

History 331: Researching Race and Sexuality in U.S. History
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-4:20
Fall 2016

Renee Romano
Office: Rice 317
Phone: x6584
Email: rromano@oberlin.edu

Office Hours:
Tuesdays, 10am-12pm; 1:30pm-3:30pm
Wednesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm
(and by appointment)



Race and sexuality are powerful axes of social difference that structure social hierarchy and inequality. This upper-level seminar introduces students to some of the key ways in which race and sexuality—as categories of difference, of identity, and as systems of power—have interacted and intersected at different times and ways in American history. The class will explore how sexuality has served as a key site of racial conflict, regulation, and oppression; how sexual racism has affected and has been challenged by racialized people in American history, and how the history of sexuality is vital to understanding US racial history. While grounded in historical methods, the class challenges students to explore the many ways we can learn and know about the historical intersections of race and sexuality, so we will also read works from other disciplines (visual analysis, literary analysis, legal studies)—to explore the ways in which race and sexuality have operated to create social hierarchies, construct normative categories, maintain relations of power, and affect identities at different historical moments. This course will introduce students to an overview of US sexual history, but it cannot provide a comprehensive overview of the experience of every racialized group in the United States. Rather, it seeks to highlight the importance of sexuality as a category of analysis in some of the most important topics in the history of race in the United States, as well as to introduce students to a variety of different methods for exploring those intersections as a way to prepare them to undertake their own research projects.

Course Objectives: This course is designed to challenge advanced students in History, Comparative American Studies, Africana Studies, and Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies. The class seeks to help students hone critical thinking skills, to read difficult texts closely and carefully, and to express arguments in a spirited intellectual exchange. As a research seminar, History 331 especially aims to give students the tools they need to produce their own research on a topic related to race and sexuality. A research seminar asks students to bring together many different aspects of the historian’s craft: to develop a significant and well-defined research problem or question, to find primary sources that can help you answer that question, to locate your own interpretation in a scholarly conversation, and to produce a compelling piece of historical writing. Each student will be expected to produce a 20-page paper of original research by the end of the class; classroom discussions and assignments will be geared to helping students with every aspect of that process, from brainstorming possible research topics to finding and analyzing sources, to locating one’s own interpretation in a broader historiography.

Course Structure: History 331 will meet twice a week for most of the semester. Typically, the first meeting of the week (on Monday) will be a historical content class, where we will discuss new readings. The second meeting of the week will be a workshop class, where we will focus on the craft of doing historical research and work on exercises designed to help students with their research papers.

Course Readings: The following books are available at the campus bookstore and are on reserve at Mudd:

Estelle Freedman and John D’Emilio, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America, 3rd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2012)

Janell Hobson, Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture (Routledge, 2005)

Melton McLaurin, Celia, A Slave (Harper Perennial, 1993)

Pablo Mitchell, West of Sex: Making Mexican America, 1900-1930 (Univ. of Chicago, 2012)

Rachel Moran, Interracial Intimacy: Race and the Regulation of Romance (Univ. of Chicago, 2003)

Kevin Mumford, Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the early 20th Century (Columbia Univ. Press, 1997)

Dorothy Roberts, Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty (Vintage Books, 1997)



Items marked with a * are available on the Online Readings Section of the blackboard site.

Course Requirements: Your grade in History 331 will be based on the following assignments and requirements. Please note that all assignments must be completed to receive credit for the class.

1) Participation and Attendance (25% of final grade):

Race and Sexuality is a discussion-based seminar. Student participation is vital to the success of the class. Students are expected to arrive at class prepared to engage thoughtfully and respectfully in a discussion of with classmates. I consider the ability to express oneself in discussion as important as written expression. If for any reason you are uncomfortable speaking in class, please come to see me at the beginning of the semester to talk about strategies for becoming an active participant in class.

Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to attend every class during the semester. You can make up one missed meeting of the seminar by writing a three-page response paper on the readings for the class that you missed and turning the paper in before the next class meeting. Any additional unexcused absences will lead to a 3-point reduction in the final grade for the course.

2) Leading a Discussion Session (5% of Final Grade):

Once during the semester, you and a partner will be responsible for leading at least the first half hour of class discussion on assigned readings. Discussion leaders should plan to meet with me in advance of the class session to discuss their strategy. They will also be responsible for posting reading questions to the blackboard site by **10pm on Saturday** in advance of the Monday class session. These questions should focus on issues that you want other students to think about as they complete the readings.

3) *Intimate Matters* Section Review (10% Final Grade)—Due in class on September 7th:

In a paper of no more than three pages, review how one of the four sections of *Intimate Matters* explores and covers the intersections of race and sexuality. Sections will be assigned in class. More details are available on the blackboard site.

4) Four Very Short Dissection Papers (10% of final grade):

Each student is required to write what I am calling a “dissection paper” for four of the class sessions with assigned readings. Dissection papers should pick one of the readings assigned for the class and should analyze that reading as a piece of research. In your paper, please consider the following:

- a) What do you take the author’s primary research question to be, based on the book or article?
- b) How does the author define the scope of the study? Is the chosen scope reasonable? Too limited?
- c) What primary sources does s/he use in answering that research question? How well suited are the sources to answering the question? What are the strengths of the research? What are the limitations? You will need to look closely at the footnotes to address this question.
- d) In what secondary literature does the author locate his/her study? Do you get a sense of the broader historiographical context of the field from this piece?
- e) What is the author’s argument or interpretation? Do you think s/he supports the claims well?
- f) What questions does this article or book leave you with? What do you wish the author had explored that s/he didn’t?

Each of these points should be addressed in a paper of approximately one single-spaced page. You may write your paper in narrative form or answer each of these questions in its own paragraph. Please email me your paper by 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the class session where we will be discussing the readings. Dissection papers will be graded on a √-, √, √+ scale and will be returned to you at the start of each class. Late papers will not be accepted.

5) Research Paper (Paper, 45% of final grade; Oral presentation, 5% of final grade):

The major assignment for History 331 is to write research paper of approximately 20 pages on a topic related to the history of race and sexuality in the United States. Papers can address any topic within the broad field of race and sexuality, with my approval. Papers must be based on original research. They should also draw on relevant secondary sources and course materials to locate and contextualize your topic. We will discuss the process of defining good research topics in class.

During our last week of class, we will hold a conference; students will be grouped into panels based on their paper topics and each student will give a polished research presentation of approximately eight minutes. Each student will be also be assigned a role as either chair or commentator for one of the other panel sessions and will be asked to either introduce the panel or to comment on the three papers.

The following deadlines are associated with the research paper:

September 28: Submit a one-page single-spaced prospectus that describes the subject of your paper, the historical question or problem that you seek to address in studying this subject, and what approach you might take to answer the question you pose.

October 5: Before class, spend ½ hour brainstorming the kinds of sources that you could use to answer the historical question you posed in your prospectus. Our class will meet at the library where each student will spend time trying to find those kinds of sources and will

do an in-class writing exercise about the your brainstorming and what you found when you actually went looking for sources.

October 26: Find at least four articles or books that relate to your chosen subject and do an annotated bibliography—write at least three sentences about each secondary source that describes the topic of the study, its argument, and its methodology. Bring your list to class.

November 9: Come to class with two different possible outlines for your research paper.

November 23: First drafts of research papers due by 4:30pm. Drafts must be at least ten pages long and at least eight of those pages must be real text. Drafts must have a thesis statement. Email your draft to me and to your peer review group members.

November 30: Provide comments on the drafts of your peer review group members.

December 5 and 7: History 331 Research Conference presentations

December 17: Revised versions of the research paper are due by 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 17th. Late papers will not be accepted. Students who cannot turn in the paper on time because of a medical or family emergency will have to take an incomplete.

Other Course Policies:

Classroom Conduct: Please come to class on time and once you are in class, please do not leave to go get a drink or use the restroom. We will have a short break during most class sessions, so please wait until break to leave the classroom. It is distracting to me and disrespectful to your classmates when students walk out in the middle of class. Because I want everyone to be focused on the classroom conversation and engaged in discussion, there will be no note-taking on computers in the classroom.

Oberlin Honor Code: All work for this course must be done in compliance with the Oberlin Honor Code, which means that it must be your own. Any cases of plagiarism will be dealt with immediately according to the letter of college policy. You must acknowledge when you use the ideas of other people (whether that be other students or published materials from websites, books, the media, etc.). If you have questions about citations, academic honesty, or the acceptability of collaborations, please see me. You should include the honor code (“I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code on this assignment”) on all the written work you hand in for this class.

Educational Access: I am committed to creating inclusive learning environments and to designing a course in which all students can learn. If any aspects of the instruction or design of the course result in dis/ability-related barriers to your participation, please let me know. If you receive any specific accommodations, please provide documentation from the Disability Service Office.

Difficult Topics: This class will explore many challenging issues, including sexual and reproductive violence, sexual exploitation, fetishization, and the legacies of sexualized racial stereotypes. I will attempt to give trigger warnings for the most difficult material, but I may not always give warnings about material that you consider merits one. I am happy to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have, but please be forewarned that you may find some of the course material disturbing.

Extra Help: My door is open if you need help or just want to discuss the reading or other topics of interest to you. Drop in to my office hours anytime or email to schedule a specific appointment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE (8/29 & 8/31)

August 29: Introduction—Getting to Know Each Other

In class exercise: Free write for 10 minutes about your own interests in the history of race and sexuality. Begin to think about what kinds of subjects you might be interested in studying and what kinds of questions you might want to pursue. Explain your interests—do they stem from your personal experiences, something you've learned in other classes, your political commitments? What made you want to take this class?

August 31: Introduction to the Study of Race and Sexuality

Joanne Nagel, "Introduction" in Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality: Intimate Interactions, Forbidden Frontiers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1-13*

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Meta-Language of Race," *Signs* (Winter 1992): 251-274*

WEEK TWO (9/5 & 9/7)

September 5: No class meeting (Labor Day)

September 7: The History of Sexuality—An Overview

John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters (please read the Preface, Introduction, Afterword and at least one of the four sections of the book carefully; you can skim the other three sections)

Due in class: In a paper of no more than 3 pages, review how one of the sections of *Intimate Matters* explores and covers the intersections of race and sexuality (sections will be assigned in class).

WEEK THREE (9/12 & 9/14)

September 12: Sex, Conquest, and Cultural Conflict

Joanne Nagel, "Sex and Conquest" in Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality, 63-90*

Antonia I. Castañeda, "Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest" in Adela de la Torre and Beatriz Pesquera, ed., Building with Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 15-31*

Gunlög Fur, "Weibe-Town and the Delawares as Women: Gender-Crossing and Same-Sex Relations in Eighteenth-Century Northeastern Indian Culture" in Thomas Foster, ed., Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America New York: New York University, 2007), 32-50*

Rebecca Faery, "Close Encounters of the First Kind," in Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race & Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation (Norman: University of OK Press, 1999), 87-117*

September 14: What Kind of Primary Sources exist to study race and sexuality?

Before class, spend ½ hour online looking for potential primary sources related to any aspect of the history of race and sexuality in the United States. Think creatively—where might you find material



that could be useful for historical research? Make a list of the kinds of material you found. Bring your list and a copy of one primary source to class.

WEEK FOUR (9/19 & 9/21)

September 19: The Sexual Systems of Slavery

Melton McLaurin, *Celia, A Slave*

Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, Chapter 1, pp. 22-55

Thomas Foster, "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 20:3 (2011): 445-464

Annette Gordon-Reed, "Did Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson Love Each Other?" *American Heritage*, 58 (2008): 14-17*

September 21: Coming up with Topics for Research Papers

In class exercise: Historians often come up with their own research questions in response to other historical works that they have read. In reading a book or article, you might find some issue that you feel could be developed more, you might see a gap that is not discussed at all by the author, you might think about how the methods the author uses or arguments the author makes about a certain era or topic might work for a different era or subject. You might consider how the kinds of sources the author used to study the particular topic of the book might illuminate a different era or issue in history. For this thinkpiece, you will be asked to come up with some potential questions or subjects for a research paper that might be generated based on an issue or approach from a reading we have done for class thus far.

WEEK FIVE (9/26 & 9/28)

September 26: Sexual Violence and the post-Civil War Social Order

Hannah Rosen, "A Region of Terror—Violence in the South, 1865-1868 in *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: citizenship, sexual violence, and the meaning of race in the postemancipation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), pp. 179-241*

Robyn Wiegman, "Anatomy of Lynching" in *American Sexual Politics*, edited by John Fout and Maura Shaw Tantillo (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 59-74*

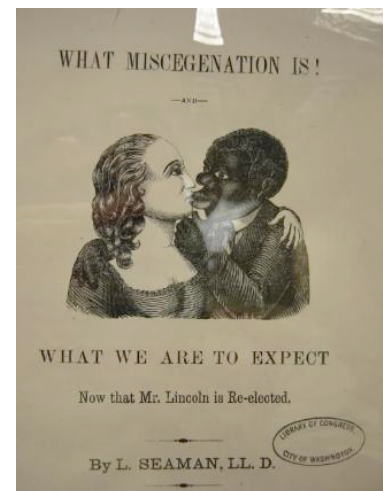
James Baldwin, "Going to Meet the Man" in *Going to Meet the Man* (New York Dial Press, 1965), 229-249 *

Darlene Clark Hine, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Southern Black Women: Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance" in *Southern Women: Histories and Identities*, edited by Virginia Bernhard, Betty Brandon, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Theda Perdue (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 177-189*

Film: *Birth of a Nation* (screen excerpts before class)

September 28: Initial Problem Statement for Final Paper Due

Submit a one-page single-spaced prospectus that describes the subject of your paper and the historical question or problem that you seek to address in studying this subject. Explain why you are personally interested in and invested in the question. Show how the problem or question relates to



our study of the history of race and sexuality. Explain why the question you are posing is significant and what approach you might take to answer the question you pose.

WEEK SIX (10/3 & 10/5)

October 3: Sex and Social Boundaries in the West

Pablo Mitchell, *West of Sex*

Nayan Shah, “Between ‘Oriental Depravity’ and ‘Natural Degenerates’: Spatial Borderlands and the Making of Ordinary Americas,” *American Quarterly* 57:3 (September 2005): 703-725*

October 5: How do historians answer the questions that they pose? How do they find sources? (Meet at the Library)

Before class: Spend ½ hour brainstorming the kinds of sources that you could use to answer the question you posed last week.

In class: We will meet at the library and each student will have one hour to search for sources related to their paper topic. In an in-class thinkpiece, you will be asked to describe your thought process of your brainstorming and what you found when you actually went looking for sources.

WEEK SEVEN (10/10 & 10/12)

October 10: Race and Sexuality in the Progressive Era Urban North

Kevin Mumford, *Interzones*

Cheryl Hicks, “‘Bright and Good Looking Colored Girl’: Black Women’s Sexuality and ‘Harmful Intimacy’ in Early-Twentieth-Century New York,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 18:3 (September 2009): 418-456*

October 12: No class meeting (Yom Kippur)

WEEK EIGHT (10/17 & 10/19): NO CLASS MEETINGS—FALL BREAK

WEEK NINE (10/24 & 10/26)

October 24: Race and Reproduction

Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body*, Intro and Chapters 2-7, pp. 3-21, 56-312

October 26: How do Historians Place themselves in a Scholarly Conversation?

Before class: Find at least four articles or books that relate to your chosen subject and question and do an annotated bibliography—write at least three sentences about each secondary source that describes the topic of the study, its argument, and its methodology. Bring your list to class.

In class: Free writing exercise where you will draw on your annotated bibliography to make a case about what scholars argued about your particular topic, what kinds of methodologies and sources they have used to study this issue, and what kinds of questions they have sought to answer in their research. How will you contribute to this conversation? How does your own work relate to their studies? What are the areas of agreement or disagreement?

WEEK TEN (10/31 & 11/2)

October 31: *Race and Queer Categories and Identities*

Thaddeus Russell, "The Color of Discipline: Civil Rights and Black Sexuality," *American Quarterly* (2008): 101-128*

Kwame Holmes, "What's the Tea: Gossip and the Production of Black Gay Social History," *Radical History Review* 122 (May 2015): 55-69*

Judy Wu, "Was Mom Chung a 'Sister Lesbian'?": Asian American Gender Experimentation and Interracial Homoeroticism," *Journal of Women's History* 13:1 (Spring 2001): 58-82*

Eric Wat, "Preserving the Paradox: Stories of a Gay-Loh," *Amerasia Journal* 20:1 (1994), 149-160*

Emily Skidmore, "Constructing the 'Good Transsexual': Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness, and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press," *Feminist Studies* 37:2 (2011): 270-300*

***November 1, 4:30pm:** Required lecture by Jennifer Jones (University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa), "Saving The Race": SCLC/W.O.M.E.N. Inc. and Ambivalent HIV/AIDS Activism, 1986-1993"

November 2: *Researching and Writing Black Queer History—Workshop with Jennifer Jones*

Before class: Read Jennifer Jones, "'Until I Talked With You': Silence, Storytelling and Black Same-Sex Intimacies in the Johns Committee Records, 1960-1965"*

WEEK ELEVEN (11/7 & 11/9)

November 7: *Interracial Marriage and Families*

Rachel Moran, *Interracial Intimacy: The Regulation of Race and Romance*

Renee Romano, Introduction and Epilogue from *Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America**

November 9: *Structuring Research Papers*

Come to class with two different possible outlines for your research paper. Depending on your topic, you might organize one by chronology and another by theme. You might organize by source type or in some other way entirely. Each outline should be short—no more than 1 page. The goal of this assignment is to get you to think about the pros and cons of alternative ways of organizing your research findings.

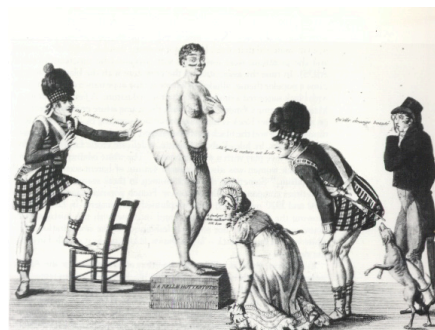
WEEK TWELVE (11/14 & 11/16)

November 14: *The Legacies of Sexual Racism, Sexual Imperialism, and Sexual Fetishization*

Janell Hobson, *Venus in the Dark*

Sunny Woan, "White Sexual Imperialism: A Theory of Asian Feminist Jurisprudence," 14 *Wash. & Lee J. Civ. Rts. & Soc.* (2008): 275-301*

Kobena Mercer, "Reading Racial Fetishism: The Photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe" in *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (Routledge, 1994), 171-219*



November 16: Engaging Readers With Your Work

Before class: Look back at the first pages or paragraphs of three books or articles we've read for class. How did they start? How did they seek to engage readings from the very beginning of their work? What can you learn from how authors start their books or articles?

In Class: Free writing exercise where you brainstorm what your "hook" might be and what it might look like.

WEEK THIRTEEN (11/21 & 11/23)

November 21: No Class Meeting—Work on Drafts

November 23: No Class Meeting—First draft of research paper due

Send first draft of research paper to Professor Romano and your peer review group by 4:30pm on Wednesday. Drafts must be at least 10 pages long, of which at least eight pages must be real writing. Drafts should have a thesis statement.

WEEK FOURTEEN (11/28 & 11/30)

November 28: In-class Peer Review of Drafts

Come to class with comments for each of the people in your group (draft response sheet will be posted on blackboard). We will workshop drafts in class.

November 30: Individual Meetings about Drafts

WEEK FIFTEEN (12/5 & 12/7)

December 5: Presentations—Mini Conference, Day 1

December 7: Presentations—Mini Conference, Day 2

December 17: REVISED FINAL PAPERS DUE AT TIME OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM AT 4:00PM ON DECEMBER 17.