Female “Femsex” Sexuality

Course Description:
This collaborative, student-facilitated course seeks to engage participants in reading and discussions on female sexual health and sexuality. Adapted from a course created at University of California at Berkeley, *FemSex* will explore topics such as female sexual anatomy, body image, pleasure, effects of power and privilege on the female body, reproductive health, and the intersections of race, class, sex, and gender. Expect creative homework assignments, sweet fieldtrips, speakers, and discussions.

Course Goals
- To engage in sex-positive conversations as a form of sexual violence prevention
- To create a safe space that encourages and facilitates the ability of women to learn about their bodies, explore their sexualities, and expand their understanding of diversity as individuals, Carleton students, and global citizens
- To create a community of active, engaged, and conscious women

Course Requirements
Regular Attendance (no more than 2 absences), Speakers and Fieldtrips t.b.a.
Regular completion of reading and participation in class
Weekly Journal Writing (the prompts listed are only one option of what to write about. You are allowed to write, draw, collage, etc, about anything you want, so long as you do it. Though we might ask if people want to share their journal entries, it will never be required)
Homework activities t.b.a.
Final Presentation

Syllabus
(Homework is given
Week 1
Monday, March 31st: Introduction
We will review the course procedure, syllabus, and requirements, construct a class contract, review language to be used throughout the term, and discuss why people are in this course and what they want to get out of it. We will also handout and discuss, “Be a Little Gay: The Good Wife’s Guide”.
Homework: Communication Checklist, How Being a Good Girl Can Be Bad, 5 Point Plan, Reactions to Femsex at Harvard
Journal Prompts: What is your reaction to femsex thus far, how would you refute/bolster the Harvard reactions, do you personally have any insecurities, fears, or reservations? Have you felt or do you anticipate feeling alienated in this class?
Wednesday, April 2nd: Communication and Sex Positivity
We will discuss reactions to Femsex at Harvard, how we can avoid alienation in our classroom, methods of effective conversation, and asserting/respecting
boundaries. We will also talk about how communication in terms of sex positivity is sexual violence prevention.

Homework: Orgasm Gap (women's health reader), Are We Having Sex Yet? (femsex), Images about Women in Medical Textbooks (femsex), What is Homophobia and Heterosexism (femsex)

Journal Prompt: How did you learn about sex? What is your definition of sex?

Week 2

Monday, April 7th: How we Learn about Sex
We will watch the sex scene clip from “Knocked Up” and discuss ways in which we learn about sex in sexist and heteronormative terms. Personal stories as well as media portrayals will be welcome.

Homework: Age, Race, Class, and Sex (women’s health), Principles of Anti-Oppression (femsex); Group 1: Ain’t I a Woman (femsex), Strained Class Windows (women’s health), excerpts from Facing the Mirror (femsex); Group 2: White Privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack (everywhere), There is No Hierarchy of Oppression (women’s health); Group 3: Does Gender Matter: Article from Nature (femsex), Health Disparities in the United States (women’s health)

Journal Prompt: How do you see these oppressions playing out in our classroom, what can we do, as a group, to avoid systems of power and privilege?

Wednesday, April 9th: Power and Privilege
Class will start with 10 minute small group discussions with at least one member of each of the different homework groups presenting their articles. We will move into the ‘circle of privilege’ activity. Responses to the circle activity and group dynamics in the classroom will be discussed. This discussion will center on the microcosm of our classroom instead of splaying out into abstract discussions of systematic oppression.

Homework: Say Incest Out Loud (femsex), Carleton Sex Assault Article in Chronicle in Higher Education, Mapping the Margins (femsex)

Journal Prompt: Which rape myth pisses you off the most? Which one do you see most prevalent at Carleton, what can we do as a community to stop it?

Week 3

Monday, April 14th: Sexual Violence
We will start with a discussion on those topics that are least found in main-stream discourse. We will take an in-depth look at sexual violence against woman at Carleton and provide handouts of resources at Carleton, survivor support resources, dating rights, signs of an abusive relationships, etc.

Homework: Fat Phobes of the Medical Kind (femsex), We’ll Always be Fat, but Fat can Be Fit (femsex), Eating Disorder Info and Stats (femsex), I’m not Fat, I’m Latina (women’s health), Myth of the Black Butt (femsex)

Journal Prompt: Create your own Barbie, include accessories, partner(s), house—whatever lifestyle details you wish.

Wednesday, April 16th: Body Image
We will look at how women view themselves and each other, what shapes our self-image, and how this affects our lives. We will also discuss cultural variations of body image.
Homework: The Truth about Your Clitoris (women's health), Sex for One (femsex), explore the Intersex Society of N. America website (http://www.isna.org/), Notes on How to Use a Speculum (femsex), If Men could Menstruate Use a speculum

Journal Prompt: Draw your vagina

Week 4

Monday, April 21st: Sexual Anatomy and Menstruation
We will share stories about the onset of our first menses and other menses stories that demonstrate the cultural representation of menstruation in the U.S., decorate vulva/breast cookies with appropriate anatomy, and talk about the erotic potential of the whole body

Handouts: Pelvic Exam Cartoon, Breast Self-Exam, Cunning Cunt Care, Put Your Pussy on a Pedestal, About Menstruation

Handout: Various articles from I heart Female Orgasm book, Tyranny of Orgasm (femsex), The Big O (femsex), Joy of Self-loving (femsex), Fantasies (femsex)

Journal Prompt: Come up with a list of things that you think might please you, but you haven’t tried before.

Wednesday, April 23rd: Masturbation, Pleasure, and Orgasm
We will discuss popular perceptions of masturbation, sexual response cycles, and creative approaches to pleasure.

Handouts: Kegels (femsex), Teach yourself to ejaculate (femsex), How to have energy orgasms (femsex)

Homework: How to Write an Erotica Story (femsex), Talk Dirty to Me (femsex), Why Watch Porn (femsex), Through a Glass Smudigly (femsex), Feminists Against Porn [find an article]

Journal Prompt: Write your own erotica.

Week 5

Monday, April 26th: Porn and Erotica
We will discuss different views, opinions, and taboos surrounding porn and erotica.

Homework: Write an anonymous erotica to be read in class or create pornography artwork that you want to share (or both). Write a paragraph about why you do or don’t think this fits in with this course.

Wednesday, April 28th: Catch-up and midterm review
We will review how the course has gone and share individual responses. We will also share creative projects, including erotica.

Handout: Strip Club Rules and Etiquette

Week 6

Monday, May 5th: Mid-term break - No class

Homework: S.E.X. chapter,

Journal prompt: How did you determine when you lost your virginity?

Wednesday, May 7th: Definition of sex and different sexual practices
We will discuss different definitions of sex, social construction of virginity, and the validity of different sexual practices.

Homework: Research one type of sexual practice (we’ll sign up in class) and be ready to present in class.
Journal Prompt: What sexual practices make you the most uncomfortable? Why?

Week 7
Monday, May 12th: Exploration of sexual practices and lifestyle
We will have each student or pair of students present the media representations and subsequent sex-positive view of their assigned sexual practice. We will also discuss popular stereotypes and conceptions of different sexual practices and lifestyles through the “Lifestyle on your forehead” game.

Homework: It’s Your Gender, Stupid (gsc summer reader), We are all works in progress (in Leslie Feinberg’s Transliberation), Kinsey & Klein Scales (femsex), Heterosexual Questionnaire (femsex), And the Lamp in Me Kept Burning (femsex), Homosexuality: Two-spirited people (femsex), Born to Dyke (by Greg Tate, in Rebecca Walker’s To Be Real-in gsc library)

Journal Prompt: Write your own “When I Knew Submission” either when you knew you were queer or when you knew you weren’t.

Wednesday, May 14th: Orientation of sexuality and gender
We will discuss people’s individual responses to what their gender and sexuality means personally, how those identities were/are influenced and how they continue to develop, especially with reference to cultural and cross-cultural norms.

Homework: Introduction to Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice,

Journal Prompt: What are your thoughts on the Juno/Jamie Lynn Spears/Knocked Up construction of abortion? Is Juno pro-life?

Week 8
Monday, May 19th: Reproductive Choices
We will discuss the differences between reproductive rights, justice, and choice, and the implication those words have for different communities of color.

Homework: S.E.X. p. 246-269

Journal Prompt: Reflect on your high school/middle school sex ed: what misconceptions about birth control did/do you have, what contraceptives, sexual practices, etc was left out?

Wednesday, May 21st: Contraception and STI’s
We will try to arrange visits to Birthright in Northfield and/or Planned Parenthood for this as well as have contraceptive show and tell.

Homework: S.E.X. p. 99-100, Identifying and expressing feelings, non-violent communication (femsex), Communication from Good Vibes (femsex)

Journal Prompt: What are some communication problems you’ve had (with a friend, parent, sibling, ‘partner’), do any of these articles provide ways that could have made that mishap easier?

Week 9
Monday, May 26th: Communication in Relationships
For this class, we will do the Healthy, Open, Talking about Sex, and Everything Extra GSC workshop.

Homework: Repulsing Assault (femsex), Self-Defense Tips from Women Defending Ourselves (femsex)

Journal Prompt: Watch J-lo’s Enough… What do you think?
**Wednesday, May 28th: Self-Defense**
Hopefully, the Carleton teacher of women’s self-defense will come to this class to demonstrate self-defense tactics.

Homework: Transformation of silence in language and action (femsex), Ways of building community among women (femsex), Feminism is for everybody (gsc summer reader)


Week 10

**Monday, June 2nd: Women’s Empowerment**
We will discuss how/if this class has enacted women’s empowerment; start final project presentations.

**Wednesday, June 4th: In-Class Presentations**
We will continue final project presentations.