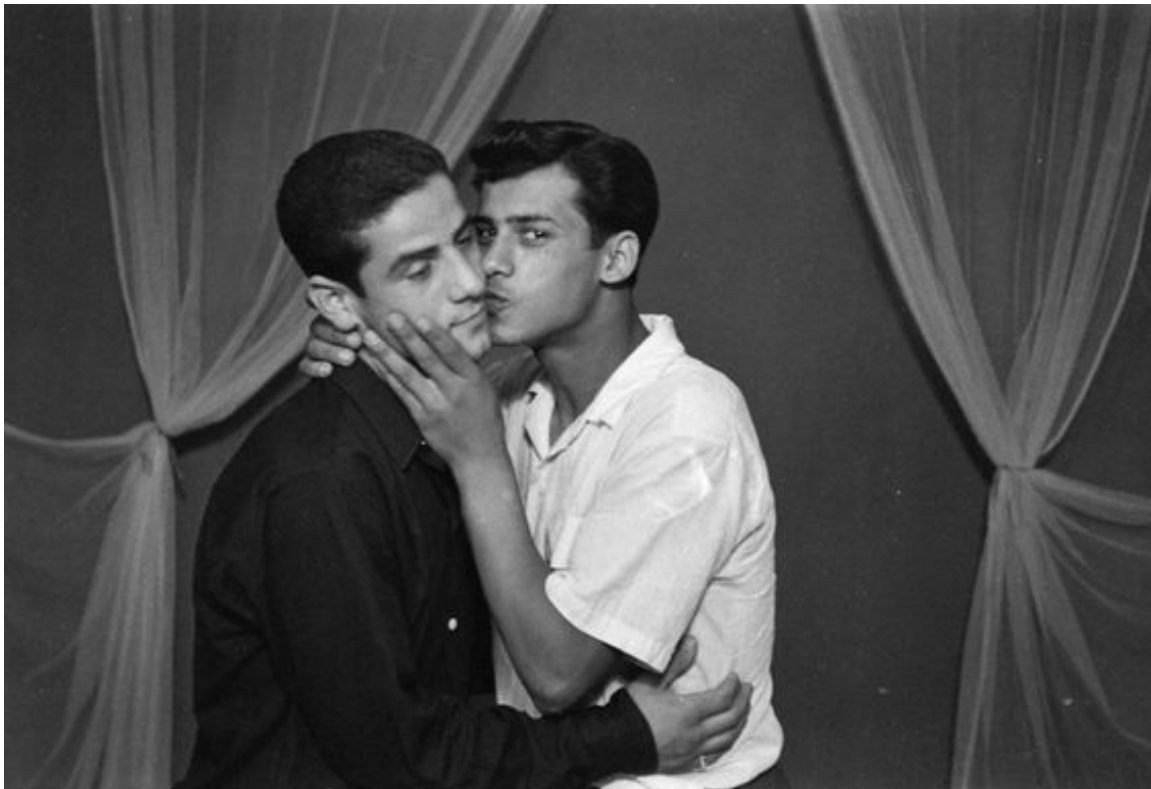


Principles of Educational Science  
Bachelorstudium Erziehungswissenschaft  
Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft  
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## **Sex, culture, and society**

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August – Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August  
Summer semester 2017



Tarho and El Masri, Hashem El Madani/Studio Shehrazade, Saida, Lebanon, 1958

*Everything in the world is about sex except sex*  
attr. to Oscar Wilde

### **Course summary**

This course introduces students to the study of sex in comparative cultural and social perspective, exploring intersections and tensions between classical psychoanalytic thought and major approaches in British, French, and US anthropology.

It takes as its gambit the anthropological legacy of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, which since its publication in 1913 has galvanised academic work on relations between sex, culture, and society. Deeply informed by debates in fin-de-siècle anthropology about "primitive sexuality", Freud proposed that sex lay at the heart of cultural and social life, and in his evolving conception of an Oedipus complex developed a comparative analytic that promised to make sense of the significance of sex across diverse cultures and societies.

In this course, we shall investigate how anthropologists over the last century have responded to Freud's "somewhat improbable conclusions" (Freud 1919 [1913]: vii), as they have sought to compare the significance of sex in the lives of the people they have studied around the world.

In our discussions, we shall chart how anthropologists have grappled with Freud's analytic of the Oedipus complex in their intercultural encounters to articulate new comparative perspectives on:-

- the relevance of sex for how people make sense of processes of procreation and reproduction
- ways such "conceptions" may inform larger cultural worldviews about how the world is meaningfully ordered
- how forms of sexual behaviour and practice, beyond procreation, may relate to the articulation of varieties of sexual identity and other social identities
- the significance of desire in wider dynamics of social life
- the extent to which shifting possibilities of social order may depend on changing constellations of sexual order

Throughout the course, as we examine these formative debates and controversies in the anthropological study of sex, we shall analyse why some anthropologists have and other anthropologists haven't found the Oedipus complex a useful tool to compare the similarities and differences they encounter in their studies. As we evaluate these often competing claims, we shall explore how the study of sex in anthropology sharpens our appreciation of what's at stake in different approaches to social and cultural comparison.

### **Course objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:-

- discuss a number of key concepts anthropologists have developed to compare the cultural and social significance of sex among peoples they study
- analyse how these comparative heuristics have emerged out of formative debates in the anthropological study of sex, and assess the significance of classical psychoanalytic thought in these conversations
- evaluate how anthropologists' use of these concepts to make empirical comparisons involves different assumptions about ways a person's particular sexual lifeway can articulate with varieties of broader sexual culture

### **Assessment**

Participation in seminar discussions – 30%

Final oral exam – 30%

Short written reflection on a theme or issue from the course (5 pages) – 40%

## Note on readings

Readings for the course have been categorised under three headings. *Required readings* are obligatory and should be read thoroughly before each seminar to ensure full participation in class discussion. *Recommended readings* are optional. They are either somewhat longer than the required readings or a little more intellectually involved; however, reading them before each seminar would enrich contributions to the discussion. *Further readings* are included in the syllabus as a reference for students who wish subsequently to write their final assessment on themes raised by a particular seminar.

There are no textbooks which cover entirely the same material as this course. Students, however, may find it helpful to consult a number of recent books which address some of the issues we shall discuss:-

Perelberg, Rosine Jozef. 2015. *Murdered father, dead father: revisiting the Oedipus complex*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Robcis, Camille. 2013. *The law of kinship: anthropology, psychoanalysis, and the family in France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Smadja, Éric. 2017 [2014]. *The Oedipus complex: focus of the psychoanalysis-anthropology debate*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Given the intensive nature of this summer school programme, it is necessary for students to have thoroughly read all the readings **before** the course commences, as you will not have sufficient time during the week of face-to-face seminars.

## Course outline

### *Required preparatory reading*

Simon, Bennett and Rachel B. Blass. 1991. The development and vicissitudes of Freud's ideas on the Oedipus complex. In Jerome Neu (Ed.). *The Cambridge companion to Freud*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 161-174.

Smadja, Éric. 2011. The Oedipus complex: crystallizer of the debate between psychoanalysis and anthropology (selection). *The international journal of psychoanalysis*, 92(4): 985-993.

## **SEMINAR 1 [Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August, morning] – Sex and the foundations of society: Professor Freud's "somewhat improbable" conjecture**

### *Required reading*

Freud, Sigmund. 1913. The return of totemism in childhood (selections). In Peter Gay (Ed.). 1995. *The Freud Reader*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. Pp. 481-513.

### *Recommended reading*

Gay, Peter. 1998. Foundations of society. In Peter Gay, *Freud: a life for our time*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company Pp. 324-334.

Lyons, Andrew and Harriet Lyons. 2004. The reconstruction of 'primitive sexuality' at the fin-de- siècle. In Andrew Lyons and Harriet Lyons (Eds.). 2011. *Sexualities in anthropology: a reader*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. Pp. 67-81.

### *Further reading*

- Gay, Peter. 1985. Human nature in history. In Peter Gay, *Freud for historians*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 78-115.
- Paul, Robert 1991. A. Freud's anthropology: a reading of the 'cultural books'. In Jerome Neu (Ed.). *The Cambridge companion to Freud*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 267-286.
- Perelberg, Rosine Jozef. 2015. The structuring function of the Oedipus complex. In Rosine Jozef Perelberg. *Murdered father, dead father: revisiting the Oedipus complex*. Oxford and New York: Routledge. Pp. 125-160.

## **SEMINAR 2 [Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August, afternoon] – Sex in the field: the disciplinary challenge of early twentieth-century anthropology**

### *Required reading*

- Jones, Ernest. 1925. Mother-right and the sexual ignorance of savages. *The international journal of psychoanalysis*, 6(2): 109-30.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1927. Psycho-analysis and anthropology. In Bronislaw Malinowski, 2003 [1927]. *Sex and repression in savage society*. London and New York: Routledge: Pp. 109-140.

### *Recommended reading*

- Stocking, George W. 1997. Anthropology and the science of the irrational: Malinowski's encounter with Freudian psychoanalysis. In George W. Stocking (Ed.), *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict, and others: essays on culture and personality*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press. Pp. 13-49.

### *Further reading*

#### *Pre-WWII British anthropology*

- Forrester, John and Laura Cameron. 2017. W. H. R. Rivers, the English Freud? In John Forrester and Laura Cameron. *Freud in Cambridge*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press. Pp. 57-99.
- Birth, Kevin. 1994. British anthropology and psychoanalysis before WWII: the evolution of asserted irrelevance. *Canberra anthropology*, 17(1): 53-69.

#### *US Neo-Freudianism, Culture and Personality, and early Frankfurt School*

- Birnbach, Martin. 1962. The break with Freud. In Martin Birnbach. *Neo-Freudian social philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Benjamin, Jessica. 1978. Authority and the family revisited: or a world without fathers? *New German Critique*, 13: 35-57.

#### *Early French structuralism*

- Robcis, Camille. 2013. Kinship and the structuralist social contract. In Camille Robcis. *The law of kinship: anthropology, psychoanalysis, and the family in France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Pp. 61-101.

**SEMINAR 3** [Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, morning] – **Sex and procreation: the “virgin birth” debate in mid-twentieth-century anthropology**

*Required reading*

- Leach, Edmund R. 1966. Virgin birth. *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1966: 39-49.
- Spiro, Melford E. 1968. Virgin birth, pathenogenesis, and physiological paternity: an essay in cultural interpretation. *Man (N.S.)*, 3(2): 242-261.

*Recommended reading*

- Tambiah, Stanley J. 2002. The comparativist stance: us and them and the translation of cultures. In Stanley J. Tambiah, *Edmund Leach: an anthropological life*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 259-289.

*Further reading*

*Broader intellectual context of Leach and Spiro's debate*

- Leach, Edmund. 1958. Magical hair. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 88(2): 147-164.
- Leach, Edmund. 1962. Pulleyar and Lord Buddha: an aspect of religious syncretism in Ceylon. *Psychoanalysis and the psychoanalytic review*, 49(2): 81-102.
- Montagu, Ashley. 1937 [1974]. *Coming into being among the Australian Aborigines: a study of the native tribes of Australia* (selection). London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul. Pp. 377-386.
- Parsons, Anne. 1964. Is the Oedipus complex universal? In Robert A Levine (Ed.), 2010. *Psychological anthropology: a reader on self and culture*. Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell. Pp. 131-154.
- Spiro, Melford E. 1983. *Oedipus in the Trobriands*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Psychoanalytic (sub)currents in mid-century British anthropology*

- Fortes, Meyer. 1959. *Oedipus and Job in west African religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fortes, Meyer. 1974 [1972]. The first born. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, 15(2): 81-104.
- Fortes, Meyer. 1977 [1973]. Custom and conscience. *International review of psychoanalysis*, 4: 127-152.
- Turner, Victor. 1978. Encounter with Freud: the making of a comparative symbolist. In George and Louise Spindler (Eds.), *The making of psychological anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 538-558.

**SEMINAR 4** [Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, afternoon] – **Sex, myth, and worldview: the “virgin birth” debate, twenty years on**

*Required reading*

- Delaney, Carol. 1986. The meaning of paternity and the virgin birth debate. *Man (N.S.)*, 21(3): 494-513.
- Obeyesekere, Gananath. 1990. Oedipus: the paradigm and its Hindu rebirth (selection). In Gananath Obeyesekere, *The work of culture: symbolic transformation in psychoanalysis and anthropology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 70-105.

*Further reading*

- Delaney, Carol. 2003. Why do we have to read Freud? In Diane Jonte-Pace (Ed.), *Teaching Freud*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 178-194.
- Franklin, Sarah. 1997. Conception among the anthropologists. In Sarah Franklin, *Embodied progress: a cultural account of assisted conception*. Oxford and New York: Routledge. Pp. 17-72.
- Kurtz, Stanley N. 1991. Polysexualization: a new approach to Oedipus in the Trobriands. *Ethos*, 19(1): 68-101.
- Martin, Emily. 1991. The egg and the sperm: how science has constructed a romance based on stereotypical male-female roles. *Signs*, 16(3): 485-501.
- Schneider, David and Edmund R. Leach. 1968. Virgin birth. *Man (N.S.)*, 3(1): 126-129.
- Weiner, Annette B. 1985. Oedipus and the ancestors. *American ethnologist*, 12(4): 758-762.

**SEMINAR 5 [Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, morning] – Sex, behaviour, and identity: comparing “semen practices”**

*Required reading*

- Kimmel, Michael. 2006. Ritualized homosexuality in a Nacirema subculture. *Sexualities*, 9(1): 95-105.
- Moore, Henrietta L. 2007. Kinship and sexuality. In Henrietta L. Moore, *The subject of anthropology: gender, symbolism, and psychoanalysis*. Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press. Pp. 137-164.

*Recommended reading*

- Elliston, Deborah A. 1995. Erotic anthropology: ‘ritualized homosexuality’ in Melanesia and beyond. *American ethnologist*, 22(4): 848-867.
- Herdt, Gilbert H. 1994. Semen transactions in Sambia culture. In Gilbert H. Herdt (Ed.), *Ritualized homosexuality in Melanesia*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press. Pp. 167-210.

**SEMINAR 6 [Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August, afternoon] – Sex and desire: schismogenesis and schizoanalysis**

*Required reading*

- Bateson, Gregory. 1936. The ethological contrast, competition, and schismogenesis. In Gregory Bateson, *Naven: a survey of the problems suggested by a composite picture of the culture of a New Guinea tribe drawn from three points of view*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 171-197.
- Herzog, Dagmar. 2017. Exploding Oedipus. In Dagmar Herzog. *Cold war Freud: psychoanalysis in an age of catastrophes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 153-178.

*Recommended reading*

- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. 1972. Psychoanalysis and familialism: the Holy Family. In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. 1983. *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrasia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pp. 51-138.

### *Further reading*

#### *Re-appraisal of Bateson in francophone social theory*

- Houseman, Michael and Carlo Severi. 1994. Naven after Bateson. In Michael Houseman and Carlo Severi. 1998. *Naven or the other self: a relational approach to ritual action*. Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill. Pp. 49-164.
- Perelberg, Rosine Jozef. 2015. Bateson and the Naven. In Rosine Jozef Perelberg. 2015. *Murdered father, dead father: revisiting the Oedipus complex*. Oxford and New York: Routledge. Pp 108-111.
- Shaw, Robert. 2015. Bringing Deleuze and Guattari down to earth through Gregory Bateson: plateaus, rhizomes, and ecosophical subjectivity. *Theory, culture, and society*, 32(7/8): 151-174.

#### *Deleuze in the context of late French structuralism*

- Robcis, Camille. 2013. Fatherless societies and anti-Oedipal philosophies. In Camille Robcis. *The law of kinship: anthropology, psychoanalysis, and the family in France*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Pp. 168-210.

#### *Deleuze's trajectory in (largely) anglophone anthropology*

- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2010. Intensive filiation and demonic alliance. In Casper Bruun Jensen and Kjetil Rodje (Eds.), *Deleuzian intersections: science, technology, anthropology*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

## **SEMINAR 7 [Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August, morning] – Sex and subjectivity: anthropology and Foucault's last trip to Athens**

### *Required reading*

- Foucault, Michel. 1984. Introduction. In Michel Foucault. 1986. *The use of pleasure. The history of sexuality, volume 2*. New York: Random House. Pp. 1-32.
- Laidlaw, James. 2014. Foucault's genealogy and the undefined work of freedom (selection). In James Laidlaw. *The subject of virtue: an anthropology of ethics and freedom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 92-125.

### *Recommended reading*

- Faubion, James. 2011. Foucault in Athens. In James Faubion, *An anthropology of ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 25-70.

### *Further reading*

#### *Foucault's final lectures in the context of late French structuralism*

- Foucault, Michel. 1980. Lectures on *Oedipus, the King*. In Michel Foucault. 2014. *On the government of the living. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979-1980*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp. 22-92.
- Grace, Wendy. 2009. Faux amis: Foucault and Deleuze on sexuality and desire. *Critical inquiry*, 36(1): 52-75.
- Leonard, Miriam. 2005. Oedipus and the political subject. In Miriam Leonard, *Athens in Paris: Ancient Greece and the political in post-war French thought*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 22-95.

#### *Foucault's reception in anglophone and francophone anthropology*

- Abélès, Marc. 2008. Foucault and political anthropology. *International social science journal*, 59(191): 59-68.
- Laidlaw, James. 2016. Through a glass, darkly. *Hau: journal of ethnographic theory*, 6(2): 17-24.
- Ortner, Sherry. 2016. Dark anthropology and its others: theory since the 1980s. *Hau: journal of ethnographic theory*, 6(1): 47-73.

**SEMINAR 8** [Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> August, afternoon] – **Sexual order and social order: comparing incest taboos in western Europe**

*Required reading*

- Barnes, Robert H. 2006. Maurice Godelier and the metamorphosis of kinship: a review essay. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 48(2): 326-358.
- Borneman, John. 2015. Incest, the child, and the despotic father. In John Borneman, *Cruel attachments: the ritual rehab of child molesters in Germany*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press. Pp. 96-119.

*Recommended reading*

- Godelier, Maurice. 2004. Proposals for a different scenario. In Maurice Godelier. 2011. *The metamorphoses of kinship*. London and Brooklyn: Verso. Pp. 431-478.
- Héritier, Françoise. 1994. The hidden order of things. In Françoise Héritier. 1999. *Two sisters and their mother: the anthropology of incest*. New York: Zone Books. Pp. 265-291.

*Further reading*

*Re-appraisal of Collège de Sociologie in anglophone social theory*

- Bataille, Georges. 1976. The prohibition of incest. In Georges Bataille. 1991. *The accursed share: an essay on general economy (Volumes II and III)*. New York: Zone Books. Pp. 27-60.
- Winnubst, Shannon. 2007. Bataille's queer pleasures. In Shannon Winnubst (Ed.) *Reading Bataille now*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp. 75-93.

*Contemporary intersections between psychoanalysis and anthropology of kinship, gender, and sexuality in France*

- Godelier, Maurice and Marie Rebeyrolle. 2009. Comprendre l'altérité sociale et existentielle d'autrui. *Journal des anthropologues*, 116/7: 35-54.
- Green, André. 2002. The models of anthropology. In André Green. 2005. *Key ideas for a contemporary psychoanalysis. Misrecognition and recognition of the unconscious*. London and New York: Routledge. Pp. 276-281.
- Haber, Stéphane. 2012. *Freud et la théorie sociale*. Paris: La Dispute.
- Juillerat, Bernard. 2001. *Penser l'imaginaire : Essais d'anthropologie psychanalytique*. Lausanne: Payot.
- Richard, François. 2014. Le complexe d'Oedipe existe-t-il toujours? L'identique et la différence. *Débat* avec Françoise Héritier. *Adolescence*, 32(1): 23-46.

**SEMINAR 9** [Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August, morning] – **So could the Oedipus complex be universal? Sex and comparison in anthropology**

*Required reading*

- Herdt, Gilbert. 2012. Anthropology and the future of sexuality studies. In Lauren Dousset and Serge Tcherkézoff (Eds.), *The scope of anthropology: Maurice Godelier's work in context*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. Pp. 86-109.
- Hollan, Douglas. 2012. On the varieties and particularities of cultural experience. *Ethos*, 40(1): 37-53.



**ORAL EXAM** [Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August, afternoon]

**FINAL DISCUSSION** [Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August, afternoon] – **Coda: orgasm**

*Recommended reading*

Choose an article (or two) that take your fancy from the most recent issue of the journal *Terrain* on orgasm:-

Girard, Agnès, Emmanuel Grimaud, and Anne-Christine Taylor (Eds.). 2017. Jouis? *Terrain*, 67. <http://terrain.revues.org/16128>