GSFS 316: Queering Sexuality Education  
Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am-12:15pm  Noland 119

Instructor: Dr. Chris Barcelos  
Office: Sterling 3414  
Contact: Barcelos@wisc.edu  
Office hours: Tues/Wed 2:30-3:30pm

“The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom” (bell hooks in Teaching to Transgress, 1994, p. 207).

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Sexuality and sexual health education occurs through a number of sites, including but not limited to K-12 schools, colleges and universities, community-based organizations, activist groups, clinical settings, and state institutions (group homes, prisons, etc.). Despite a shift away from federal funding of “abstinence only until marriage” toward so-called “evidence-based comprehensive” content and instruction, scholars illustrate how sex education remains deeply heteronormative, disregards desire and pleasure, constructs sex and risky and dangerous, reproduces gendered and racist ideologies, and neglects the bodies and experiences of trans and gender-nonconforming people. This course situates sexual health education in historical and contemporary context by tracing its discursive production and envisioning a queering of both content and practice. What might it mean to queer sex education and what would a queer sex education look like? In addition to utilizing theoretical interventions from critical education studies, queer theory, and trans/gender studies, we will engage in action-based course projects such as policy analysis or curricula design and implementation.

**TEACHING APPROACH**

There are a number of things about my approach to teaching and learning that you should know in order to have the best possible experience in this course. I use an engaged approach to teaching and learning that is interactive, emphasizes mutual participation and responsibility, and values each individual’s contribution to the learning process.

What this means is that the course expects you to be an active learner, relate what you learn to your own life, and engage in dialogue with both the instructor and other students on the topics we cover. Especially in the study of the social world, you are already an “expert” on a lot of the
topics we cover in this course. In my courses there are no wrong opinions, but there may assumptions that need challenging. We will discuss some controversial issues in this course, and it is very important to respect other people and “agree to disagree.” While all points of view are respected in my classroom, derogatory or hateful language and statements are never permitted so that the classroom can be the safest space possible for everyone to learn. Likewise, I aim to cultivate mutual respect and care for each other, especially when we disagree.

Because not everyone learns in the same ways, we will use a lot of different learning strategies in this course, including lectures, films, small and large group discussion, experiential exercises, free-writing, etc. If you anticipated sitting through lectures and then taking a multiple-choice exam, this probably isn’t the best class for you.

Statement on names and pronouns
There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name you prefer and gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity (even if they are different in this class than outside of it). Please advise me of your name’s proper pronunciation, and any name or pronouns not reflected by the record in your UW account early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Statement on self- and community-care related to course content
We will cover some intellectually and emotionally challenging topics in this class, including explicit textual and visual representations of sexuality. I am committed to making my courses academically rigorous while maintaining an ethic of self- and community-care related to intense content. I aim to help deepen your capacity for both personal/emotional engagement and nuanced political and academic engagement with these topics. I make an effort to give a heads up about potentially intense content, but it is not possible for me to anticipate the potential needs of all students. If you have concerns about your ability to participate in a particular course topic, please notify me at least two weeks in advance so that we can discuss possible arrangements. However, please honestly assess your readiness to participate in this course and its content this semester. Your enrollment in this course indicates that you have read this syllabus, including this statement, and agree to participate in the course in a thoughtful and respectful manner.
There is one book to purchase, available at A Room of One’s Own, 315 W. Gorham St.:

- Jessica Fields, *Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality*

All other readings are available as PDF downloads on our Canvas course website.

*You should complete the readings by the date listed on the calendar below. This should go without saying, but is worth repeating that reading is not optional.* Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Preparing for class will *definitely* help your participation grade. If you have questions about how to best approach your task of reading and note-taking in order to prepare for class, please come talk to me.

### Assignments

- All assignments (except for discussions) must be submitted via Canvas at 12pm on the day they are due.
- If you are absent on the day a paper is due, you are still responsible for submitting the assignment on Canvas.
- Grading rubrics for all assignments are attached to the assignment on Canvas.
- Late assignments are penalized 10% of the grade for each day they are late; no assignments are accepted more than one week after the due date.
- All papers must use Times New Roman font, 12 point, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, with all references cited using MLA or APA citation style.

**Online forum participation** (5 points each) **DUE by 11:59 pm the day before class**

The purpose of an online forum is to get the conversation going before the class session and determine how to best structure our in-class time. You are responsible for posting in 2 different weeks of discussion on Canvas. Posts should be approximately 200 words and can take any number of forms: a question about the reading, comparing the material to content from a different course, connecting the material to a current event, relating a personal story that illustrates the material—I encourage you to be creative! Your post must include at least 2 discussion questions that can be used in class that day. Discussion questions should start with words like “how” and “why.”

These posts should be spread throughout the semester; if I find that all students are saving their posts for the last few weeks of class we may have to revisit this structure. You will not receive extra credit for more than your required posts, but you are encouraged to do so if you find it helps you to better prepare for class.
The Sex Ed (I Wish) I Had (10 points, pass/fail) DUE: 9/14

2 pages max: Take some time to reflect on your previous experiences with sexuality education (broadly conceived) and address the following:

- When do you first remembering learning about sex and sexuality?
- Describe your experiences with school-based sex education. What topics did you learn about and how were they taught to you?
- Where else do recall learning about sex and sexuality as a young person? As an adult?
- What was missing from your sexuality education? In other words, what do you wish you learned about, and how?

Visual/textual analysis of sex education materials (20 points)

DRAFT ANALYSIS DUE: 10/19, WEBSITE REVISIONS DUE: 11/30

This assignment requires to you locate and analyze a sexuality education material. We will be creating a website archive of your material using the open-source content management system OMEKA. Materials can be a variety of formats, including images, texts, and videos. You cannot use a website as your material, but you may download something from a website (eg: a PDF of a material). Your material can be historical or contemporary. Materials might include but are not limited to safer sex instruction but should fall under the broad rubric of “sexuality education.” You will analyze the material’s imagery and content based on topics we are working with in class, such as how the material depicts the body, how it uses fear, frames health in a positive or negative way, attempts to provide information or modify behaviors, uses or fails to use pleasure, and/or accounts for race, class, gender, disability, etc. You will receive additional instruction and training on how to find, analyze, and catalog these materials. You will be graded on the strength of your analysis, proper entering of the material into OMEKA, and the quality of your assembled exhibit.

Final Project (25 points project; 5 points presentation) DUE: 12/18

You have a wide variety of options for your final project in this course. You will work in groups of 2-5 in order to practice collaborative pedagogies. The form is open, but your final project should be a hands-on demonstration of the theories, topics, and methods covered in the course. You may select from the following or propose an alternate project that best your learning and career preparation needs:

- Design a sexuality education curriculum on particular topic(s) for a particular audience (detailed outline and minimum 2 detailed lesson plans w/ activities)
- Revise an existing curriculum
- Develop and implement a health education campaign
- Create a zine/graphic novel
- Create a short film

You will submit a 1-page proposal to me outlining the topic and format of your final project (DUE 11/16). I will give you feedback on the feasibility of your project and expectations for the
scope (ie: what you actually turn in at the end of the semester). *Failure to submit the proposal will result in a 15% reduction from the final project grade.*

During the last week of the semester students will informally present their projects in class (ie: you will spend about 5 minutes showing us your campaign or facilitating an educational activity).

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**CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDENCE**

**Communicating with me**

Please allow 24-48 for an email response. If it’s been longer than that, a polite reminder is OK. I generally do not answer email past 6pm on weekdays and not at all on weekends. This should go without saying but I do it anyways: Emailing an instructor is not the same as texting a friend. I expect you to write professional emails to me. This includes an informative subject line (not just “question” or “GWS 449,” addressing the email to me, signing your name, and being polite even if you are upset.

I encourage you to visit my office hours if you need help or just want to chat. If you want to discuss a grade, you must come to office hours; I do not discuss grades over email or before and after class.

**Practicing Techno-mindfulness**

Many professors at UW and elsewhere prohibit students from using laptops in the classroom. I *do* allow laptops/tablets in the classroom, as I recognize them as tools that can help you learn. You are welcome to use your computer in class in order to take notes or view the readings. You are *not allowed* to use technology in the classroom to absentmindedly surf the web, check email, or use social media. In other words, be present to the class and do not engage in multi-tasking. It is up to you to assess your ability to use your computer in the classroom and be mindful about it.

This policy is open to revision at any time during the semester. Please be mindful that if one person abuses the policy, it affects all of us. Cell phone use is *not allowed* in the classroom for any reason, expect for sincere emergencies.

If you are caught surfing the web or checking your phone, you will be marked absent for that day, no exceptions.

**Participation and Attendance**

You will be graded on both attendance and your actual participation in our class discussions—in order to get the most out of this course you need to show up *and* participate in the class discussions/activities.
10% of your participation grade will be determined by me and 10% will be determined by your peers. We will have regular in-class small group discussion (with rotating group members). After each member rotation (every 5 weeks) you will submit an anonymous, online assessment of each group member’s participation.

You may miss 2 course meetings without an effect on the attendance portion of your grade, no questions asked, and you don’t need to notify me. Religious observations and UW athletics participation do not count toward your 2 absences, but please let know in advance. If you have other extenuating circumstances that prevent you coming to class, please contact me IN ADVANCE so that we can work together to find a possible solution. Emailing me after an absence does not constitute approval for that absence. You are responsible for checking with other students about what you may have missed in class. After 4 absences, you will need to schedule a meeting with me in order to stay in the course. After 6 absences, you will receive an F in the course, no exceptions.

Policy on missing class to attend political actions: As a scholar-activist, I support the learning opportunities that take place through social and political engagement. If you wish to receive an “excused” absence for the purposes of attending a protest, demonstration or similar activity (that is, not counting toward your 2 no questions asked absences) you must 1) notify me prior to the absence, and 2) submit a 1-page description and reflection of the activity to me via email by the next class meeting. I reserve the right to limit the number of times you use this excused absence opportunity.

I shut the classroom door about 10 minutes past the scheduled start of class; if you enter class after the door is shut, you are considered absent for that day.

I structure our class meetings so that everyone has a chance to participate in ways that they feel most comfortable. We will have large and small group discussions that offer you opportunities to share your thoughts and ask questions. You will be graded on your frequency of participation, quality of participation, and respect of our discussion ground rules. Classroom guidelines will be developed as a group in the beginning of the semester and will include the following:

• Show up on time and expect to stay for the whole class
• Absolutely NO texting, cell phone use, or superfluous internet surfing.
• Respect others/agree to disagree
• Understand that there are no wrong opinions, but you may have assumptions that need challenging
G
RADING

Final letter grades are as follows:
A  93-100
AB 88-92
B  83-87
BC 78-82
C  70-77
D  60-69
F  below 60

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<th>% of final grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>In-class attendance and participation</td>
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<td>The Sex Ed (I Wish) I Had</td>
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A CADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

It is important to understand that academic dishonesty is not only harmful to yourself; it is also harmful to your peers and colleagues at UW as we come together as a community of learners. While there is a zero-tolerance policy of academic dishonesty in this course, we will work together to clear up misunderstandings about appropriate use of sources, appropriate citation and documentation, and the uses of intellectual property.

A CCOMODATION POLICY

I am committed to making sure my courses are accessible to students with a range of disability accommodations and learning needs. If you have a McBurney VISA, please make it available to me by the end of week 2 of class. If you do not have a McBurney VISA but there are conditions or life circumstances that interfere with your ability to fulfill your responsibilities for this course, I encourage you to meet with me ASAP to discuss how best to accommodate you. In some cases, I may recommend that you consult with the McBurney Disability Resource Center: https://mcburney.wisc.edu/.
### Please note:
This syllabus is a “living document” in the sense that course readings and assignments may change according to the needs of student learning.

### PART 1: ORIENTING DEBATES

#### Week 1: Introduction to course

**Thurs. 9/7**
- Read the syllabus. No really, read it.
- Review OMEKA project sites

#### Week 2: A very brief history of sex education

**Tues. 9/12**
- Guttmacher Fact Sheet: Sex and HIV education
- Guttmacher Fact Sheet: American Teens Sources of Sex Education
- SEICUS 2016 Sex Ed State Legislative Year-End Report
- Canvas site links (click/explore/read/add as many as you can)

**Thurs. 9/14**
- Lord, A., “In bed with the fed”

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: The Sex Ed (I Wish) I Had**

#### Week 3: Sex education and social inequalities

**Tues. 9/19**
- Fields, J., *Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality*, ch. 1-3

**Thurs. 9/21**
- Fields, J., *Risky Lessons*, ch. 3-4

#### Week 4: What’s wrong with sex ed?

**Tues. 9/26**
- Fine, M. and McClelland, S., “Sexuality Education and Desire: Still Missing After All These Years”

**Thurs. 9/28**
- Elliott, S. “‘Who’s to blame?’ Constructing the responsible sexual agent in neoliberal sex education”
- Butler-Wall, “Viral transmissions: Safer sex videos, disability, and queer politics”
## Part 2: A METHODOLOGICAL INTERLUDE

### Week 5: Visual Analysis

**Tues. 10/3**
- Rose, G., “Visual Methodologies,” ch. 1  
  *In-class session on OMEKA*

**Thurs. 10/5**
- Rose, G., “Visual Methodologies,” ch. 2

## Week 6: Pedagogy

**Tues. 10/10**
- hooks., b., “Engaged Pedagogy”
- hooks, b., “Eros, Eroticism, and the Pedagogical Process”
- Shlasko, D., “Queer (v.) Pedagogy”

**Thurs. 10/12**

*ASSIGNMENT DUE: Peer grading #1*

## Part 3: THE POLITICS OF DOING IT

### Week 7: Is sex education racist?

**Tues. 10/17**
- Barcelos, C., “It’s their culture’: Youth sexual health promotion as a gendered racial project”
- Garcia, L., “Now why do you want to know about that? Heteronormativity, sexism, and racism in the sexual (mis)education of Latina youth”

**Thurs. 10/19**
- Froyum, C., “Making 'good girls': sexual agency in the sexuality education of low-income black girls”

*ASSIGNMENT DUE: Visual/textual analysis draft*

### Week 8: Pleasure and desire

**Tues. 10/24**
- Knerr, W. & Philpott, A., “Everything you wanted to know about pleasurable safer sex but were afraid to ask.”
- Allen, A., “Pleasure’s perils? Critically reflecting on pleasure’s inclusion in sexuality education”

**Thurs. 10/26**
- Hartley, N., “Porn: An Effective Vehicle for Sexual Role Modeling and Education”
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<th>Week 9: Dis/ability and sexuality education</th>
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<th>Week 10: The politics of AIDS and the birth of queer sex ed</th>
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<td>Tues. 11/7</td>
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**ASSIGNMENT DUE: Peer grading #2**

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<th>Week 11: Transgender bodies and the challenge of inclusivity</th>
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| Thurs. 11/16 | NO CLASS - Chris is at National Women’s Studies Association annual meeting |
|             | **ASSIGNMENT DUE: Final project proposal** |

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<th>Week 12: Transgender bodies and the challenge of inclusivity</th>
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<td><strong>Week 13: Queering risk</strong></td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT DUE: all final revisions in OMEKA</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14: Public health/public sex</strong></td>
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<td>Tues. 12/5</td>
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<td>Thurs. 12/7</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15: Group presentations</strong></td>
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<td>ASSIGNMENT DUE: Peer grading #3</td>
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<td><strong>FINALS WEEK</strong></td>
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11