

# Theories of Sexual Violence in American Culture

GNSE 22904  
WINTER 2016  
TUESDAY/THURSDAY 1:30-2:50PM  
COBB 112

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*Office Hours:* Tuesdays, 3-4:30pm & by appointment

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## Course Description

This course considers how legal discourse, feminist theory, and community activism have understood and politicized sexual assault in America, with the occasional focus on college campuses of the past generation. We will structure the class as a seminar, and discussion will be our common activity. At times, sexual violence will be our primary subject, and we will discuss it as a psychological and sociological fact. At other times, sexual violence will be a lens through which we theorize sexual culture in contemporary America more broadly, and we will discuss the relations among sex, gender, and the public. At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to: describe and define the situations and terminologies that have animated the discourse of rape; periodize and map out the central schools and genealogies of theory in feminist and queer studies that have informed this discourse; and apply these theories to an analysis of American cultural products. Prior experience in gender and sexuality studies or in theory is strongly recommended.

Although our emphasis is on theories of sexual violence, our readings will almost always present sexual violence itself in explicit and sometimes graphic ways. Much of the material can be upsetting. So, too, may be our class discussions, because difficult material can produce conversations whose trajectories are not knowable in advance. Careful attention to the material and to each other as we participate in the co-creation of knowledge will be our rule, but even this cannot make a guarantee against surprises. Please read through all of the syllabus now so you know what lies ahead. I urge you to come talk with me about any concerns you may have about participating fully in this class before the course drop deadline, January 22.

# Course Requirements

## Grade Determination

For this course, you are required to:

- participate regularly in class (20%);
- post weekly on Chalk in weeks two through nine (20%);
- write one four-page paper due Monday, January 25 at 9am (20%);
- write one six-page paper due Monday, February 29 at 9am (30%); and
- give one final presentation (10%).

## Participation

Class participation is essential and mandatory in this class—and that means not just showing up, but actively listening to and engaging with each other. I know it can be hard to put yourself out there and to think out loud in a room of your peers, but it's essential to our aims in the course. If you're finding it difficult to participate in class, come chat with me in office hours and we can brainstorm points of entry for you to make the discussion more accessible.

If you're going to be absent for a good reason, please let me know 48 hours ahead of time. More than two absences will make it much harder for you to develop the skills and knowledge you need to succeed in this course; more than three absences will directly lower your grade.

As part of participation, I'll also be holding student conferences midway through the course, at the beginning of week five. This is not an oral exam! The point of the conference is just to check-in with you about how the course is going so that I can improve my teaching earlier rather than later. We'll also begin to chat about topics for your remaining paper and presentation.

## Chalk

Chalk posts are your chance to set the direction of the class discussion. You're required to post once a week from weeks two through nine. You can take one week off, so that means you should have seven posts total.

On the first day of class, you'll be assigned to post either Tuesdays or Thursdays: your post will be due 9am that day each week and should engage with the readings assigned for that day. How you engage is largely up to you, but your response should be at least a paragraph and should directly reference some aspect of the reading you'd like us to focus on: a quote, an idea, an image. Does it remind you of something else, either that we've read in class (in which case, cite and remind us!) or that you've seen outside of class (like a YouTube video, in which case share a link!)? Does it frustrate or entertain or puzzle you—and if so, why?

## Papers

The formal writing for this course consists of two papers, due Monday at 9am in weeks four and nine. Please send papers to [dango@uchicago.edu](mailto:dango@uchicago.edu) with your surname in the filename.

### Paper #1: Theory Analysis (1/25)

For week four, you will receive a prompt asking you to put two theoretical writings we have read in conversation together, carefully tracking their arguments independently and then assessing the strengths and weaknesses in relation to one another.

### Paper #2: Media Analysis (2/29)

For week nine, you will receive a prompt asking you to do a media analysis of a music video, television show, or other media object of your choice readily available on the Internet. You will be asked to consider how the object participates in or reflects sexual cultures and cultures of domination, as we will discuss in the previous weeks.

## Presentation

Please prepare a final (but short!) presentation, 4-6 minutes in length, for week ten. For this assignment, you will be asked to present on a sexual violence “intervention”—for instance, a zine, a manifesto, a bystander intervention—and on its intentions and effects within the situation in which it arose or at which it was aimed. What kinds of relations and social conditions do the intervention respond to or aim to induce?

## Class Policies

### Accommodations

I aim to make this class accessible and inclusive by meeting the needs of each student. That means I’m happy to meet with you or respond to your e-mails if you have any concerns about the class. I just ask that you get in touch sooner rather than later so we can work toward solutions together as soon as possible. I also welcome requests for accommodation; just check out <https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/requesting-reasonable-accommodations>.

### Late Papers

If you need an extension for a paper, you must request it 72 hours in advance (that means by the Friday morning before it’s due). Late papers get a 1/3 grade reduction per day late.

# Plagiarism

Here is the University's Academic Integrity statement:

It is contrary to justice, to academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas of work as one's own. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously. Proper acknowledgment of another's ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes 'use' should be addressed to the instructor.

That means get in touch with me *before* you submit any writing about which you have doubts. Please. If you plagiarize, you will be promptly failed at the very least.

## Screens

In order to reduce the costs of taking this course, each and every reading is available as a PDF on Chalk. I realize that means lots of folks will be bringing tablets or laptops to class. As long as you're just looking at the readings, go for it. But I also know there's a lot of research that says having screens on in class distracts from both your learning and the learning of your classmates, so we'll also be having dedicated "no screens" time in class when our discussion doesn't require reference to the readings. Please be prepared to put your machines to the side.

# Reading Schedule

## 1 Defining Rape

### Tuesday, January 5: Introductory

- Michel Foucault, "Confinement, Psychiatry, Prison." In *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Routledge, 1998. Pp. 178-210.

### Thursday, January 7: Language and Framing

- Don Kulick, "No." *Language & Communication* 23 (2003): 139-51.
- Susan Estrich, "Is it Rape?" In *Real Rape*. Cambridge: Harvard UP. Pp. 8-26.
- Latoya Peterson, "The Not-Rape Epidemic." In *Yes Means Yes!* Ed. Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008. Pp. 209-220.
- Lara Stemple and Ilan H. Meyer, "The Sexual Victimization of Men in America: New Data Challenge Old Assumptions." *American Journal of Public Health* 104 (2014): 19-26.

## 2 Rape in American History

### Tuesday, January 12: Changing Definitions of Consent

- Estelle B. Freedman, “Introduction: The Political History of Rape,” “The Racialization of Rape and Lynching,” and “Scottsboro and Its Legacies.” In *Redefining Rape*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013. Pp. 1-11, 89-103, and 253-270.
- Jeannie Suk, “‘The Look in His Eyes’: The Story of *State v. Rusk* and Rape Reform.” In *Criminal Law Stories*. Ed. Donna Coker and Robert Weisberg. New York: Foundation Press, 2013. Pp. 171-211.

### Thursday, January 14: Rape and “Unwanted Sex”

- Lena Dunham, “Barry.” In *Not That Kind of Girl*. New York: Random House, 2014. Pp. 51-66.
- Catherine MacKinnon, “Rape: On Coercion and Consent.” In *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991. Pp. 171-183.
- Rebecca Traitser, “The Game is Rigged.” *NY Magazine*. 20 October 2015. <http://nymag.com/thecut/2015/10/why-consensual-sex-can-still-be-bad.html>

## 3 Theorizing The Non-Autonomy of Sex

### Tuesday, January 19: Three Generations of “Woman”

- Susan Brownmiller, “The Mass Psychology of Rape: An Introduction.” In *Against our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975. Pp. 11-15.
- Sharon Marcus, “Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention.” In *Feminists Theorize the Political*. Ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott. New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 382-403
- KelleyAnne Malinen, “Thinking Woman-to-Woman Rape: A Critique of Marcus’s ‘Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention.’” *Sexuality and Culture* 17 (2012): 360-76.

### Thursday, January 21: Sexual Negativity

- Kathy Acker, “The Scorpions.” In *Blood and Guts in High School*. New York: Grove, 1994. Pp. 31-44.
- Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” *October* 43 (1987): 197-222.
- Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman, “Sex Without Optimism.” In *Sex, or the Unbearable*. Durham: Duke UP, 2013. Pp. 1-34.

## 4 Sexual Violence as Sex Discrimination

*Paper #1 due on Monday, January 25, 9am.*

### Tuesday, January 26: Harassment on Campus

- Know Your IX, “Title IX in Detail.” <http://knowyourix.org/title-ix/title-ix-in-detail/>.
- University of Chicago Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct. <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/page/policy-harassment-discrimination-and-sexual-misconduct>
- Janet Halley, “Sexuality Harassment.” In *Left Legalism/Left Critique*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002. Pp. 80-104.

### Thursday, January 28: Pornography as Violence

- Ariella Azoulay, “Has Anyone Ever Seen a Photograph of Rape?” In *The Civil Contract of Photography*. New York: Zone, 2012. Pp. 217-288. *Focus on: pp. 241-81.*
- Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, “The Minneapolis Ordinance.” In *Pornography and Civil Rights*. Minneapolis: Organizing Against Pornography, 1988. Pp. 99-105.
- Paul Morris and Susanna Paasonen, “Risk and Utopia: A Dialogue on Pornography.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 20 (2014): 215-239.

## 5 Sexual Violence and the “Child”

*Student conferences commence.*

### Tuesday, February 2: Historicizing Statutory Rape Laws

- Estelle B. Freedman, “Raising the Age of Consent,” “From Protection to Sexualization,” and “The Sexual Vulnerability of Boys.” In *Redefining Rape*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2013. Pp. 125-190.
- Optional: Ian Hacking, “The Making and Molding of Child Abuse.” *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 253-288.

### Thursday, February 4: Anti-Mythologies of the Sexual Child

- Phoebe Gloeckner, *A Child’s Life*. Berkeley: Frog Books, 1998. Pp. 9-54.
- Kate Millett, “Beyond Politics? Children and Sexuality.” In *Pleasure and Danger*. Ed. Carole S. Vance. London: Pandora, 1989. Pp. 217-224.
- Joseph J. Fischel, “Per Se or Power? Age and Sexual Consent.” *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism*. 22 (2010): 279-342. *Focus on: Abstract, Part II, III.D-E (pp. 279-80; 294-300; 320-338).*

- Optional: Steven Angelides, “Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 10 (2004): 141-177.

## 6 Variations on Consent

### Tuesday, February 9: Toward Affirmative Consent

- Janet Napolitano, “‘Only Yes Means Yes’: An Essay on University Policies Regarding Sexual Violence and Sexual Assault.” *Yale Law and Policy Review* 33 (2015): 387-402.
- Nicholas J. Little, “From No Means No to Only Yes Means Yes: The Rational Results of an Affirmative Consent Standard in Rape Law.” *Vanderbilt Law Review* 58 (2005): 1321-64.
- Katie Roiphe, “The Rape Crisis, or ‘Is Dating Dangerous?’” In *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism*. New York: Back Bay Books, 1993. Pp. 51-84.

### Thursday, February 11: Challenging Sexual Autonomy

- Jed Rubenfeld, “The Riddle of Rape-by-Deception and the Myth of Sexual Autonomy.” *Yale Law Journal* 122 (2013): 1372-1443.
- Deborah Tuerkheimer, “Sex Without Consent.” *Yale Law Journal* 123 (2013): 335-52.

## 7 Responding to Violence Outside the Law

### Tuesday, February 16: Critiques of the Legal System

- Mary P. Koss, et al., “Expanding a Community’s Justice Response to Sex Crimes Through Advocacy, Prosecutorial, and Public Health Collaboration: Introducing the RESTORE Program.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 19 (2004): 1435-1463.
- Julia Sudbury, “Rethinking Antiviolence Strategies: Lessons from the Black Women’s Movement in Britain.” In *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*. Brooklyn: South End Press, 2006. Pp. 13-24.
- Jennifer Doyle, *Campus Sex, Campus Security*. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015. Pp. 1-18, 83-93.
- Generation FIVE, *Toward Transformative Justice*. June 2007. [http://www.generationfive.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/G5\\_Toward\\_Transformative\\_Justice-Documents.pdf](http://www.generationfive.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/G5_Toward_Transformative_Justice-Documents.pdf). Pp. 5-12.

### Thursday, February 18: Community Accountability

- Creative Interventions, *Creative Interventions Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Stop Interpersonal Violence*. June 2012. <http://www.creative-interventions.org/tools/toolkit/>. Sec. 2.1

- INCITE!, “Organizing for Community Accountability.”  
[http://www.incite-national.org/sites/default/files/incite\\_files/resource\\_docs/6685\\_toolkitrev-cmt yacc.pdf](http://www.incite-national.org/sites/default/files/incite_files/resource_docs/6685_toolkitrev-cmt yacc.pdf)
- Philly Stands Up, *A Stand Up Start-Up: Confronting Sexual Assault with Transformative Justice*.  
<http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/a-stand-up-start-up.pdf>
- The Chrysalis Collective, “Beautiful, Difficult, Powerful: Ending Sexual Assault Through Transformative Justice.” In *The Revolution Starts at Home*. Brooklyn: South End Press, 2011. Pp. 189-206.

## 8 Rape Culture vs. Sex Publics

### Tuesday, February 23: “Rape Culture”

- Patricia Donat and John D’Emilio, “A Feminist Redefinition of Rape and Sexual Assault: Historical Foundations and Change.” *Journal of Social Issues* 48 (1992): 9-22.
- Shannon Ridgway, “25 Everyday Examples of Rape Culture.” *Everyday Feminism*. 10 March 2014.  
<http://everydayfeminism.com/2014/03/examples-of-rape-culture/>
- Caroline Kitchens, “It’s Time to End ‘Rape Culture’ Hysteria.” *TIME Magazine*. 20 March 2014.  
<http://time.com/30545/its-time-to-end-rape-culture-hysteria/>
- Zerlina Maxwell, “Rape Culture is Real.” *TIME Magazine*. 27 March 2014.  
<http://time.com/40110/rape-culture-is-real/>

### Thursday, February 25: Sex Publics

- Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public.” *Critical Inquiry* 24 (1998): 547-566.
- Davina Cooper, “Unsettling Feminist Care Ethics through a Women’s and Trans Bathhouse.” In *Everyday Utopias*. Durham: Duke UP, 2013. Pp. 100-128.

## 9 Sex on Campus

*Paper #2 due on Monday, February 29, 9am.*

### Tuesday, March 1: “Hook-up Culture”

- Michael Kimmel, “Predatory Sex and Party Rape.” In *Guyland*. New York: Harper, 2009. Pp. 217-241.
- Nancy Jo Sales, “Tinder and the Dawn of the ‘Dating Apocalypse.’” *Vanity Fair*. September 2015. <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2015/08/tinder-hook-up-culture-end-of-dating>

- Amanda Hess, “The Women! They’re Using Gadgets and Having Sex!” *Slate Magazine*. August 2015. [http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/users/2015/08/tinder\\_and\\_the\\_moral\\_panic\\_over\\_women\\_using\\_technology\\_to\\_meet\\_men\\_and\\_have.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/users/2015/08/tinder_and_the_moral_panic_over_women_using_technology_to_meet_men_and_have.html)
- To Skim: Justin A. Garcia, et al., “Sexual Hookup Culture: A Review.” *Review of General Psychology* 16 (2012): 161-176.
- To Skim: Martin A. Monto and Anna G. Carey, “A New Standard of Sexual Behavior? Are Claims Associated With the ‘Hookup Culture’ Supported by General Social Survey Data?” *The Journal of Sex Research* 6 (2014): 605-615.

### Thursday, March 3: Trigger Warnings

- Rani Neutill, “My Trigger-Warning Disaster: ‘9 1/2 Weeks,’ ‘The Wire’ and How Coddled Young Radicals Got Discomfort All Wrong.” Salon. 28 October 2015. [http://www.salon.com/2015/10/28/i\\_wanted\\_to\\_be\\_a\\_supporter\\_of\\_survivors\\_on\\_campus\\_and\\_a\\_good\\_teacher\\_i\\_didnt\\_realize\\_just\\_how\\_impossible\\_this\\_would\\_be/](http://www.salon.com/2015/10/28/i_wanted_to_be_a_supporter_of_survivors_on_campus_and_a_good_teacher_i_didnt_realize_just_how_impossible_this_would_be/)
- Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind.” *The Atlantic*. September 2015. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/09/the-coddling-of-the-american-mind/399356/>
- Aaron R. Hanlon, “The Trigger Warning Myth.” *The New Republic*. 14 August 2015. <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/122543/trigger-warning-myth>

## 10 Presentations