

Reading Guide – New Trajectories in the Politics of Gender and Sexuality and Closing Thoughts: Sexuality and Gender in the Past, Present, and Future

This week we enter the final unit of the course, “Sexuality and Gender in the Twenty-First Century: Diverging Currents?” Fittingly, one of the key questions we will ask over the next two weeks is how the politics of gender and the politics of sexuality differ in our current historical moment. We will also seek to identify new areas of conflict, change, and continuity as we reflect on how the past informs the present... and our visions for the future.

Assigned Materials for GY 330 (FY 330) & Readings TBA)

- George Chauncey, “What Gay Studies Taught the Court: The Historians Amicus Brief in *Lawrence v. Texas*,” *GLQ* 10:3 (2004) 509-513 [Amicus Brief is optional reading]
- Steven Mintz, “The Role of History in the Supreme Court Decision on Gay Marriage,” *Inside Higher Ed* (July 2013) 1-3.
- Margot Canaday, “LGBT History,” *Frontiers* 35:1 (2014) 1-19.
- Daisy Hernandez, “Becoming a Black Man” *Colorlines* (Jan/Feb 2008) 1-7.
- bell hooks, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In,” *The Feminist Wire* (2013) 1-15.
- [SKIM] Shelley Correll, et al, “Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?” *American Journal of Sociology* 112:5 (March 2007) 1297-1339.
- Kelly Wallace, “23% of Women Report Sexual Assault in College, Study Finds,” *CNN* (September 2015) <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/22/health/campus-sexual-assault-new-large-survey/>
- Susan Fitzmaurice, “Adventures in Child-Rearing: The Sexual Life of a Child Growing Up with Down Syndrome, 2002” in *Documenting Intimate Matters: Primary Sources for a History of Sexuality in America*, Foster ed. (2012) 213-215.
- Timothy Stewart-Winter, “The Price of Gay Marriage,” *New York Times* (June 2015) 1-5.
- [OPTIONAL] Dean Spade and Craig Willse, “Marriage Will Never Set Us Free,” *Organizing Upgrade* (September 2013) <http://www.organizingupgrade.com/index.php/modules-menu/beyond-capitalism/item/1002-marriage-will-never-set-us-free>

Questions to Consider

Diverging Currents? The past 5-10 years have witnessed a massive shift in American thinking about sexuality. This shift has led to the passage of laws that decriminalize sodomy, guarantee marriage rights to same-sex couples, and allow lesbians and gay men to serve openly in the military. Even more recently, the new visibility of transgender figures in mainstream media has helped challenge negative stereotypes and add momentum to a burgeoning trans-rights movement. These twenty-first-century triumphs are offset, however, by what many identify as a slowing, or even stalling, of progress in efforts to improve the lives of women (see hooks, Correll, and Wallace). New findings concerning the prevalence of sexual assault on campuses across the nation, the continuing feminization of poverty, a persistent wage gap between female and male earners, and dwindling access to contraception and abortion for women living in many parts of the nation suggest dark times for women’s activists and no-end-in-sight for the inequalities they have fought for decades. How can we make sense of the diverging fortunes of LGBT activism and feminist/women’s movements?

Intersectionality Over the course of the semester we have spent a lot of time discussing the ways in which class, gender, race, and sexuality intersect – both in terms of identity, and in terms of regulation/oppression/resistance. The Hernandez article assigned this week provides a powerful comment on these issues, and so does hooks. And the Fitzmaurice source adds disability (a topic we rarely discussed) to the mix. As we move forward into the twenty-first century, what role do you think intersectionality will play our in understanding of sexuality and gender? Are all differences and oppressions equal? Is thinking in terms of intersectionality enough? What else is necessary?

Structures and Strategies of Social Movements At many points this semester we have paused to consider the changing structures and strategies of social movements. Winter, Spade, and hooks all speak to this question. Drawing on what you have learned over the course of the semester, which movements have been most successful in achieving their goals? Why? Which strategies for creating social/political/cultural/economic change “worked” at different times, in different ways, and which didn’t? Why? What can the history of social movements teach those of us who hope to bring about change in the present and the future?

The Role of History Historians and historical analysis have recently played an important role in shaping the law, especially in cases relating to sexuality – a development Chauncey, Mintz, and Canaday all emphasize in their articles. Beyond the courts, history has mattered in myriad ways throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Most crucially, it has served as a tool for those who have worked to resist, reject, and reform institutionalized heterosexuality and mainstream configurations of gendered power. How would you characterize the changing role of history in these efforts? Or in other words... how have the *uses* of history changed?

Finally – and most importantly – how does thinking historically change the way all of us understand sexuality and gender? How has it changed *your* thinking? What histories have yet to be written/told/recorded/remembered? Why and how should we write and record them?

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