

## SEXUAL REVOLUTIONS

PLPT 4500-002

Fall 2021

Tu 2:00pm-4:30pm, Gibson Hall 441

Professor Kevin Duong

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30-2:00pm

The “Age of Revolutions” is usually defined by two interrelated developments: the “political” revolutions that laid European monarchies low, and the “industrial” revolutions that transformed the Euro-Atlantic economy. This is an advanced seminar in political theory that focuses on a third pillar of political modernity: “sexual” revolutions. The invention of modern sexual difference was inseparable from the rise of democracy and the global spread of capitalist social relations. In this seminar, we will explore the nexus of political, economic, and sexual revolutions by reading the history of sexuality together with major figures of modern political theory. Students will read canonical authors debate the place of sex and kinship in modern life. Students can also expect to survey key twentieth-century debates about sexual revolution in the family, the economy, and the state. Our goal will be to appreciate how sexual revolutions have shaped our past at every scale—and will continue to shape our collective futures.

### Required Materials

There are no books to purchase for this class. All readings are posted on Collab. Our Collab class can be accessed here:

<https://collab.its.virginia.edu/portal/site/280ecdbf-491c-4823-9fc9-5ace05b1efbc>

### Course Objectives and Expectations

Assignments: In addition to class participation, you will be responsible for a weekly forum post, a brief in-class presentation, and a final research paper. More details about the research paper will be given in class.

Attendance: Attendance is crucial for the success of a discussion seminar. The expectation is that students will attend each class. However, if for any reason circumstances conspire to make it difficult for a student to attend a class, just let me know – the request will usually be accommodated. A student’s participation grade will be in jeopardy if a student has more than 2 unexcused absences.

Class Participation: Please note that participation is a substantial component of the course’s overall evaluation. Students can ensure that they maximally receive participation points by attending class, participating in class discussion, and by showing general attentiveness towards, including thoughtful responses to, their fellow classmates. If for any reason a student is concerned about their ability to do the above listed, please feel free to discuss the matter with me early in the semester.

### Course Evaluation:

Class Participation	20%
Forum Posts	15%
Class Presentation	15%
Final Research Paper	50%

**Other Matters:**

Plagiarism: Each student is expected to abide by the code of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with college policies regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity, which will be strictly observed in this class. If work is found to be plagiarized, the student will receive an automatic failing grade in the class, and depending on the situation additional sanctions may be imposed by the college.

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodations, or if you have any questions related to any accommodation for testing, note taking, reading, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Student Disability Access Center at <https://studenthealth.virginia.edu/sdac-contactus>

## Schedule of Readings

Readings and assignments are to be completed by their corresponding date. ‘Optional’ readings are additional selections that may improve your mastery of the material but aren’t required. All required readings are available on our Collab website. Please read the assigned texts in the order they are listed.

### WEEK 1-5: Modern Sexuality as a Sexual Revolution

It’s widely known that sexuality and sexual identity are modern inventions; in fact, inventing sexuality as a field of experience is arguably the first and most important sexual revolution. It provides the macro-historical context against which modern political theorists debate sexual freedom and revolution. The first part of our class focuses on classic and contemporary histories of modern sexuality. We will discuss the centuries-long inventions and modifications of sexuality and the corresponding transformations in global finance, scientific institutions, and state regulation of everyday life.

- Aug 24:** Caroline Walker Bynum, “The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg”  
Christine Helliwell, “‘It’s Only a Penis: Rape, Feminism, and Difference”
- Aug 31:** Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, pp. 51-115, 132-153, 195-217
- Sept 7:** Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1*, pp. 1-73, 133-159
- Sept 14:** John D’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity”  
Christopher Chitty, *Sexual Hegemony: Statecraft, Sodomy, and Capital in the Rise of the World System*, pp. 21-25, 35-41, 73-105  
Angela Davis, “The Legacy of Slavery: Standards of a New Womanhood”
- Sept 21:** Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, pp. 1-29, 45-77  
Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today’s Revolution*, pp. 45-114
- Optional:** Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*  
Magnus Hirschfeld, *Berlin’s Third Sex*  
Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Republic*  
Marie Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*  
Shauna J. Sweeney, “Gendering Racial Capitalism and the Black Heretical Tradition”  
Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book”  
Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*  
Michelle Murphy, *The Economization of Life*  
Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*

### WEEK 6-10: Who is the Protagonist of Sexual Revolution?

For the middle part of our class, we’ll be descending from macro-historical analyses of the history of sexuality, capitalism, and the family to individual political theorists. Our goal is two-fold. First, we’ll survey a diverse cast of characters who tried to theorize the meaning of

sexuality, desire, and freedom in specific contexts. We'll see extensive disagreement among feminists, sex radicals, and queers on the question "what is sexual revolution?" Second, we'll also see how over time, theorists of sexual revolution became increasingly self-reflexive about sexuality itself. Critics started to suspect that something like "sexual difference" couldn't be taken for granted as the starting point of revolution. The protagonist of a sexual revolution would have to go far beyond "women"—but then, who?

- Sept 28:** Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, pp. 362-370  
John Stuart Mill, *On the Subjection of Women*, pp. 388-397
- Oct 5:** Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, pp. 3-17, 159-186, 283-313, 721-765
- Oct 12:** Huey Newton, "The Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements"  
Jean Genet, "May Day Speech"  
Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women"  
Claudia Jones, "We Seek Full Equality for Women"
- Oct 19:** Flora Tristan, "The Workers' Union"  
Lucy E. Parsons, "To Tramps, the Unemployed, the Disinherited, the Miserable"  
Alexandra Kollontai, "Sexual Relations and Class Struggle"  
Shulamith Firestone, "The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution"
- Oct 26:** Monique Wittig, "The Category of Sex"  
Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s"
- Optional:** Eileen Hunt Botting, *Wollstonecraft, Mill, and Women's Human Rights*  
Daniel O'Neill, *The Burke-Wollstonecraft Debate: Savagery, Civilization, and Democracy*  
Sandrine Sanos, *Simone de Beauvoir*  
Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*  
Sarah Dunstan and Patricia Owens, "Claudia Jones, International Thinker"  
Jean Genet, *The Declared Enemy: Texts and Interviews*  
Jackqueline Frost, "Jean Genet's May Day Speech, 1970: 'Your Real Life Depends on the Black Panther Party'"  
Glyn Salton-Cox, *Queer Communism and the Ministry of Love: Sexual Revolution in British Writing of the 1930s*  
Paul B. Preciado, *The Countersexual Manifesto*  
Jack Halberstam, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*

#### WEEK 11-15: What is Sexual Revolution? Twentieth Century Debates

The decades after the Second World War witnessed protracted debate about sexual revolution. Where was it supposed to happen? What would it mean for everyday life? Questions like these were posed in countless arenas of conflict: pornography, free love, kinship, anticapitalism, Third Worldism, and consumerism. In the final part of our class, we turn from "major thinkers" to "major debates," although we'll peruse only a small fraction of them. Our goal is to appreciate how sexual revolution could serve as both a rallying cry and an intractable point of dispute. The fractures opened up by these debates are still with us and continue to shape the tactical fault lines of contemporary critics.

- Nov 2:** Phyllis Schlafly, “The Power of the Positive Woman”  
Catharine MacKinnon, “Excerpts from the MacKinnon/Schlafly Debate”  
Catharine MacKinnon, “Francis Biddle’s Sister: Pornography, Civil Rights, and Speech”  
Amia Srinivasan, “Does Anyone Have the Right to Sex?”
- Nov 9:** Margaret Benston, “The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation”  
Silvia Federici, “Wages Against Housework”  
Angela Davis, “The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working-Class Perspective”
- Nov 16:** ACT UP, “Queer Nation Manifesto: Queers Read This”  
Bikini Kill, “RIOT GRRRL Manifesto”  
Kath Weston, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship*, pp. 103-136  
Michael Warner, “Normal and Normaller: Beyond Gay Marriage”
- Nov 23:** **Thanksgiving Break**
- Nov 30:** The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”  
Frances Beale, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female”  
Pat Parker, “Revolution: It’s Not Neat or Pretty or Quick”  
Jennifer C. Nash, “Re-Thinking Intersectionality”
- Dec 7:** Françoise Vergès, *A Decolonial Feminism*, pp. 4-42  
Verónica Gago, *Feminist International*, pp. 9-55
- Optional:** Endnotes, “The Logic of Gender: On the Separation of Spheres and the Process of Abjection”  
Tom O’Shea, “Sexual Desire and Structural Injustice”  
Lorna Bracewell, *Why We Lost the Sex Wars: Sexual Freedom in the #MeToo Era*  
Joseph Fischel, *Sex and Harm in the Age of Consent*  
Carole Boyce Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*  
Cheryl Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism: Women Writers of the Black Left, 1945-1995*  
Jacqueline Rose, *On Violence and On Violence Against Women*