

HistSci 138. Sex, Gender, and Evolution

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am - 11 am, Northwest Building B101
Weekly section, TBA

Prof. Sarah Richardson
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Office hours: Wednesdays, 10 am – 12 pm, online sign-up

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Course Description:

Evolutionary theories of sex and gender and central controversies in human evolutionary biology from Darwin to the present. Topics include debates over the theory of sexual selection and the evolutionary basis of monogamy, sexual preference, physical attraction, rape, maternal instinct, and sex differences in cognition. Readings: primary texts and historical, philosophical, and feminist analyses.

Texts:

Required texts (marked [T] on the syllabus) are available for purchase at the Harvard Coop. Additional required readings (marked [E] on the syllabus) are available via the course website.

1. Londa Schiebinger. *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
2. Cynthia Russett. *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
3. Diane Paul. *Controlling Human Heredity, 1865 to the Present*. Amherst, N.Y.: Humanities Books, 1995.
4. Martha McCaughey. *The Caveman Mystique*. N.Y.: Routledge, 2008.
5. Joan Roughgarden. *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Course Requirements:

This course requires 100-200 pages of reading/week, regular attendance, participation in a weekly discussion section, 3 entries on the class blog, and completion of three 5-7 pp. analytical papers or multimedia essays. There will be five essay assignments, corresponding to the units of the course. Pick the three assignments that most interest you and turn them in by the required dates. *Students taking the class for graduate credit should see the professor for graduate student requirements.*

Grading:

Attendance, participation, and preparation	20%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Essay 3	20%
Blog contributions	20%

Course Schedule:

Part 1. Gender and Evolution in History and Culture: Major Themes

January 24	Course Overview and Opening Lecture <i>No reading</i>
January 26	Clan of the Cavemen: Gender, Evolution, and Human Origins [E] Berman, "Bad Hair Days in the Paleolithic: Modern (Re)Constructions of the Cave Man" [E] Clark, "The Caveman and the Strenuous Life" [E] "The New Cavemen Lifestyle," <i>New York Times</i>
January 31	"Women Consorting with Chimpanzees": Gender, Evolution, and Human-Animal Relations [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapter 2 and 3, "Why Mammals are Called Mammals" and "The Gendered Ape" [E] Haraway, "Apes in Eden, Apes in Space: Mothering as a Scientist for National Geographic"
February 2	"The Woman Who Never Evolved": Males as the "Species Type" in Evolutionary Science and Popular Culture [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapters 4 and 5, "The Anatomy of Difference" and "Theories of Gender and Race" [E] Zihlman, "The Paleolithic Glass Ceiling: Women in Human Evolution"
February 7	Darwin's Beard: The Voyage of the Beagle, Masculinity, and Biology [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapter 6, "Who Should Do Science?" [E] Gapps, "Charles Darwin as an Icon" [E] Endersby, "Sympathetic Science: Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker, and the Passions of Victorian Naturalists"

Essay 1 is due on Tuesday, February 14, 10 am in class and posted to your dropbox.

Part 2. Darwin and sexual politics

February 9	NO LECTURE TODAY
February 14	<p>Victorian Sexual Science</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Chapters 1 and 2, “How to Tell the Girls from the Boys” and “Up and Down the Phyletic Ladder”</p>
February 16	<p>Coy Women and Promiscuous Men: Darwin's Theory of Sexual Selection</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Chapter 3, “Hairy Men and Beautiful Women”</p> <p>[E] Jann, “Darwin and the Anthropologists: Sexual Selection and Its Discontents”</p> <p>[E] Darwin, <i>The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex</i>, Chapter 8, 19, and 20: “Principles of Sexual Selection” and “Secondary Sexual Characters of Man”</p>
February 21	<p>Feminism and Darwin's Theories</p> <p>[T] <i>Sexual Science</i>, Chapter 5, “The Physiological Division of Labor”</p> <p>[E] Ayala, “Victorian Science and the ‘Genius’ of Woman”</p> <p>[E] Deutscher, “The Descent of Man and the Evolution of Woman”</p>
February 23	<p>Darwin Correspondence Project: Darwin and Gender Class Workshop</p> <p>[E] Letters from the Darwin Correspondence Project</p>

*Essay 2 is due on Tuesday, February 28, 10 am in class and posted to your dropbox.
 Blog entry 1 is due February 26 at midnight.*

Part 3. Eugenics, evolution, and reproductive politics

February 28	<p>A Threat to the Race: Evolution, Eugenics, and Reproductive Politics</p> <p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapters 1-3, “What is Eugenics?,” “Evolutionary Anxieties,” and “From Soft to Hard Heredity”</p> <p>[E] Allen, “The Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, 1910-1940: An Essay in Institutional History”</p>
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	<p>[E] Survey the Cold Spring Harbor Eugenics Archives: http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics</p> <p>[E] Galton's "Hereditary Talent and Character" (1865)</p> <p>[E] Pearson's "On Breeding Good Stock" (1903)</p>
March 1	<p>Birth Control, Sterilization, and Normative Mothering: The Complex Politics of Gender and Eugenics</p> <p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapters 4-6, "The Menace of the Moron," "Eugenic Solutions," and "Whose Country Is This?"</p> <p>[E] Lovett, "Nostalgia, Modernism, and the Family Ideal"</p>
March 6	<p>WWII, Nazis, and the Denouement of Eugenics</p> <p>[T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapter 7, "From Eugenics to Human Genetics"</p> <p>[E] Proctor, "Lives Not Worth Living"</p> <p>[E] Kay, "'Social Control': Rockefeller Foundation's Agenda in the Human Sciences, 1913-1933."</p>
March 8	<p>Yummy Mummies and Birthrate Politics: Evolutionary and Eugenic discourses in Reproductive Politics Today</p> <p>[E] Duster, "Eugenics by the Back Door"</p> <p>[E] Roberts, Introduction to <i>Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty</i></p> <p>[E] Oliver, "Motherhood, Sexuality, and Pregnant Embodiment"</p>

Essay 3 is due on Tuesday, March 20, 10 am in class and posted to your dropbox.

Part 4. Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology

March 20	<p>E.O. Wilson's <i>Sociobiology</i>: From Animal Behavior to Human Nature</p> <p>[E] Wilson, "Man: From Sociobiology to Sociology"</p>
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	<p>[E] Segerstrale, "The Storm over <i>Sociobiology</i>"</p> <p>[E] Yudell and Desalle, "Sociobiology: 25 Years Later"</p>
March 22	<p>From Sociobiology to Evolutionary Psychology: The Birth of a Discipline and a New Science of Gender Difference</p> <p>[E] Trivers, "Parental Investment and Sexual Selection"</p> <p>[E] Barash, "Sexism: Strategies of Reproduction"</p> <p>[E] Pinker, "Gender," pp. 337-359 only</p>
March 27	<p>"The Determined Patriarchy": The Politics of Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology</p> <p>[T] <i>Caveman Mystique</i>, Introduction and Chapter 1, "Welcome Back to the Caveman Times" and "Sperm Wars, Sex Wars, and Science Wars"</p> <p>[E] Herrnstein-Smith, "Super Natural Science: The Claims of Evolutionary Psychology"</p> <p>[E] Fausto-Sterling, "Feminism and Behavioral Evolution: A Taxonomy"</p>
March 29	<p>Maxim Magazine and the Academy: Gender and Evolutionary Psychology in Popular and Scientific Contexts</p> <p>[T] <i>Caveman Mystique</i>, Chapters 2 and 3, "The Theory of Evolution as a Moral Answer for Men" and "Evolution, Popular Culture, and the Embodied Ethos of Male Sexuality"</p>

Blog entry 2 is due April 1 at midnight.

Essay 4 is due on Tuesday, April 3, 10 am in class and posted in your dropbox.

Part 5. Contemporary debates and controversies

April 3	<p>Breasts, Orgasms, and Birth Canals: Evolutionary Theories of Female Anatomy and Physiology</p> <p>[T] <i>Evolution's Rainbow</i>, Chapters 2-4, "Sex versus Gender," "Sex within Bodies," and "Sex Roles"</p> <p>[E] Barash and Lipton, "Breasts and Other Curves"</p> <p>[E] Lloyd, "The Case of the Female Orgasm"</p>
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April 5	<p>Mother Nature and Infanticidal Apes: Evolutionary Theories of Parental instinct</p> <p>[E] Diamond, “What Are Men Good For?: The Evolution of Men’s Roles”</p> <p>[E] Hrdy, “A New View of Mothers”</p>
April 10	<p>Prairie Voles and Dating Games: Evolutionary Theories of Monogamy</p> <p>[T] <i>Evolution’s Rainbow</i>, Chapters 5-7, “Two-Gender Families,” “Multiple-Gender Families,” and “Female Choice”</p> <p>[E] Diamond, “Wrong Time for Love: The Evolution of Recreational Sex”</p> <p>[E] Buss, “What Women Want”</p> <p>[E] “Student Surveys Contradict Claims of Evolved Sex Differences”</p> <p>[E] Baker, “Shopping Around for Genes” {Skim}</p>
April 12	<p>Spider Wasps and 40-Year-Old Virgins: Evolutionary Theories of Rape</p> <p>[E] Thornhill and Palmer, “Why do Men Rape?”</p> <p>[E] Coyne, “Of Vice and Men: A Case Study in Evolutionary Psychology”</p>
April 17 & 19	<p>Squaring the Pink Triangle: Evolutionary Theories of Homosexuality (2 lectures)</p> <p>[T] <i>Evolution’s Rainbow</i>, Chapter 8 and 14, “Same-Sex Sexuality” and “Sexual Orientation”</p> <p>[T] <i>Caveman Mystique</i>, Chapter 4, “Homo Sexual: Perverting Evolutionary Stories of Male Sexuality”</p> <p>Additional reading TBA</p>
April 24	<p>Closing Lecture: Knowledge Politics, Ethics, and Evolutionary Theories of Gender</p> <p>[T] <i>Evolution’s Rainbow</i>, Chapter 9, “The Theory of Evolution”</p> <p>[E] Gowaty, “Sexual Natures: How Feminism Changed Evolutionary Biology”</p>

Essay 5 is due on Tuesday, May 1, 12 noon to your TF’s box in the History of Science department and uploaded to your dropbox.

Blog entry 3 is due April 19 at midnight.

Course guidelines

Course website:

The course website is a primary tool for this course. Check the site frequently.

Class announcements:

Announcements will be posted on the course website. Urgent announcements will be sent to your Harvard email account. You are responsible for checking the course website and your Harvard email regularly.

Class attendance:

On-time attendance, preparation, and full participation are expected. Three absences or late arrivals is grounds for dismissal from the course.

Required reading:

There are 100-200 pages of reading/week in this class. Please plan accordingly. Recommended readings, recent scientific articles, and media links provided on the course website are not mandatory, but will enhance your understanding of the course material.

Late policy:

Deadlines are firm. Late assignments will incur a 10% penalty for the first day and 5% after that. If an assignment is due at 5 pm, and you turn it in at 5:30 pm, the highest grade that you can receive is a 90. The professor/TF reserves the right not to provide written feedback on late work. Extensions are granted only with advance notice and usually only in cases of illness.

Office hours:

Please visit me in office hours during the semester. Sign up for office hours using the online sign-up posted on the course website. If you are unable to attend scheduled office hours, email me to set up a time to meet.

Email:

Keep email to a minimum, and if you email me, keep it brief and professional. Please visit me or your TF in office hours if you have detailed questions about the assignments or readings. Do not rely on email for last minute questions.

Technology policy:

No use of laptops, tablets, or phones in class.

Statement on disabilities:

If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester regarding reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course.

Statement on academic honesty:

Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty) is prohibited and will lead to dismissal from the course and referral to College disciplinary procedures.

Assignment guidelines

Attendance, Participation, and Preparation

This is a lecture course that involves active learning. In-class and in-section activities and discussions are an important component of the course. You should come to class and section on time, alert, and prepared. Do the readings prior to lecture. Bring your readings and notes. You will be invited to ask questions, analyze text and images, and bring elements of the class readings into our sessions. Your vigorous, attentive, and constructive participation in class is an important part of your overall grade.

Essays

Three 5-7 page written *or* multimedia essays (podcast, short film, cartoon strip, or other – see TF for guidelines) are required for this class. These are analytical essays requiring you to advance an argument using the materials provided by this course. There will be five paper assignments, corresponding to the five units of the course. Topics will be announced approx. one week before the due date. Pick the three that most interest you and turn them in by the required date. We will grade only the first three essays that you submit.

Writing guidelines:

- Advance an original argument or analysis using only your own ideas
- State your thesis clearly
- Use specific examples, quotations, and details to support your argument
- Clean grammar and spelling

Formatting guidelines:

- 5-7 pages of main text
- MS Word .doc or .docx format
- Include complete citations in a consistent, recognized academic citation style of your choice.
- References, footnotes, and endnotes are not included in page count and should be placed at the end of the document.
- Double-spaced
- 12 pt Times New Roman font
- 1 inch margins
- Name and page number on the upper right header of each page
- Hard copy should be stapled in the upper left corner. Single or double-sided is accepted.

Multimedia essays:

- *Equivalent* of 5-7 pages of main text (3 minute film, 3-5 minute podcast, 8-10 frame cartoon -- confirm with professor or TF)
- 1-2 page (double-spaced) descriptive summary/caption
- Include a *storyboard* detailing your planning and aesthetic choices
- Include complete citations in a consistent, recognized academic citation style of your choice.
- Good models: <http://theoatmeal.com/comics>, <http://thismodernworld.com/newest-comic>, <http://current.com/shows/infomania/target-women/>, <http://sociologicalimages.blogspot.com/>, <http://www.illdoctrine.com/>
- Grading: 65% content; 35% execution; one revision and regrade permitted

Blog

Our blog will be an *informal* space to expand our class discussions beyond our course materials to areas of special interest to you.

Examples of acceptable content for the blog:

1. **Big Important Idea:** Is there a fascinating idea from the course readings, discussions, and lectures that you had not known/grasped before, and that you wish everyone understood? Explain the idea to a general audience. Say why the idea excites or interests you, and why you think everyone should know about it.
2. **Popular Culture and Media:** Post a link to a news item, image from popular culture, or video clip relevant to our course, along with your detailed analysis informed by course concepts and readings.
3. **Empirical or Methodological Analysis:** Take a scientific study or result described in one of the readings and briefly critically analyze the methods used and the interpretation of the data. Are they sound? What would be an alternative starting hypothesis, experimental design, or interpretation of the data?
4. **Point of Debate:** We will discuss lots of controversial topics in this class, and the class readings will often showcase a particular point of debate. Briefly outline the points on each side and then develop your own position, either agreeing with one side and elaborating or taking your own route.

Requirements:

- 3 blog posts by the posted deadlines (we hope you won't wait for the deadline -- you may contribute to the blog at any time).
- Blog posts should consist of:
 - Approx. 500 words text
 - At least three hyperlinks to worthy web sources outside of our course materials
 - At least one image that powerfully communicates the main idea
- Active participation in blog discussions – minimum of three substantive comments during the semester.

Key deadlines

February 14	Essay 1
February 26	Blog entry 1
February 28	Essay 2
March 20	Essay 3
April 1	Blog entry 2
April 3	Essay 4
April 29	Blog entry 3
May 1	Essay 5