

Yale University
ANTH 325 / WGSS 327 / E&RS 532
Fall 2017
Monday 9:25-11:15

Dr. Cassandra Hartblay
Office Location: 344 Luce Hall (MacMillan Center, 3RD Floor)
Office Hours: Monday 11:30am-3:00pm, Tuesday 9:00am-12:00pm

Gender & Sexuality in Contemporary Russia: Ethnography and Social Theory

Course Description

This advanced seminar explores sociocultural aspects of gender and sexuality in contemporary Russia from a transnational queer feminist standpoint. Social theory emerging from transdisciplinary conversations in critical gender and sexuality studies are applied to the Russian context, and students engage ethnography and recent history to contextualize and interpret current events. The course considers how unfolding transnational and transcultural LGBTQ and feminist movements align and come into conflict with heterogeneous and shifting regionally-specific attitudes and laws about sexuality and gender.

Questions about the fixedness, fluidity, and transgression of identity and norms arise repeatedly in readings that consider culture change in the post-Soviet period. Topics include Soviet and post-Soviet kinship patterns, expressions of masculinity and femininity, gendered divisions of labor, LGBTQ identity and changing vocabularies of difference, the production of social norms in regards to sexuality and gender, notions of public and private, and configurations and expressions of patriarchy in daily life, the state, and the church.

Course Goals

This course aims to develop a nuanced understanding of gender and sexuality in Russia in relation to power and social norms in daily life, cultural trends, and geopolitical discourse. Gender and sexuality are understood as permeable, unstable, and shifting categories that are at once analytic tools useful for critical thought, valuable rhetorical devices instrumental to systems of power, and performative roles up for negotiation. Students completing the course will be prepared to describe complex social and historical processes, and the implications of contrasting the theoretical approaches for real world action and policy. Regular writing assignments and class discussions seek to develop critical thinking skills through the analysis and interpretation of academic texts, news articles, and popular media. With the midterm assignment, students must take an articulate a position on a current event topic relevant to the subject matter of the course. Through the term paper students develop an original argument and point of view, and present it using formal academic writing. The course is suitable for advanced undergraduates or Masters students with an interest in Russia, Anthropology, Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies, and European Studies.

Texts

The following books are core readings for the course. Students are encouraged to purchase or rent their own copy for the duration of the semester. Copies may also be available in library reserve or ebook systems.

- Essig, Laurie. 1999. *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and the Other*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Rivkin-Fish, Michele. 2005. *Women's Health in Post-Soviet Russia: The Politics of Intervention*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Shevchenko, Olga. 2009. *Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Tuller, David. 1997. *Cracks in the Iron Closet: Travels in Gay & Lesbian Russia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Utrata, Jennifer. 2015. *Women without Men: Single Mothers and Family Change in the New Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

The following additional texts may be purchased according to student interest; we will read 1-2 chapter excerpts, which will be available as PDFs.

- Borenstein, Eliot. 2008. *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Culture and Society after Socialism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lomasko, Victoria, and Thomas Campbell. 2017. *Other Russias*. New York: n+1.
- Parsons, Michelle A. 2014. *Dying Unneeded: The Cultural Context of the Russian Mortality Crisis*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Zavisca, Jane R. 2012. *Housing the New Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

The excerpted chapters as well as all other readings not found in the required monographs are marked with an asterisk (*) below, and will be posted online as links or PDF files. You will need to access these files using a Yale IP address (either a computer registered on the Yale network or a VPN connection from elsewhere). Readings are subject to change as the course unfolds.

Each student is expected to come to class having already completed the reading for the day, with access to the assigned reading in either hardcopy or electronic format in hand. Please take care to note page numbers of passages of interest, or in the case of e-books, to note other relevant location information to orient yourself and others to the text during class discussion.

Assignments and Grading

There are four components that make up your final grade.

Participation = 20%

Reading Responses 3 x 10 points each = 30%

Mid-Term Assignment = 15%

Final Research Paper (prospectus = 10% + outline/peer review = 5% + final paper = 20%) = 35%

1. **Participation** (20% of your grade). The primary responsibility for an upper level research seminar is to come to class prepared to discuss the reading. This means that you have read, taken notes, and reflected on the subject matter before class, and have original insights and opinions to offer about the text at hand. Your presence and ongoing, active, engaged participation during in-class discussion is worth 20% of your grade. If you would like to know how you are doing on this front, please ask after class or during office hours at any point in the semester. If verbal discussions present a real challenge for you for an accessibility reason, please talk to me early: accommodations can be made to offer suitable alternatives if warranted.
2. **Reading Responses** (30% of your grade). Each student must turn in at least three reading responses (10 points each) throughout the semester. Reading responses are due at the start of class on the day that the reading is due. If you would like to retroactively write about a past reading, or turn in a late reading response (e.g. if you are absent from class) you may do so one time. If you would like to write four reading responses, you may do so, and I will drop your lowest grade. Reading responses respond to the assigned readings on a given day, summing up the main argument of the author(s), situating it in relation to other course materials, and providing your own assessment of its merits, flaws, and usefulness. On weeks when several readings are due on the same day, you may focus on one text, but be sure to situate it in relation to the others. What was the main theme in the assigned texts? What does the author of the text (use last names) want to communicate to the reader? What kinds of details, evidence, and arguments does the author present to make the point? What interested you the most about the reading? What was compelling? What was unconvincing? Reading responses should be 500-800 words. Please type using double-spacing, a standard 12-point-font, and one-inch margins. Reading responses may be turned in electronically. Wise students will turn in their reading responses early in the term.
3. **Midterm Assignment** (15% of your grade). The midterm assignment is similar in nature to the regular reading responses, but must be completed and turned in on the midterm date, and will be accompanied by a more developed set of directive questions corresponding to the readings in question (students will be asked to take a position in an on-going debate), and should be 800-1000 words in length. As with the Reading Responses, students should turn in an appropriately formatted document.

4. **Final Paper** (35% of your grade). This is a research paper on a topic of the student's choice, chosen in consultation with the instructor. The paper must present an original argument that pertains to the subject matter of the course, based on research (primarily library and media sources) conducted during the term. You must select your topic in time to submit a proposal and annotated bibliography. You should come to class on the day of the Peer Review with a hard copy of an outline or rough draft of your final paper. You will be graded on your own outline as well as the feedback that you provide to others. Because the peer review session requires your presence in person, please consider it an exam day and plan to be present in class to receive full credit. Final papers must include a title, bibliography, and properly cited sources throughout, and adhere to standard formatting (see above). The bibliography and any graphics should not count toward the page count. Undergraduate papers should be 12-15 pages in length. Graduate student papers should be 18-20 pages in length.

Components of the Final Paper:

Week Three: Discuss preliminary ideas in class

Week Nine: Prospectus (10%): a two-page proposal for your paper and an annotated bibliography including at least two sources from the course readings and at least 5 other major sources.

Week Ten: Peer review and Outline (5%): Review outlines in small groups during class and offer constructive feedback to peers

Exams: Final Paper (20%) due, last day of exam period

Absences and Late Papers

Papers are due by the start of class, and may be turned in electronically. If you are absent, you can submit a reading response for the missed day as late as the start of the next class, for a total possible score of 8/10. After 1 week past the date the readings were discussed, you will receive no more than half credit. Late reading responses (e.g. submitted at after class) will be marked down 2 points. Late midterm assignments and final papers will be marked down one letter grade step for each day that they are late. Attendance is expected as a baseline level of participation. It is common courtesy good professionalism to notify your instructor of planned absences in advance, or unplanned absences as soon as they become necessary. One absence during the course of the quarter will not affect your participation grade. More than three absences or repeated late arrivals affect the capacity of the group to work together in building a shared vocabulary and set of ideas, and this will be taken into account in grading.

Accommodations

Please assert requests for accommodations often and early. It is never too late to request accommodations - our bodies and circumstances are continuously changing. You will be asked to make use of formal accessibility services on campus; however, you will not be asked to disclose personal medical information. If there are ways in which the overall structure of the course and general classroom interactions could be adapted to facilitate full participation,

please do not hesitate to raise your ideas with the instructor: comments and suggestions about the format of readings, lectures, and class discussions are welcome.

Electronic Devices

While notetaking on electronic devices has become central to our way of working and thinking, using laptops and other devices suggests a Pandora's box of possible distractions. We will have both tech-open and tech-closed discussion segment each class. Therefore, it is suggested that each student bring a notebook and pencil or pen to take notes during tech-closed sessions. During tech-open discussions, please regulate your own use of online and social media, shopping, news-reading, chatting, and other digital adventures that distract from the task at hand and the special social contract of the classroom setting. If the communication is not important enough to warrant leaving the room, I suggest that it be left until a break or after class. Those who are distracted will lose points on participation.

Academic Dishonesty

Do not plagiarize. Your integrity is not worth risking. When you draw on the ideas, research, or work of others in your own writing, use standard citation styles to appropriately credit that work. When collaborating, give proper credit to all collaborators. Do not represent others' work as your own, or turn your own work in multiple courses without explicit advance permission from both instructors. Please read the [Writing Center's guidelines](#), and make use of the Writing Center resources. Do not hesitate to ask me about citations, collaboration, or other concerns. Read the full university policy [here](#). Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be referred to the Yale College Executive Committee for adjudication.

Schedule

Friday, September 1

Week One: Course Introduction

In Class: Introductions, Review Syllabus, Course Goals, Read Lomasko Excerpts
Watch: Excerpts from *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer*

Monday, September 4 – no class, Labor Day

Monday, September 11

Week Two: Crisis and Daily Life

Reading Due:

Shevchenko, Olga. 2009. *Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

*Stella, Francesca. 2013. "Queer Space, Pride, and Shame in Moscow." *Slavic Review* 72 (3): 458–80.

Monday, September 18

Week Three: Queering Soviet Life

Reading Due:

Excerpts

(pp20-22; Chapter 3; Chapter 4)

in Essig, Laurie. 1999. *Queer in Russia: A Story of Sex, Self, and the Other*. Durham: Duke University Press.

pp3-39 (Prologue, Chs 1-3)

in Tuller, David. 1997. *Cracks in the Iron Closet: Travels in Gay & Lesbian Russia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Supplemental: *Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. 1993. "Epistemology of the Closet." *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*.

Monday, September 25

Week Four: Queering Post-Soviet Gender and Sexuality

Reading Due:

*Baer, Brian James. 2002. "Russian Gays/Western Gaze: Mapping (Homo) Sexual Desire in Post-Soviet Russia." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8 (4): 499–521.

*Chapter 1 in Borenstein, Eliot. 2008. *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Culture and Society after Socialism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

*Berlant, Lauren, and Michael Warner. 1995. "Guest Column: What Does Queer Theory Teach Us about X?" *PMLA* 110 (3): 343–49.

*Stella, Francesca. 2010. "The Language of Intersectionality: Researching 'Lesbian' Identity in Urban Russia." In *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality*, 212–34. Springer.

Monday, October 2

Week Five: What about Feminism(s)?

Reading Due:

*Cerwonka, Allaine. 2008. "Traveling Feminist Thought: Difference and Transculturation in Central and Eastern European Feminism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33 (4): 809–32.

*Funk, Nanette. 2004. "Feminist Critiques of Liberalism: Can They Travel East? Their Relevance in Eastern and Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union." *Signs* 29 (3): 695–726.

*Gal, Susan. 2005. "Language Ideologies Compared: Metaphors of Public/Private." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15 (1): 23–37.

*Hement, Julie. 2004. "The Riddle of the Third Sector: Civil Society, International Aid, and NGOs in Russia - *Anthropological Quarterly* 77:2." *Anthropological Quarterly*.

Monday, October 9

Week Six: Masculinities

In Class: Discuss Midterm Assignment and Detailed Prompt

Reading Due:

- *Ashwin, Sarah, and Tatyana Lytkina. 2004. "Men in Crisis in Russia: The Role of Domestic Marginalization." *Gender & Society* 18 (2): 189–206.
- Excerpts from* *Parsons, Michelle A. 2014. *Dying Unneeded: The Cultural Context of the Russian Mortality Crisis*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
- *Zdravomyslova, Elena, and Anna Temkina. 2012. "The Crisis of Masculinity in Late Soviet Discourse." *Russian Studies in History* 51 (2): 13–34.

Supplemental:

Additional Chapters from Borenstein's *Overkill* (students' choice – use library e-book)

Monday, October 16

Week Seven: Between Critique and Outrage

Midterm Assignment Due:

Read the following materials and craft a short position paper in response. Follow instructions in the detailed prompt to be handed out in class during week six.

- *Fierstein, Harvey. 201. "Russia's Anti-Gay Crackdown." *The New York Times*. Accessed July 13.
- *Gessen, Masha. 2013. "As a Gay Parent I Must Flee Russia or Lose My Children." *The Guardian*, August 11.
- *Kondakov, Alexander. 2014. "The Silenced Citizens of Russia: Exclusion of Non-Heterosexual Subjects From Rights-Based Citizenship." *Social & Legal Studies* 23 (2): 151–74.
- *Rahman, Momin. 2014. "Queer Rights and the Triangulation of Western Exceptionalism." *Journal of Human Rights* 13 (3): 274–89.
- *Rivkin-Fish, Michele, and Cassandra Hartblay. 2014. "When Global LGBTQ Advocacy Became Entangled with New Cold War Sentiment: A Call for Examining Russian Queer Experience." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21 (1): 95–111.
- *Wilkinson, Cai. 2014. "Putting 'Traditional Values' Into Practice: The Rise and Contestation of Anti-Homopropaganda Laws in Russia." *Journal of Human Rights* 13 (3): 363–79.

Monday, October 23 (First day back from October Recess)

Week Eight: Love and Desire

Reading Due:

- *Conclusion, "Someone Like Putin," in Borenstein, Eliot. 2008. *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Culture and Society after Socialism. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [cont. →]

- *Hartblay, Cassandra. 2011. "Liminality in Love: Institutionalized Practice in Alina Rudnitskaya's Civil Status." *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 29 (2).
- *Lemon, Alaina. 2008. "Hermeneutic Algebra: Solving for Love, Time/Space, and Value in Putin-Era Personal Ads." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 18 (2): 236–67.
- *Wilson, Jennifer. 2016. "The Revolution Will Not Be Consummated: The Politics of Tolstoyan Chastity in the West." *Slavic and East Europe Journal* 60 (3): 494–511.

Supplemental:

- * Selected works of Alexandra Kollontai. Recommendations:
1921. "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle."
1920. "Communism and the Family."
1946. "The Soviet Woman – A Full and Equal Citizen of her Country"
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/>

Monday, October 30

Week Nine: Gender in Public and Private

In Class: Discuss Term Paper Assignment and Detailed Prompt

Reading Due:

- *Oushakine, Serguei Alex. 2006. "The Politics of Pity: Domesticating Loss in a Russian Province." *American Anthropologist* 108 (2): 297–311.
- *Karimova, Liliya. 2014. "'Islam as a Pillar': Muslim Tatar Women's Narratives on Tatars' Identity and the Future." *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia* 53 (2): 8–32.
- *Kayiatos, Anastasia. 2014. "Pantomimes of Power and Race: Can the Socialist Subaltern Speak?" *Ulbandus Review* 16: 24–44.
- *Stella, Francesca. 2008. "Homophobia Begins at Home: Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Experiences of the Parental Household in Urban Russia." *Kul'tura* 2: 12–17.

Supplemental:

Excerpts from *Zavisca, Jane R. 2012. *Housing the New Russia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Monday, November 6

Week Ten: Gender after Kinship

(Dr. Hartblay away at ASEEES Conference, Nov 9-12)

Reading Due:

- *Schneider, David Murray. 1984. *A Critique of the Study of Kinship*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Utrata, Jennifer. 2015. *Women without Men: Single Mothers and Family Change in the New Russia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Monday, November 13

Week Eleven: Gender, Reproduction, and Professionalism

Readings Due:

Rivkin-Fish, Michele. 2005. *Women's Health in Post-Soviet Russia: The Politics of Intervention*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Monday, November 20 – no class, Thanksgiving

Monday, November 27

Week Twelve: Transnational postsocialisms

(Dr. Hartblay away at American Anthropological Association Conference, Nov 29-2)

Readings Due:

*Suchland, Jennifer. 2011. "Is Postsocialism Transnational?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (4): 837–62.

*Introduction in Fraser, Nancy. 1997. *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York: Routledge.

*Chari, Sharad, and Katherine Verdery. 2009. "Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (01): 6–34.

*Dirlik, Arif. 1994. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20 (2): 328–56.

Monday, December 4

Week Thirteen: Transfeminisms and other new formations - A New (Queerer) Cold War?

Readings Due:

*Barchunova, Tatiana, and Oksana Parfenova. 2010. "Shift-F2: The Internet, Mass Media, and Female-to-Female Intimate Relations in Krasnoyarsk and Novosibirsk." *Laboratorium*, no. 3.

Kirey-Sitnikova, Yana. 2016. "The Emergence of Transfeminism in Russia Opposition from Cisnormative Feminists and Trans People." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3 (1–2): 165–74.

*Kayiatos, Anastasia. 2012. "Shock and Alla: Capitalist Cures for Socialist Perversities at the End of the Twentieth Century." *Lambda Nordica* 4: 33–64.

*Wiedlack, M. Katharina. 2016. "Seeing 'Red' (*Orange Is The New Black*): Russian Women, US Homonationalism, and New Cold War Cultures." *Gender, Equal Opportunities, Research/Gender, Rovne, Prilezitosti, Vyzkum* 17 (1).

Monday, December 11, no class, Reading Period Office hours by appointment only

Week of Monday, December 18: Exam Week

No final exam meeting. Final Paper due Wednesday, December 20th at 3pm.