

San Diego State University  
Spring 2012

**History 406**  
**The History of Sexuality**  
Dr. Matt Kuefler



**Course Description**

In this course, we study a broad sweep of the history of sexuality from the distant to the recent past. We examine a variety of topics and cultures, but focusing on three periods/regions—ancient Athens, medieval Christianity, and modern America—and on three major themes—sexuality as social practice, sexuality as ideology, and sexuality as identity. Marriage, gender relations, homosexuality, prostitution, and pornography are among the subjects we explore as we examine the varieties of sexual expression in the past and compare them with those of the present. We also look at the diversity of human sexual expression, past and present.

**Information about the Professor**

My name is Dr. Matt Kuefler. My office is also located in the College of Arts building, in room 530. My office hours in the spring semester of 2012 will be Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12:30 and 1:45 p.m. My email address is [mkuefler@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:mkuefler@mail.sdsu.edu). My office telephone number is: 594-0707. I also have a website, with information for and about this course, including writing tips as well as information about my teaching career. The web address is [www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~mkuefler](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~mkuefler); you should bookmark it.

## Course Objectives

What do I hope you will learn over the course of the semester? Well, I do hope that you will learn to love—even a little—history as much as I do. I hope that you will think about the central role of sexuality in human lives—not just in the present, but throughout recorded history. Now, one of the things you will learn is that there are all kinds of terrible things human beings have done to each other, sexually and in many other ways. And it is also true that there are certain patterns in human behavior, including in sexual behavior, that sometimes make it seem that we have no real choices about our lives. But I hope you don't learn from that to be pessimistic about the past or about sexuality. Instead, I hope you take the opposite lesson: that human beings can be kind to each other, sexually and otherwise, and that we do have important choices to make about our sexual behavior and how it affects other people. Learning about the past is as good a way as any to begin to think about some of the important things in life, including about sexuality. I also hope that studying human societies in the past, whether our ancestors came from those societies or not, will encourage us to respect the diversity of human life and the range of values, including sexual lives and sexual values.

Much of the course will consist of lectures, accompanied by *Powerpoint* slides. Most class meetings I will also talk about excerpts from the class textbook, *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*, but we will have four major discussions of the chapters in the textbook. And films will be shown in three classes. Through it all, we'll be talking about history: what is involved in studying history as well as sexuality, what separates good from bad history, how do we reconstruct the past with confidence, and other questions like that.

By the end of this course, you should have:

1. a clear sense of the value of the history of sexuality both to the broader study of history and to the broader study of human sexuality
2. some familiarity with the varied topics, times, and places that scholars have examined in the history of sexuality as well as with some of their debates
3. practice in the “doing” of history, through the interpretation of the historical documents that historians call primary sources, and also through developing your own interpretations of the past in written form
4. a greater curiosity to learn more about the history of sexuality

This is an **Explorations course in the Humanities and Fine Arts**. Completing this course will help you to do the following in greater depth: 1) analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments; 2) describe various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures; 3) identify issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance; 4) demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities.

This course also satisfies a requirement for the new **LGBT Studies** official major and minor. For more information about this program go to [www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~lgbt](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~lgbt).  
**Course Requirements**

Let's face it: life has rules. I'll try to set out the rules for this course as clearly as possible, so you'll know exactly what you're getting yourself into (or have the chance to get yourself out!).

First of all, keep in mind that it is an upper division course in the humanities. That means that there is a certain amount of reading and writing required for it. Those of you who are History or English majors will doubtless be familiar with the sort of workload, but for those of you who are from other departments and schools of the university may find it a challenge.

What if you've not that familiar with the details of history? Don't worry, I'm not expecting any specific knowledge of history for this course. We'll be talking about what is history, and how that shapes our view of the past, so you'll learn quite a bit about history itself in this course. When it comes to the periods of history, a little background now should be enough to get you started. Historians usually divide history into three main periods:

<u>NAME</u> (as a noun/as an adjective)	<u>PERIOD</u>
Antiquity/Ancient	any time before 500 C.E.
The Middle Ages/Medieval	500 C.E. to 1500 C.E.
Modernity/Modern	1500 C.E. to the present

Historians will disagree about the specifics of these divisions (as they will disagree about just about anything) but these are the standard divisions. C.E. stands for Common Era. The period before the Common Era is called B.C.E. (Before the Common Era). It is exactly the same dating system as B.C. and A.D., but since that dating is Christian in origin, the system of B.C.E. and C.E. is used more and more as a neutral way of using this system in world history.

What do you need to do to get a good grade in this course? This is a trickier question, but I've tried to divide up this part into five sections. If you do these five things well, you'll be sure to get a good grade in this course. They are:

1. Attendance. There is no easier way to fall behind in a course than to miss classes. To you, it may seem sometimes as if history is just "one damn thing after another" (as Will Rogers once said), but all professors structure their courses so that one week builds upon another. I understand that you all have lives outside of this course, but you must make every possible effort to attend all classes. There will be no taking of attendance, but it is just good sense to attend class, and to stay until the end of class. You would not miss work regularly and expect to do well, and you should not expect to miss class and succeed in this course. And since the class meets only once a week, to miss even one class is to miss a week's worth of material.
2. Quizzes. To make sure that you stay focused on the lectures and learn the material from them, there will be quizzes on each lecture class that will test what you learned from them.

*Keep in mind about the Quizzes:*

--There will be 19 quizzes, each one based on one of the numbered lectures from the Course Outline below; in many weeks there will be two quizzes that should be taken, one based on the lecture in the first half of class, and the other based on the lecture in the second half of class. The two quizzes do not have to be taken at the same time.

--Each one will be made available through *Blackboard* and graded automatically. I will take the highest ten scores to calculate 50% of the final grade.

--Each one will be worth 5% of the final grade; they will consist of five multiple-choice questions, based on information from the lectures, and you will be given five minutes to take each quiz, accordingly, so as to have one minute to answer each question. If you take longer than the allotted time, there will be a penalty deducted, depending on how much more time you took.

--You will have one week in which to take them, that is, until the start of the next class, although I recommend taking them within a day or two of each class so that the information is fresh in your mind. The deadline for taking each quiz will be clearly marked on the *Blackboard* website where you go to take the quiz, and you will not be permitted to take a quiz after this deadline has passed, because the quiz will disappear from the *Blackboard* menu.

--If you have problems when taking a quiz and wish to retake it, send me an email *at least 24 hours before the deadline for it* and I can delete the score and reset it so that you can retake it. So be sure to take the quiz early enough so that if your internet connection breaks or there are other problems, you have sufficient time to contact me and for me to get your email and reset your quiz. But if you have any technical problems you will need to contact the *Blackboard* managers to find out what went wrong.

--You will be required to answer each question in the order in which you receive them before going onto the next; it is not possible to “backtrack” so as to answer the questions in any other order than the random order in which they are given to you.

--The *Blackboard* managers recommend using either *Mozilla Firefox* or *Google Chrome* to access their site and to take the quizzes to avoid pop-up boxes blocking questions.

--Do not try to “save” your quiz while you are taking it, or try to “resize” or “refresh” the quiz, or “print” the quiz; any of these actions will freeze the quiz and submit it as finished.

--Always print out the page at the end where *Blackboard* tells you what your score is, in case there are any problems with the recording of that score.

3. Readings and Discussions. There is one textbook you will be expected to read in its entirety over the course of the semester. It is my own *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook*,

published by Broadview Press in 2007, that has been ordered from Aztec Books. You can read it at your own pace, but you should read about a chapter a week. A copy of this book will also be on two-hour reserve at the SDSU library.

Four times during the semester there will be classes devoted in part to discussing the readings in the textbook. They are: February 7 (a discussion of chapters 1-4), February 28 (chapters 5-8), April 10 (chapters 9-12), and May 8 (chapters 13-15). They are intended to help you to understand the sources, so be sure to read the chapters in question *before* the discussion dates, bring your textbooks with you for those classes, and ask whatever questions you have about them, especially if you are having difficulty understanding some of the sources in them. You will receive extra credit in the course for participation in the discussion, so make sure that I know who you are if you are planning to speak.

4. Films and Essays. We will be watching three feature-length fictionalized historical films and discussing them. The first is *Alexander* (on February 14), the second is *Stealing Heaven* (on March 6), and the third is *Far from Heaven* (on May 1). If you miss any of these classes, you'll have to watch the films on your own. Since the second film is hard to find, though, there will be a second viewing of it on campus on Friday, March 16, between 2 and 4 p.m.

After each film, I'll expect you to write a 1500-word essay that will require you to reflect on the film and compare it to at least ten of the sources in the textbook. *By no means* should this essay summarize the film or give your personal reaction to it, or even talk about the quality of the film, rather, it should analyze how well the film represented the history of sexuality of that period, based on your insights from lectures and in comparison to the sources in the textbook. In other words, you should not answer the questions "What was the film about?" or "Did I like it?" or "Was it an interesting or entertaining film?" but rather "Was the film realistic and accurate in its representation of the history of sexuality in its time and place, when compared to the historical sources in the textbook?"

*Keep in mind about the Essays:*

--Each is worth 15% of your final grade, for a total of 45%.

--Each essay must be *at least* 1500 words, not including titles, long quotations, or notes.

--The first essay is due on Friday, March 2, at 12 noon, the second essay is due on Friday, April 6, at 12 noon, and the third essay is due on Friday, May 11, at 12 noon. Keep in mind that our class does not meet on Fridays and I do not hold office hours on that day, so you will have to ask any questions you have about the essays at least a day in advance.

--The essays will all be submitted to the *BlackBoard* site for the course. They will be sent to and graded through *Turnitin.com*, which is an antiplagiarism program. If you remain in this course past the drop deadline, it will be counted as your giving legal permission for this process. If you have not used this program, I urge you to look at the information online at <https://turnitin.com/static/training/student.php> and to take the online tutorials

at the start of the semester. I should also warn you that there may be glitches, so you would be well advised to try to submit your essays early enough so that if any problems arise, you can contact me or the help desk.

--Essays may be handed in up to midnight on the Sunday following the due date without penalty; that is, you may take the weekend following the deadline to finish up or polish up an essay. After that, however, whatever grade you get will be lowered by one grade for each half-day (up to 12 hours) that the essay is late. So an essay that would otherwise have received an A if submitted by noon on Friday or even by midnight on Sunday will receive an A- if submitted by noon on Monday, B+ if submitted by midnight on Monday, B if submitted by noon on Tuesday, and so on.

Each of the essays will be graded in three equal parts:

*Ideas:* how clearly they are presented, how well conceived and well argued they are, and whether they are on topic;

*Examples:* whether they are the best examples that might have been used to demonstrate the point, whether there are a variety of examples from the different sources and different parts of each source, and how accurately the details of the examples are given; and

*Structure:* how well written the essay is, whether there is an introduction and conclusion, and whether grammatical and spelling errors are minimal.

To help you with these essays, I have extensive comments on my website intended as help with writing essays, and I urge you to review them. I will put a link to these pages on the *BlackBoard* site for the course. Keep in mind that I am more than happy to help you with your writing skills in any way I can, so please don't hesitate to talk to me about your essays either while you're working on them or after I've graded them (although I will not regrade essays or grade them in advance, so please don't ask if you can email them to me to look over). I also strongly recommend that you buy a good writing style book, if you don't have one already. An excellent one is Diana Hacker's *A Pocket Style Manual*.

#### Summary of Grades:

Quizzes: 50% (for the best 10 out of 19 quizzes, each at 5%)

Essays: 45% (for 3 essays, each at 15%)

Extra Credit: up to 35% (up to 5% each for enthusiastic participation in discussion sessions and in all classes, and for participating in the discussion boards posted after each film)

You'll notice that the total percentage adds up to 130%. In other words, there is extra credit built into the course, so if you don't do well on a few of the assignments, you can still get a good grade in the class.

#### **Other Important Information about the Course**

Cheating: If you attempt to use fraudulent means to improve your grade or any other method that uses anything other than your personal abilities, and I find out about it, any and all parties involved will receive no points for the assignment. A second such attempt will result in an F for the course.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a bit different from cheating; it is the use of someone else's work as your own, without proper credit. It is the number one sin of the academic world, because academic work is all about using ideas and words, and it must be clear which ideas and words are yours and which belong to someone else. You may not use another student's work, including past or present students, and you may not copy from any published work, whether published in a book, as an article, or on the world wide web, unless you give proper credit for those ideas. If you want to use someone else's words, even words from the textbook, whether from the introductory paragraphs or from the historical sources themselves, or even in rephrasing questions from the textbook, you must give proper credit by placing all of the words you take between quotation marks, even if you only use three or four words together or a few key words or phrases. At the end of the quotation you must also describe where you got the quotation. For the purposes of this class, since you should only be using the textbook, that can simply be the page number in parentheses at the end of your sentence. Using someone's ideas or facts, even if you do not use that person's words, also requires giving credit. You do not need to put quotation marks around the words that describe the idea or the information if you do not quote words, but you must indicate at the end of the sentence where you got that idea or fact. Keep in mind that it is not enough simply to change the order of words or replace a few of the words in someone else's sentence; it remains in essence someone else's words. The penalty for plagiarism is a grade of F on the assignment in question. If one essay is plagiarized, and you hand in a second plagiarized essay, you will receive an F for the course. Please see the "Help for Writing" pages of the website for the course, also available in the lefthand menu on the *Blackboard* site for the course, for more information on using quotation marks, footnotes, and please come and talk to me *before* you hand in an essay if you are uncertain about how to avoid plagiarism. SDSU now has an online tutorial on plagiarism at <http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/index> and I urge you to take it early in the semester.

Office Visits: Office visits should be part and parcel of our personal interaction in this course. Please come and see me during my office hours to talk about the class, the content of readings or lectures, or your grades. Come as many times as you like. Come to talk to one of us especially if you are having difficulty understanding the content of the course, or if you are unhappy with your grades, or if you are having difficulty participating in discussions. Since it is such a large class, it will be difficult for me to get to know you otherwise from class alone. If you remain in this class, knowing that you cannot attend my office hours because of other commitments, I cannot guarantee that I can meet with you outside of them. Make sure that if you are having troubles in the course that you come and talk with me early on in the semester; the longer you wait to see me, the less I can do to help you to do better. If you come to see me in the last few weeks of the semester and ask what you can do to improve your final grade, I will not be able to do much of anything to help you.

Email: It is far too easy to send emails nowadays and I am swamped with them. I expect you to limit the emails you send to me, and to speak to me in person, either before or after class or

during my office hours. Do not ask me for information about your grades through email; university policy prevents me from discussing any student's grades in emails, because they are not private but belong to the university. If you wish to discuss a quiz score or writing assignment grade, I'll just tell you to come and see me anyway (and bring a hard copy of your writing assignment and the printed copy of your quiz score, when you do). Do not ask me for information that is found in this syllabus, like what my office hours are or whether you can get a copy of my notes; if you do, I probably won't answer it. Do email me if you are having problems uploading a writing assignment or taking a quiz (but see above, I'll reset quizzes only twice for any student during the semester). If you do email, remember to sign your name to them, since I often cannot figure out who it is from unusual email addresses.

Late or Missed Essays or Quizzes: No quizzes can be taken late; if you cannot take a quiz because of some serious and unforeseen emergency, I will need to see proof of it and will try to come up with some alternative assignment for it. But keep in mind that there are 18 quizzes and only 11 will be used to calculate your final grade, so missing a few should not count against you in your final grade. I will permit you to submit a paper within 60 hours late without penalty, as explained above, after that there is a penalty. Likewise, if a serious and unforeseen emergency prevents you from submitting an essay any longer past the deadline, do come and see me to be exempted from the penalty. In all instances, you must be prepared to provide proof of the emergency and proof of your personal involvement in it.

Extra Credit Assignments: There is extra credit built into the course (see above). So no additional extra credit assignments will be considered, unless real and unforeseen emergencies have prevented you from completing assignments on time, as explained above.

Electronic Equipment: Because of abuses in the past, I no longer permit students to use laptop computers in my class, unless they must do so due to a disability. For that they must be registered with Disabled Student Services, and it must be part of the accommodation for their disability. Nor do I permit use of any other electronic devices, whether cellphones or blackberries or i-pods or whatever else. In such a large class it will be difficult to prevent texting, but you cannot both be texting and taking notes for the quizzes. It is distracting to me and to others if you are texting, so if I see you texting I will ask you to stop and put away your device, and either to leave the class if it happens again or to accept points deducted from your final grade total. To put it in a more positive light: it is impossible to concentrate on two things at once. Since I do not give exams, I do not expect you to learn the information I provide by heart, but I do expect you to listen to it while it is being presented.

Lecture Notes and Powerpoint Slides: I do not distribute either my notes or my Powerpoint slides, except for disabled students who are registered with Disabled Student Services and require the slides as part of the accommodation for their disability.

Incompletes: University policy restricts the granting of incompletes except for a few assignments toward the end of the semester that cannot be finished because of an unforeseen emergency. I will not give you an incomplete in order to submit work from earlier in the semester because you missed the deadlines. Nor will I give you an incomplete if you have not taken at least 10 quizzes and submitted at least 2 of the essays. In most cases, you should seek

what is called course forgiveness if you find that you have not done enough work to pass the course, but you should know that in cases of serious personal difficulties or emergencies, it is possible to withdraw from a course or from the whole of a semester after the deadline: talk to someone in the Registrar's Office about these options.

And last, but certainly not least: R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Please be respectful of what anyone says in the class. We each hold our own values and beliefs about sexuality. It is perfectly acceptable to disagree with someone, and you should certainly speak up if you have a different point-of-view, but treat differences with respect, and allow everyone the right to his or her opinion. Some of what I will be saying may also challenge the values and beliefs you have been raised to hold. An important part of the university environment is being exposed to new ideas, even if you choose to reject these ideas. If you feel that any remarks I make are unjustified or unfair, please feel free to object in a respectful way, in class or in an office visit. I should be able to justify any remarks I make, and your objection will not affect your grade in any way.

### Course Outline

Tuesday, January 24: *Introduction to the Course*

#### *Unit 1: Sexuality as Social Practice*

*Case Study: Classical Athens and the Ancient Mediterranean*

*Lecture 1: Patriarchy: The Battle of the Sexes in Ancient Athens*

*Lecture 2: Ancient Matriarchal and Egalitarian Societies*

Tuesday, January 31: *Lecture 3: Prostitution and Pederasty in Ancient Athens*

*Lecture 4: Thou Shalt Not: Licit and Illicit Sex in the Ancient Near East*

Tuesday, February 7: *Lecture 5: Private and Public Sexuality in Ancient Rome*

*Discussion: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, chapters 1-4*

Tuesday, February 14: *Film: Alexander (2004; dir. Oliver Stone)*

#### *Unit 2: Sexuality as Ideology*

*Case Study: Medieval Christian Culture*

Tuesday, February 21: *Lecture 6: Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*

*Lecture 7: The Christian Reappraisal of Sex and Marriage*

Tuesday, February 28: *Lecture 8: Sex and Marriage in Other World Religions*

*Lecture 9: Sex and Marriage in Other World Religions, continued*

*Discussion: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, chapters 5-8*

Friday, March 2: *First Essay due*

- Tuesday, March 6:        *Film: Stealing Heaven* (1988; dir. Clive Donner)
- Unit 3: Sexuality as Identity*  
*Case Study: America between the Seventeenth and Twentieth Centuries C.E.*
- Tuesday, March 13:      *Lecture 10: Puritans and Libertines*  
                                 *Lecture 11: American Religion, Liberty, and Sexuality*
- Friday, March 16:        *Film (second showing): Stealing Heaven, 2-4 p.m. (room to be announced)*
- Tuesday, March 20:      *Lecture 12: Sex and the Other*  
                                 *Lecture 13: Science and Sexuality*
- Tuesday, April 3:        *Lecture 14: Capitalism and Modern Sexuality*
- Friday, April 6:         *Second Essay due*
- Tuesday, April 10:       *Lecture 15: The Birth of Homosexuality*  
                                 *Discussion: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, chapters 9-12*
- Tuesday, April 17:      *Lecture 16: Speaking Sex in American Culture*  
                                 *Lecture 17: Sex + Love = Romance*
- Tuesday, April 24:      *Lecture 18: Liberation*  
                                 *Lecture 19: Backlash*
- Tuesday, May 1:         *Film: Far from Heaven* (2002; dir. Todd Haynes)
- Tuesday, May 8:         *Conclusion to the Course*  
                                 *Discussion: The History of Sexuality Sourcebook, chapters 13-15*
- Friday, May 11:         *Third Essay due*