SEXUALITY AND SOCIETY IN RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE

COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course seeks to analyse the social construction of non-heteronormative sexualities in Russia and Eastern Europe throughout various periods of the region’s history – from the medieval era to the present day. The course will begin with two sessions examining different approaches to the study of sexualities, analysing in particular the psychoanalytic theory of Freud, the discourse theory of Foucault and the queer theories of Butler et al. We will examine a range of influences on constructions of sexuality (including religious doctrine, nationalism, political ideology and medicine, etc.) to better understand the lived experiences of sexual minorities and social attitudes towards non-heteronormative sexualities in the specific socio-political, cultural and historic contexts of Russia and Eastern Europe. With reference to the contemporary period we will discuss homophobia, homonationalism, queer migration and diaspora, HIV/AIDS and the social context of sex, social activism and LGBT rights in the broader European context.

OBJECTIVES
The course seeks to analyse and assess a range of explanatory theories and perspectives on sexuality; to make coherent oral and written presentations in lucid English; to enable students to frame their MA dissertations within theories elaborated in this course. At the end of this course students are expected to be able to analyse and evaluate a range of explanatory theories and perspectives on sexuality; to examine the explanatory power of such theories when applied to specific cases in Russia and Eastern Europe; to analyse the relationship between power and the construction of sexuality in Russia and Eastern Europe.

SEMINAR STRUCTURE
A list of readings and questions accompanies each seminar topic. In each seminar one or two students will each give a 15-minute presentation based on the recommended (not essential) readings. ALL students are expected to participate in the discussion. The teacher’s role is that of chair and not lecturer. You will be required to sign up for one presentation.

READINGS AND REFLECTION SHEETS
Each week all students must read at least two of the essential readings and at least one of the recommended readings. Each week all students must e-mail a reflection sheet (a one-page summary and critique of one of the essential readings and one of the recommended readings of 400-500 words) to the course tutor by the Sunday morning before the seminar. An example of a reflection sheet is available on the Moodle site.
ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment: feedback on the presentation of the formative essay.
Summative assessment: one 3,000-word essay on a topic of the student’s choosing.

PENALTIES FOR LATE ASSESSMENT, OVER-LENGTH COURSEWORK AND PLAGIARISM

See the SSEES Post-Graduate (Taught) Student Handbook for the latest information.

SEMINAR TOPICS

1. Studying sexualities: from sexology to psychoanalysis
2. Studying sexualities: from discourse to queer and beyond
3. Sexualities in pre-communist Russia and Eastern Europe
4. Sexualities and ideology in communist Russia and Eastern Europe
5. Sexualities, post-communism and in/visibility
6. Homophobia, nationalism and homonationalism
7. Queer migration, diaspora and asylum: is the West best?
8. HIV/AIDS and the social context of sex in Eastern Europe
9. LGBT rights and social activism in the broader European context
10. Student presentations
READINGS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introductory texts


1. **Studying sexualities: from sexology to psychoanalysis**

   *Task*: Bring in a newspaper or magazine article on sex or sexuality to discuss how sexuality is generally understood outside of academia.

   **Essential**


   **Recommended**


2. Studying sexualities: from discourse to queer and beyond

Essential

Recommended
Duggan, L. (1994) ‘Queering the state’, Social Text, no. 39


### 3. Sexualities in pre-communist Russia and Eastern Europe

**Essential**

Engelstein, L. (1992) ‘Gender and the juridical subject: sodomy, prostitution and rape’ in her *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-siècle Russia*. Ithica: Cornell UP, 56-95


**Recommended**


4. Sexualities and ideology in communist Russia and Eastern Europe

Essential

Recommended
Clech, A. (2018) ‘Between the Labor Camp and the Clinic: *Tema* or the Shared Forms of Late Soviet Homosexual Subjectivities’, *Slavic Review*, vol. 77, no. 1, 6-29
5. Sexualities, post-communism and in/visibility

Essential

Baer, B.J. (2002) ‘Russian gays/Western gaze’ and Other Russias’, *GLQ*, vol. 8, no. 4

Recommended

Graff, A. (2006) ‘We are not all homophobes: a report from Poland’, *Feminist Studies*, vol. 32, no. 2
6. **Homophobia, nationalism and homonationalism**

**Essential**


Pryke, S. (1998) ‘Nationalism and sexuality, what are the issues?’, *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 4, no. 4


**Recommended**


Pryke, S. (1998) ‘Nationalism and sexuality, what are the issues?’, *Nations & Nationalism*, vol. 4, no. 4


7. **Queer migration, diaspora and asylum: is the West best?**

**Essential**


**Recommended**


Gorman-Murray, A. (2007) ‘Rethinking queer migration through the body’, *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol. 8, no. 1, 105-121


Puar, J. (2002) ‘Circuits of Queer Mobility’, *GLQ*, vol. 8, no. 1/2


8. HIV/AIDS and the social context of sex in Eastern Europe

**Essential**


**Recommended**


9. **LGBT rights and social activism in the broader European context**

**Essential**

Ayoub, P.M. (2013) ‘Cooperative transnationalism in contemporary Europe: Europeanization and political opportunities for LGBT mobilization in the European Union’, *European Political Science Review*, vol. 5, no. 2


Recommended


Bilic, B. (2016) ‘Europeanization, LGBT Activism, and Non-Heteronormativity in the Post-Yugoslav Space’, Special Issue: *Southeastern Europe*, vol. 40, no. 1


Buyantueva, R. (2018) ‘LGBT Rights Activism and Homophobia in Russia’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 65, no. 4


10. Student presentations