This year’s HIST 3292 seminar will examine the history of the commodification of sexual acts and knowledge about these acts, as well the ancillary industries that serviced and regulated sex acts, in twentieth-century North America.

That sex acts can be treated as type of labour-power that can be abstracted and made marketable is ancient knowledge. That “sexuality” exists is another matter. Most historians now work from the premise that our way of thinking about sexuality as an identity category is a wholly modern phenomenon, one that owed its existence to other categories – the individual and identity, for a start – that had no purchase centuries ago. In this class, we will explore the relationship between sexuality and other identity categories, such as gender, race and class. We will also situate identity-formation within the rapidly changing context of continental capitalism. Finally, students will examine the various methodologies used by historians practicing their craft.

Please note: some topics can prompt strong emotional reactions. I will make every attempt to be considerate of diverse feelings and sensitivities among the students, and I ask all of you to do the same. During this term, you will be exposed to what may seem to you be (or may in fact be) anti-male or anti-female or otherwise disturbing concepts or language or images. Part of our task in this course will be to analyse and explain these sometimes ugly aspects of our history and historical writing. We cannot and should not ignore our emotional reactions to these facts, but in the spirit of scholarship, we must think about and examine our reactions. Please talk to me if you find some aspect of the course’s climate uncomfortable, and I will respond to your concerns as best I can.

Class Schedule

**Week One, Jan 8th**

Introduction, Or, It’s a Metaphor, because it isn’t a Metaphor


**Week Two, Jan 15th**

Context: Capitalism, Courtship, and Copulation without Procreation


Andrea Tone, “Contraceptive Consumers: Gender and the Political Economy of Birth Control in the 1930s,” *Journal of Social History* 29:3 (Spring 1996), 485-506. (OWL)

Week Three, Jan 22nd  Interzones 1


Week Four, Jan 29th  Interzones 2


Also, view the 1959 film *Imitation of Life*, d. Douglas Sirk.

Week Five, Feb 5th  Burlesque West 1


Week Six, Feb 12th  Burlesque West 2

Ross, *Burlesque West*, Chapters 4-6.

Christabelle Sethna, Beth Palmer, Katrina Ackerman, and Nancy Janovicek, “Choice, Interrupted: Travel and Inequality of Access to Abortion Services since the 1960s,” *Labour/Le Travail* 71 (Spring 2013), 29-48. (OWL)

Week Seven, Feb 19th  Study Break, No Class

Week Eight, Feb 26th  Perversion for Profit 1


Week Nine, Mar 5th  Perversion for Profit 2

Strub, *Perversion for Profit*, Chapters 3-5.

Also, view 1965’s *Perversion for Profit*, at [http://archive.org/details/PerversionForProfit](http://archive.org/details/PerversionForProfit).
**Week Ten, Mar 12th**  
Perversion for Profit 3


Alice Echols, “Cultural Feminism: Feminist Capitalism and the Anti-Pornography Movement,” *Social Text* 7 (Spring-Summer 1983), 34-53. (OWL)

**Week Eleven, Mar 19th**  
Modern American Sexology


**Week Twelve, Mar 26th**  
Masters & Johnson 1


**Week Thirteen, Apr 2nd**  
Masters & Johnson 2


My weekly regular office hours in the Winter term will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:00 pm. In March, I will add extra hours.

Due to my obligations with administrative committees, I may have to cancel regular office hours from time to time. In order to ensure my accessibility, I will hold weekly virtual office hours Sundays from 10:00 am-12:00 pm, and Wednesdays from 7:00-9:00 pm. During these times, I will be available for video chats via thedamagedlife@gmail.com, and on twitter, @thebeforetime.
Texts

The following books are available at the King’s Bookstore:


The remainder are available via OWL or in a reader available for purchase at Julia’s Photcopy, 1525 Lemarchant St.

Given the subject matter, a seemingly inexhaustible amount of content exists on the internet. With the help of three recent graduates – I think of them as “retired students/underpaid minions” – links have been posted at www.twitter.com/thebeforetime & http://thebeforetime.tumblr.com/. Jasmine Hare, Mary Cameron and Rebecca Riordan have graciously agreed to act as informal out-of-town consultants concerning the present-day scene, since my contemporary pop culture knowledge stops with Dawson’s Creek and The O.C. Obviously, this being the internet, some of the material may be considered objectionable, and the nature of hashtags allow for anyone to join any conversation. We have posted trigger warnings for sensitive material, and I encourage students to speak to me about any material they find questionable.

Marking Breakdown

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Participation

Wealth and Power in North America is a seminar course with an above-average amount of reading. You are expected to evaluate the arguments in the readings before coming to class, and to have your own ideas and questions about the material for others to consider – discussion is the heart of any seminar course. No marks are earned for attendance. Instead, your participation grade will be earned based on the quantity and quality of your contributions to class discussions. A portion of this mark will be earned by providing written answers to questions in class.
**Historical Document – A Sex Object**

For this assignment, students will locate and contextualize one or more pieces of evidence relating to the business of sex in North America, 1915-1985. A publication in an academic journal, a dog-eared copy of *Hustler*, black and white photographs taken at a crime scene, the lyrics to a Barry White album, and poems written by teenagers everywhere – the possibilities are endless. Accompanying the document will be a short essay (3-5 pages) that contextualizes the document and explains the reasons for your choice.

You must submit 2 paper copies of the document (or a suitable facsimile) and your essay by 3 pm, February 10th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies. There are no penalties for late submissions. No document will be accepted after March 3rd.

**Essay One – Knowledge About Sex: The Research Essay**

For the major assignment, students will complete a research essay (approx. 15 pages) that combines primary and secondary forms of research. The topic, which must be related to the themes of the course, will be chosen by the student in consultation with the instructor. All essays are expected to conform to the policies set out in the History Style Guide, found online at [http://history.dal.ca](http://history.dal.ca).

**Research Essay Proposal** – With a minimum of 500 words, explain the subject and scope of your research, including a clearly defined thesis statement. In a separate bibliography, list at least 7 secondary sources that will figure prominently in your paper. Your bibliography should also contain a list of relevant sources, with brief descriptions of each.

You must submit 2 paper copies of the proposal by 3 pm, . There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies. There are no penalties for late submissions. No proposal will be accepted after

Research essays are built with the following components:

1. An introduction that conveys the significance of the subject as well as your research questions and answers.
2. A clear and concise thesis statement, in the form of an argument that can be proven by marshalling evidence.
3. A historiographical section that describes and evaluates the major schools of thought about your subject.
4. The so-called ‘body’ of the paper, which combines evidence and analysis in order to demonstrate the validity of your thesis.
5. A conclusion that restates the arguments.

You must submit 2 paper copies of the research essay by 3 pm, April 14th. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies. There are no penalties for late submissions. No essays will be accepted after April 28th.
Essay Two – Knowledge About Knowledge About Sex: The Critical Evaluation

Instead of an exam, students will demonstrate their comprehension of the course material by writing a critical evaluation (10-12 pages in length) of Thomas Maier’s Masters of Sex. Your assignment should include the following components, of roughly equal length:

1. A description of the book’s subjects, evidentiary base, and main arguments.
2. A discussion of the historiography – the stormy sea of interpretation surrounding the subject, as indicated by the different approaches found in the course readings.
3. A critical evaluation of the book, tying together a discussion of evidence and arguments in order to draw your conclusions.

You must submit one electronic copy of the critical evaluation by 3 pm, April 21st. There are no extensions, save for documented medical and family emergencies. There are no penalties for late submissions. No essays will be accepted after April 28th.

Accommodation Statement:

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation – Form A.

A note taker may be required as part of a student’s accommodation. There is an honorarium of $75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to participate in the class.

Academic Integrity Statement:

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Policies and Student Resources sections of the academicintegrity.dal.ca website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations.

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand.