Course description: This course will look at the political stakes in the division between heterosexuality and other forms of sexuality in particular and interrogates the category of “normal” in general. It is organized around some key concepts fuelling both the thinking of sexuality and the directions of LGBT movements since 1969. The objective of the course is to give an introduction to the poststructuralist body of queer theory. The purpose of the course is to foster critical thinking about the aspects of our, and others’, lives we think of as “sexuality” as well as to highlight some basic heteronormative assumptions in modern social thought.

Learning outcomes: At the end of the course, students will be familiar with the main questions within queer theory (the poststructuralist body of scholarship interrogating sexual normalcy as a political phenomenon) and will be competent in navigating among its main concepts, concerns and questions. Their analytical skills will be improved by the close reading of texts that demand an attention to counter-intuitive reflexivity and therefore improve their skills to engage in independent, critical scholarship and the oral and written assignments help students to improve their skills to articulate their thoughts as academic questions and problems.

Requirements: This is a reading-intensive course. You need to come to class having read the assignments and ready to discuss them. The requirements are designed to fit the difficult reading load of the course and to improve specific skills of academic writing.

Class participation: You are required to attend class consistently. Please come to class having read, and bringing with you, the assigned texts. Your active participation (listening as well as speaking) will be expected. Generally, the more active class participation is in a class, the more intellectually stimulating it becomes, so I hope that you will always share your thoughts during discussion. You may miss one class without formal documentation of illness or any other case of vis major. Please let me know in advance if you know you won’t come to class.

Discussion leading every student will be responsible for leading at least one 30-40 minute discussion (depending on class size). Please prepare 3 to 5 questions about the assigned article(s) You will be asked to wait until others have responded to the questions before you may share your views on the question. Assessment will be based on the thoughtfulness of the questions and your facilitation of the conversation. The exact format of this component will be designed after we know the exact class size.

Exegetic paragraphs (detailed but concise summary of an idea or an argument without any interpretation or critique): There is a specific key term or idea identified in almost all of the readings. You find these underlined after the respective text in the schedule. You will have to write brief exegetic summaries of most of these terms (cca. one 300-word paragraph per exegesis). These exegetic paragraphs will be due in two sets of 6, one at mid-term time covering the readings from Week 1 to 6, the other at the end of the course covering texts from Week 7 to 12. The first exegetic paragraph will be due the second class. You can later include this one or a revised version of it in your midterm set.
Peer feedback
After submitting the midterm set of exegetic paragraphs, you will receive two sets written by your peers. You will have to read them carefully and give constructive feedback on them in writing. The feedback will be due two weeks after you received the sets. Please send them to the writer and to me.

Here are a few tips to write effective exegetic paragraphs:
- Imagine that a friend wants you to explain this concept or idea. How would you explain this concept to someone who hasn’t read the text?
- Abstain from referring to other texts
- Paraphrase: minimize quoting
- Introduce the concept: where is it employed and what is its general significance (what does the author want to do with it)?
- What does the author mean by this concept?
- How does this concept fit into the argument of the text?
- Make it economical: don't leave out anything really important (really important is anything that helps the argument move forward) and don't repeat anything.

Here are a few tips for giving constructive feedback:
- Commend points that make a paragraph effective and helpful
- Commend points where you think the writer was successful in communicating difficult points in their own voice
- Point out places where you are not sure you understand the point
- Point out where you think grammar issues make the point harder to come across
- Indicate where you find repetitions unhelpful
- Indicate where you think paraphrasing would be more helpful instead of quoting
- Indicate if you’ve missed a point or component which would have made the paragraph more comprehensive or helpful
- Offer clarification where you think appropriate

Grading:
Attendance and participation: 10%
Discussion leading: 20%
Exegetic paragraphs: 35% for the midterm set and 35% for the final set

Note on extensions: If you need an extension on any of the deadlines, email me at least two days prior to the deadline (I will most likely grant an extension). I may not honor requests that come in last minute. I will most probably not honor requests about the deadline for giving peer feedback.

Note on plagiarism: It is your responsibility to make sure that your written work does not include any plagiarism (make sure you clearly mark your notes including quotations for yourself in order to avoid accidentally pasting them in your text). Any assignment found containing plagiarism will receive an F with no possibility of rewriting and you’ll receive an email notification of the problem. Any recurrence may result in failing the course.

Electronic policy:
Please don’t use your laptops in class. I ask you to bring your readings in hard copy and take notes by hand on paper. You can find several articles online justifying this, here are a few (and please note the irony):
http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away
https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/students-are-better-off-without-a-laptop-in-the-classroom/
https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/2015/08/laptop-use-effects-learning-attention/

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/
http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away

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Schedule

week 1: Intro
Monday
queer responsibility

Wednesday

week 2: Foucault
Monday
History of Sexuality continued

Wednesday

week 3 : “Sexuality”
Monday

Wednesday

week 4: Kindred spirits
Monday

Wednesday

week 5: Protest
Monday

Wednesday
week 6:
Monday: No class

Wednesday
Bersani continued


week 7 “Lesbian”:
Monday
Butler continued.

Wednesday: No class

First set of 6 exegetic paragraphs due on Friday; hard copy, Iva’s mailbox

week 8:
Monday Bisexuality

Wednesday Queer colors/ Trans

week 9:


Week 10: Eve Sedgwick: from paranoid to reparative
Monday

Wednesday

week 11: Homonormativity
Monday

**Wednesday**  
Writing workshop based on peer review feedback

**week 12: Belonging**  
**Monday**  


Second set of 6 exegetic paragraphs due on Friday, hard copy, Iva’s mailbox.

**Wednesday**  

This syllabus is subject to change.