

The Medical History of Sex and Sexuality

History of Medicine 524

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What causes homosexuality? Can frigidity in women best be cured by a pill, an analyst's couch, or sweeping social change? Are sexual psychopaths sick or criminal? What determines a person's sex? Are there therapeutic uses for sex toys?

Over the course of the twentieth century, medicine and biomedical science have become increasingly influential in the social and cultural lives of Americans. This course looks at the changing place of medicine in our public and private sexual lives. We will be guided by five particular questions: How has medicine (and scientific authority) helped to define and control appropriate sexual behavior? How has medicine become involved in the definition and creation of sex? What do medical interventions reveal about social and cultural ideas of sex and sexuality? How do campaigns against sexual disease illuminate cultural judgments about social groups? How do boundaries defining appropriate sexual behavior also define appropriate sex/gender roles?

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS:

(Ordered at Room of One's Own Bookstore)

Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905).

Course readers Vol. I and Vol. II will be available in History of Science Department office: 7143 Social Sciences. **Absolutely no refunds.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation:	20%
Marriage Manual Paper	20%
Midterm	20%
Final	20%
Historical Roots Paper	20%

1) Participation:

Because the discussion of readings is a major component of this course, you will be graded on your preparation for and involvement in class. This approach asks that you engage fully with the material and explore your own beliefs about historical events and processes. I evaluate

participation by how well you talk about your ideas, listen and respond to others' ideas, remain sensitive to the feelings of other class members, and take responsibility for moving class discussion forward. Expressing one's ideas and getting reactions from others can help you evaluate your own opinions and ultimately sharpen your thinking. Although I set the grading criteria, you assign your own participation grade daily. (I do reserve the right to revise the grades.) Please note that the most valuable participation does not necessarily come from the student who speaks the most. Students who do not listen to their classmates, who do not make room for various viewpoints and speakers, should not earn the highest participation.

As part of your participation grade, I expect you to complete reading guides before you come to class and turn them in at the end of the discussion. I will provide the reading guides the class session before they are due. These are to help you approach the reading, provide a starting point for class discussion, and guide your study before the exams. If you do not do them, you will deduct two points from your participation grade. If you barely do them, you will deduct one point from your participation grade. For days I do not provide reading guides, I have attached a few general guidelines (Appendix II) to help you think about the texts.

2) Marital Advice Research Paper:

Find three books written by physicians, separated by at least twenty years, that offer marital advice. Choose one issue (foreplay, sex roles, orgasm, continence, birth control, menopause, impotence, homosexuality, hygiene, attractiveness, etc) and discuss how the advice has changed (or not changed) over time. How do your examples fit with the secondary literature on marital advice guides? Can you generalize from these three examples about the changing nature of medical advice? What can this comparison reveal about the changing social view of sexuality? (Aim for about 5 pages. 8 pages are too many. 3.5 pages are too few.) **First draft due February 10. Final draft due February 24.**

Grading Criteria: I will evaluate the paper on the appropriateness of the examples, the depth of the interpretation, the insight of the analysis, and the strength of the prose.

3) Examinations:

The midterm and the final will be take-home essays. I will provide the questions for the midterm on **March 3**. It will be due on **March 10**. I will provide the questions for the final on **April 28**. It will be due on **May 11** at 2:30.

4) Historical Roots of Contemporary Issues Paper:

Over the course of the semester, be on the lookout for newspaper or magazine articles that address some aspect of sexuality, particularly as it has been presented on this syllabus. I suggest that you collect some that look especially interesting. Choose one article, and discuss how the history you have learned informs the current issue. Again, you must make an argument about the role of history. You could, for example, create a thesis about how the past helps explain the present or you could argue how the past can help guide the future. Or you could try something else as the issue and article suggest. But your paper must have a thesis and it must connect historical analysis with a current issue. (Aim for about five pages. Eight pages are too many. Three pages are too few.) **First draft due April 7. Final draft due April 21.**

Grading Criteria: See Appendix III

Writing Fellows:

To help with the writing assignments this semester, we have the opportunity to work with the Undergraduate Writing Fellow Program. The Writing Fellows are gifted undergraduates who have received special training to offer critical evaluation and helpful suggestions on your drafts. After you turn in your drafts, I will give them to the Fellows who will read and provide written comments. You will then meet with your Fellow to discuss the paper and strategies for the rewrite. These meetings are mandatory.

This is a terrific opportunity for several reasons. First, our work is always improved by input from others. While the Fellows have no special training in the *content* of the course, they are trained to help you develop a well-constructed and persuasive essay. Second, good writing comes through practice and rewriting. The two-draft policy provides a chance for both. Finally, it may help your grade. Many of you are new to historical writing, and it can be surprisingly challenging. Getting two chances to get it right will improve the quality of your final product.

Late Paper Policy:

Assignments that are late, for whatever reason, will be docked 5 points per day unless I have granted prior approval. This applies to all final assignments, including the take-home exams. Assignments a week or more late will not be accepted. Late drafts will be accepted only in extraordinary cases and only with my prior approval. If you do not turn in a draft, your final paper will be lowered by a minimum of 10 points. Do not assume that if you provide a gut-wrenching story, I will make an allowance in your case. Chances are good that I won't. Only a very few circumstances that result in late papers are completely unforeseeable. Use the phone.

GRADING SCALE

93-100	A
88-92	AB
83-87	B
78-82	BC
70-77	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

If you have questions about a grade, speak first to the instructor (Houck). If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Warwick Anderson. He will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

I wish to include fully any students with special needs in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the instruction or evaluation procedures in order to enable you to participate fully. The McBurney Center will provide useful assistance and documentation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 18	Introduction
January 20	Normative Nineteenth-Century Sexuality
January 25	Masturbation
January 27	Freud's Theories of Sexuality
February 1	Early Twentieth-Century Sexual Advice
February 3	Mid-Twentieth-Century Marital Advice
February 8	Surveying Sex I
February 10	Surveying Sex II (First draft of Marital Advice Paper Due)
February 15	Sex Education
February 17	Venereal Disease
February 22	Tuskegee Syphilis Study
February 24	AIDS (Final Draft of Marital Advice Paper Due)
March 1	Impotence and Frigidity
March 3	Hypersexuality and Sexual Addiction
March 8	Hysteria
March 10	Midterm
March 15	Prostitution
March 17	The Birth of Perversion
March 21-25	Spring Break
March 29	Freud and Sexual Aberrations
March 31	Homosexuality I
April 5	Homosexuality II
April 7	Sexual Psychopath (First Draft of Roots of Contemporary Issues Paper Due)
April 12	Birth Control
April 14	Abortion
April 19	Sterilization
April 21	Vibrators (Final Draft of Roots of Contemporary Issues Paper Due)
April 26	Rejuvenation
April 28	Transsexuals
May 3	Intersex
May 5	Wrap-up and evaluation
May 11	Final Exam due at 2:30

January 18 Introductions

DEFINING AND PATROLLING NORMATIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

January 20 Normative Nineteenth-Century Sexuality

Sylvester Graham, *Lecture to Young Men* (Providence, 1834), 25-39.

William A. Alcott, "Physical Laws of Marriage," in *The Physiology of Marriage* (Boston, 1866), 111-127.

Dio Lewis, "Marital Excesses" and "Women's Ruling Passion," in *Chastity: Or Our Secret Sins* (Philadelphia, 1874), 57-83, 114-117.

Carl N. Degler, "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," in *Women and Health in America*, Judith Walzer Leavitt, ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 40-56.

January 25 Masturbation

E. B. Duffey, *What Women Should Know. Woman's Book About Women* (Philadelphia, 1873), 50-57.

An Old Practitioner, *Philosophy of the Sexes* (Chicago: Lake City Publishing, 1882), 51-69.

William J. Robinson, "Habit of Masturbation," in *Woman: Her Sex and Love Life* (New York: Eugenics Publishing Co., 1933), 135-142.

H. Tristram Engelhardt, "The Disease of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease," in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald Numbers, eds. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 13-21.

January 27 Freud's Theories of Sexuality

Sigmund Freud, "Infantile Sexuality" and "Transformations of Puberty" in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905).

February 1 Early Twentieth-Century Sexual Advice

William J. Fielding, *Woman's Sexual Life* (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Co., 1925), 3-18.

William J. Robinson, *Woman: Her Sex and Love Life* (New York: Eugenics Publishing Co., 1933), 62-64, 336-355.

Peter Laipson, "'Kiss Without Shame for She Desires It': Sexual Foreplay in American Medical Advice Literature, 1900-1925," *Journal of Social History* (1996): 507-525.

February 3 Mid-Twentieth-Century Marital Advice

- Hannah M. Stone and Abraham Stone, *A Marriage Manual: A Practical Guidebook to Sex and Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935, 1952), 168-194.
- David Reuben, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex, But Were Afraid to Ask* (New York: Bantam, 1969), 53-77.
- Jessamyn Neuhaus, "The Importance of Being Orgasmic: Sexuality, Gender and Marital Sex Manuals in the United States, 1920-1963," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (2000): 447-473.

February 8 Surveying Sex I

- Katharine Bement Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women* (New York: Harper and Brothers Pub., 1929), 62-78.
- Julia A. Ericksen, *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 14-35.

February 10 Surveying Sex II

- Excerpts from and reactions to Kinsey Reports, 1948-1953, 368-374.
- Ruth and Edward Brecher, eds., *An Analysis of Human Sexual Response* (Bergenfield, NJ: New American Library, 1966), 82-87.
- Julia A. Ericksen, *Kiss and Tell: Surveying Sex in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), 36-66.
- Janice M. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire: Sex and Gender in Modern American Sexology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 67-94.

February 15 Sex Education

- Jeffrey Moran, "Modernism Gone Mad": Sex Education Comes to Chicago, 1913," *Journal of American History* 83 (1996): 481-513.
- Julian B. Carter, "Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10 (2001) 213-249.

SEX AND DISEASE

February 17 Venereal Disease

- William A. Alcott, "Crimes that Deserve No Name," in *The Physiology of Marriage* (Boston, 1866), 200-208.
- Prince A. Morrow, "Sanitary Safeguards of Marriage: Qualification of the Physician," in *Social Diseases and Marriage: Social Prophylaxis* (New York: Lea Brothers and Co., 1904), 36-45.
- Allan Brandt, "'Damaged Goods': Progressive Medicine and Social Hygiene," in *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880, Expanded Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 7-51.

February 22 Tuskegee Syphilis Study

- Thomas W. Murrell, "Syphilis and the American Negro," *JAMA* 54 (1910): 846-849.
- H.H. Hazen, "Syphilis in the American Negro," *JAMA* 63 (1914): 463-466.
- Allan M. Brandt, "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study," in *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, 2nd ed., Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald Numbers, eds. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 331-343.
- Vanessa Northington Gamble, "Under the Shadow of Tuskegee: African Americans and Health Care," *American Journal of Public Health* 87 (1997): 1773-1778.

February 24 AIDS

- Peter Lewis Allen, "AIDS in the USA," in *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 119-155, 173-178.
- Evelynn Hammonds, "Missing Persons: African American Women, AIDS, and the History of Disease," *Radical America* 24 (1990): 7-23.

SEXUAL PATHOLOGIES AND PERVERSIONS

March 1 Impotence and Frigidity

- Kevin Mumford, "'Lost Manhood' Found: Male Sexual Impotence and Victorian Culture in the United States," in *American Sexual Politics: Sex, Gender and Race since the Civil War*, John C. Fouts and Maura Shaw Tantillo, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 75-99.
- Joseph Collins, *The Doctor Looks at Love and Life* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing, 1926), 31-45.
- William J. Robinson, "Frigidity in Women," and "Advice to Frigid Women," in *Woman: Her Sex and Love Life* (New York: Eugenics Publishing Co., 1933), 301-307.
- Hannah M. Stone and Abraham Stone, *A Marriage Manual: A Practical Guidebook to Sex and Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935, 1952), 195-227.
- I. Stuart Rosengard, "You Can Cure Your Wife's Frigidity," *Sexology* August 1970, 46-49.
- Frank Caprio, "Ten Things a Wife Should Know About Impotence," *Sexology* August 1971, 21-24.

March 3 Hypersexuality and Sexual Addiction

- Elizabeth Lunbeck, "'A New Generation of Women': Progressive Psychiatrists and the Hypersexual Female," in *Women and Health in America*, 2^d ed., Judith Walzer Leavitt, ed. (University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 229-249.
- Janice M. Irvine, "Reinventing Perversion: Sex Addiction and Cultural Anxiety," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 429-450.

March 8 Hysteria

Laura Briggs, "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology," *American Quarterly* 52 (2000): 246-273.

Elizabeth Lunbeck, "Hysteria: The Revolt of the 'Good Girl'," in *American Sexual Histories*, Elizabeth Reis, ed., Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 172-189.

L. E. Emerson, "The Case of Miss A," in Reis, 190-197.

March 10 Midterm

March 15 Prostitution

G. Frank Lydston, "Sexual Vice and Crime," in *The Diseases of Society: The Vice and Crime Problem* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1904), 303-323.

James M. Anders, "The Role of the Medical Profession in Combating the Social Evil," *Medicine* (1906): 821-825.

Denslow Lewis, "What Shall We Do with the Prostitute," *American Journal of Dermatology and Genito-urinary Diseases*, 11 (1907): 485-93.

William J. Robinson, "How to Deal with the Problem of Prostitution," *American Journal of Urology* 9 (1913): 381-390.

March 17 The Birth of Perversion

Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Modern Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 25-72.

Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (Brooklyn, NY: Physicians and Surgeons Book Co., 1926), 79-88.

Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. 3, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 1928), 104-128.

March 29 Freud and Sexual Aberrations

Sigmund Freud, "Sexual Aberrations," in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905).

March 31 Homosexuality I

George Chauncey, Jr., "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Medical Conceptualization of Female Deviance," 87-117.

Bert Hansen, "American Physicians' 'Discovery' of Homosexuals, 1880-1900: A New Diagnosis in a Changing Society," *Sickness and Health in America: Readings in the History of Medicine and Public Health*, 3rd ed., Judith Walzer Leavitt and Ronald Numbers, eds. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 13-31.

April 5 Homosexuality II

- Stphanie H. Kenen, "Who Counts When You're Counting Homosexuals? Hormones and Homosexuality in Mid-Twentieth Century America," 197-218.
- Garland E. Allen, "The Double Edged Sword of Genetic Determinism: Social and Political Agendas in Genetic Studies of Homosexuality, 1940-1994," in *Science and Homosexualities* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 242-270.

April 7 Sexual Psychopath

- Stephen Robertson, "Separating the Men from the Boys: Masculinity, Psychosexual Development, and Sex Crime in the United States, 1930s-1960s," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 56 (2001): 3-35.
- Estelle Freedman, "'Uncontrolled Desire': The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960," in *Passions and Power: Sexuality in History*, Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 199-225.
- "New Curbs are Urged for Sex Offenders," *NYT* 27 December 1943, p. 14.
- "View is Modified on Sex Offenders," *NYT* 23 April 1950, p. 71.
- "State Study of Sex Crimes," *NYT* 23 May 1950, p. 27.
- Richard E. Vatz and Lee S. Weinberg, "Sexual Predator Statutes and Psychiatric Confusion," *USA Today*, July 2001, 61-62.

MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS

April 12 Birth Control

- John Harvey Kellogg, "Prevention of Conception; Its Evils and Dangers," in *Plain Facts for Old and Young* (1882), 250-270.
- Johanna Schoen, "Fighting for Child Health: Race, Birth Control, and the State in the Jim Crow South," *Social Politics* (1997): 90-113.
- James Reed, "Doctors, Birth Control, and Social Values, 1830-1970," in *Women and Health in America*, Judith Walzer Leavitt, ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 124-139.

April 14 Abortion

- "Accused of Malpractice: The Criminating Story of A Young Brooklyn Girl," *NYT*, December 11, 1879, p.8.
- "Dr. Hathaway's Crimes," *NYT* June 24, 1883, p.1.
- "A Doctor Indicted," *NYT* July 8, 1886, p. 2.
- Horatio R. Storer, *Criminal Abortion: Its Nature, Its Evidence, and Its Law* (Boston: 1868), 1-14.
- Walter Dorsett, "Criminal Abortion In Its Broadest Sense," *JAMA* 51 (1908): 958-961.
- Leslie Reagan, "'About to Meet Her Maker': The State's Investigation of Abortion in Chicago, 1867-1940," *Journal of American History* 77 (1991): 1240-64.

April 19 Sterilization

- G. Frank Lydston, "Sex Mutilation in Social Therapeutics, with Some of the Difficulties in the Application of Eugenics to the Human Race," *New York Medical Journal* (1912): 677-685.
- Alison C. Carey, "Gender and Compulsory Sterilization Programs in America: 1907-1950," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 11 (1998): 74-105.
- Johanna Schoen, "Between Choice and Coercion: Women and Politics of Sterilization in North Carolina, 1929-1975," *Journal of Women's History* 13 (2001): 132-156.

April 21 Vibrators

- Rachel P. Maines, *The Technology of Orgasm: "Hysteria," the Vibrator, and Women's Sexual Satisfaction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

April 26 Rejuvenation

- Laura Davidow Hirshbein, "The Glandular Solution: Sex, Masculinity, and Aging in the 1920s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (2000): 277-304.
- Jennifer R. Fishman and Laura Mamo, "What's in a Disorder: A Cultural Analysis of Medical and Pharmaceutical Construction of Male and Female Sexual Dysfunction," *Women and Therapy* 24 (2001): 179-193.

April 28 Transsexuals

- J. Allen Gilbert, "Homosexuality and Its Treatment," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders* 52 (1920): 297-322.
- D. O. Cauldwell, Psychopathia Transexualis, *Sexology* (December 1949): 274-80.
- Joanne Meyerowitz, "From Sex to Gender," in *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2002), 98-129, 308-314.

May 3 Intersex

- Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Sexe Which Prevaileth" and "Of Gender and Genitals: The Use and Abuse of the Modern Intersexual," in *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 30-77, 273-295.
- Alice Domurant Dreger, "'Ambiguous Sex' or Ambivalent Medicine," *Hastings Center Report*, May/June 1998, 24-35.

May 5 Wrap-up and Evaluations

Appendix I: How to Grade Your Participation

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1) Attendance | 3 points |
| If you show up on time and stay the whole class period, you earn full credit. | |
| If not, adjust accordingly. | |
| 2) Attention | 2 points |
| If you pay attention to the conversation, give yourself full credit. | |
| If you read a magazine, do a crossword puzzle, or take a nap, adjust accordingly. | |
| 3) Preparation | 2 points |
| If you read all the readings, give yourself full credit. If not, adjust accordingly. | |
| 4) Reading Guides | |
| no reading guide | -2 points |
| half-hearted reading guide | -1 point |

5) Participation

Participation points gauge several aspects of course involvement. They reflect whether you have understood the basic issues, engaged with the material, volunteered your opinions, and listened to your classmates. Choose the category (and the point assignment) that best fits your situation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| Category A—no participation
did not participate in discussion | 0 |
| Category B—good participation
answered a question when directly asked
volunteered an item for a board list | 1 |
| Category C—better participation
asked a question
participated in small groups discussion
voluntarily offered an interpretation of an event or reading
voluntarily responded to a classmates comment
voluntarily offered a summary of a reading | 2 |

The discussion format is based upon the notion that students can and do learn from each other. To acknowledge this, one discussion point will be assigned by your peers. After every discussion, you will indicate which two people you believe contributed most valuably to discussion that day and explain why. Please note that this is not a reward for sheer quantity. Instead, perhaps someone asked one question that you made you rethink an issue. Perhaps somebody brought two disparate strains together in a way that enlivened discussion. So carefully consider which of your classmates helped you engage and analyze the material.

Bonus points: I will occasionally distribute discussion-role cards. These suggest specific ways for people to contribute to the conversation. Give yourself one bonus point if you participate in the discussion as suggested by your card.

Medical History 524
Appendix II: Approaching Texts

As you read:

Decide whether the source is a primary source or a secondary source. In general, a primary source is a text generated at the time of the event or issue or person discussed. A secondary source is a document that analyzes that event, issue, or person from a historical perspective. If the topic of discussion is tuberculosis in the early 19th century, primary sources might include medical literature, newspaper articles, journal entries, short stories, domestic health guides, and personal letters from the early 19th century. Secondary sources might include a historian's account of tuberculosis in the early 19th century that was written in the 20th century. There are cases where the differences are more fuzzy, but start from this rough distinction.

If the source is a primary source:

- a) Note the date. What else happened at the same time? Make sure you understand the chronology of the sources for any given topic.
- b) What perspective does it illuminate? Was it written by a middle-class woman facing childbirth? Was it written by a physician advising women how to cope with childbirth?
- c) What is the author's goal? Is she trying to persuade? Inform? Seduce? Scold?
- d) Who is the intended audience for the piece?
- e) Look up words and phrases you don't know.
- f) Can you identify a take-home message?

If the source is a secondary source:

- a) Figure out the author's argument. Every article has a main point. Make sure you know what it is. (Knowing the argument is different than knowing what the article is about).
- b) What kind of evidence does the author use? (Prescriptive literature, diary entries, medical journals?) Is the evidence appropriate for the argument?
- c) Is the argument persuasive? Has the author proven his or her claim?
- d) Keep track of the chronology. In other words, if the author is describing change over time, make sure you understand how, when, and why things change.
- e) Look up words and phrases you don't know.

Medical History 524
Appendix III: Paper Grading Criteria

Grading Criteria:

The paper will be evaluated on the specificity of its thesis, the soundness of its organization, the strength of its analysis, the effectiveness of its evidence, the originality of its ideas, and the grace of its style.

Thesis: A thesis is the reason a paper exists; it is the point you are trying to make. A thesis should not merely describe what the paper does (“This paper examines the validity of the biological understandings of gendered behaviors”). Instead, your thesis statement establishes your claim (“The efforts to link gendered behavior and biology always rely on culturally and historically specific notions of gender. The failure to recognize the culture-bound definitions of gender weakens the claims that gendered behaviors--such as playing with truck--are biologically based.”)

Organization: The organization of your paper should revolve around your thesis. Each paragraph should build an argument in support of the thesis. Consider every paragraph a mini-argument. It should have one main idea (presented in the topic sentence) and three to five sentences (or so) that clearly support the topic sentence. Each paragraph should be connected to the one above it by a transition. End with a conclusion that explains how your paper contributes to the history of the women and women’s health.

Evidence: For the critical reaction paper, your evidence will come from the course reader. For the research project, you will need to track down the evidence yourself. In both cases, I will evaluate the appropriateness of the evidence for the claims you are trying to make.

Analysis: Your paper should analyze and interpret the evidence to support your claim. Imagine for a moment a courtroom drama on TV. The gun, the barking dog, the tire tracks are all deployed by the prosecutor to support her case. But she does not merely describe the evidence; she uses it to make a point. She claims that the fingerprints on the gun, coupled with the tire tracks that match Jane Doe’s car prove that Jane murdered Hello Kitty. Or pretend you are the defense attorney who analyzes the same evidence to prove Jane is innocent. The defense attorney notes that the finger prints provided only a three-point match, and besides, Jane shoots regularly at the firing range. Further, he claims that Jane loaned her car to her friend Willy that night so he could attend a “Dance, Dance Revolution” tournament. In other words, evidence does not speak for itself; your analysis gives evidence meaning. In the same way, you must analyze your sources, you must interpret them, to make a convincing case.

Originality: A first-rate paper will not just reiterate the claims made in the readings or the ideas raised in discussion. Instead, the best essays will use the readings and discussions as the starting point to explore and create your own interpretations of a topic.

Style: The best ideas can fail to impress if packaged carelessly or imprecisely. Vague or messy prose tends to leave the reader puzzled and frustrated rather than persuaded and enlightened. Take care that your prose illuminates your ideas rather than obscures them. Take your work seriously enough to pay attention to the way it is packaged.

Some particular items to keep in mind.

Strive for clarity

If a reader must read a sentence three times to understand it, the writing hinders the idea.

Sometimes hazy prose reflects hazy thinking. Make sure you know exactly what you are trying to say before you say it.

Strive for precision

Avoid claims like “people thought,” “doctors argued,” “women dieted.” Which people, doctors, or women? All of them?

Avoid baggy sentences

Good prose is direct prose. As a result, good writers rid their sentences of all extraneous words. For example, I could advise you that if there is any way at all to get rid of extra words in your sentences that are not absolutely necessary, they should be gotten rid of if you can. Or in the words of Strunk and White, “Omit needless words.”

Use active voice

Instead of saying “The study was conducted,” try “Mr. Smith conducted the study.” This is desirable for several reasons. 1) It often allows you to omit needless words. 2) It forces you to identify the historical actors. “It was generally believed...” is a dead give-away that you only have a vague idea who believed. 3) Active voice forces you to use punchy verbs rather than the drab and generally unhelpful form of the verb “to be.” (See next point.)

Use vigorous verbs

Verbs provide the foundation of good writing. Unfortunately we often use verbs that provide no action such as forms of the verb “to be” or its helper verbs (am, is, was, were, are, be, been, being, have, has, had, do, does, did). These are perfectly fine, but try replacing them with something jazzier or omit them altogether. “She was a good student,” provides basic but bland information. “She excelled in math and science,” adds verve and specificity. Further, “he laughed” can usually replace “he was laughing.” Finally, avoid turning perfectly good verbs into nouns. Consider the following: “The mirror had a reflection of the lake on it.” “The mirror reflected the lake,” is stronger.

Avoid careless stuff

Run a spell check. Check for run-on sentences and sentence fragments. Proof-read.

What do grades mean?

A (93-100)

For outstanding papers only. Thesis and argument are clear, thought-provoking, and persuasive; research is thorough, appropriate, and creative; relationships drawn between evidence and ideas are sophisticated, subtle, and/or original. The paper also connects to larger trends addressed by the course. Writing is grammatically correct and succinct. The argument flows well from point to point, without any puffery or wasted words.

AB (88-92)

For very good papers that for some reason fall short of the criteria listed above. For example, the argument may be murky in one place; information may be presented that doesn't directly or clearly contribute to the argument; writing style may be awkward here and there, or flawed by one or two consistent (if minor) grammatical errors.

B (83-87)

Your basic good grade. The paper may pursue a straightforward but not especially deep or sophisticated argument; it is okay as far as it goes, but it doesn't penetrate the material very far. It may lack enough primary research to make the argument completely persuasive. It may have a flash of brilliance that is unfulfilled, counterbalanced by minor grammatical problems, a weakness in argumentation, and/or a significant misunderstanding of events or chronology.

BC (78-82)

The paper shows some of the basics of the ideal paper, but is weakened by a lack of serious think-work, evidence gathering, or writing problems. It may make superficial connections without offering sufficient evidence to make the connections plausible or persuasive, or it may have what is in principle a good argument supported by incorrect facts or chronology. Alternatively, it may provide a fairly solid argument with minor flaws, from which the reader is repeatedly distracted by awkward or ungrammatical prose.

C (70-77)

A grade signifying some serious problems in paper design, expository writing, or primary research. It may deliver facts without a recognizable thesis or argument; it may wander away from the point; or it may be a thoughtful attempt so weakened by writing problems (grammar, punctuation, word choice) that it is difficult for the reader to understand a crucial point you are trying to make. Alternatively, it may offer an strong thesis without providing sufficient primary evidence. Also used for papers that do not ask historical questions.

D (60-69)

A marginal grade. This grade usually indicates a paper does not meet the requirements of the assignment in two or more ways: the paper does not ask an historical question, lacks an original thesis, and/or relies almost exclusively on secondary sources. There may be some evidence of reading in the secondary literature, but the paper indicates no effort at synthesis or critical engagement. Also used for essays that are just barely coherent.

F (0-59)

For unacceptable essays. An essay may be judged unacceptable if it contains plagiarism; if it fails to meet three of the major requirements for the paper; if it consists primarily of content inappropriate to the themes of the course; or if the writing fails to meet standard college-level requirements of basic communication in English.

Graduate Student Requirements

It is sometimes tricky for graduate students to sit in undergraduate courses. I do expect you to attend the class, and I welcome you to participate in the discussion. Undergraduates can learn a lot from graduates students and vice versa. But to attend to the special needs and interests of graduate students, we will also be meeting in a separate seminar to discuss extra readings and whatever else you'd like to bring up.

In addition to attending the seminar, graduates students will be required to write two book reviews (of the books we read for the seminar), write a 10-12 page research paper (draft due November 30; final due December 14), and take the final. As part of the participation grade for the seminar, grads will be asked to write a short think piece about each book.

Grading:

Seminar Participation	30%
Book Reviews	10% each
Final	20%
Research paper	30%

Seminar Readings

Seminar readings will be chosen (probably) from the following list:

- Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance*
- Lisa Duggan, *Sapphic Slashers: Sex, Violence, and American Modernity*
- Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, Vol. I*
- Carol Groneman, *Nymphomania: A History*
- Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: Battles over Sex Education in the United States*
- Janice M. Irvine, *Disorders of Desire: Sex and Gender in Modern American Sexology*
- Thomas W. Laquer, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation*
- Jeffrey P Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century*
- Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*
- Harry Oosterhuis, *Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity*
- Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America*
- Jean L. Silver-Isenstadt, *Shameless: The Visionary Life of Mary Gove Nichols*
- Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society*

