

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SPEAKER SERIES

QUEER BEIRUT & SEXY INFORMATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF INFORMATION

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In Beirut, queer men credit dating/sex apps like Grindr and Scruff with having brought sex to the fore of queer male social life in Lebanon. But why? What is it about these technologies that lend themselves to a logic whereby sex is the main outcome? What amounted to men's experience with information was not information as informative but information as an enhanced ability to create the kinds of sexual encounters they wanted most. As I argue, informational culture among queer men in Beirut is comprised of a set of conventionalized practices for how to exchange pieces of information that logically lead to likely sex. I explore how men use sexy information - as in those bits of information about bodies, sex, desire, pleasures, that are conventionally patterned to convey something knowable about a man's offline embodiment and social position - to generate the kinds of sex they want most by trading, accumulating, and arranging bits of information into alternate possibilities upon which they decide who to meet for certain kinds of sexual encounters. While these bits of information might represent something about men's sexualities, their sexiness comes from the ability of this information to arouse and forge sexual possibilities by computing away the messiness of sex and intimacy into ordered practices for trading information.

Friday, November 4, 2022

2:30 pm

1116 McCain Building

ALL WELCOME!!