

HIST 127 / AMST 135 / WGSS 200
U.S. LESBIAN AND GAY HISTORY

Professor George Chauncey
Office: HGS xxxx
Hours: Thursdays, 2:00-3:30, or by appointment
xxx-xxxx, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@yale.edu

Yale University
Fall 2008
TTh 10:30-11:20 & 1 HTBA
LC 317

Teaching Fellows:

Brian Distelberg, xxxxxxxxxxx@yale.edu

xxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxxxxx@yale.edu

xxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxxxxxxx @yale.edu

Discussion sections meet: W 7-7:50, Th 7-7:50, Th 8-8:50, Fr 10:30-11:20

This course explores the social, cultural, and political history of lesbians, gay men, and other socially constituted sexual and gender minorities, primarily in the twentieth century. Since the production and regulation of queer life has always been intimately linked to the production and policing of “normal” sexuality and gender, we will also pay attention to the shifting boundaries of normative sexuality, especially heterosexuality, and to other broad developments in American history. Themes include the emergence of homosexuality and heterosexuality as categories of experience and identity; the changing relationship between homosexuality and transgenderism; the development of diverse lesbian and gay subcultures and their representation in popular culture; the sources of antigay hostility; religion and sexual science; generational change and everyday life; AIDS; and gay, antigay, feminist, and queer movements.

There will be two lectures a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays (10:30-11:20) and a weekly discussion section taught by a Teaching Fellow. Two mandatory films will be screened.

REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Regular class attendance, careful completion of all assigned reading, and thoughtful, active participation in section discussion.
- (2) Viewing two films screened in the second half of the course (listed in the syllabus below; precise times and places to be announced).
- (3) A three-page thought piece, to be submitted via e-mail to Professor Chauncey by Friday of second week (September 12) and brought to your TF at the first meeting of your section during third week. Write a mini-ethnography of the place of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and/or transgendered people in two social milieux you know well: Yale, and one other social world you’ve inhabited (high school, church, singing group, sports team, etc.). How are they regarded and treated in these social worlds? How visible, accepted, and/or involved are they in these milieux? What are the terms that people use for them and/or that they use themselves—gay, lesbian, queer, other, none?
- (4) Two 5-page papers. Three assignments are included in the syllabus below, and you may choose which two of them to complete. Each will be explained in greater detail later. The first two ask you to interpret primary documents that will be discussed in section (those

papers are due at the beginning of section—around September 18 and/or October 23—and will not be accepted after section is over). The last paper option asks you to interview your parents and grandparents about their attitudes toward homosexuality and the lesbians and gay men they knew (if any) when they were young; you are not required to record or transcribe the interview, just to take good enough notes for you to quote them in the paper, in which you will place their attitudes and experiences in historical context. This paper is due on December 2, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving break.

(5) An in-class midterm exam on October 14 and a final exam on December 17 at 2 PM.

GRADING: The two 5-page papers will each count for 20% of the grade; the midterm for 20%; and the final for 40%. The effect on your final grade of your participation in section discussions (which includes your mini-ethnography) is not so easily quantifiable, but exceptionally thoughtful and engaged participation has the potential to push the grade based on your written work up a notch, e.g., could turn a B into a B+, while more than two unexcused absences could turn a B into a B- and regular absences could turn it into a C+.

READINGS:

The following books are available at Labyrinth Books (290 York St.):

George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*

Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*

Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in the Second World War*

David Johnson, *The Lavender Menace: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority, 1945-1970*

Cathy Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*

The last required book is out of print, but you can order it from Amazon.com or another on-line bookstore, where it is easily available:

Dudley Clendinin and Adam Nagourney, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America*

A packet of readings (marked * on the syllabus) is available at Tyco on Broadway.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND DISCUSSION SECTION READINGS

Sept. 4 Course Introduction

Reading:

*David Halperin, “Is There A History of Sexuality?” *History and Theory* 28 (1989): 257-74

Sept. 9 Sex & Identity: From Sodomy to Homosexuality

Sept. 11 Sex & (Trans)gender: From the Berdache to the Mannish Woman
THREE-PAGE MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY DUE BY FRIDAY, SEPT. 12.

Reading:

George Chauncey, *Gay New York* (Basic, 1994), Introduction and Part I (Male (Homo)sexual Practices and Identities in the Early Twentieth Century), 1-127.
Recommended: 151-206

Sept. 16 Love, Friendship, Bed Sharing: Abraham Lincoln & His Contemporaries

Sept. 18 New Languages of Desire: Whitman, Plato, and Oscar Wilde

► *PAPER OPTION #1: Analyze Frances Willard's diary account of her feelings toward her friend Mary. How does she conceptualize and express those feelings? What expectations seem to govern those feelings and the reactions of their friends and relatives to them? How do you interpret the crisis in their relationship? How does your reading of her diary compare to Smith-Rosenberg's or Hansen's analysis of mid-nineteenth-century women's love and friendship? Due at the beginning of your section.*

Reading (first section meetings held this week):

*Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1 (1975): 1-29

*Karen V. Hansen, "'No Kisses is Like Youres': An Erotic Friendship between Two African-American Women during the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Gender and History* 7 (August 1995): 153-82

*Selections from Frances Willard's diary (1860s)

Sept. 23 Radclyffe Hall and Turn-of-the-Century Sexual Science

Sept. 25 "It" Girls, Yale Men, and the Production of Heterosexuality

Reading:

Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928)

Sept. 30 The Pansy Craze and the Politics of Homosexuality in the Jazz Age

Oct. 2 "My Buddy": World War II and the Remaking of American Sexual Culture

Reading:

Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in the Second World War* (Free Press, 1990), skim chps. 1-2, read 3-4, 7-9

Oct. 7 Sex Panics and the Making of the Homosexual Menace in Cold War America

Oct. 9 Alfred Kinsey and Postwar Sexual Science

Reading:

David Johnson, *The Lavender Menace: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago, 2004), selections

Oct. 14 MIDTERM

Oct. 16 Donald Webster Cory, Minority Rights, and the Postwar Homophile Movement

Reading:

John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority, 1945-1970* (Chicago, 1983), chps. 4-7 (57-125), 9-10 (149-95)

*Daughters of Bilitis, Statement of Purpose (1955)

*"What About the DOB?" *The Ladder* (1959)

Oct. 21 Bar Culture

Oct. 23 Race, Class, Region, and the Diversity of Postwar Lesbian, Gay, & Trans Cultures

► PAPER OPTION #2: Compare Vining's everyday gay life and his attitude toward his homosexuality with that of one other of the following diarists/memoirists. Drawing on both of them, how would you assess gay men's lives and consciousness in the postwar years? Due at the beginning of your section.

Reading:

*Donald Vining, *A Gay Diary*, vol. 2 [1946-49], 8-17, 32-41, 110-11, 126-27, 236-43

*Martin Duberman, "Gay in the Fifties" [Harvard diary, 1956-57; Yale, 1957-58]

*Paul Monette, *Becoming a Man*, 101-38 [on his freshman year at Yale, 1963-64]

*James Baldwin, "Here Be Dragons" (1985)

*Samuel Delany, *The Motion of Light in Water*, 218-24, 172-76

■ **FILM SCREENING MONDAY**, Oct. 27: *The Children's Hour* (William Wyler, 1961, with Audrey Hepburn, Shirley MacLaine, and James Garner)

Oct. 28 Pulp Novels and Butch/Fem Relationships in Postwar Lesbian Culture

Oct. 30 The Double Life

Reading:

*Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis, "The Reproduction of Butch-Fem Roles: A Social Constructionist Approach," in Peiss and Simmons, eds., *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Temple, 1989), 241-256

*Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, "Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community: Buffalo, New York, 1940-1960," in Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, eds., *Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (NAL, 1989), 426-40

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (Crossing Press, 1982), 176-256

Nov. 4 Stonewall and Gay Liberation

Nov. 6 Lesbian Feminism, Women's Culture, and the Sex Wars

Reading:

*Becki L. Ross, *The House That Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation* (Toronto, 1995), 83-138

*Radicalesbians, "The Woman-Identified Woman" (1970)

*Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt" (1972)

*Joan Nestle, "A Fem's Feminist History," in DuPlessis and Snitow, eds., *The Feminist Memoir Project*, 338-49

*Margaret Hunt, "Report on a Conference on Feminism, Sexuality, and Power: The Elect Clash with the Perverse," in Samois, *Coming to Power* (2nd ed., Samois, 1987), 81-89

Nov. 11 From Drag Balls to Vogue Balls: Black Gay Politics and Culture After Stonewall

Nov. 13 Experiments in Living: Sexual Cultures and Community Building in the 1970s

Reading:

Dudley Clendinin and Adam Nagourney, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (Simon & Schuster, 1999), chps. 6, 8, 10-12, 15-16, 19, 22-3. Highly recommended: 24, 27. Out of print but easily available from Amazon.com, BarnesAndNoble.com, etc.

Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, "'That's My Place!': Negotiating Racial, Sexual, and Gender Politics in San Francisco's Gay Latino Alliance, 1975-1983," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 12:2 (April 2003), pp. 224-258

■FILM SCREENING MONDAY, Nov. 17, *Longtime Companion* (Norman René, 1990)

Nov. 18 AIDS

Nov. 20 No lecture. Sections will still meet; Friday sections may meet during the lecture hour.

Reading:

*Larry Kramer, "1,112 and Counting," *New York Native* (March 1983)

Cathy Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago, 1999), selected chapters.

Dec. 2 Matters of Life and Death: AIDS, the Lesbian Baby Boom, and the Emergence of both Queer Politics and Lesbian/Gay Family Issues

Dec. 4 The Present as History: The Christian Right's Antigay Politics and the Debate over Same-sex Marriage in Historical Perspective

► *PAPER OPTION #3: Interview your parents and grandparents about their attitudes toward homosexuality and the lesbians and gay men they knew (if any) when they were young, then write a paper placing their attitudes and experiences in historical context. What insight into historical change can you glean from any generational differences you discover? Due on Monday, December 1.*

Reading (several very short essays):

*Dennis Altman, "Sexual Freedom and the End of Romance" (1982)

*Thomas B. Stoddard, "Why Gay People Should Seek the Right to Marry" (1989)

*Paula L. Ettelbrick, "Since When is Marriage a Path to Liberation?" (1989)

*Nan B. Hunter, "Sexual Dissent and the Family: The Sharon Kowalski Case," *The Nation* (1991)

*Andrew Sullivan, "A Conservative Case for Gay Marriage," *The New Republic* (1989)

*Evan Wolfson, "Crossing the Threshold" (1994)

*Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Against Gay Marriage," *Commonweal* (1991)

*E.J. Graff, "Retying the Knot," *The Nation* (1996)

Dec. 17, 2 PM, FINAL EXAM.