

HistSci 138. Sex, Gender, and Evolution

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Course Description:

Evolutionary theories of sex and gender and central controversies in human evolutionary biology from Darwin to the present. Topics include debates over the theory of sexual selection and the evolutionary basis of monogamy, sexual preference, physical attraction, rape, maternal instinct, and sex differences in cognition. Readings: primary texts and historical, philosophical, and feminist analyses.

Texts:

Required texts (marked [T] on the syllabus) are available for purchase at the Harvard Coop. Additional required readings (marked [E] on the syllabus) are available via the course website.

1. Londa Schiebinger. *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.
2. Cynthia Russett. *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.
3. Diane Paul. *Controlling Human Heredity, 1865 to the Present*. Amherst, N.Y.: Humanities Books, 1995.
4. Martha McCaughey. *The Caveman Mystique*. N.Y.: Routledge, 2008.
5. Joan Roughgarden. *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Course Requirements:

This course requires 100-200 pages of reading/week, regular attendance, participation in a weekly discussion section, 3 entries on the class blog, and completion of three 5-7 pp. analytical papers or multimedia essays. There will be five essay assignments, corresponding to the units of the course. Pick the three assignments that most interest you and turn them in by the required dates. *Students taking the class for graduate credit should see the professor for graduate student requirements.*

Grading:

Attendance, participation, and preparation	20%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Essay 3	20%
Blog contributions	20%

Course Schedule:

Part 1. Gender and Evolution in History and Culture: Major Themes

January 25	Course Overview and Opening Lecture <i>No reading</i>
January 27	Clan of the Cavemen: Gender, Evolution, and Human Origins [E] Berman, "Bad Hair Days in the Paleolithic: Modern (Re)Constructions of the Cave Man" [E] Clark, "The Caveman and the Strenuous Life" [E] "The New Cavemen Lifestyle," <i>New York Times</i>
February 1	"Women Consorting with Chimpanzees": Gender, Evolution, and Human-Animal Relations [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapter 2 and 3, "Why Mammals are Called Mammals" and "The Gendered Ape" [E] Haraway, "Apes in Eden, Apes in Space: Mothering as a Scientist for National Geographic"
February 3	"The Woman Who Never Evolved": Males as the "Species Type" in Evolutionary Science and Popular Culture [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapters 4 and 5, "The Anatomy of Difference" and "Theories of Gender and Race" [E] Zihlman, "The Paleolithic Glass Ceiling: Women in Human Evolution"
February 8	Darwin's Beard: The Voyage of the Beagle, Masculinity, and Biology [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapter 6, "Who Should Do Science?" [E] Gapps, "Charles Darwin as an Icon" [E] Endersby, "Sympathetic Science: Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker, and the Passions of Victorian Naturalists"

Essay 1 is due on Monday, February 14, 12 midnight in your dropbox

Part 2. Darwin and sexual politics

February 10	Victorian Sexual Science [T] <i>Sexual Science</i> , Chapters 1 and 2, “How to Tell the Girls from the Boys” and “Up and Down the Phyletic Ladder”
February 15	Coy Women and Promiscuous Men: Darwin's Theory of Sexual Selection [T] <i>Sexual Science</i> , Chapter 3, “Hairy Men and Beautiful Women” [E] Jann, “Darwin and the Anthropologists: Sexual Selection and Its Discontents” [E] Darwin, <i>The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex</i> , Chapter 8 and 19, “Principles of Sexual Selection” and “Secondary Sexual Characters of Man”
February 17	Feminism and Darwin's Theories [T] <i>Sexual Science</i> , Chapter 5, “The Physiological Division of Labor” [E] Ayala, “Victorian Science and the ‘Genius’ of Woman” [E] Deutscher, “The Descent of Man and the Evolution of Woman”
February 22	Darwin Correspondence Project: Darwin and Gender Class Workshop [E] Letters from the Darwin Correspondence Project
February 24	Guest Lecture: Miranda Mollendorf, Hybrid Selves: Botanical Bodies and Imperial Aesthetics from the 17th-19th centuries [T] <i>Nature's Body</i> , Chapter 1, “The Private Lives of Plants” [E] Browne, “Botany for Gentlemen: Erasmus Darwin and The Loves of the Plants” [E] Darwin, Erasmus. <i>Loves of the Plants</i> (London: J. Johnson, 1791), preface and canto 1, pp. 1-16.

Essay 2 is due on Monday, February 28, 12 midnight in your dropbox
 Blog entry 1 is due February 28 at midnight.

Part 3. Eugenics, evolution, and reproductive politics

March 1	A Threat to the Race: Evolution, Eugenics, and Reproductive Politics [T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapters 1-3, “What is Eugenics?,” “Evolutionary Anxieties,” and “From Soft to Hard Heredity” [E] Survey the Cold Spring Harbor Eugenics Archives: http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics [E] Galton’s “Hereditary Talent and Character” (1865) [E] Pearson’s “On Breeding Good Stock” (1903)
March 3	Birth Control, Sterilization, and Normative Mothering: The Complex Politics of Gender and Eugenics [T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapters 4-6, “The Menace of the Moron,” “Eugenic Solutions,” and “Whose Country Is This?” [E] Lovett, “Nostalgia, Modernism, and the Family Ideal”
March 8	WWII, Nazis, and the Denouement of Eugenics [T] <i>Controlling Human Heredity</i>, Chapter 7, “From Eugenics to Human Genetics” [E] Proctor, “Lives Not Worth Living” [E] Kay, “'Social Control': Rockefeller Foundation's Agenda in the Human Sciences, 1913-1933.”
March 10	Yummy Mummies and Birthrate Politics: Evolutionary and Eugenic discourses in Reproductive Politics Today [E] Duster, “Eugenics by the Back Door” [E] Roberts, Introduction to <i>Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty</i> [E] Oliver, “Motherhood, Sexuality, and Pregnant Embodiment”

Essay 3 is due on Monday, March 21, 12 midnight in your dropbox

Part 4. Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology

March 22	E.O. Wilson's <i>Sociobiology: From Animal Behavior to Human Nature</i> [E] Wilson, "Man: From Sociobiology to Sociology" [E] Segerstrale, "The Storm over <i>Sociobiology</i> " [E] Kitcher, "What is Sociobiology?"
March 24	From Sociobiology to Evolutionary Psychology: The Birth of a Discipline and a New Science of Gender Difference [E] Trivers, "Parent-Offspring Conflict" [E] Barash, "Sexism: Strategies of Reproduction" [E] Pinker, "Gender," pp. 337-359 only
March 29	"The Determined Patriarchy": The Politics of Feminism and Evolutionary Psychology [T] <i>Caveman Mystique</i> , Introduction and Chapter 1, "Welcome Back to the Caveman Times" and "Sperm Wars, Sex Wars, and Science Wars" [E] Herrnstein-Smith, "Super Natural Science: The Claims of Evolutionary Psychology" [E] Fausto-Sterling, "Feminism and Behavioral Evolution: A Taxonomy"
March 31	Maxim Magazine and the Academy: Gender and Evolutionary Psychology in Popular and Scientific Contexts [T] <i>Caveman Mystique</i> , Chapters 2 and 3, "The Theory of Evolution as a Moral Answer for Men" and "Evolution, Popular Culture, and the Embodied Ethos of Male Sexuality"

Blog entry 2 is due March 31 at midnight

Essay 4 is due on Monday, April 4, 12 midnight in your dropbox

Part 5. Contemporary debates and controversies

April 5	Breasts, Orgasms, and Birth Canals: Evolutionary Theories of Female Anatomy and Physiology [T] <i>Evolution's Rainbow</i>, Chapters 2-4, "Sex versus Gender," "Sex within Bodies," and "Sex Roles" [E] Barash and Lipton, "Breasts and Other Curves" [E] Lloyd, "The Case of the Female Orgasm"
April 7	Prairie Voles and Dating Games: Evolutionary Theories of Monogamy [T] <i>Evolution's Rainbow</i>, Chapters 5-7, "Two-Gender Families," "Multiple-Gender Families," and "Female Choice" [E] Diamond, "Wrong Time for Love: The Evolution of Recreational Sex" [E] Buss, "What Women Want" [E] "Student Surveys Contradict Claims of Evolved Sex Differences" [E] Baker, "Shopping Around for Genes" {Skim}
April 12	Squaring the Pink Triangle: Evolutionary Theories of Homosexuality [T] <i>Evolution's Rainbow</i>, Chapter 8 and 14, "Same-Sex Sexuality" and "Sexual Orientation" [T] <i>Caveman Mystique</i>, Chapter 4, "Homo Sexual: Perverting Evolutionary Stories of Male Sexuality"
April 14	Mother Nature and Infanticidal Apes: Evolutionary Theories of Parental instinct [E] Diamond, "What Are Men Good For?: The Evolution of Men's Roles" [E] Hrdy, "A New View of Mothers"
April 19	Scorpionflies and 30-Year-Old Virgins: Evolutionary Theories of Rape [E] Thornhill and Palmer, "Why do Men Rape?" [E] Coyne, "Of Vice and Men: A Case Study in Evolutionary Psychology"

April 21	NO CLASS
April 26	Closing Lecture: Knowledge Politics, Ethics, and Evolutionary Theories of Gender [T] <i>Evolution's Rainbow</i> , Chapter 9, "The Theory of Evolution" [E] Gowaty, "Sexual Natures: How Feminism Changed Evolutionary Biology"

Essay 5 is due on Friday, April 29, 12 midnight in your dropbox