

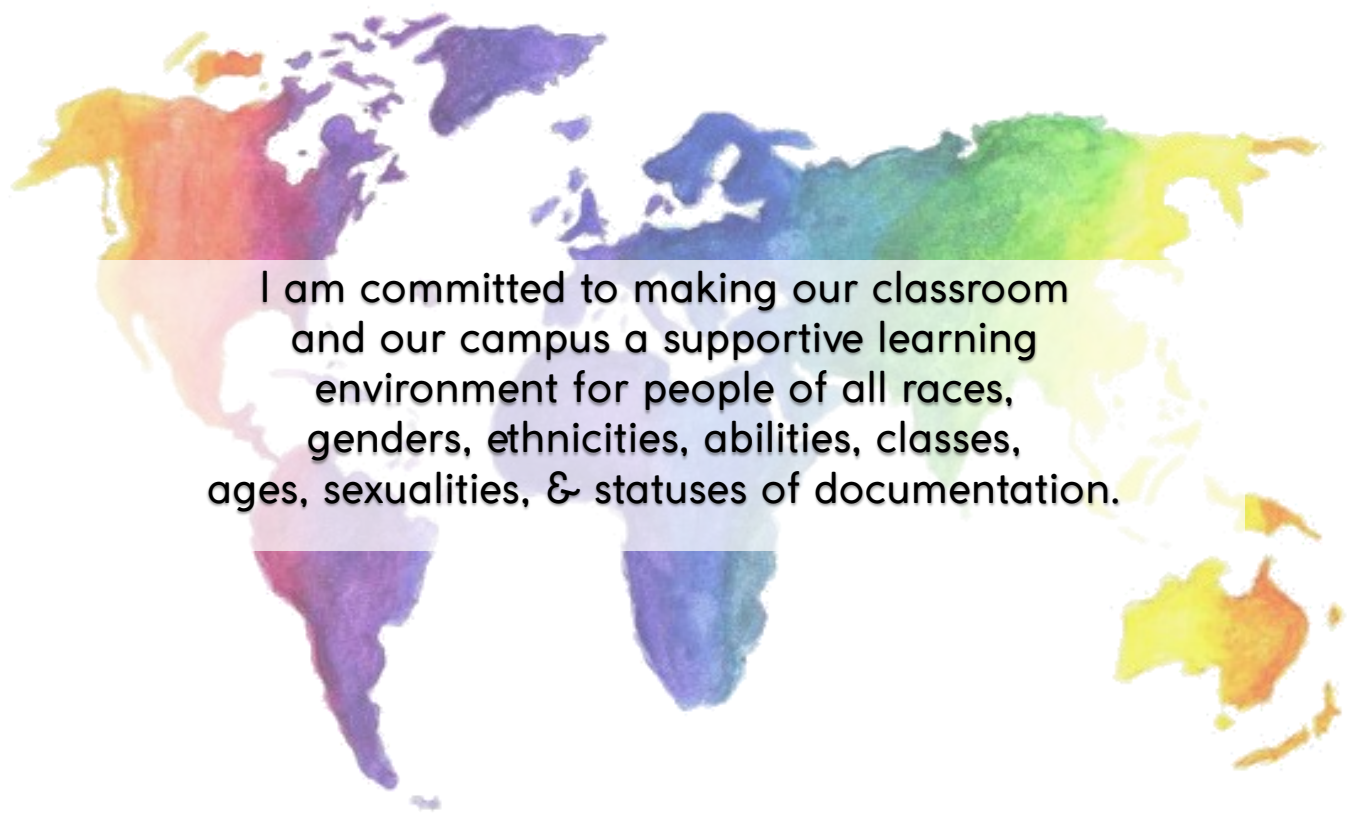


Religion and Sexuality

PHIL 1271 | #NUTRESEX | FALL 2018

The relationship between religion and sexuality is complex, seemingly contradictory, often tense, and full of possibility. This class will consider the richness of sexual difference in the context of contemporary global religions, especially as it relates to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Discussion topics include contraception, polygyny, abuse, homonationalism, and religiously motivated fear—even hatred—of queerness and queer people.

Given the nature and content of this course, students will read about, talk about and write about religious and sexual identities, bodies, desires, and practices. If such discussions make you uncomfortable, you should not be in this class. No student will be required to reveal their own religious or sexual identities, orientation, desires, or practices, but some students might choose to do so. If such revelations will make you uncomfortable, or if you are unable to engage the fact of religious and sexual diversity in a respectful, mature manner, you should not be in this class.



I am committed to making our classroom and our campus a supportive learning environment for people of all races, genders, ethnicities, abilities, classes, ages, sexualities, & statuses of documentation.

This is an intermediate course. I don't expect you to know anything about the traditions we're discussing or about religious studies as a discipline. I do assume a basic familiarity with humanities scholarship. If you're unfamiliar with humanities scholarship—particularly reading and analyzing scholarly articles or writing scholarly essays using standard humanities styles—you might find some course assignments challenging. Please be sure to read directions closely and seek additional assistance as needed well in advance of deadlines.

Regardless of your academic background, **treat every student and every concept you encounter with scholarly respect.** Challenge your assumptions and your position(s) of privilege. Speak from your own best understandings of the issues. As scholars of religion, **it is not our job to evaluate the truth or validity of any tradition.** We use the evidence we have to position that tradition's beliefs, practices, teachings, and products in the broader context of global religions.

EXPECTATIONS

CLASS FORMAT

Each class will center on discussion of the assigned texts. Some will include brief lectures, media analysis, or other elements. None of these work unless you **attend class regularly and read the assignments carefully**. Please come to class ready to analyze and respond to the readings, as well as to the contributions of your fellow students. **Always bring the readings to class with you**. Remember: engagement includes active listening!

If you require accommodations for in-class discussions or activities, have emergency medical information, or need special arrangements during a building evacuation, **please let me know as soon as possible**. Be sure to **register with the DRC** and inform me of your needs during the first week of classes.

ACCESSIBILITY

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M PARTICIPATING?

Attendance isn't enough. To succeed in this class, you must fully engage in activities and discussions. These criteria determine your participation grade. **In short: speak up!**

EXCELLENT

You're present, prepared, & engaged. You reference readings, lectures, and class discussions. You encourage other students' comments & questions in a productive and respectful manner.

GOOD

You're present, prepared, and offer thoughtful questions & comments that show your preparation for discussion and attention to readings and lectures.

ADEQUATE

You're present and prepared, but limit your contributions to several surface-level observations or clarifying questions about lectures or readings.

MINIMAL

You usually make a single comment during discussions in response to another student's observations or insights. ("I agree with them.")

KNOW YOUR IX

Sex and gender-based violence and harassment are Civil Rights offenses. Offenders are subject to the same kinds of penalties applied to offenses against other protected categories (such race, national origin, etc.).

Survivors are entitled to confidential support.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, Northeastern wants to help.

Here are our resources.

TECHNOLOGY

Unless you need them for learning accessibility, only use your **laptops and other devices in the classroom for specified class activities**. You'll also need to know how to use Twitter, to create a PDF document, & submit it via Blackboard in a timely manner. (We'll discuss these in class.) Please note: **I only accept electronic submissions in PDF format, and only via Blackboard.** I will not accept assignments as *.doc or *.docx files or assignments sent to my email address.



You will be graded on **HOW** you think—not **WHAT** you think—in this class. In other words, **you will not be graded on your beliefs, opinions, or the positions you advance.** I evaluate how well you articulate your thoughts and positions, how closely you read the assigned texts, and how much your ability to think critically and synthetically about course themes develops throughout the semester.

GRADING

Attendance:	10%
Participation:	10%
Media Analyses:	20%
Reading Notes	30%
Harkness Discussions:	30%

RUBRIC

ASSIGNMENTS

READING NOTES

Learning to read, understand, and think critically about challenging material is a key skill for liberal arts scholarship.

This assignment will help you become a more careful reader of these texts. Submit reading notes for each text in bold on the class schedule. Reading notes are due by midnight before the class meets. Please review the assignment sheet, and rubric for further instructions.

HARKNESS DISCUSSIONS

These are rigorous, student-led classroom discussions. Three times this semester, students will spend the class period responding to a prompt provided in advance. Students will also receive further research questions and a list of required readings. I will record the conversation but participate only to pause for check-ins. All participants earn a single grade for this discussion. You must attend to receive credit for this assignment. Review the assignment sheet for more info.

MEDIA ANALYSES

Three times this semester, we'll be watching documentaries as part of our class discussions. You'll livetweet our viewings and submit 750-1000 word analyses of the films, as well as an analysis of *Handmaid's Tale*. Do they correspond with our class readings and discussions? About broader concerns in the study of religion and sexuality? Why/not? Why do these correspondences matter? Use examples from assigned course readings to support your argument. Review the assignment sheet for more info.



CHEATING

Cheating = failing.

Please don't.

Complete this **plagiarism tutorial** by 12 September.

Check out the "What is Plagiarism?" handout on Blackboard or Northeastern's **Academic Integrity Policy** for more info. "I didn't know" is not an excuse. Go know.



"IT REALLY WAS A MATTER BETWEEN ME AND GOD. I WOULD HAVE TO LIVE THE LIFE HE HAD MADE ME TO LIVE."
~ JAMES BALDWIN

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
W 5 September	Introductions	
F 7 September	Religion & sexuality	Orsi, "Snakes Alive" ["real" religion] Rubin, "Thinking Sex," ["charmed circle"] Goodwin, "Thinking Sex and American Religions"
COMPLICATING RELIGION AND SEXUALITY		
W 12 September	Queer & religious	Baldwin, "Go the Way Your Blood Beats" Khan, "How I Came Out, Converted to Islam, & Found My True Self" Kessler, "Why It's Still Frightening to Be Queer & Jewish in 2018"
F 14 September	Religious & sexual	De Rogatis, from <i>Saving Sex</i> Warner, "Tongues Untied" Zakaria, "Sex and the Muslim Feminist"
W 19 September	Plural marriage	Bennion, "Many Faces of Polygamy" Miles, "What's Love Got to Do with It?" Goodwin, "This Is Not about Religion: Raiding Zion to Save It"
F 21 September	Islamic polygyny	Majeed, from <i>Polygyny</i> New Books, interview with Debra Majeed (podcast)
W 26 September	Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence	Wilcox, from <i>Queer Nuns</i> Religion Dispatches, interview with Melissa Wilcox
F 28 September	Film / Harkness prep	<i>Sons of Perdition</i> (in class)
W 3 October	Harkness discussion	
RELIGION, SEX, AND VIOLENCE		
F 5 October	Conversion "therapy"	Gerber, from <i>Seeking the Straight and Narrow</i> Vance, "Converging on the Heterosexual Dyad"
W 10 October	Ritual Abuse	"Annette," from <i>The Courage to Heal</i> Goodwin, "Play Me Backwards" Goodwin, "They Couldn't Take My Soul"
F 12 October	Islam and Sexual Violence	Zohair, "The Religion of My Rape" Rashid, "#RamadanToo" Bucar, "Giving a Voice to Muslims in the #MeToo Movement" Ali, "The Truth about Islam and Sex Slavery History"

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
RELIGION, SEX, AND VIOLENCE (continued)		
W 17 October	Roman Catholic Sex Abuse (1)	Orsi , from <i>History and Presence</i> Lockwood, from <i>Priestdaddy</i> Goodstein and Otterman, "Catholic Priests Abused 1000 Children"
F 19 October	Roman Catholic Sex Abuse (2)	Petro , " Beyond Accountability " Brintnall, "The Curious Case of Paul Richard Shanley" Holscher, "Colonialism and the Crisis inside the Crisis"
W 24 October	Film / Harkness prep	<i>Deliver Us from Evil</i>
F 26 October	Harkness discussion	
W 31 October	No Class	
RELIGION, SEX, AND NATION		
F 2 November	Sex v. Religious Freedom	<i>Burwell v. Hobby Lobby</i> (Ginsburg, dissenting) Goodwin , " Costs of Corporate Christian Conscience " Sullivan, "Is Masterpiece Cakeshop a Church?"
W 7 November	Homonationalism & Pinkwashing	Schulman , from <i>Israel, Palestine, and the Queer International</i> Segev, "Israel Makes the Hormones I Need" Michaelson, "Pinkwashing Israel"
F 9 November	Gendering Iran	Najmabadi , from <i>Professing Selves</i> Bucar and Shirazi, "The 'Invention' of Lesbian Acts in Iran" Hamedani, "Pushed to Change Their Gender"
W 14 November	Evangelizing Uganda	DRAM, Uganda country report (skim) Chellew-Hodge, "Ugandan Gay Rights Activist Murdered" Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa" Montgomery , " Loving Uganda to Death " Montgomery, "Uganda Anti-gay Fallout" Watkins, "Why Histories of African Homosexualities Matter"
F 16 November	No Class	
W 21 November		
F 23 November		

CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
RELIGION, SEX, AND NATION (continued)		
W 28 November	Book discussion	Atwood, <i>Handmaid's Tale</i>
F 30 November	Film / Harkness prep	<i>God Loves Uganda</i>
W 5 December	Harkness discussion	



Northeastern hosts a number of events that are pertinent to the study of religion and sexuality. For extra credit, attend one or more of these events this semester. I encourage you to contact the Women and Gender Studies Department in particular to stay abreast of their events. For each event you attend, submit an event report that summarizes the discussion/content and relates it to our class conversations and assigned readings. Your event report should directly reference class sources. Refer to the assignment sheet for further instructions. One event = 1 extra point toward your final grade, up to three events this semester.

EXTRA CREDIT

GET STARTED

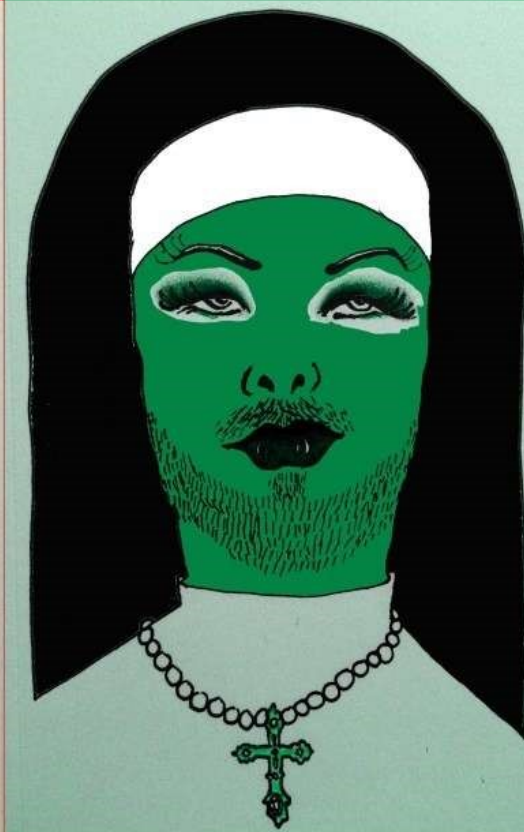
If you intend to remain in this class, please be sure to complete the **SYLLABUS QUIZ** and the **PLAGIARISM TUTORIAL** by **Wednesday, 12 September**. Don't forget to submit your passing plagiarism quiz certificate via Blackboard!

NOTA BENE

This syllabus is a blueprint, not a contract. We live in interesting times, and many of our assumptions about religion & sexuality are being challenged daily. I might shift assignments to reflect those challenges. But I will not increase the number of assignments.

IMPORTANT DATES

Quizzes: 12 September
Film 1: 28 September
Harkness 1: 3 October
Film 2: 24 October
Harkness 2: 26 October
Atwood Discussion: 28 November
Film 3: 30 November
Harkness 3: 5 December



REQUIRED TEXTS

Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*

All other readings will be available online, either via direct link on the syllabus or via Blackboard. Readings (and reading notes) are due before class on the day they are listed on the syllabus.

CLASS INFO

(PHIL1271) Religion & Sexuality

Robinson Hall 409

WF 11:45am–1:25pm

Note on Attendance:

you are permitted two absences (no excuses necessary).

If you're having a hard time making it to class,

please come see me.

INSTRUCTOR INFO

Prof. Megan Goodwin

Holmes Hall 368

me.goodwin@northeastern.edu

@mpgphd

Office hours: W 10–11 am or by appointment