyze. You may not post a meme that is identical to one that has already been discussed, but you may use memes with the same images and different messaging.

**What is a meme you ask?**

A meme is "an idea, behavior or style that spreads from person to person within a culture." A meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols or practices, which can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena (Boundless.com, accessed March 28, 2020). An example of a meme for this class would be:
When posting your meme, be sure to 1) identify the norm or narrative you think is being expressed and why, 2) then use one sociological perspective to explain the implications of the meme.

Example:
One narrative the meme above is depicting is the American cultural norm of indirectly communicating sexual interest in someone, which often makes flirting so confusing. The character looks apprehensive and is trying to answer the question: flirting or being nice? This issue is deeply gendered and connected to power dynamics.

From a feminist perspective, this norm causes a lot of sexual danger across the board, but for women in particular, there is vitriol and anger when “just being nice” is perceived as flirting; the cultural story represented here is that privilege breeds entitlement, particularly in heteropatriarchal societies, this aggrieved entitlement can extend to social and sexual exchange, leading dominant cultural groups to objectify those with less power.

This is a reflection/awareness exercise as much as it is intellectual. How many times have you experienced this interaction? Have you been blamed for your niceness? How did you navigate this interaction?

Discussion Group Deadlines
Each Week, students are expected to post at least once under a forum topic and reply twice to another student’s post. Posts need to be completed by Sunday, 11:30 pm.

What to Post - Forum Topics or Meme
Most forum topics will have question prompts in the topic description section to help shape posts. For example, a forum topic under “Reading Questions” may have a topic asking students to compare two theories. Posting under this topic would require the student to discuss how one theory works differently than another. Make sure to answer all questions when posting. Students may use personal experience; however, when using personal experience to make a point, students must also include cited literature to earn full credit.

Students may post a meme, which will count for the post-of-the-week as well as one of the three meme assignments required for the term.
Replies should be used to generate student discussion around the course material. For example, if there is a post comparing queer theory with social construction theory, a student can reply by adding insight to the comparison or ask questions. Replies are also expected to include cited work.

**Extra Credit Options**

To ensure you earn the grade you want in this class, there will be the opportunity to do two extra credit papers (15 points each) for a total of 30 points.

Extra credit can be a reflection paper based on participating in an event relevant to the class (this can be done online given COVID-19 precautions). For example, going to a community event focused on relationships, Gender, families, or sexualities. A second option is to write a paper analyzing a movie, documentary, or podcast relevant to the course material. Papers should be a minimum of two pages, maximum of four pages.

**Event Reflection Components**

1. Explain why you picked this event and how you feel it is relevant to the class.

2. Outline how your social location (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, age, gender identity, etc.) may have shaped your reaction to the event. For example, did you feel comfortable in the space? If yes, why? If not, explain. Were there themes that came up that you found interesting or offensive? Be sure to focus on how your identities informed your experience.

3. Connect at least one theoretical concept from any class material to the event content. Please use a quote from any class readings to illustrate which theoretical framework you are invoking. For example, you could discuss the way social constructionism was invoked by the way the event was organized.

**Analysis Paper Components**

1. Explain why you picked this documentary, movie, or podcast and how you feel it is relevant to the class.

2. Connect at least one theoretical concept from any class material to the event content. Please use a quote from any class readings to illustrate which theoretical framework you are invoking. For example, you could discuss how exchange theory helps explain the rules of romantic comedies.

**Course Attendance and Make-up Policies**

I will not accept late work. Please be sure to upload assignments on time when they are due. Most assignments are due on Friday by 11:50pm.
PSU Policies & Resources
Here are some important links to resources you may want to take some time and read.

**PSU Grading System**
Undergraduate:  

Drop/Withdraw Deadline  

**Disability Access Statement**
If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations.

The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union  
call: 503-725-4150  
email: drc@pdx.edu  
visit: [https://www.pdx.edu/drc](https://www.pdx.edu/drc)

**Safe Campus Statement**
Portland State University desires to create a safe campus for our students. As part of that mission, PSU requires all students to take the learning module entitled Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault. See [http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/safe-campus-module](http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/safe-campus-module).

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on PSU’s Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at [http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault](http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault)

**Student Food Security**
Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact Committee for Improving Student Food Security for support at foodhelp@pdx.edu.

Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

**Title IX Reporting**
As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that as a faculty member, I have the
responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination.

If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals on PSU’s Enrollment Management & Student Affairs: Sexual Prevention & Response website at http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault.

For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module “Creating a Safe Campus: Preventing Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Assault” in the “My Courses” section of D2L.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is a vital part of the educational experience at PSU. Please see the PSU Student Code of Conduct for the university’s policy on academic dishonesty. A confirmed violation of that Code in this course may result in failure of the course.

Incomplete Policy
Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade. The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when the following criteria are met.

Eligibility Criteria:
1. Required satisfactory course completion/participation.
2. Reasonable justification for the request.
3. Incomplete grade is not a substitute for a poor grade.
4. Written agreement. (See Incomplete Contract)
5. Resolving the Incomplete.


Cultural Resource Centers
The Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. We honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. Our centers include the Multicultural Student Center, La Casa Latina Student Center, Native American Student & Community Center, Pan African Commons, Pacific Islander, Asian, Asian American Student Center and the Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian program. We provide student leadership, employment, and volunteer opportunities; student resources such as computer labs, event, lounge and study spaces; and extensive programming. All are welcome!

Zoom Use
We will use Zoom for virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Your use of Zoom is governed by the Acceptable Use Policy and PSU’s Student Code of Conduct. A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. Individual use and distribution of recording is limited to academic purposes.
**Turnitin**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.