

**Carleton University**  
**Winter 2019**  
Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's and Gender Studies

Crosslist WGST4812B/WGST5902B  
**Feminist Controversies in Sexuality and the Law**

**Thursday 8:35-11:25**  
Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: **Dr. Ummni Khan**  
Email: [Ummni.khan@carleton.ca](mailto:Ummni.khan@carleton.ca)  
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Office Hours: **After class**

- *This outline is preliminary and subject to change*

## DESCRIPTION:

Feminist theorists, activists and legal reformers often identify sexuality as a key site of oppression, if not the quintessential linchpin to patriarchy. At the same time, feminists are in dispute with one another about the meaning of sexuality, which sexual practices are oppressive, and which strategies will best bring about equality and liberation. At stake in these debates is determining the feminist agenda for social change, along with identifying which "side" is entitled to claim *the* feminist position on the issues.

With an emphasis on the contemporary socio-legal context, this class surveys a number of "hot topics," including BDSM, pornography, sex work, sexual violence, and safe spaces. The goal is for us to engage with the substantive issues, consider the contrasting methodologies and theories employed to illuminate the issues, evaluate the various feminist approaches to social transformation, and explore the epistemic and ontological premises of different feminist positions. In the course of our work, we will grapple with various concepts including: agency, autonomy, consent, coercion, context, call out culture, rape culture, carceral politics, sex equality, socialization, material and structural constraints, desire, pleasure and empowerment.

This challenging class will require a high level of participation, substantial reading for most weeks, group work, and written assignments that must be completed in response to all the readings. While keeping up with the class material and weekly assignments, students are expected to be researching and preparing for their final assignment, a major paper or project that engages with the issues. In preparation for this assignment, students will submit a proposal and workshop the ideas with their peers during the final two weeks of class. Please be aware that the seminar delves into difficult and potentially triggering material.

## TECHNOLOGY POLICY and DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

As this is a discussion-based and interactive seminar, during most of the class time together, we will be discussing the issues, listening to one another and engaging with the material. Cellphone use is not allowed at any time except in the case of receiving an emergency call. Laptops should generally not be used, except in the case of accommodations (accompanied by a letter from the Paul Menton Centre), or at designated times when, for example, our work could be enhanced by on-line research. The exception to this rule is that for each week, I will canvas 1-2 volunteers to take notes on a laptop of salient points, which will be shared and posted on CULEARN. PowerPoint presentations and facilitation notes will also be posted. In order to engage fully with the text, students should bring a print out of the week's readings to class.

### EVALUATION:

Attendance and participation	10%	Includes <b>weekly</b> attendance and oral participation
Weekly assignments	10%	Short assignments that engage the readings <b>(Weeks 2-10)</b>
Class facilitation	10%	Group work to facilitate one week's readings ( <b>one week assigned by the professor</b> )
Proposal & annotated bibliography	10%	Proposal/outline + annotated bibliography for final paper DUE: <b>TUESDAY February 26, 9PM.</b>
Proposal presentation and peer feedback	10%	Presentation of final project to the class <b>(final 2 weeks of class)</b>
Final Paper (or creative project with permission)	50%	Final assignment (4000-6000 words) DUE: <b>April 12 9pm</b>

### ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION (10%)

Attendance and participation are evaluated for every class. Your evaluation is based on your attendance record, showing up on-time (**8:35am**), staying for the duration of the class, actively and respectfully listening to your peers, engaging in class discussions, linking discussions to class material and outside readings/theories, and demonstrating understanding of the material in your discussions.

You are allowed to miss one class without repercussion. Other than this, any absence will impact your attendance grade, unless you provide sufficient proof that you were absent for medical or other reasons that may require accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

### WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS (10%)

For each week of readings, there is a reading assignment posted in CULEARN that you must complete by 11pm the night before class. The reading assignments vary, but can include an on-

line quiz, answering a question about a concept, or summarizing the take-home message of the article. The reading assignments are posted one week before they are due.

I will read all assignments to ensure they have been completed and evaluate them on a pass/fail basis. However, I will randomly choose 2 weeks to grade. The first set of assignments to be graded will be chosen between weeks 2 - 6 and is worth 5% of your mark. The second set of assignments to be graded will be chosen between weeks 7-10 and is worth 5% of your mark. For any week that is missed, .5% is deducted from the 10% allocated to this component.

Late summaries will not be accepted unless you provide sufficient proof that you were unable to meet the deadline for medical or other reasons that may require accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

### CLASS FACILITATION (10%)

Students will be assigned a week where they are charged with leading the class discussion for all the readings. This includes a very **short** summary of the text (that will take between 3-5 minutes maximum), along with discussion activities. The facilitation will draw attention to the most salient points and central concepts, reflect on the methodology, and create exercises to unpack and analyze the texts.

See: <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/lecturing-and-presenting/delivery/class-activities-and-assessment-flipped-classroom> for ideas.

For each week, the assigned students can decide how they would like to share the workload (either facilitating all the readings together, or dividing up the readings), but they will all receive the same grade. While the seminar will be student-led, I will sometimes provide broader historical and theoretical context either before, during or after the facilitations. The assigned group of students must together submit one class facilitation plan by no later than 1 pm on the day of the class. A class facilitation plan includes an outline of the "key themes" from the texts, a list of talking points/potential discussion questions, the objective of any activities planned, and the intended "take home" message for the class. The facilitation for all the readings should take about 2 hours of the class time.

Absence from a facilitation day will result in a "0," unless you provide sufficient proof that you were unable to attend the class for medical or other reasons that may require accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

### PROPOSAL & ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (10%)

A proposal is a general description of your final paper/project. It should identify the topic, your central argument, the main points you expect to address, the methodology, some background information on the issue, the theories and concepts you think you will draw upon, how the topic has been addressed by others, and how you will offer a unique perspective. It must be written in full sentences and should be between 800-1500 words.

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations (books, articles, cases, statutes, films, songs, poems, media stories, blogs...). At this stage, your annotated bibliography must include at least 6 references to outside readings, and 2 from the assigned readings. Each citation must include a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph of about 100-150 words. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance and quality of the source *and* how it relates to your project. In other words, please explain how the selected piece can help further enhance your research topic.

Late proposals and bibliographies will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends, unless you provide sufficient proof that you were unable to meet the deadline for medical or other reasons that may require accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

## PROPOSAL PRESENTATION AND PEER FEEDBACK (10%)

All students must attend the last 2 classes to deliver a 5-minute presentation on their final papers/projects, to be followed by 5 minutes of student questions and feedback. Ideally, the presentation should not be read out loud. Rather, I want you to speak to your major points more interactively, while engaging your peers by making eye contact and using accessible language. You must also produce a written summary of your major points and submit this document to all students. Of the 5% of the final grade allocated to this presentation, 2.5% is based on your presentation and written summary, while the other 2.5% of your grade is based on the quality of **verbal** feedback you offer to other students. You must make at least 6 comments on other students' work during this discussion period over the course of the two weeks.

Absence from the presentation day will result in a "0," unless you provide sufficient proof that you were unable to attend the class for medical or other reasons that may require accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

## FINAL PAPER/PROJECT (50%) DUE April 12 9pm through CULERN

Your final paper/project must be on a topic that addresses sexuality debates and feminism from any vantage point or disciplinary perspective. The paper/project *must* draw upon at least 3 of the assigned readings in class, as well as at least 7 other readings or materials not assigned in class. The paper must be handed in through CULERN. As an alternative to a standard academic paper, I am open to creative interventions, including autoethnographies and multi-media pieces. However, all creative ideas must be approved by me at least 2 weeks before the proposal is due. In addition, all such assignments must include a 5-10 page written gloss that outlines how the creative project engages with the theories discussed in class, and makes an 'argument' about sexuality. Your final paper must include a cover page with an original title, word count and must specify which citation style is used (APA, Chicago, MLA...). You must also include a bibliography of all sources used. You are not required to include an annotated bibliography for the final paper.

Late papers/projects will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends, unless you provide sufficient proof that you were unable to meet the deadline for medical or other reasons that may require accommodation under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

## WEEKLY READINGS and ASSIGNMENTS:

All readings are available on CULEARN and should be printed and brought to class, except for the book, Geimer, Samantha, Lawrence Silver, and Judith Newman, *The Girl: A Life in the Shadow of Roman Polanski* (2013), which is available for purchase at Haven's Books (<https://www.havenbooks.ca/> 43 Seneca St.)

### Week 1 (January 10)

INTRODUCTION (no assigned readings)

Discussion of Jamaica Kincaid's short story, "Girl" (<http://www.saginaw-twp.k12.mi.us/view/8490.pdf>)

### Week 2 (January 17)

Khan, Ummni. "[Hot For Kink, Bothered By The Law: BDSM And The Right To Autonomy.](#)" Law Matters (2016).

Benedet, Janine. "[Marital Rape, Polygamy, and Prostitution: Trading Sex Equality for Agency and Choice.](#)" Rev. Const. Stud. 18 (2013): 161.

Try to watch a show or movie that features BDSM ([Secretary](#), [9 1/2 Weeks](#), [Basic Instinct](#), [Walk All Over Me](#), [Fifty Shades of Grey](#), [In the Shadow of Iris](#), and any number of *CSI* or *Law and Order Special Victims Unit* episodes)

**OPTIONAL:** For more information on popular representations of BDSM, read: "Fifty Shades of Ambivalence: BDSM representation in pop culture." *The Routledge Companion to Media, Sex and Sexuality* (2017)

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### Week 3 (January 24)

Miller-Young, Mireille. "**Introduction "Theorizing Black Women's Sexual Labor in Pornography"**" in *A taste for brown sugar: Black women in pornography*. Duke University Press, 2014.

Dines, Gail. "**The white man's burden: Gonzo pornography and the construction of black masculinity.**" *Yale JL & Feminism* 18 (2006): 283.

SVA Community Lecture Series : Jennifer C. Nash Lecture on **The Black Body In Ecstasy** <https://vimeo.com/96423345>

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### Week 4 (January 31)

Elya M. Durisin, Emily van der Meulen, and Chris Bruckert, "**Contextualizing Sex Work: Challenging Discourses and Confronting Narratives**" in Durisin, Elya M., Emily van der Meulen, and Chris Bruckert, eds. *Red Light Labour: Sex Work Regulation, Agency, and Resistance*. UBC Press, 2018.

Hunt, Sarah. "**Decolonizing sex work: Developing an intersectional Indigenous approach.**" *Selling sex: Experience, advocacy, and research on sex work in Canada* (2013): 82-100.

Bernstein, Elizabeth. "**Carceral politics as gender justice? The “traffic in women” and neoliberal circuits of crime, sex, and rights.**" *Theory and society* 41.3 (2012): 233-259.

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### **Week 5** (February 7)

Gersen, Jacob, Jeannie Suk. "**The Sex Bureaucracy.**" *Cal. l. reV.* 104 (2016): 881.

Muehlenhard, Charlene L., et al. "**The complexities of sexual consent among college students: A conceptual and empirical review.**" *The Journal of Sex Research* 53.4-5 (2016): 457-487.

“Cat person” <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/12/11/cat-person>

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### **Week 6** (February 14)

Halberstam, Jack. "**Trigger happy: From content warning to censorship.**" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42.2 (2017): 535-542.

Long Chu, Andrea. "**Study in blue: trauma, affect, event.**" *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory* 27.3 (2017): 301-315.

Redmond, Melissa. "**Safe space oddity: Revisiting critical pedagogy.**" *Journal of Teaching in Social Work* 30.1 (2010): 1-14.

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

## READING WEEK

**PROPOSAL DUE THROUGH CULEARN ON TUESDAY February 26, 9PM.**

### **Week 7** (February 28)

Geimer, Samantha, Lawrence Silver, and Judith Newman. "**The Girl: A Life in the Shadow of Roman Polanski.**" (2013). *Full Text*

Geimer, Samantha (2018, May 03). **So you want to know what I think?** Retrieved from <https://samanthageimer.wordpress.com/2018/05/03/so-you-want-to-know-what-i-think/>

Greenberg, Z. (2018, August 13). **What Happens to #MeToo When a Feminist Is the Accused?** Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/13/nyregion/sexual-harassment-nyu-female-professor.html>

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### **Week 8** (March 7)

Gruber, Aya. "Anti-rape culture." *U. Kan. L. Rev.* 64 (2015): 1027.

Rentschler, Carrie A. "Rape culture and the feminist politics of social media." *Girlhood Studies* 7.1 (2014): 65-82.

Khan, Ummni (DECEMBER 5, 2016) "Rhetoric of rape culture"  
(<https://cfe.ryerson.ca/blog/2016/12/rhetoric-rape-culture>)

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### **Week 9** (March 14)

Stiritz, Susan Ekberg, and Susan Frelich Appleton. "Sex Therapy in the Age of Viagra: Money Can't Buy Me Love." *Wash. UJL & Pol'y* 35 (2011): 363.

Davis, Adrienne D. "Erotic Entitlements Part I: A Reply to Sex Therapy in the Age of Viagra: Money Can't Buy Me Love." *Wash. UJL & Pol'y* 35 (2011): 421.

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

### **Week 10** (March 21)

Taylor, Drew Hayden. "Indian Love Call." in *Me Sexy: An Exploration of Native Sex and Sexuality* (2008): 20-32.

Bear, Tracy L. "Power in my blood: corporeal sovereignty through the Praxis of an indigenous eroticanalysis." *Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy in English Dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton* (2016). READ: TAWAW – (Introduction); CHAPTER ONE – Strategy of Inquiry; CHAPTER TWO – The Erotic Motif (pages 1-128)

**COMPLETE READING ASSIGNMENT POSTED IN CULEARN BY 11PM NIGHT BEFORE CLASS**

**Week 11 (March 28) and Week 12 (April 4): student presentations (no assigned readings)**

**April 12, 2019:** Final Papers and Projects Due through CULEARN