

# GWST/CSST 210: Introduction to Critical Sexuality Studies

Fall 2021

**Section 01:** T/Th 10:00-11:15\*

**Section 02:** T/Th 11:30-12:45\*

\*see course schedule for hybrid meeting pattern

**Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Kein**

**Email: kkein@umbc.edu**

**Office Hrs (Webex): Tuesdays 10:30-12  
and 2:30-3:30, by appt**

## **Course Description:**

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of critical sexuality studies. The course conducts a critical inquiry into the historical precedents and theoretical frameworks necessary to understand the role of sexuality in shaping personal, social, economic, and political life. Some questions we will consider throughout the semester include: What does it mean to say that sexuality as a category is constructed? What historical/cultural conditions set the stage for the emergence of sexuality as a category and of the homosexual as a certain kind of sexual being? In what ways has the state played a role in the construction of sexuality? How does sexuality operate as a mode of discipline? How do media and popular culture represent normative and marginalized sexualities and contribute to notions of boundaries between the two? Our approach to understanding these topics will be intersectional; in other words, we will ask how identities and categories such as sexuality, race, gender, (dis)ability, class, and nation reinforce each other, and are used to oppress and subordinate, to create inequalities and privileges.

## **Course Objectives:**

Through successful completion of this course, students will:

- Display understanding of key terms and concepts in the field of critical sexuality studies
- Explain the concept of sexuality as a constructed category rooted in historical and cultural contexts
- Identify and critically engage with scholarly arguments in the field and synthesize those arguments in writing
- Apply background theoretical knowledge of sexuality to analyze contemporary issues
- Constructively collaborate with a group to develop and deliver presentations

## **Hybrid Procedures and Meeting Pattern:**

This course will be taught as a hybrid with a mix of in-person and online work. Unless otherwise noted, we will follow this schedule:

- Tuesdays:
  - Always online, asynchronous unless otherwise noted
  - Virtual office hours (Dr. Kein available for individual meetings)
- Thursdays:
  - In person during designated class time
  - Section 01: 10:00-11:15, Fine Arts 427
  - Section 02: 11:30-12:45, Fine Arts 424
  - Subject to change pending campus status and COVID protocols. Look for announcements via email and Blackboard

## **Required Materials:**

Texts:

- Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (2007)

All other course materials will be available on the course Blackboard page.

## **Course Requirements:**

- In-Person Attendance and Participation – 15%
- Weekly Reading Responses – 25%
- Online Discussions/Activities – 5%
- Group Presentation – 20%
- Midterm Exam – 15%
- Final Exam – 20%

\*It is the responsibility of each individual student to keep track of their grades throughout the semester if so desired. Please refer to the “Course Requirements” section of this syllabus for the weight of each assignment in order to calculate your grade. Note that while some assignment grades are posted on Blackboard for students’ convenience, overall grades are not calculated on Blackboard. This means that at any given time Blackboard Gradebook may not accurately account for all submitted grades or weighting of assignments.

## **In -Person Attendance and Participation:**

Students are expected to attend synchronous class meetings and participate in all class discussions and group activities. As we are learning not just new information in this course, but new ways of thinking and new perspectives to consider and apply, active participation in class is a fundamental

component of mastery of material. Active involvement is a responsibility we all hold to one another to create the richest learning experience.

HAVING SAID THAT, though it's important to be present in class, more than ever it's important for us to take care of ourselves and one another, and that includes staying away from campus when we're sick! In the event of a missed synchronous class, students may make up the day's attendance and participation grade with a brief reflection paper on the week's material (see instructions on Blackboard).

Overall, students will be allowed one absence (without make-up) without penalty, no questions asked. Each additional absence without make-up will result in the reduction of the synchronous attendance and participation grade by ½ letter grade (for example, from a B+ to a B-).

### Weekly Reading Responses

Each week students will submit short (about ½ page per assigned text) write-ups about that week's assigned texts. These will be due on Tuesdays at 5:00 pm, unless otherwise noted. Most will follow a standard format of identifying a text's main argument and most important evidence, offering your own response, and raising questions. Specific questions/prompts will be provided for some texts. Complete instructions, requirements, and grading information will be available on Blackboard.

### Online Discussion/Activities

From time to time online class days will include online discussion boards or other asynchronous discussions/activities. Like in-person class, participation in these is always required. Instructions will be provided for each as needed, and they will be graded on a credit/no-credit basis.

### Group Presentation

In groups of 3-5, students will deliver approx. 15-minute presentations on the topic of their choice relating to sexuality in contemporary culture (instructions on choosing group mates and topics to come). Presentations will be delivered in class and will be followed by question-and-answer periods. More detailed instructions and a grading rubric will be available on Blackboard.

### Midterm Exam

In-class bluebook exam. Thursday, October 21.

### Final Exam

Cumulative exam during the registrar-assigned final exam period.

Section 01: Tuesday, December 21, 10:30-12:30

Section 02: Thursday, December 16, 10:30-12:30

## Course Policies and Resources:

### Technology: Access, Requirements, Resources, Support:

To help ensure that UMBC students are equipped for academic success, the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) provides a wealth of resources and support, including tips for getting online and minimum specifications to consider when purchasing a computer. UMBC does require all students to be technologically self-sufficient, which entails having a reliable personal computer (preferably a laptop with webcam) and Internet access. It is important to note that this university requirement has been factored into UMBC's official "[cost of attendance](#)," which can be funded by student financial aid. To learn more about the resources and support that DoIT offers to students, visit [doit.umbc.edu/students](http://doit.umbc.edu/students).

### Academic integrity in the Classroom and Online Instruction Environment:

Academic integrity is an important value at UMBC. By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. These principles and policies apply in both face-to-face and online classes. Resources for students about academic integrity at UMBC are available at <https://academicconduct.umbc.edu/resources-for-students/>

### Resources to Help you Succeed in Online Courses:

Many students need additional support to succeed in online courses. Click on the following links for helpful resources:

[UMBC's Academic Success Center \(ASC\)](#) provides a range of resources to support students as they progress toward degree completion. They will continue to offer all of their services online. The ASC has created a specialized set of [Online Learning Resources](#). In addition, check out the following resources:

- [Tutoring and Instructional Support](#): Online tutoring and writing support, supplemental instruction, study sessions, academic success meetings, placement testing, academic advocacy, first year alerts, and academic success meetings.
- [Academic Advocates](#): Advocates work one-on-one with students who need support navigating academic and institutional challenges that may adversely affect their persistence, progression and timely completion of degree. No matter how complex the concerns (i.e., personal, academic, or financial), Academic Advocates will work together with students to review their progress, present options toward graduation, map out a plan for success, and facilitate communication and connections with the appropriate campus resources.
- [Tips for Academic Success during COVID-19](#): General tips for getting the most out of online learning.
- [How to Study Effectively](#): An informative video with different study strategies

If you have a question, please contact the ASC at [academicsuccess@umbc.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@umbc.edu).

### Support Outside of the Classroom:

Diminished mental health can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be related to your course work; if so, please speak with me. However, problems with other parts of your life can also contribute to decreased academic performance. UMBC provides cost-free and confidential mental health services through the Counseling Center to help you manage personal challenges that threaten your personal or academic well-being.

Remember, getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do -- for yourself and for those who care about you. For more resources get the Just in Case mental health resources Mobile and Web App. This app can be accessed by clicking: <http://counseling.umbc.edu/justincase>

The UMBC Counseling Center is in the Student Development & Success Center (between Chesapeake and Susquehanna Halls). Phone: [410-455-2472](tel:410-455-2472). Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm.

### Accessibility and Disability Accommodations, Guidance and Resources:

Support services for students with disabilities are provided for all students qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA & ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC department designated to coordinate accommodations that would create equal access for students when barriers to participation exist in University courses, programs, or activities.

If you have a documented disability and need to request academic accommodations in your courses, please refer to the SDS website at [sds.umbc.edu](http://sds.umbc.edu) for registration information and office procedures.

SDS email: [disAbility@umbc.edu](mailto:disAbility@umbc.edu)  
SDS phone: (410) 455-2459.

If you will be using SDS approved accommodations in this class, please contact me (instructor) to discuss implementation of the accommodations. During remote instruction requirements due to COVID, communication and flexibility will be essential for success.

### Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Gender Based Violence and Discrimination:

UMBC's [Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination](#) and Federal Title IX law prohibit discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex in University programs and activities. Any student who is impacted by sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, gender discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, gender-based harassment or retaliation should contact the University's Title IX Coordinator to make a report and/or access support and resources:

Mikhel A. Kushner, Title IX Coordinator (she/her/hers)  
410-455-1250 (direct line), [kushner@umbc.edu](mailto:kushner@umbc.edu)

*You can access support and resources even if you do not want to take any further action.* You will not be forced to file a formal complaint or police report. Please be aware that the University may take action on its own if essential to protect the safety of the community.

If you are interested in or thinking about making a report, please see the [Online Reporting Form](#). Please note that, while University options to respond may be limited, there is an anonymous reporting option via the online form and every effort will be made to address concerns reported anonymously.

***Notice that Faculty are Responsible Employees with Mandatory Reporting Obligations:***

All faculty members are considered *Responsible Employees*, per [UMBC's Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, and Gender Discrimination](#). Faculty are therefore required to report possible violations of the [Policy](#) to the Title IX Coordinator, even if a student discloses something they experienced before attending UMBC.

While faculty members want you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, students should understand that faculty are required to report Sexual Misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator so that the University can inform students of their [rights, resources and support](#).

If you need to speak with someone in confidence, who does not have an obligation to report to the Title IX Coordinator, UMBC has a number of [Confidential Resources](#) available to support you:

- The [Counseling Center](#): 410-455-2472 / After-Hours 410-455-3230
- [University Health Services](#): 410-455-2542
- Pastoral Counseling via [Interfaith Center](#): 410-455-3657; [interfaith@umbc.edu](mailto:interfaith@umbc.edu)

Other Resources:

- [Women's Center](#) (for students of all genders): 410-455-2714; [womenscenter@umbc.edu](mailto:womenscenter@umbc.edu).
- [Shady Grove Student Resources](#), [Maryland Resources](#), [National Resources](#).

Child Abuse and Neglect:

Please note that Maryland law and [UMBC policy](#) require that I report all disclosures or suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services and/or the police.

Pregnancy:

UMBC's [Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination](#) expressly prohibits all forms of Discrimination and Harassment on the basis of sex, including pregnancy. [Resources for pregnant students](#) are available through the University's Office of Equity and Inclusion. Pregnant and parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator to discuss plans and assure ongoing access to their academic program with respect to a leave of absence or return following leave related to pregnancy, delivery, or the early months of parenting.

In addition, students who are pregnant may be entitled to accommodations under the ADA through the [Student Disability Service Office](#), and/or under Title IX through the [Office of Equity and Inclusion](#).

### Religious Observances & Accommodations:

UMBC [Policy](#) provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs, students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance, and as early as possible. For questions or guidance or to request an accommodation, please contact the [Office of Equity and Inclusion](#) at [oei@umbc.edu](mailto:oei@umbc.edu).

### Hate, Bias, Discrimination and Harassment:

UMBC values safety, cultural and ethnic diversity, social responsibility, lifelong learning, equity, and civic engagement.

Consistent with these principles, [UMBC Policy](#) prohibits discrimination and harassment in its educational programs and activities or with respect to employment terms and conditions based on race, creed, color, religion, sex, gender, pregnancy, ancestry, age, gender identity or expression, national origin, veterans status, marital status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or genetic information.

Students (and faculty and staff) who experience discrimination, harassment, hate or bias or who have such matters reported to them should use the [online reporting form](#) to report discrimination, hate or bias incidents; reporting may be *anonymous*.

### COVID-19 Safety Measures

UMBC has set clear expectations for masking while on campus that include the requirement that you must wear a face mask that covers your nose and mouth in all classrooms regardless of your vaccination status. This is to protect your health and safety as well as the health and safety of your classmates, instructor, and the university community. Anyone attending class without a mask or wearing one improperly will be asked by the instructor to put on a mask or fix their mask in the appropriate position.

Any student that refuses to comply with this directive will be asked to leave the classroom immediately and failure to do so will result in the instructor requesting the assistance of the University Police. Students who refuse to wear masks may be referred to Student Conduct and Community Standards and may face disciplinary action for violations of the Code of Student Conduct, specifically, Rule 2: Behavior Which Jeopardizes the Health or Safety of Self or Others and Rule 16: Failure to Comply with the Request of a University Official. UMBC's on-campus safety protocols, including masking requirements, are subject to change in response to the evolving situation with Covid-19.

### **Course Schedule:**

*\*Schedule of topics and readings subject to change. Any changes will be announced on Blackboard and via email.*

### **KEY**

- O Online Day. Reading responses due at 5:00 pm. Some days will have Bb discussions or other activities. Don't forget Dr. Kein is available for office hours!
  
- I In-Person Day. Come to class! Prepare by reading all listed texts (for today and the previous Tuesday) before you come.

### **Introductions**

- O T 8/31 Class Introductions and Syllabus
  
- I Th 9/2 Hanna Rosin, "Boys on the Side," *The Atlantic*, 2012

### **Unit I: Sexuality: The Construction of a Category**

- O T 9/7 Carol Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America"  
  
George Chauncey, excerpts from *Gay New York*
  
- I Th 9/9 In-Class Discussion
  
- O T 9/14 Introduction to Foucault (online lecture)  
  
Sandra Lee Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power"
  
- I Th 9/16 In-Class Discussion
  
- O T 9/21 Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body"
  
- I Th 9/23 In-Class Discussion

## Unit II: Power, Normativity, and the State: Sexuality as a Mode of Discipline

- O T 9/28 Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory on the Politics of Sexuality"
- I Th 9/30 In-Class Discussion
- O T 10/5 Michael Warner, excerpts from *The Trouble with Normal*  
Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism"
- I Th 10/7 In-Class Discussion
- O T 10/12 Margot Canaday, "Building a Straight State: Sexuality and Social Citizenship under the 1944 G.I. Bill"  
Laura Briggs, "Demon Mothers in the Social Laboratory: Development, Overpopulation, and 'The Pill,' 1940-1960, from *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism in Puerto Rico*
- I Th 10/14 In-Class Discussion
- O\* T 10/19 Midterm Exam Review  
**\*This is a virtual, synchronous (Webex) review session during normal class time**
- I Th 10/21 **In-Class Midterm Exam**

## Unit III: Heteronormativity and Sex and/in Popular Culture

- O T 10/26 Linda Williams, excerpts from *Screening Sex*
- I Th 10/28 In-Class Discussion
- O T 11/2 Jessica Valenti, "The Cult of Virginity"  
Video Clip: VH1 special on Virginity
- I Th 11/4 In-Class Discussion

O T 11/9 Mireille Miller-Young, "Ho Theory: Black Female Sexuality at the Convergence of Hip Hop and Pornography" from *A Taste for Brown Sugar: Black Women and Pornography*

I Th 11/11 In-Class Discussion

#### **Unit IV: Queer Sexualities: Representation and Exploration**

O T 11/16 *Paris is Burning* (1990 Documentary)

bell hooks, "Is Paris Burning?"

I Th 11/18 In-Class Discussion

T 11/23 **No Class—Start Reading *Fun Home!***

Th 11/25 **No Class—Thanksgiving!**

O T 11/30 Allison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

I Th 12/2 In-Class Discussion

O T 12/7 *Moonlight* (2016 film)

Text TBA

I Th 12/9 In-Class Discussion

O\* T 12/14 Final Exam Review

**\*This is a virtual, synchronous (Webex) review session during normal class time**