Why did sexual subcultures and public sexual expression flourish in the United States after World War II? How did Americans come act on their desire for sexual autonomy, and what ramifications did that have for religion, politics and domestic life? Did the so-called "sexual revolution" liberate all Americans, regardless of class, race or gender? This class will focus on the transformations in North American sexual cultures that altered, not just habits and taboos, but also laws, families, economic consumption, the media and popular knowledge about sexuality. Topic will include the emergence of LGBT communities, controversies over reproductive choice, the liberalization of divorce, feminism, the impact of new media on sexual choices, men's liberation, transgender identity, new forms of marriage and childrearing, pornography, and controversies over sex education.

Each class will be organized around documents, films, images and secondary texts that allow us to understand the contests over sexuality that articulated, defined, and sometimes constrained, notions of sexual freedom in the United States between World War II and 1970.

*This class is cross-listed with the Gender Studies minor.*
Readings and Films:

These films are all available on Electronic reserve:

- *Rebel Without a Cause* (Dir. Nicholas Ray, 1955)
- *The Apartment* (Dir. Billy Wilder, 1960)
- *Screaming Queens: the Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria* (Dir. Susan Stryker, 2005)
- *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?* (Dir. Stanley Kramer, 1967)
- *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (Dir. Paul Mazursky, 1969)
- *Foxy Brown* (Dir. Jack Hill, 1974)

All required readings are available in this Canvas site.

Should you wish to consult one, excellent surveys of post-1945 sexual revolution and the social movements it was embedded include:

- David Allyn, *Make Love, Not War: The Sexual Revolution, an Unfettered History* (Links to an external site.) (Routledge: 2001)
- Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender and the New Racism* (Links to an external site.) (Rutledge, 2005)
- Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Links to an external site.) (Seal Press, 2009)

It is not necessary to read these books to get a good grade in the course: they are suggestions for further reading only.

Unit 1 | Introduction | August 29 - September 12

- Austin Ruse, "11 Reasons the Sexual Revolution Has Been a Complete, Utter, and Deadly Failure That Have Nothing to do with the Catholic Church," *Breitbart*, January 26 2016.

Two discussions, one quiz: 25 total points.
Unit 2 | Approaches to the History of Sexuality | September 5 - September 19

- **The Hays Code** (1930)

One discussion, one quiz: 25 total points.

Unit 3 | Love During Wartime | September 12 - September 26


One discussion: 15 total points

Unit 4 | Sexual Conformity and Sexual Dissent in Cold War America | September 19-October 3

- “Are American Dating Customs Dangerous?” *Ebony Magazine* (June 1960)
140-146.
  - Rebel Without a Cause (Dir. Nicholas Ray, 1955)

One discussion: 15 total points.
Pick a topic for Assignment #1 by September 26

No Reading | Capsule Biography Due | October 3-10

This assignment is described in Unit 3: you may upload your capsule biography here. Students who upload early drafts of capsule biographies can get early feedback, and have the chance to revise prior to the October 10 due date.

Assignment # 1: 250 words, 30 total points.

Unit 6 | Playboy Nation | October 10-24

- Gloria Steinem, “I Was a Playboy Bunny” (1963)
- The Apartment (Dir. Billy Wilder, 1960)

One discussion, one quiz: 25 total points.

Unit 7 | Sexual Civil Rights | October 17-31

- Gillian Frank, "Stalling Civil Rights: Conservative Sexual Thought has been in the Toilet Since the 1940s," Notches, November 9 2015.
- Huey P. Newton, “A Letter from Huey Newton to the Revolutionary Brothers and Sisters about the Women’s Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements”
(September 5, 1970)

- *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?* (Dir. Stanley Kramer, 1967)

One discussion, one quiz: 25 total points.

**Unit 8 | Make Love, Not War: The Counterculture | October 24-November 7**

- *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (Dir. Paul Mazursky, 1969)

One discussion: 15 points
Pick topic for Assignment #2 (Timeline module) by November 7

**Unit 9 | Gay is Good! | October 31- November 14**

- *Screaming Queens: the Riot at Compton’s Cafeteria* (Dir. Susan Stryker, 2005)

One discussion, one quiz: 25 total points.

**No Reading | Timeline Module Due | November 14-21**

**Thanksgiving Vacation | November 21-28**
Unit 10 | Was There A Feminist Sexual Revolution? | November 28-December 12

- *Foxy Brown* (Dir. Jack Hill, 1974)

Final Exam | December 12-19

The final exam is intended to give you a chance to think through the whole course and assess what you have learned. As you do your readings, take notes on major concepts and themes. The introduction to each unit of readings and films should also give you guidance on the major ideas in the course, and you should begin to assemble your notes and readings well in advance of the exam so that you can use them effectively during the test.

The exam will be similar to the quizzes you have taken in several of the units in form. You can expect:

- Short answers that ask you to identify people, concepts and events;
- Essay questions that ask you to think through a problem or set of ideas;
- A document that you will be asked to analyze

To take it in any three-hour window you choose between December 12 and December 19. When you open the exam, the clock will start. Please remember:

- You must be in a place with a good Internet connection.
- In order to have the full three hours, you should start no later than 8:59 on December 19.

____________________________________________________________________________________________

How This Course Works

*It is organized in units, rather than weeks*

- Each unit will be active for two weeks: the exercises in the unit will open and
close on the dates indicated in the module heading, and the readings and films will remain available to you. You should do your course preparation early in the first week of the unit, and leave 7-10 days to complete the graded discussions and quizzes.

- Three weeks during the semester have been set aside for review & special graded exercises. Two exercises will ask you to dig more deeply into the work you have just completed, the third is the final exam.
- If you miss an exercise, you will receive a zero for it: I will not reopen units except for illness, family emergencies, or a natural disaster.
- If you have an accommodation for a learning disability, we will work with the Disability Support Services to devise a schedule that supports your success.

Participating in discussion is the same as attendance/participation: think of this class as a seminar, held online.

- All discussions are graded: if you do not participate, you will receive a zero.
- Quality of participation matters: please discuss the readings specifically and address points made by others drawing on evidence from the readings. While other things you know are important, the purpose of the discussions is to help everyone learn the course materials.
- Not completing three units before they close means that you may fail the course. Please consult with me about whether you should withdraw.

Hints for success

- In my experience, people who make a good start in an online course do well; people who get behind right away tend to become discouraged and drop. If you feel overwhelmed by the first 2-3 weeks, contact me immediately.
- Make this class as much of a priority as any onsite class would be.
- Schedule time in the week to do the work, preferably early. Many people like online classes because they are flexible, but don’t be so flexible that you are at risk of not getting the work done. Except for the first week, each module will be open for 11 days, which includes two weekends. But leaving the work until the last weekend is going to give you less time to absorb the material.
- Check back into discussions like you would check on Facebook or Instagram (ok -- maybe not quite so much!) to see how people responded to your ideas.

Goals, Learning Outcomes and Expectations

Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Our learning goals for the course draw on the New School Provost’s Shared Capacities Initiative. While I hope you will learn many things in this course, and be able to explore interests specific to your own goals for your education, the capacities
we will focus on most are:

• **Critical Analysis:** Assessing conceptual and empirical resources before devising and revising an opinion or judgment. (e.g., contextualizing, analyzing, comparing, revising, problem formation, listening, discerning, challenging)

• **Multi-modal Communication:** Comprehending written and oral concepts, discussions, and arguments; expressing ideas effectively through writing and speech; developing effective use of multiple modes of communication; participating in the larger economy of ideas and things. (e.g., presenting, writing, speaking, mapping, executing.)

• **Authorship:** Developing one’s personal agency by finding appropriate audiences for one’s work and actively contributing to larger discussions with other makers, thinkers, and communities. (e.g., agency, blogging, podcasting, publishing.)

I hope you leave this course thinking that the study of history is fun. In addition, I hope you have confidence that you understand how to study and learn more about the history of sexuality on your own, and an awareness of the range of sources that would allow you to pursue your own particular interests in the field.

*Expectations:*

You can expect from me that I will:

• Be available to answer any question, help you complete an assignment, or guide you to a university resource;
• Answer an email by the end of the next business day;
• Be respectful of you as a person;
• Meet with you by appointment in office hours or over Skype;
• Respond empathetically if you are encountering problems;
• Acknowledge mistakes I make;
• Respond to work you hand in within ten days.

I expect that you:

• Will come to me with questions or difficulties, rather than avoid them or fall behind;
• Make requests in a timely manner that allows me to respond constructively;
• Treat others on the discussion boards respectfully;
• Be honest in your dealings with me: this means being straightforward about difficulties you are having in the class, so that I can address them, and only turning in work that you have genuinely done;
• Spend a **minimum** of four hours a week on the work of the course;
• Complete all the assignments in the course. This includes doing all readings, watching films and videos, and participating in discussions.

Grading

Each assignment is worth the stated number of points, and will be accompanied by a rubric that will clarify how points are awarded or deducted. The total number of points available in this course will exceed 100: the letter grade awarded at the end of the semester will be determined by the percentage of points you earn:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93%-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90%-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87%-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74%-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70%-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67%-69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teaching and Learning

I love teaching online, and I hope you will enjoy this class too. Some of the students I have met online remain in my memory as some of the most talented and interesting people I have met in my career, so I am very much looking forward to meeting you.

I understand that online classes can be wildly different from each other, as well as different from an onsite class. Teachers don’t always say what they want, but I would like to start with a few mutually understood expectations about how we will work together online:

You can expect me to:

• Respond to your emails in 24 business hours. This means that if you email me Friday, I may not get back to you until Monday.
• Be available to schedule a meeting with you, either by video chat or in my office at The New School. I really enjoy getting to know my students better, so just because the classroom is online doesn’t mean I don’t want to meet you onsite.
• Make sure that each module is up and running when it is supposed to be. If something is broken, let me know and I will fix it as quickly as I can.
• Grad your work promptly, and comment on it thoughtfully.
• Enter the online discussions.
• Help you if you fall behind or encounter unexpected problems.
• Be accountable to you.

I expect you to:

• Get hold of me before the last minute if you have a problem or need an
extension.

- Let me know if you are confused. It may be something I have done wrong, and it would be helpful to the whole class to fix it.
- Schedule meetings before you are really in trouble. I hope that you can trust me to be positive, compassionate and constructive. If you don’t feel you have reason to trust me, let’s talk about how that can happen.
- Even if you haven't settled down to do the work, just run through the next module to make sure no links are broken.
- **Make time for this class.** If it were onsite, it would meet for an hour and fifty minutes a week, and I would expect you to prepare for 3-5 hours, depending on your reading speed. You probably cannot do well in this class without spending a minimum of 4-5 hours a week on it.
- Take notes on movies and readings.
- Be positive and polite with others in the discussion, referring to the texts we are discussing that week rather than drawing on your personal experience.
- Be accountable to yourself, to me, and to your classmates.

**Honesty and Conduct**

*You must do your own work.*

Passing off someone else’s work as if it were your own, or paying someone to take this course in whole or in part, is cheating at minimum and may be plagiarism at worst. You may not purchase a paper, hire someone else to take your quizzes and exams, or hand in a paper you have written for another class. You may not cut and paste someone else’s words into your paper without quotes and attribution. If someone proofreads and/or edits your paper, you must acknowledge that help as well. Even if you paraphrase someone else’s idea, or get information from an outside source, you must provide a citation. Please review The New School’s Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy to make sure you understand it: contact me or visit the Learning Center if you do not.

Plagiarism is an act of fraud that is against University regulations. It may result in failing the course, and even suspension or expulsion from your program.

**Pronouns.**

*You will be asked what pronouns you prefer.*

If you are unfamiliar with non-binary gender identities, go here. Please respect the pronouns that other people ask you to use. If you are unsure of someone’s preferred pronoun, use "they." If you make a mistake, apologize. If your gender identity is not being respected by others, please inform the instructor.

**Be polite and show compassion.** As we all know, online arguments can get out of hand easily. I hope we will have robust discussions, and that we will disagree with each other vigorously. Nonetheless, please be aware of when you are pursuing an
argument too far, or becoming personally invested in "being right." Log off, cool down, and go back to the discussion when you are better able to listen.

Microaggressions: An Intervention

What are "microaggressions"? Who do they affect? And why do they matter to our work as a class this semester?

According to Dictionary.com, a microaggression is "a subtle but offensive comment or action directed at a minority or other nondominant group that is often unintentional or unconsciously reinforces a stereotype." We shouldn’t avoid difficult conversations: when we are able to bring different perspectives and histories to the table, our semester together will be enriched. But we need to be able to discuss race, class, gender, sexuality, and national origins in a way that is thoughtful, creating a space for speaking frankly and listening with compassion.

Microaggressions impede equal access to education for those who are targeted by them because they cause pain. Eliminating microaggressions, and responding appropriately when one occurs, is the professor’s responsibility. But the classroom climate is a shared task. We can attend to it while still preserving academic freedom, insisting on everyone’s right to speak openly and frankly, and preserving the possibility of genuine and respectful disagreement.

As you can see from the picture below, a microaggression can be a statement the speaker thinks they are making about themselves, but understandably, it made the person who was spoken to feel disrespected. Most of us would like to believe we are always respectful, but it can be hard work to be aware of when we are expressing bias.

It is not unusual for a speaker to frame a microaggression as a compliment, a statement about someone not in the room, a (false) social fact, or an expression of baseless familiarity. For example, if you find yourself quoting "my Native American friend," you are using someone as an authority who is not present to grant it. Or if you find yourself starting a statement with the phrase "This may sound racist" well... it probably is racist. Instead of making blanket statements about people who
you perceive as different from yourself, be respectfully curious. Do research about things you don’t understand before burdening others with intrusive questions.

Microaggressions sometimes convey coded assumptions about another person that are embedded in unconscious bias towards a whole group. For example, associating a person in the class with ethnic food, holidays, clothing, or customs makes them feel, at the very least, that you don’t see them. This is one reason a microaggression can be so painful for a student experiencing it: they are experiencing the burden of your bias -- whether racism, sexism, transphobia, or xenophobia -- in a very personal way that ignores their own intelligence, character, and personhood.

Microaggressions are also a form of unwelcome attention that make people feel singled out because of their presumed identity: the young man above probably wants to be a friend, not singled out as trans. As Khanh Ho points out, microaggressions are not unrelated to lethal violence suffered by subordinated people, and a contemporary social and legal tolerance for that violence.
Because microaggressions can make people feel emotionally battered, they steal energy that could otherwise go into studying, learning, and friendships. Microaggressions may also contribute to lingering feelings of being unwelcome or invisible in an academic space, or that taking the intellectual and creative risks that help us learn are too dangerous.

Microaggressions can be especially hurtful when the speaker expresses skepticism about disclosures already made, or probes for personal information as if they are entitled to it. The young woman above, for example, is responding to a long-standing racist and anti-immigrant bias that people of Asian heritage are always "foreign" no matter how many generations their family has lived in the United States. Think how exhausting it must be to have to persuade people over and over that you are who you say you are, and that your home is your home.

Microaggressions reduce access to education when people who are just going about the business of teaching and learning are given the unhappy choice between being the object of unwelcome attention and being silent. A microaggression might also be distressing to another person in the room who overheard the remark and feels stigmatized -- even actively threatened – by it.
Don’t assume, as the young man above warns, that a classmate wants to, or can, represent for all people of their group, everywhere, throughout time. On the other hand, we shouldn’t be afraid to talk to each other, and be curious. If microaggressions are often unintentional, can we be intentional and reduce them?

Remember:

- You are not entitled to comment on a person’s appearance, body, or presumed identity, unless your opinion is solicited.
- People differ about what counts as a personal question. If you are curious, disclose something about yourself and see if the person reciprocates.
- Drawing evidence from that day’s assignment is the most effective way to make a point. What your relatives think about race, gender, sexuality or class is irrelevant; so are casual personal experiences.
- Don’t assume you know about a person, what they think or what they know, by what you see on the surface.

But what if you are a target of a microaggression, or see one occur? The instructors and Professor Potter hope you will feel comfortable with us and trust us to help. Actions you might take could include:

- Responding immediately by deflecting, making a joke or asking the person to rethink what they said.
- Expressing your concern and strategizing a response directly with the instructor and/or Professor Potter.
- Having a private conversation with a friend, academic advisor, counselor or dean about how to bring a problematic or hurtful dynamic up with the instructor or Professor Potter.
- Describing what happened to Professor Potter, and asking her to address it in the following week’s lecture without naming names.
- If you are a bystander, you might also talk to the section leader; however, you might also want to stand up for the person who has been harmed in the
moment. Alternatively, you might take the person who committed the microagression aside and share your perspective privately. Encourage them to apologize to the person they harmed.

As a student, you are not responsible for solving the problem unless you wish to. In this class, it is the teaching team’s job to make sure the classroom environment is productive and open. We will do our best to respond to microaggressions in the moment. If the microaggression occurs out of our sight, or we have failed to notice it, we encourage you to bring it to us: we will believe you, and we will help you.

**University Resources**

There are numerous resources at The New School to help you succeed: they include your professor, your academic advisor, and the offices listed below. *Online students are entitled to all the same services to which onsite students are entitled.*

This includes:

- **Meeting with the professor.** Please email me to set up an online or Skype appointment. I prefer to do this during business hours, but if your schedule precludes this, I will be flexible. Please don’t wait until you are desperate! Part of our teaching job is to help students outside of class, consult about the broader mission of your education, or just go have coffee!
- **The library.** Librarians can be particularly helpful in guiding you through a research project, how to use a database, and how to search for the exact source you need -- and in fact, they are paid to do this for faculty and students alike! You may also access all library services at [New York University’s Bobst Library](https://www.bobstlibrary.cuny.edu) . Remember that Internet research is not always the best way to get what you need: Google and other search engines tend to give you what you already know, not what you don’t know or specialized research.
- **The University Learning Center.** Like librarians, they are there to help you do your work. Again, you don’t have to be struggling, only the desire to improve some aspect of your work: taking better notes, writing more lucidly, and reading faster would be a few of the basic skills you might want to improve.

**Disability Services.** In keeping with the university’s policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student with a disability who needs academic accommodations is welcome to meet with me privately. All conversations will be kept confidential. Students requesting any accommodations will also need to contact Student Disability Service (SDS). SDS will conduct an intake and, if appropriate, the Director will provide an academic accommodation notification letter for you to bring to me. At that point, I will review the letter with you and discuss these accommodations in relation to this course. If you have already been diagnosed with cognitive or physical disability, this is where you go to ensure that you have equal access to an education. If you have ever struggled with school, seen a pattern in
those struggles, or are frustrated in your attempts to plan, work effectively, or stay organized, you might want to consult with this office to see if they can support you. Equal access to education for all disabilities may include: extra time for graded work, an assistant to help you, or other accommodations.