LAH 4930: History Research Seminar

Gender and Sexuality in Latin America

Introduction:
Sexuality, like gender, is both intensely individualistic and intimate. Still, no individual expression or understanding of either is ever genuinely free of the framework of "honor" (code of cultural valorization) or power structure that surrounds us. Honor forms the fabric of daily life in different socio-political systems of power that reward conformity in both symbolic and material ways. This course defines gender as a central, fundamental way of signifying relations of power and ascribing not just meaning, but value and importance to sexual difference and ways of being. Similarly, this course defines sexuality as an active, rather than passive, means of expressing identity, creating an individual’s place in social units like the family and connecting to imagined concepts of community such as empire and nation.

This seminar assumes that neither gender nor sexuality is a palpable reality but an individually and collectively invented idea that we constantly construct in our daily lives and interactions. The same can be said of the nation. A nation can be understood as the process by which different groups of people, often with conflicting interests and radically different goals, imagine a sense of belonging to a larger “whole” and then, proceed to develop criteria for limiting, policing and admitting new members to that whole. Without understanding how pre-colonial and colonial gender identities developed in relationship to racial hierarchies and empire, we cannot understand what changed with independence or the legacies of change for Latin American nations in the contemporary period.

Goals: This course provides students the opportunity to engage with highly influential works of Latin American history that rely on a variety of sources and interpretative methods to open up the world of gender and sexuality. Works for analysis in the seminar see gender and sexuality as systems of symbolic power directly tied to material structures of wealth, identity and inequality. Discussing these books offers students insight into how they might conduct their own research on these themes, periods or societies. By the end, they will not only acquire new knowledge and approaches but produce original research of their own.

Topics in the Course:

This course looks carefully at the honorific cultures of the colonial period as well as the role of gender in political struggles that such factors as Spanish Catholicism, monasticism, African and indigenous resistance generated. We then turn to the Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century’s transitions to nationhood and discover how new ideologies such as Liberalism, modernity, and eugenics effected forms of liberation for women and men, especially in terms of class and race.

We will analyze how Latin American officials, intellectuals and elites often considered issues of "morality" (i.e. gender roles and sexual norms) crucial to the success or failure of their efforts to build a nation. Policies that attempted to stop political and social change were often promoted as a means for “saving the nation.” Thus, we will study how liberal forms of capitalism combined with the rise of U.S. support for military dictatorships in order to promote US businesses and political control over the region. Through the examples of Puerto Rico, the Trujillo dictatorship of the Dominican Republic and the transnational frontier of Miami, we will examine the centrality of
rescuing or defending national sovereignty through the deployment of \textit{militant, heteronormative masculinities}. We will also study how subjects of these policies resisted and successfully crafted \textit{queer forms and fora for empowerment}. Considering how violence can take the form of poverty, state terror and homophobia, we will ask how much racialized systems of patriarchy and gendered codes of honor have evolved from colonial times.

\textbf{Colonial Period}
- resistance and transformation of gender identities among colonial peoples and colonizers
- the imperial logic of racialized patriarchy in Spanish Peru & Mexico
- cultural systems of honor, their internalization and expression through Catholic mysticism, witchcraft, heresy, challenges to belief in biologically rooted gender expression/ “object choice”

\textbf{Nineteenth-Century & Twentieth-Century}
- how Enlightenment concepts of citizenship and individual rights increased freedom of most men while limiting the power of women
- the role of sexual violence in the experience of slaves and perpetuation of slavery in Brazil
- relationship between modernity as an ideology, eugenics as “uplift” and policies of “social hygiene” in Puerto Rico
- centrality of masculinity to militarism, dictatorship and US foreign policy toward the Caribbean
- frontier society in Florida and New Mexico as a locus of gendered/sexual rebellion vs. conformity

\textbf{Required Books:}
Eight texts should be purchased as part of the course’s requirements. You must have the \textbf{reading in front of you so that you can participate in seminar}. Accessing the texts digitally and \textbf{bringing only the notes to class is not an option}: a seminar requires that students readily point out, refer to and discuss evidence, methods and passages of an assigned book. If you cannot afford to purchase a book, scan the relevant sections assigned (using the top-notch scanner at LACC in Library East), download the PDF and print it out so that you can read the assignment and bring the paper copy to class.


**Scholarly approach of the course:** *This course focuses on the experience of Latin American majorities*, that is, the very groups of people whom elites have often seen as problematic members of their societies that their policies needed to "fix". These include not only people of African, indigenous or mixed descent, but specifically prostitutes, the urban poor, single women, workers, social activists and homosexuals. *In the course of our study, race will inevitably become a critical part of how we understand the workings of gender, sex and sexuality.* Indeed, the "morality" of these groups was often called into question on racial terms, that is, white prostitutes were seen as having been "blackened" by their "dishonor". Black, indigenous and mixed race women were often seen as "potential" prostitutes because their "nature" was inherently dishonorable, regardless of what they did for a living, their marital status or proximity to cultural forms ascribed to whites. Yet, even as we study the experience of Latin American majorities, we will often do so through the testimonies and oral histories of individuals, making our discussions both deductive and dynamic as we work to link smaller realities to our own historical views of the "big picture."

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Seminar Participation 35%**
   By definition, a seminar is not a lecture class in which students’ role is largely limited to listening, taking notes and active thinking. Instead, the success of a seminar depends on each student’s willingness to **complete the reading** in advance of class and desire to **share and debate ideas** in an organized discussion led by the professor. Although Professor Guerra will often provide introductory thoughts and context, her role is to inspire discussion, help craft ideas, draw out analytical patterns and explain/highlight the nature of scholarly methodology.

   - **A student’s final grade** depends on consistent preparation for discussion and coherent, collegial participation in every class discussion.
   - **Every student is required to bring two or three questions on the seminar reading to class.** These questions should be typed and printed on a sheet of paper for Prof. Guerra to collect at the start of discussion. Prof. Guerra will draw questions for that day’s discussion from this pool of questions.
   - **On the first day, each student will sign up to be a discussion leader for one of the assigned readings.** Each seminar meeting, two students will then serve as discussion leaders. *This exercise will allow these students to examine the book they select with greater care, thinking about the sources, the methods and the contribution of the book to the historiography of Latin America.*

2. **Short analytical writing (5 pages), précis and annotated bibliography for research paper 20%**
   - **Each student will write a 5-page analysis** of the strengths, weaknesses and methods of the book that s/he has chosen to discuss as a discussion leader. The paper is due the day of that discussion in hard copy.
   - **By Thursday, September 13th,** all students are required to have met with Professor Guerra to discuss the viability of a research topic and have it approved.
   - **A précis and working, annotated bibliography of the final research paper in hard copy is due on Thursday, October 4th.**
3. Final research paper (15-25 pages) 45%
Each member of the seminar must complete a research paper of 15-25 pages in length. Students will also offer a 15-minute oral presentation to their peers during one of the last three class meetings. The oral presentation is worth 5% of the research paper’s grade.

- First drafts of the research paper in hard copy are due by Wednesday November 14th.
- First drafts will be returned to students on Tuesday, November 20th.
- Final drafts of the paper are due by Wednesday, December 12th in hard copy.

Technology in the classroom: When class starts, all cell phones must disappear. Surfing the web, looking at/answering email, shopping, engaging in social media, writing one’s congressional representatives, checking the stock market and all other activities on one’s laptop unrelated to taking notes or class discussion are strictly prohibited. Engaging in such activities will result in Prof. Guerra confiscating a student’s device and retaining it for an indeterminate period of time.

Academic Honesty: Violations of academic honesty standards include but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of another’s work as one’s own, bribery, conspiracy and fabrication. The criteria for assessing whether student behavior meets one or more of these violations as well as the sanctions imposed may be reviewed at the website: http://www.aa.ufl.edu/aa/Rules/4017.htm

Attendance: Attendance at weekly seminar meetings is mandatory. Students are allowed to miss one seminar without penalty; all other absences will negatively affect your final evaluation and grade. Multiple absences may be excused pending approval of medical or other credible documentation of an emergency. Students who have other conflicts that will prevent them from being able to complete an assignment on time must notify Professor Guerra in advance and discuss whether or not the extension or make-up exam is merited. Students must also notify Professor Guerra if they will incur absences due to UF-sanctioned activities (such as participation in UF teams, etc.) and provide documentation to that effect.

Grading Scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>89-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>86-88</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Letter Grade with GPA equivalent:

- A: 4.0
- A-: 3.67
- B+: 3.33
- B: 3.0
- B-: 2.67
- C+: 2.33
- C: 2.0
- C-: 1.67
- D+: 1.33
- D: 1.0
- D-: 0.67
- F: 0

Seminar Schedule
8/28 Introduction to the Genders & Sexualities of Latin America
9/4 Deciphering Gender Consciousness & Power in a Conquest Continuum
Dr. Lillian Guerra  
Class Meetings: T 12:50-3:50 PM  
Office: Grinter 307  
Class Location: Flint 115  
Office Hours: Th 12-2 PM  

Reading: Silverblatt, Sun, Moon and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru pp. 3-19; 40-47; 81-210.

9/11 Getting Away with Murder: The Case of the Cross-dressing Conquistador  

Thursday, September 13th: Deadline for meeting with Prof. Guerra & approval of research topic.

9/18 Catholic Mysticism and the Poor’s Power to Shame  
Reading: Van Deusen, ed. The Souls of Purgatory: The Spiritual Diary of a Seventeenth-Century Afro-Peruvian Mystic, Ursula de Jesus, pp. 1-77 (esp. pp. 32-62) and translation of Ursula’s diary, pp. 79-160.

9/25 Historical Imagination, Honorific Cultures & Myths of Catholic Morality  
Gutiérrez, When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away, pp. 1-94; 143-206

10/02 Sexual Violence & Slavery’s Subversions of Humanity  
Lamonte, Slavery Unseen: Sex, Power and Violence in Brazilian History, pp. 11-66; 111-186.

Thursday, October 4th: Précis and working annotated bibliography are due.  
Monday, October 8-Sunday, October 14th: Professor Guerra is in Haiti. No class! Read for Oct. 16!

10/16 Women’s Bodies: Sites of Modernity, Colonization & Control  

10/23 Trujillo: Populism’s Seductive Symbolic Power & Sources of Totalitarian Rule  
Derby, The Dictator’s Seduction, pp. 66-203.

10/30 New Frontiers, Old Realities? Homosexuality & the Queer History of Miami  
Capó, Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940, pp. 1-23; 60-95; 125-196.

11/6 RESEARCH CONSULTATIONS WITH PROF. GUERRA in her office.  
11/13 Oral presentations in class.  
11/20 Oral presentations in class.

Wednesday, November 14th: First draft of research papers due in hard copy to Prof. Guerra. Deliver to front desk of the Center for Latin American Studies, 3rd floor, Grinter Hall.

11/27 Oral presentations in class and wrap-up.  
12/4 NO CLASS. Complete research paper.

Wednesday, December 12th, final research papers due to Professor Guerra. Deliver to front desk of the Center for Latin American Studies, 3rd floor, Grinter Hall.