



# Religion + Sexuality

Prof. Megan Goodwin

(REL 211) Winter 2015

MW 2:40—4pm  
Pettengill 151

Office hours:  
Fridays 2—4pm

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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Hedge 213

The relationship between religion and sexuality is complex, seemingly contradictory, often tense, and full of possibility. **This class will consider the richness of sexual difference in the context of contemporary global religions.** Discussion topics include consent, religious ecstasy, plural marriage, contraception, and religiously motivated fear—even hatred—of queerness and queer people.

Given the nature and content of this course, students will read about, talk about and write about religious and sexual identities, desires and practices. If such discussions make you uncomfortable, you should not be in this class. No student will be required to reveal his or her own religious or sexual identity, orientation, desires or practices, but some students might choose to do so. If such revelations will make you uncomfortable, or **if you are unable to engage the fact of religious and sexual diversity in a respectful, mature manner, you should not be in this class.**

## Expectations

This is an intermediate course. I do not expect that you will know anything about the traditions we will discuss or about the field of religion studies, I do assume a basic familiarity with the humanities as a discipline. If you are unfamiliar with humanities scholarship—particularly reading and analyzing scholarly articles or writing scholarly essays in keeping with standard humanities styles—you might find some course assignments challenging. Please be sure to read directions closely and seek additional assistance as needed well in advance of deadlines.

Regardless of your academic background, **treat every student and every concept you encounter with scholarly respect.** Challenge your assumptions and your position(s) of privilege. Speak from your own experiences and understandings of the issues, and assume that each class member operates from his own best intentions. As scholars of religion, **it is not our job to evaluate the truth or validity of any tradition.** We only scrutinize the evidence we have, so that we might position that tradition's beliefs, practices, teachings, and products in the broader context of global religions.

Each class will center on discussion of the

assigned texts; some will combine lecture and presentation elements as well. None of these work unless you **attend regularly and read the assignments.** Please come to class ready to analyze and respond to the primary documents and secondary sources assigned, as well as to the contributions of your fellow students. (The handouts on Lyceum, "How to Read a Primary Source" and "How to Read a Secondary Source," will come in handy here.) Participating in the discussions will be easier if you bring your readings to class with you, so be sure to print them ahead of time.

**Your active engagement in these exercises is essential.** "Engagement" includes attentive listening as well as speaking.

## Class Format



I am committed to making our classroom and our campus an inclusive and supportive learning environment for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions.

Unless you have learning accommodations that require their use, **laptops and other devices are only permissible in the classroom for specific class activities.**

You are also required to use certain technologies to complete your assignments. Most importantly, you need to know how to create a PDF document and submit such documents via Lyceum in a timely manner. You are responsible for learning how to negotiate these technologies.

I will not accept any electronic submission that is not in PDF format, and I only accept electronic submissions via Lyceum. I will not accept assignments as \*.doc or \*.docx files or assignments sent to my email address.

## Technology

Please note that there is no attendance grade for this class — **you must participate in the conversation to receive credit for attending.** Unless granted an exception due to hospitalization, family emergency, or another extenuating circumstance, students who miss three or more classes will lose two points per missed class from their final grades. **Students must meet with me once before the midterm.**

Contact me before **9 February** to schedule this meeting.

Please don't arrive late for class: it distracts me and your classmates, and it's very rude. Also, please turn off your cell phones before arriving for class. Anyone using their phones, laptops, tablets, etc., for reasons unrelated to class will be asked to leave the discussion and may not make up any missed work.

# Attendance & Participation

How do I know if I'm participating?

Attendance isn't enough. To succeed in this class, you must fully engage in activities and discussions. These criteria determine your participation grade.

**In short: speak up!**

## EXCELLENT

You're present, prepared, and engaged. You consistently refer to the readings, lectures, and class discussions from other weeks. You encourage other students' comments and questions in a productive and respectful manner.

## GOOD

You're present and prepared, and you offer thoughtful questions and comments that demonstrate your preparation for discussion and attention to readings and lectures.

## ADEQUATE

You're present and prepared, but limit your contributions to several surface-level observations or clarifying questions about lectures or readings.

## MINIMAL

You usually make a single comment during discussions in response to another student's observations or insights. ("I agree with hir.")

If you need in-class or testing accommodations because of accessibility issues, if you have emergency medical information, or if you need special arrangements in the event of a building evacuation, please inform me as soon as possible.

Students who require accommodations for testing must pre-register with **Bates' Learning Differences Office** and inform me of these accommodations during the first week of class. Please note that you are responsible for making timely arrangements with Learning Differences and me regarding your testing accommodations.

## Accessibility





# Grading

In this course, you will be graded on **how** you think, not **what** you think. In other words, **you will not be graded on your beliefs, opinions, or the positions you advance**. You will be graded on how well you articulate your thoughts and positions, how closely you read the assigned texts, and how much your ability to think **critically and synthetically** about course themes develops throughout the semester.

## Percentages

- 5% leading discussion
- 10% participation
- 15% film review
- 20% events @ Bates
- 25% final project
- 30% reading notes

## Rubric

•A =	94—100
•A- =	93—90
•B+ =	89—87
•B =	86—83
•B- =	82—80
•C+ =	79—77
•C =	76—73
•C- =	72—70
•D+ =	69—67
•D =	66—60
•F =	59 and below

- A work far exceeds basic requirements.  
The work is of excellent quality.
- B work exceeds basic requirements.  
The work is good or very good.
- C work meets basic requirements.  
The work is satisfactory.
- D work does not meet most of the basic assignment requirements.  
The work is poor but passing.
- F work fails to meet most of the requirements of an assignment or of the course.

There are a number of helpful handouts and guidelines for writing on our Lyceum site, including a handout on writing for religious studies. For further assistance, please come to office hours, make an appointment with Bates' **Peer Writing and Speaking Center** or visit their **website**.

# Write Better



# Sources

All sources consulted for this class and for your projects must be of scholarly import.

Scholarly sources are written by experts with formal academic training in the areas in which they are writing and are published by academic presses. You must cite every source you use—whether you're directly quoting or merely referring to it—in each and every assignment. Religious Studies as a discipline uses Chicago style; use Chicago style citations for all class assignments. See the Chicago style quick guide on Lyceum for further instructions.

There are very few circumstances under which websites are permissible as sources for assignments in this class. If you're using a website as a reference, it must be a credible academic website. (Hint: [about.com](http://about.com) and Wikipedia are *not* academic websites.) Some websites that might be of interest:

- The Immanent Frame
- Religion Dispatches
- Religion and Politics
- Pew Forum
- Al Jazeera



You plagiarize when you present someone else's thoughts, words, or ideas as your own without proper attribution. Please don't cheat or plagiarize you will fail the course. You must complete this plagiarism tutorial and submit a passing certificate before 21 January if you intend to remain in the course. If you're still unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult the "What is Plagiarism?" handout available on Lyceum or Bates' Academic Integrity Policy. "I didn't know" is not a valid excuse. Go know.

plagiarism  
&  
cheating

# Reading Notes

Learning to read, understand, and think critically about challenging material is a key skill for liberal arts scholarship. For this reason, one of our regular writing assignments will be creating reading notes for assigned primary and secondary sources. This will help you become a more careful reader of these texts and jump-start your preparation for your final project.

Detailed instructions for creating reading notes are available on Lyceum. You are responsible for providing reading notes for one source assigned on the days marked RN on the following schedule.

**Reading notes are due on Lyceum by midnight before class.** You must also bring your reading notes to each class discussion.

# Assignments



# Leading Discussion

Each student will lead a class discussion during the course of the semester. If you are leading discussion, you must submit a one page (single-spaced) report on the material we'll be covering in class. State each article's argument/main point in a single sentence; provide a brief (3- 5 sentence) summary of each source we'll discuss; and propose discussion questions with suggested responses that draw examples from the assigned texts. Some classes will have multiple discussion leaders. You are allowed—and encouraged—to work together on your plans for the class; however, you must each submit a separate report.

**Submit your report as \$YOURLASTNAME.pdf via Lyceum no later than 48 hours before the session in question.** Refer to the assignment sheet for further instructions.

# Events @ Bates



Bates hosts a number of events that are pertinent to the study of religion and sexuality. Attend at least three of these events this semester. You must attend at least one public lecture of a speaker in the “Religion and Sexuality” speaker series sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies; the other two are entirely up to you. I encourage you to contact the Women and Gender Studies Department in particular to stay abreast of their events. You might also want to reach out to the Title IX Office and the Office for Intercultural Education about their events schedules.

For each event you attend, submit an event report that summarizes the discussion/content and relates it to our class conversations and assigned readings. Your event report should directly reference class sources. Refer to the assignment sheet for further instructions.

**Submit your report as \$YOURLASTNAME.pdf via Lyceum no later than one week after the event in question.**

Please note that you must submit at least three event reports to receive any credit for this assignment. You may attend up to 3 additional events for extra credit.

# Assignments



# Documentary Review

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We will be watching a number of documentary films as part of our cultural analysis of religion and sexuality. Choose one of these films or select another (pending instructor approval) that engages issues of sexual issues in contemporary religious practices. In 750 –1500 words, review the film. Does it correspond with our class readings and discussions about the tradition in question? About broader concerns in the study of religion and sexuality? Why or why not? Why do these

correspondences (or lack thereof) matter? What role does sexuality play in these depictions, and why is it significant to the creators' message? Use examples from assigned course readings to support your argument.

**Submit your review as \$YOURLASTNAME.pdf via Lyceum on Monday, 30 March by midnight.**

6 April 2015

You must use assigned readings to support your analysis; be sure to check with me about outside sources. As with all projects, please be sure to check the assignment sheet for further instructions.

## Final Project

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By the end of the semester, you should have a fairly comprehensive understanding of religion and sexuality. Now it's your turn to tell me what you think. Compose your own theory of religion and sexuality. What, in your (now) informed, scholarly opinion, do religion and bodies have to do with one another? Why do religious texts or religious leaders invest so much energy into regulating sexual practices? Why do so many people think religion should tell them what to do with (on, in, to) their bodies? To answer these questions, refer to the authors we've covered this semester. Select two or three scholars that approach your own thinking on the matter, summarize their arguments, and explain the benefits and limitations of their thinking. Then offer your own theory of religion and sexuality. What was missing from the arguments you discussed? What could these authors learn from each other? Finally, use up to three case studies—ones we've addressed in our readings, or ones you have located in your own research (subject to instructor's approval)—to defend your theory. How do these examples support your thinking about religion and sexuality? What insights do your case studies provide into the relationship between religion and sexual bodies?

You must submit a proposal for this assignment before class on **16 March**. Include a suggested argument, a brief outline (including the authors you intend to address and the case studies you propose to use), and a working bibliography. **Please note that the proposal is not optional:** it accounts for 10% of your grade for this assignment. **Submit your final project as \$YOURLASTNAME.pdf on Lyceum by 14 April.**



# Schedule of Classes

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
<b>GETTING STARTED</b>		
M 12 January	Introductions	
W 14 January	Studying religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McCutcheon, "Religion and Classification"</li> <li>• McCutcheon, "The Public Discourse on Religion"</li> <li>• Arnal and McCutcheon, "On the Persistence of Imagining Religion"</li> </ul>
M 19 January	No classes: MLK day	
W 21 January	Studying sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality"</li> <li>• Wolters, "What the Fuck is Queer Theory?"</li> </ul>
F 23 January	Studying religion and sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goodwin, "Thinking Sex and American Religions"</li> <li>• Cady and Fessenden, "Gendering the Divide: Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference"</li> </ul>
<b>REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM v. FREEDOM OF RELIGION</b>		
M 26 January	Burwell v. Hobby Lobby (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision and dissent, Burwell v. Hobby Lobby</li> <li>• Oyez report</li> </ul>
W 28 January RN	After Hobby Lobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sullivan, "The Impossibility of Religious Freedom"</li> <li>• Imhoff, "The Supreme Court's Faith in Belief"</li> <li>• Friedman, "My Business, Myself"</li> <li>• Ingersoll, "Why Hobby Lobby Is a Pandora's Box"</li> <li>• Miller, "Hobby Lobby Case Isn't Really About Contraception"</li> <li>• Miller, "Obama Caves on (Another) Contraception Exemption"</li> </ul>
<b>MORAL PANIC</b>		
M 2 February	Believe the Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smith and Pazder, from <i>Michelle Remembers</i></li> <li>• "Annette," from <i>The Courage to Heal</i> (1988)</li> <li>• DeYoung, from <i>The Day Care Ritual Abuse Moral Panic</i></li> </ul>
W 4 February RN	Satanic Panic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeYoung, "Breeders for Satan: Toward a Sociology of Sexual Trauma Tales"</li> <li>• Goode and Ben Yehuda, from <i>Moral Panics</i></li> <li>• Foxcroft, "Hunting Witches"</li> <li>• Satanic Temple, "Satanists Leverage Hobby Lobby Ruling"</li> </ul>
<b>SAVING SEX</b>		
M 9 February	Losing Religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thompson, <i>Blankets</i></li> <li>• Warner, "Tongues Untied"</li> </ul>
W 11 February RN	Reclaiming Pleasure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DeRogatis, from <i>Saving Sex</i></li> <li>• DeRogatis, "What Would Jesus Do?"</li> </ul>
M 16 February	Winter break	
W 18 February		
M 23 February	No class	
<b>RETHINKING NARRATIVES</b>		
W 25 February RN	"Pinkwashing" Israel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schulman, from <i>Israel/Palestine and the Queer International</i></li> <li>• Michaelson, "6 Reasons Why Pinkwashing Israel Is So Wrong"</li> <li>• Meronek, "De-Pinkwashing Israel"</li> </ul>
F 27 February	Ap(paul)ing Bodies Vistor: Joseph Marchal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings TBA</li> </ul>



# Schedule of Classes

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
<b>ROMAN CATHOLICISM &amp; CLERGY ABUSE</b>		
M 2 March	Screening: "Deliver Us From Evil"	
W 4 March	Complicating Abuse <b>Visitor:</b> Kent Brintnall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brintnall, "The Curious Case of Paul Richard Shanley"</li> <li>• Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?"</li> <li>• Jordan, "Abusing Rhetoric"</li> </ul>
F 6 March RN	Surviving Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gibson, "'Feminized' Church and Altar Girls Caused Priest Shortage"</li> <li>• Hunt, "Vatican Equates Women's Ordination with Priest Pedophilia?"</li> <li>• Kavka, "Sister Martin Ignatius Explains Not Very Much At All For You"</li> <li>• Levander, "The Church, the State, and the Child"</li> </ul>
<b>GENDER V. SEXUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY IRAN</b>		
M 9 March	Screening: "Be Like Others"	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHmi3WAieew">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHmi3WAieew</a>
W 11 March RN	Sexual Reassignment Surgery in Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hamedani, "The Gay People Pushed to Change Their Gender"</li> <li>• Bucar and Shirazi, "The 'Invention' of Lesbian Acts in Iran"</li> <li>• Najmabadi, from <i>Professing Selves</i></li> </ul>
<b>PLURAL MARRIAGE</b>		
W 18 March	Multiple wives and Mormon Fundamentalisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Krakauer, from <i>Under the Banner of Heaven</i></li> <li>• Jacobsen and Burton, "The Incident at El Dorado, Texas"</li> <li>• Kent, "A Matter of Principle"</li> <li>• Beaman, "Church, State, and the Legal Interpretation of Polygamy in Canada"</li> </ul>
F 20 March RN	Plural marriage beyond polygamy ( <b>Visitor:</b> Bennion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bennion, from <i>Polygamy in Primetime</i></li> <li>• Gibson, "However Satisfied a Man Might Be"</li> <li>• Miles, "What's Love Got To Do With It?"</li> </ul>
<b>EVANGELIZING UGANDA</b>		
M 23 March	Screening: "God Loves Uganda"	
W 25 March	Screening: "Call Me Kuchu"	
F 27 March RN	Queer Identities and activism in Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chellew-Hodge, "Ugandan Gay Rights Activist Murdered"</li> <li>• "Africa is not a country" photo campaign</li> <li>• Sharlet, from <i>C Street: The Fundamentalist Threat to American Democracy</i></li> <li>• Montgomery, "Loving Uganda to Death"</li> <li>• Montgomery, "Uganda Anti-gay Fallout"</li> <li>• ORAM, Uganda country report (skim)</li> </ul>
<b>HOMONATIONALISM AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY</b>		
M 30 March	Homonationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puar, "Monster Terrorist Fag"</li> <li>• Puar, from <i>Queer Assemblages</i></li> </ul>
W 1 April RN	Sexuality, Islam, and American Foreign Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hirschkind &amp; Mahmood, "Feminism, the Taliban, &amp; the Politics of Counterinsurgency."</li> <li>• Schulman, "Homonationalism"</li> </ul>
<b>EROS AND CONSENT</b>		
M 6 April	"It's On Us"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feldman, "Sexual Assault at God's Harvard"</li> <li>• Atkins, "How Some Christian Colleges Are Getting Around the Federal Laws That Address Campus Rape"</li> <li>• Zohair, "The Religion of My Rape"</li> </ul>
W 8 April	"All Acts of Love & Pleasure"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kraemer, from <i>Eros and Touch from a Neopagan Perspective</i></li> <li>• Pike, "All Acts of Love and Pleasure Are My Rituals"</li> </ul>
F 10 April	Final project workshop	
T 14 April	Final Exam session: 1:15–3:15 pm	17th by midnight

# Speaker Series

## Syllabus Quiz

The Department of Religious Studies will be hosting a campus-wide speaker series on the subject of religion and sexuality this semester. Topics will include plural marriage among Mormon fundamentalist communities, clergy abuse within the Roman Catholic Church, sex positivity among American evangelicals, and sacred touch from a Neopagan perspective.

You are required to attend at least one of these public lectures, but are (of course) encouraged to attend as many as you can. Details forthcoming on Lyceum.

## Important Dates

21 Jan	Syllabus and plagiarism quizzes due
9 Feb	Schedule pre-break meetings
11 Feb	<i>Blankets</i> discussion
27 Feb	Author discussion: Joseph Marchal
1 Mar	First event report due
4 Mar	Author discussion: Kent Brintnall
15 Mar	Second event report due
16 Mar	Final project proposal workshop
20 Mar	Author discussion: Janet Bennion
30 Mar	Documentary review due
8 Apr	Author discussion: Christine Kraemer
10 Apr	Third event report due / final wkshp
14 Apr	Final projects due

**This syllabus is a blueprint, not a contract.** As we progress through the semester, I may shift assignments and requirements. But I promise I will not add more readings or assignments than are currently listed here.

nota bene



### Know Your IX

Sex and gender-based violence and harassment are **Civil Rights offenses**. Offenders are subject to the same kinds of penalties applied to offenses against other protected categories (such as race, national origin, etc.). **Survivors are entitled to confidential support.** If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, Bates wants to help. [Here](#) are our resources.