

# The Poetics and Politics of Sex: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century European Empires

AS.363.334 (01) // Maryland 109 // Tuesdays & Thursdays 3-4:15pm  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2-3pm in the Gillman Atrium or by appointment

## Course Description

This course demonstrates the centrality of gender and sexuality to understanding how European empires functioned historically in terms that include but are not limited to the bureaucracy of the colonial state, the treatment of colonial subjects in both legal and social norms, travel and migration, and the liminal position of elite colonial subjects. Each week through lectures, selected readings, and discussions, students will explore the multiple ways historians can use gender and sexuality to produce and analyze history.

## Course Format and Grading

Students should complete each week's readings and post a response to Blackboard by 3pm Monday. Responses should be approximately one page in length and should make a distinct argument about one aspect of the readings. In lieu of a final exam, students will be asked to write a 15-20 page research paper devoted to a topic of their choosing under the rubric of the themes explored in class around gender, sexuality, and empire. Students will practice historical analysis through the lens of gender and sexuality with a 7-10 page midterm paper.

In-Class Participation	30%
Blackboard Responses	20%
Midterm Paper	20%
Final Paper	30%

## Course Objectives

- Understand and analyze key themes, concepts, and events related to the history of European empires in the twentieth century.
- Explore how historians have used a focus on gender and sexuality to inform their analyses of this history.
- Critically analyze both primary and secondary sources.
- Construct coherent and well-organized historical arguments, both in writing and orally in class discussions.

## Week 1: Introduction (September 1)

- Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist*. 104.3 (2002): 783-790.
- Edward Said, "Introduction" in *Orientalism* (Vintage Books, 1994), 1-28.

- Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American History Review* 91:5 (1986), 1053-1075.

## UNIT 1: GENDER-POLICING IN THE COLONIAL STATE

### Week 2: Introduction to Slave Societies (September 6 & 8)

- Olwyn Mary Blouet, "Slavery and Freedom in the British West Indies, 1823-33: The Role of Education" *History of Education Quarterly* 30:4 (1990): 625-43.
- Barbara Bush, "Hard Labor: Women, Childbirth and Resistance in British Caribbean Slave Societies" in *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, edited by D. Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clarke Hines, (1996): 193-217.
- Martha Few, "Women, Religion, and Power: Gender and Resistance in Daily Life in Late-seventeenth-century Santiago De Guatemala" *Ethnohistory* 42:4 (1995): 627-37.

### Week 3: Colonial Schools (September 13 & 15)

- Zeynep Çelik, "A Lingering Obsession: The Houses of Algiers in French Colonial Discourse," in *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City through Text and Image*, edited by Zeynep Celik, Julia Clancy-Smith, and Frances Terpak (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009): 134-160.
- Rebecca Rogers, "Teaching Morality and Religion in Nineteenth Century Colonial Algeria: Gender and the Civilizing Mission," *History of Education* 40:6 (November 2011): 741-759.
- Nancy Rose Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbura's Foyer Social, 1946-1960." *Signs* 15, no. 3 (1990), 447-74.

### Week 4: (European) Women Reforming (non-European) Women (September 20 & 22)

- Antoinette Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and 'The Indian Woman,' 1865-1915," in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, edited by Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (1992).
- Leah Rosenberg, "The New Woman and 'the Dusky Strand': The Place of Feminism and Women's Literature in Early Jamaican Nationalism" *Feminist Review* 95 (2010).
- Margaret Strobel, "Missionaries, Reformers, and the Status of Indigenous Women" in *European Women and the Second British Empire* (1991): 49-71.

## UNIT 2: COLONIAL MASCULINITIES

### Week 5: Masculinities Abroad: Curtailing the Threat of Colonial Elites (September 27 & 29)

- Mrinalini Sinha, "Introduction," "Competing Masculinities: the Public Service Commission, 1886-87," and "Potent Protests: the Age of Consent Controversy, 1891" in *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (1995)
- Emily Apter, "Female Trouble in the Colonial Harem," *Differences* (Spring 1992): 205-224.

- Kenneth Ballhatchet, "On the Margins of Social Distance," in *Race, Sex, and Class under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905* (1980): 96-122.

#### **Week 6: Masculinities at Home: Manliness & Citizenship in the Metropole (October 4 & 6)**

- Anne McClintock, "Imperial Leather: Race, Cross-Dressing, and the Cult of Domesticity" and "The White Family of Man: Colonial Discourse and the Reinvention of Patriarchy" in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995): 132-180, 232-257.

#### **Week 7: Model Masculinities: The Colonial Soldier (October 11 & 13)**

- Jennifer Sessions, "Empire of Merit: The July Monarchy and the Algerian War," in *By Sword and by Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (2011): 67-124.
- Gregory Mann, "Introduction," "Soldier's Families and Slavery's Echoes," and "A Military Culture on the Move" in *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (2006).
- Elizabeth Thompson, "Soldiers and Patriarchs: Pillars of Colonial Paternalism" in *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (2000).

### **UNIT 3: POLICIES OF THE COLONIAL STATE FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES**

#### **Week 8: Patriotic Motherhood (October 18)**

- Jasodhara Bagchi, "Representing Nationalism: Ideology of Motherhood in Colonial Bengal" *Economic and Political Weekly* 25:42/43 (1990).
- Alice Conklin, "Redefining Frenchness: Citizenship, Race Generation, and Imperial Motherhood in France and West Africa, 1870-1912" and Frances Gouda, "Good Mothers, Medeas, or Jezebels: Feminine Imagery in Colonial and Anticolonial Rhetoric in the Dutch East Indies, 1900-1942," in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in Dutch and French Colonialism*, edited by Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (1998): 65-83, 236-254.
- Elizabeth Thompson, "Political Rights: Women's Suffrage as a Revolutionary Threat" and "Civil Rights: Patriotic Motherhood and Religious Law Reform" in *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (2000).

#### **Week 9: Establishing Paternity and Maternity in the Colonial State (October 25 & 27)**

- Emmanuelle Saada, "A Threat to the Colonial Order" and "Investigating Paternity in the Colonies" in *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies* (2012).
- Ann Laura Stoler, "Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: Cultural Competence and the Dangers of Métissage" and "A Sentimental Education: Children on the Imperial Divide" in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (2002): 79-111, 112-139.

**Week 10: Policing Deviant Sexualities (November 1 & 3)**

- Philippa Levine, "Space and Place: The Marketplace of Colonial Sex" in *Prostitution, Race and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (2003): 297-322.
- Susan Pedersen, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-making," *The Journal of Modern History* 63 (December 1991): 647-680.
- Luise White, "Introduction: Prostitution in Comparative Perspective; or, Casual Sex and Casual Labor" and "Prostitution and Housing in Nairobi, 1919-1929" in *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (1990): 1-28, 51-78.

**UNIT 4: ANTI-RACISM, ANTI-COLONIALISM, & FEMINISM (interwar-1960s)**

**Week 11: Black Activism in the Colonial Metropole (November 8 & 10)**

- Brent Hayes Edwards, "Feminism and *L'Internationalisme Noir*: Paulette Nardal" in *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (2003).
- Jennifer Anne Boittin, "Reverse Exoticism & Masculinity: The Cultural Politics of Race Relations" in *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Interwar Paris* (2010): 111-132.

**Week 12: New Women, New Nations: Nationalist Feminisms (November 15 & 17)**

- Margot Badran, "Dual Liberation: Feminism and Nationalism in Egypt, 1870s-1925," *Feminist Issues* (Spring 1988), 15-34.
- Anne Macpherson, "Citizens v. Clients: Working Women and Colonial Reform in Puerto Rico and Belize, 1932-45" *Journal of Latin American Studies* 35:2 (2003): 279-310.

**Week 13: Gender in the Wars of Independence (November 29 & December 1)**

- Natalya Vince, "Heroines and victims, brothers and sisters" and "From national construction to new battles" in *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory, and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (2015): 72-101, 180-211.
- Barbara Ramusack, "Catalysts or Helpers? British Feminists, Indian Women's Rights and Indian Independence," in *The Extended Family: Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan*, edited by Gail Minault (1981).
- Phillipa Levine, "Contesting Empire" and "Decolonisation" in *The British Empire: Sunrise to Sunset* (2013): 180-205, 206-234.

**Week 14: Feminisms in a Post-Colonial World (December 6 & 8)**

- M. Jacqui Alexander, "Redrafting Morality: The Postcolonial State and the Sexual Offences Bill of Trinidad and Tobago," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (1991): 133-152.

- Lynn Stoner, "Fields, Factories and Feminists" and "Blacks, Whites and Women: The Equal Rights Law" in *From the House to the Streets: The Cuban Women's Movement for Legal Reform, 1898-1940* (1991): 167-184, 185-192.
- John D. French and Mary Lynn Pedersen, "Women and Working Class Mobilization in Postwar Sao Paulo, 1945-1948," *Latin American Research Review* 24:2 (1989): 99-126.