

**ANG 2461 SEXUALITY AND REPRESENTATION  
SEXUALITY, REPRESENTATION, AND THE LAW**

**INSTRUCTOR: TAIWO ADETUNJI OSINUBI**

**TIME: MONDAY 4-7 PM**

**VENUE: PAV. JEAN-BRILLANT B3265**

**OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY 13h-15.30h WEDNESDAY 10.30-13.30**

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Sex has no history. It is a natural fact, grounded in the functioning of the body, and as such, it lies outside of history and culture. Sexuality, by contrast, does not properly refer to some aspect or attribute of bodies. Unlike sex, sexuality is a cultural production: it represents the *appropriation* of the human body and of its physiological capacities by an ideological discourse.... Sexuality is not a somatic fact; it is a cultural effect. Sexuality, then, does have a history... David M. Halperin "Is there a History of Sexuality?"

There are two central overriding objectives to this course. First, it seeks to introduce students to a number of important debates about sex, sexuality, and gender. Second, it will ask students to think about and analyze critically the composition of representational schemes. We will approach these objectives by juxtaposing two issues: an understanding of human sexuality as a categorically knowable and normative entity and a conception of it as a contingent part of several interacting variables within different cultural, historical, and legal contexts. As we shall observe, debates about sexuality are often bound up with complex issues of power, recognition, and agency. Hence, we will focus narratives that seek to represent the importance of these debates by exploring the difference between our generalized feelings about sexuality and its codified definitions in law.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WE MAY REVISE THIS SCHEDULE AS TERM PROGRESSES TO ACCOMMODATE THE INTERESTS/NEEDS OF THE CLASS.

**Reading and viewing list:**

Valerie Martin, *Property*.

J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*.

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*.

Ian McEwan, *Atonement*.

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*.

Films: *Gran Torino*, dir. Clint Eastwood.

*Proteus*, dir. Jack Lewis and John Greyson.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

Take-Home Essay: 20%; Independent Topic Essay: 20%; In-class Midterm: 20%; Participation: 10%; Final exam: 30%

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS**

1--13/09

Introduction. Film: *Gran Torino*, 2008

2--20/09

Robert Padgug, "Sexual Matters: On Conceptualizing Sexuality in History."

R. W. Connell, "The History of Masculinity."

Lecture and discussion: Sex, Sexuality and Knowledge

Assignment 1: Text Home Essay: Analysis of Sexuality in the films of Clint Eastwood

3--27/09

*Proteus*, dir. Jack Lewis and John Greyson.

David M. Halperin, "Is there a History of Sexuality?"

4--04/10

Valerie Martin, *Property*

Audrey Lorde, "On the Uses of the Erotic"

Assignment 1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

**5--11/10 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

6--18/10

Valerie Martin, *Property* [CONT'D]

J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

7--25/10

J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

8--01/11

Examen partiel—Midterm exam COVERS MATERIAL ON THE FIRST TWO NOVELS

9--08/11

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

INDEPENDENT ESSAY ANNOUNCED AND DISCUSSED IN CLASS

10--15/11

Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

**11--22/11**

Ian McEwan, *Atonement*

12--29/11

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*

Judith Butler, Excerpt from *Gender Trouble*.

INDEPENDENT ESSAY DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

13--6/12

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* [CONT'D]

COURSE CONCLUSIONS AND REVISION FOR FINAL EXAM

14--13/11

**FINAL EXAM B3280**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course requires student participation; we will spend at least a sizeable part of each class discussing individual responses to the readings and films. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings. The Take-Home Essay, worth 20% of your final grade, will ask you to do a short comparative analysis of the representation of sexuality in two films directed by Clint Eastwood. In this assignment, you will be given a set of questions from which you will select one and write an essay in response to it. The question may also require either a response to a one of the essays we discuss in the first weeks of class.

The midterm exam, another 20% of your final grade, is similar to the mid-term. While it will focus on the second half of the term, the questions will require knowledge of the critical terms we have acquired over the course of the whole term. You may be asked to discuss archetypal scenarios, plot conventions, or characters across two or three books and films.

The Independent Topic Essay, 20% of the final grade, will give students the opportunity to write a 5-6 page essay on a topic developed by the student. This essay will be graded on the basis of 1) the quality of the argument, 2) the attention to textual analysis, 3) the use of critical concepts we would have used in the course, and 4) the organisation of the essay. You are expected to find at least ONE critical (i.e. academic) source outside of the selected films and novels. Your source does not have to be directly about either of your two authors—it could, for example, provide some background information on the topic you have selected.

### **PLEASE PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAYS BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THEM!**

The final exam is worth 30% of your final grade. It will cover material we discuss after the midterm, but will require knowledge of the essays we discuss early in the term.

### **Conduct**

All students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes an effective learning environment and according to university rules and regulations on classroom behaviour. This is a fairly large class: there may be up to fourteen people in any given seminar. Seminars work best when everyone gets a chance to participate in discussions. This means that we all need to watch the length of our interventions. The best comments tend to be pertinent to readings/discussions and offer insight into the ongoing inquiry. The most helpful questions also tend to be focused. It is sometimes better to avoid long comments or anecdotes that offer no specific insights or state succinct questions.

### **Academic integrity/Plagiarism**

The unacknowledged use of another author's work will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to department and university regulations.

Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the policies of the Faculté des Arts et des Sciences: [www.fas.umontreal.ca/plagiat](http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/plagiat). All students are also advised to consult the pages on plagiarism in the FAECUM agenda 2010-2011.

### **Communication**

We shall use several lines of communication throughout the course. You may send me emails regarding any course related issues you would like to discuss, but please allow a window of at least 24 hours—excluding Saturdays and Sundays—for me to respond to your emails. DO NOT **AUTOMATICALLY EXPECT ME TO READ AND RESPOND TO YOUR EMAILS ON THE WEEKEND!** Students are also welcome to meet or call me during my office hours. I will be sending all email communications concerning the course to the Université de Montréal (umontreal.ca) addresses that I receive from the department. It is the duty of each student to reroute emails to other internet addresses—if they do not use their UdeM addresses.

### **Evaluation policies**

Assignments must be submitted in class on the due date unless students request (and receive) an extension. Requests for extensions must be made in writing **before** the due date. Late submissions will be penalized—I deduct 5% for each late day including Saturdays and Sundays.

Students unable to write quizzes or exams on the fixed dates need to notify me a week in advance. Those students have to submit a formal request for accommodation.

**Please do not email or fax assignments to me.**

Assignments that cannot be handed in to me personally should be submitted in the English department main office (C8132-Pavillon Lionel-Groulx) or put in my mailbox.

