
SEX AND THE GLOBAL CITY

Proposed Course: International Studies, University of Chicago
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OVERVIEW

The global city is often discussed as a site of economic processes. This course aims to understand transnational and international processes by analyzing sex as the proverbial "canary in the mine". This class argues that one can see a multitude of global economic, cultural, and political processes if we stop to look at sex and sexuality.

Many global studies focus solely on American and European cities. This course will go beyond these boundaries and also analyze urban centers in South America, Africa and Asia. This class is interdisciplinary and draws on various sources and fields, including popular fiction, literature, history, sociology, anthropology, music, globalization studies, political science, gender studies, and race and ethnic studies.

A theme throughout this course will be the regulation of sex and sexuality by the state and private actors. In addition, this course is interested in various manifestations of sex: gender, sex practice, & sexuality. This course attempts to explore the diffusion (and difference) of various sexual identities in an attempt to trace transnational processes.

COURSE AIM

Students will leave this class not only with a better understanding of globalization and transnationalism, but also how global processes shape sex, sexual practice, and sexual identity. The course aim is to sharpen students' analytic frameworks so as to be able to identify different global processes. This course uses the study of sex to demonstrate to students that globalization is not a monolith that sweeps the world and effects all places in the same way. Instead, students will be taught to unpack the concept of globalization and begin to discuss specificity—the particular global processes at work and their respective homogenous and heterogeneous features.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

PART I: CONCEPTUALIZATION, THE BIG PICTURE

WEEK 1

Introduction

This first session will serve as a basic overview of the course (aims, requirements, etc). We will begin the course surveying and discussing audio/visual presentations with urban sex themes. Material will likely include excerpts of the following:

Steam: The Turkish Bath. Director: Ferzan Ozpetek. 1997. Film.

- Italian designer who travels to Istanbul after his recently deceased aunt bequeaths him a Turkish bath, an "hamam." Deciding to stay in Istanbul

to restore the bathhouse, Francesco's encounters with Turkish culture lead to his own self-examination as he becomes increasingly drawn to the simplicities of Turkish life.

Star Maps. Director. Miguel Arteta. 1997. Film.

- Allegorical tale about the gap that exists between East and West Los Angeles as Latino kids try to pursue the American Dream. After five years of living in Mexico, an 18-year-old youth returns to Los Angeles with aspirations of becoming a movie star. At the urging of his father, a pimp who sells maps to stars' homes as a cover, the young man turns to hustling as a way to meet Hollywood insiders.

An episode of the HBO series, "Sex and the City." Television.

Listening to the song, "What would you do?" by City High. Music.

- a song about a young impoverished African-American woman working as a sex worker to feed her son.

An episode of Amistad Maupin's "Tales in the City." Television.

WEEKS 2 & 3

Defining Sex and the City

We must begin this course on a quest to use a common language and jargon. What is globalization? How does globalization influence sex, sexuality, and sexual practices? What is a city? What is a global city? And does the urban allow us to see global processes better (than studying the rural)? Does it [the city] allow us to examine global sex better?

Global City. Saskia Sassen.

Global Sex. Dennis Altman. University of Chicago Press. 2001.

Globalization: A Critical Introduction. Jan Scholte. NY: St. Martin's Press. Chs. 1-2. pp. 13-61.

WEEKS 4 & 5

Imagining Sex and the City

Possibly the most interesting part of the course. This section reads literature and popular novels in order to see how sex and the city are expressed and captured in different international contexts. We will read novels written by a popular American writer on the sexual relationship "trials and tribulations" of upper-middle class women living in New York City, a Chinese woman writing about gay male sexuality in Taiwan, and a man writing about sex and love in Lagos, Nigeria. The goal is to read these texts as ethnographies—are there truths that we can extract from these urban stories? Are there similarities between these disparate tales that inform our inquiry of international processes and sex and the city?

Jagua Nana. Cyprian Ekwensi. Heinemann Educational Publishers.
A novel, a brilliant evocation of modern Lagos.

Sex and the City. Candace Bushnell. Warner Books. 1996.

Yes, the book that launched the Emmy© Award winning HBO series.

Notes of a desolate Man. Chu, Tien-wen, Howard Goldblatt, trans.

A novel about AIDS and a Taiwanese gay male.

PART II: REGULATION OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

WEEK 6

Sex Workers and the City

Not only is sex work the world's oldest profession...but it may be the most ubiquitous.

Global Sex Workers. Eds. Kamala Kempadoo & Jo Doezema. Routledge 1998.

Policing Public Sex. Edited by Dangerous Bedfellows. South End Press. 1996.

P.I.M.P. (Prostitutes in Municipal Politics). Carol Leigh (A.K.A. Scarlet Harlot).

WEEK 7

Sex and the Urban Consumer

The City as an Entertainment Machine. Richard Lloyd and Terry Nichols Clark. Unpublished paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association. 2000.

Policing Public Sex. Edited by Dangerous Bedfellows. South End Press. 1996.

- Sex Club Owners: The ~~Fuck Suck~~ Buck Stops Here. Jay Blotcher
- The Twilight (Zone) of Commercial Sex. David Serlin.
- From Soubrette Row to Show World: The Contested Sexualities of Times Square, 1880-1995. Timothy J. Gilfoyle.

Pleasure Island. Tourism & Temptation in Cuba. Rosalie Schwartz. University of Nebraska Press. 1997.

WEEK 8

Visual Sex in the City/Puritans and the City

Pornography. Bill boards, advertisements, etc.

This section explores whether we are seeing a Disneyfication of society...whether the world is increasingly looking like a Disneyland, and where sexually explicit visions are increasingly compartmentalized and removed from the public landscape.

"The Disneyization of Society." *Sociological Review*. Alan Bryman.

"Zoning for Sex Shops Sustained Law, Effective Friday, Ruled Constitutional." *New York Law Journal* October 24, 1996. Bill Alden.

"Its not easy to push sex into the shadows." *The New York Times*. March 1, 1998. N.R. Kleinfield.

"Last Days of XXX? Memories and Gloom in Times Sq." New York Times, July 21, 1998. Susan Sachs.

"Blitz on Sex Outlets." New York Times. David Rohde. August 16, 1998.

"Giuliani Begins to See Results in Battle Against Sex Shops." Dan Barry and David Rohde. NYT August 9, 1998.

"Disney leads Cinderella Transformation of 42nd Street." Florence Schetzel. Poughkeepsie Journal. September 3, 1997.

PART III: FORMATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CITY

WEEK 9

Gay Ghettos

Cities are sites where traditionally marginalized social groups agglomerate. This holds true for sexually marginal peoples like gays or homosexuals. This section particular examines the transnational spread and development of homosexuality and gay culture both spatially and temporally throughout the world.

Queer Sites. Edited by David Higgs. Routledge. 1999.

A history of gay space in seven of the world's major cities from the early modern period to the present. Focusing on the changing nature of queer experience in London, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco, Paris, Lisbon and Moscow.

Post-Colonial Queer. Altman.

WEEK 10

Technology/Future Sex in the City?

How will the advances in technology (and their global diffusion) affect sex and desire? What happens to groups and people who never have the opportunity to utilize these technologies?

"A place where no one knows your name." Steve Friess. in The Advocate. February 3, 1998. p. 24

Through the years bars have served as town squares for gays in big cities. Now gays are finding that Internet chat rooms offer endless possibilities for meeting people of like interests, whether they're in Milan, Italy, or Milan, Ill.—and they're making dates.

"Ecologies of Cyberspace: Gay Communities on the Internet" J. Dallas Dishman. in From Chicago to L.A. (ed) Michael Dear.