



**Anthropology 413
Gender and Sexuality in Archaeology**

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Overholtzer

Office Hours: 2:30-3:30 MW & by appt.

Office hours by Zoom:

<https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/2921378674>

Email: lisa.overholtzer@mcgill.ca

Term: Fall 2020, Remote delivery

Day: T

Time: 10:05-12:05

To book an appointment for office hours, visit <https://calendly.com/lisa-overholtzer/15min>

Please note that this course will be delivered synchronously by Zoom (ie. remotely) due to covid-19. We will meet for two hours each week on Tuesdays, 10:05-12:05, during our normally scheduled class time. An hour and a half will be devoted to discussions of the week's readings, and half an hour will be used to go over assignments and other housekeeping tasks.

Course Description:

In the early 1980s, archaeologists began to draw on feminist theory to counter what they saw as a problematic androcentric bias within the field—that is, research that centered the male perspective and projected modern Western gender norms onto past societies. Since then, and especially beginning in the 1990s, the discipline has witnessed a flourishing of research that falls under the wide umbrella of gender archaeology; this includes scholarship that draws on feminist theories and theories of practice, performance, and embodiment. The 21st century has seen burgeoning interest in queer theory and the archaeology of sexualities, acknowledging that just as our contemporary gender norms had been projected onto the past, so too had modern Western heteronormative and reproductive models.

This seminar course introduces students to the range of archaeological research on past genders and sexualities, covering topics such as: gender and power; intersectionality; gender/sexuality and the body; and gender/sexuality in men and women, as well as third gender, non-gendered, and gender spectrum. Epistemic concerns—how and the extent to which we can reconstruct and make convincing arguments about gender and sexuality in the past—have been at the forefront of this research since the beginning, owing to its marginalized position, and we will devote significant attention to this topic. Case studies cover a wide range of archaeological methods, including ethnoarchaeology, bioarchaeology, and the use of fictional narratives, and we will use a critical eye in evaluating the case studies assigned. We will also turn this critical lens on ourselves within the “ivory tower,” considering gender within the academy in Canada.

Course assignments will ask students to apply course material to local archaeology in the Old Port of Montreal, first by critically evaluating how gender and sexuality are represented in museum narratives of the past, and second by proposing future avenues for archaeological research on the subject that might improve such narratives.

Course goals:

This course aims to:

- 1) Introduce students to the various theoretical frameworks that have been applied to archaeological research, and to the methodologies that archaeologists use to apply them;
- 2) Develop critical understandings of gender and sexuality in the past; and
- 3) Encourage the development of evaluation, communication, and grant writing skills.

Learning outcomes:

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

- 1) Engage in and facilitate sustained academic discussion on archaeological research on gender and sexuality and of gender issues within academic archaeology
- 2) Compare, contrast, and critique theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of gender and sexuality within archaeology
- 3) Evaluate popular archaeology narratives with respect to their coverage and understanding of gender and/or sexuality
- 4) Design an archaeological study with a gender or sexuality focus on a topic of their own interest

Basis for Evaluation:

- Weekly 250-word reading response papers, due at midnight each Sunday (20 points)
- Virtual attendance and active participation in discussion (10 points)
- Leading discussion with a fellow student for one class (10 points)
- Midterm writing assignment: Museum critique, 3-4 pages, due October 13 (20 points)
 - If students are unable to visit or uncomfortable visiting the Pointe-à-Callière museum, they may visit virtually, exploring links to exhibits on Quebec and Montreal archaeology on the following page:
<https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/>
 - And by looking at the education booklets distributed for teachers:
<https://pacmusee.qc.ca/en/education/school-program/tales-of-montreal/>
- Final writing assignment: gender/sexuality research project proposal for the Old Port, 7-8 pages (10-15 for graduate students) plus references and figures (40 points total)
 - Two short paper benchmarks, due October 27 and November 17 (5 points each, 10 points total)
 - Presentation of research proposal by Zoom during the final class period (5 points)
 - Final draft of research proposal, due on December 8 at 11:59 pm (25 points)

Grading scale:

Grade	Grade Points	Percentages
A	4.0	85-100%
A-	3.7	80-84%
B+	3.3	75-79%
B	3.0	70-74%
B-	2.7	65-69%
C+	2.3	60-64%
C	2.0	55-59%
D	1.0	50-54%
Fail	0	0-49%

In general, papers will be judged by these criteria: clearly articulated purpose or main idea; cogent development with well-chosen evidence and specific details; clear, thoughtful analysis or explanation; clear organization; smooth, logical connections between ideas; polished style. The papers will be graded on the basis of three criteria:

- *Quality of critical thought:* Did you relate your discussion to our course readings and class discussions? Have you raised new issues relating to the main questions in this course?
- *Thoroughness:* Did you address all parts of the assignment? Did you address the question, “How do we know this?” Did you support your argument with specific evidence and details? Are appropriate citations included and is full bibliographic information supplied on the References Cited page?
- *Quality of writing:* Is your paper free of errors in spelling and punctuation? Is your essay coherent, with an appropriate introduction, a thesis statement, a discussion that advances your argument, and a conclusion that matches your introduction? Do paragraphs have strong topic sentences, and do they contain appropriate supporting evidence?

I review performance for the semester when assigning grades and reserve the right to raise a final grade when on-time completion of assignments and an upward trend through the semester make it clear that extra effort has been invested, or when poor performance on a single assignment is out of line with overall performance. Because of this, I do not entertain arguments over the grading of individual assignments aimed at moving a grade up marginally.

Active participation in lecture and discussion: Attendance in class is mandatory. You should come to the Zoom meeting prepared and ready to actively contribute to class discussions and activities. This is a seminar course; the quality of the class experience depends in part on the active participation of the class learning community. I understand that especially during a pandemic, people get sick, internet connections fail, and unanticipated problems occur, so you may miss class **two** weeks without a drop in your grade. Additional absences will be reflected in your participation grade. You do **not** need to inform me if you will miss class or explain why; life happens!

Reading response papers: Each class meeting has assigned readings that will be discussed in class. In order to think through the readings and prepare yourself for discussion, you must write an approximately 250-word response to the week's readings. Your response should **not** focus primarily on *summarizing* the readings, but rather, should put them in *conversation with each other*.

Your response should:

- 1) identify the week's theme (in more detail than as listed on the syllabus)—that is, consider why these pieces were assigned together;
- 2) discuss similarities or differences between individual readings in terms of theoretical perspective, methodologies, etc.—that is, if you put these authors in a room together, what would they say to each other?;
- 3) identify any confusing or unclear parts of the readings, or the most surprising point of the readings, if nothing was unclear;
- 4) end with one or two discussion questions.

This is a lot to fit into 250 words, so be precise and concise! Reading response papers should be posted to the course website by midnight on Sunday. Students must also write reading response papers during the week that they lead discussion, since it will help them prepare.

Discussion leading: Students will (in pairs) lead the discussion of one week's readings. To prepare to lead discussion, students should not only write the reading response paper for that week, but also prepare a thoughtful brief introduction to the week's theme (maximum 5 minutes), followed by a series of discussion prompts to which fellow students can respond, or activities students can carry out. You may also read the response papers of your fellow classmates to facilitate this preparation and get a sense of their interests and understandings of the texts. Discussion questions should be situated at various levels: theoretical, methodological, case study-specific, etc., and some of the questions should put the readings in conversation with each other, comparing and contrasting the approach of authors. Stay close to the text, including quotes when possible. You may choose to use the time creatively, for example, organizing a debate or role play or other activity. There is no need to prepare a powerpoint or bring in additional texts or information.

Late policy:

Writing assignments will be accepted after the deadline, but 10% will be deducted for each calendar day the assignment is late. Extensions for valid reasons may be obtained with documentation *before* the due date. I do not accept late reading response papers. However, because I understand that "life happens," I drop one reading response paper grade (whether that is a missed response or the lowest grade). **You do not need to inform me if you will not turn in a reading response paper.**

Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Science—a human discipline that exists within our social world—is by definition subjective. Moreover, science has historically reproduced the voices of a privileged few. In preparing this course syllabus, I have attempted to assign papers from a diverse group of scholars, but real limits on this diversity exist in the academy that constrain my choices. Integrating a diverse set of perspectives makes for better archaeology, but both overt and covert biases likely still exist in

the readings because of the lenses through which they were written. Please let me know if you have any suggestions regarding how to improve course materials.

In addition to course materials, I would like to promote a classroom learning environment that celebrates diversity in student perspectives and experiences, and that honors your identities, whether based on gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, religion, or ability. I ask that you honor and respect the diversity of your fellow classmates in discussions, and that you talk to me if something said in class (by anyone) was hurtful in this regard. I also ask that if you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those listed in your McGill records, that you please let me know. Remember, you can always submit anonymous feedback if it is more comfortable for you.

Policy on Children in Class:

Before the pandemic, I included on every syllabus my own policy that reflected my beliefs and commitments to student parents. It acknowledged that unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of either missing class or bringing the child to the classroom. Covid-19 has made childcare disruptions more frequent and online learning more routine for elementary and secondary students, and it has erased the divide between home and school, home and work. I fully expect that children—yours or mine—may be last minute adds as participants for our Zoom sessions at some point in the semester, and I am sure we will all do our best in that situation.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/)."

LANGUAGE: In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. (approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue)."

Required and Recommended Texts:

Please note that recommended books will be assigned in part or in their entirety, but their purchase is optional, since the McGill library owns eBooks to which you will have free access (see links below). If you choose to use the eBooks, please have the readings open during our

class meeting. I also highly recommend figuring out a way to annotate or create reading notes for discussion.

Books required for purchase (not available through the library):

- *Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives: Sex, Gender, and Archaeology* by Rosemary A. Joyce
- *The Archaeology of Mothering: An African-American Midwife's Tale* by Laurie A. Wilkie

Books available online through the library:

- *What This Awl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village* by Janet D. Spector: <http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/5441>
- *Black Feminist Archaeology* by Whitney Battle-Baptiste: <https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.4324/9781315096254>
- *Archaeologies of the Heart* edited by Kisha Supernant, Jane Eva Baxter, Natasha Lyons, and Sonya Atalay: <https://link-springer-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/book/10.1007%2F978-3-030-36350-5>
- *Archaeologies of Sexuality* edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss: <http://www.tandfebooks.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/doi/book/10.4324/9780203991879>
- *The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi* by Laurie A. Wilkie: <http://site.ebrary.com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=10395760>

Additional course readings are available on MyCourses. Students should have the readings open in front of them (with notes and/or annotations) during class discussion on the relevant days.

Please complete all readings before the week listed. Reading response papers for the week are due on Sunday night at midnight, on the week they are listed.

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Content, Readings, and Assessments
1	Sept 8	Class introductions Syllabus overview, lecture on gender in the academy, and <i>Woman the Toolmaker</i> film
2	Sept 15	Topic: Gender/Sex and Archaeological Methods Readings: (Remember, Week 2 response papers are due Tuesday, January 15 by midnight) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Joyce, <i>Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives</i> Introduction & Chapter 1▪ Bowser, Brenda J., and John Q. Patton. 2004. "Domestic spaces as public places: An ethnoarchaeological case study of houses, gender, and politics in the Ecuadorian Amazon." <i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i> 11(2):157-181.

- Begley, Chris. 2016 “Evoking a Mythical Normative Past—Lidar, Lost Cities, and the Hegemonic Gaze.” Paper presented at the Theoretical Archaeology Group Annual Meeting in Boulder, CO, April 22-24.

- 3 Sept 22 Topic: A Feminist Approach
 I will model discussion facilitation for this class.
 Readings:
 - Conkey, Margaret W., and Janet D. Spector. 1984. “Archaeology and the study of gender.” *Advances in archaeological method and theory* 7: 1-38.
 - Spector, *What This Awl Means, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-40)*
 - Franklin, Maria. 2001. “A Black feminist-inspired archaeology?” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1(1):108-125.

- 4 Sept 29 Topic: Reversing the Androcentric Lens, aka “Finding Past Women”
 Discussion facilitators: TBD
 Readings:
 - Tringham, Ruth. 1991. “Households with faces: the challenge of gender in prehistoric architectural remains.” In *Engendering archaeology: women and prehistory*, edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, pp. 93-131. Wiley Blackwell.
 - Wylie, Alison. 1992. “The interplay of evidential constraints and political interests: recent archaeological research on gender.” *American Antiquity* 57(1):15-35.
 - Deagan, Kathleen. 1996. “Colonial transformation: Euro-American cultural genesis in the early Spanish-American colonies.” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 57(1):135-160.
 - Barnett, Kristen D. and Brenda Frank. 2017. “Indigenous Household Spatial Analysis.” In *The Last House at Bridge River: The Archaeology of an Aboriginal Household in British Columbia during the Fur Trade Period*, edited by Anna Prentiss, pp. 209-225. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City.

- 5 Oct 6 Topic: Sex/Gender Trouble
 Discussion facilitators: TBD
 Readings:
 - Joyce, *Ancient Bodies, Ancient Lives* Chapter 2
 - Prine, Searching for third genders, in *Archaeologies of Sexuality*
 - Geller, Pamela L. 2008. “Conceiving sex: Fomenting a feminist bioarchaeology.” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8(1):113-138.
 - Weismantel, Mary. 2004. “Moche sex pots: Reproduction and temporality in ancient South America.” *American Anthropologist* 106(3):495-505.

- 6 Oct 13 Topic: Sexuality
Discussion facilitators: TBD
Readings:
- Joyce, Chapter 4
 - Meskell, “Re-em(bed)ding sex: domesticity, sexuality, and ritual in New Kingdom Egypt,” in *Archaeologies of Sexuality*.
 - Casella, “Bulldaggers and gentle ladies: Archaeological approaches to Female Homosexuality in Convict-Era Australia,” in *Archaeologies of Sexuality*.
 - Blackmore, Chelsea. 2011. “How to queer the past without sex: queer theory, feminisms and the archaeology of identity.” *Archaeologies* 7(1): 75-96.
- POINTE-À-CALLIÈRE MUSEUM CRITIQUE PAPERS DUE
- 7 Oct 20 Topic: Black Feminist Archaeology
Discussion facilitators: TBD
Readings:
- Battle-Baptiste, Whitney. 2013. *Black Feminist Archaeology*, Foreword, Introduction, Chapter I-III, and V
- Discuss museum critiques and ideas for final projects
- 8 Oct 27 Topic: Intersectionality (in the past and present)
Discussion facilitators: TBD
Readings:
- Sterling, Kathleen. 2015. “Black Feminist Theory in Prehistory.” *Archaeologies* 11(1):93-120.
 - Omilade Flewellen, Ayana. 2017. “Locating Marginalized Historical Narratives at Kingley Plantation.” *Historical Archaeology* 51(1):71-87.
 - Williams, Bryn. 2008. “Chinese masculinities and material culture.” *Historical Archaeology* 42(3): 53-67.
 - Conkey, Margaret. 2005. “Dwelling at the Margins, Action at the Intersection? Feminist and Indigenous Archaeologies.” *Archaeologies* 1:9-59.
- Grant writing tutorial
FINAL PAPER BENCHMARK #1 DUE
- 9 Nov 3 Topic: Motherhood
Discussion facilitators: TBD
Readings:
- Wilkie, *The Archaeology of Mothering* Prologue and Chapters 1, 3, and 5-8

- 10 Nov 10 Topic: Heart-Centered Archaeology
 Discussion facilitators: TBD
- Kisha Supernant, et al., *Archaeologies of the Heart*, Chapters 1, 5-7, 9, and 17
- 11 Nov 17 Topic: Embodiment
 Discussion facilitators: TBD
 Readings:
- Agarwal, Sabrina C., Mircea Dumitriu, George A. Tomlinson, and Marc D. Grynepas. 2004. "Medieval trabecular bone architecture: the influence of age, sex, and lifestyle." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 124(1):33-44.
 - Joyce, Rosemary A. 2000. "Girling the girl and boying the boy: the production of adulthood in ancient Mesoamerica." *World Archaeology* 31(3):473-483.
 - Overholtzer, Lisa. 2012. "So that the baby not be formed like a pottery rattle: Aztec rattle figurines and household social reproductive practices." *Ancient Mesoamerica* 23(1):69-83.
 - Gilchrist, "Unsexing the body: the interior sexuality of medieval religious women" in *Archaeologies of Sexuality*
 - FINAL PAPER BENCHMARK #2 DUE; Workshop outlines in class in pairs.
- 12 Nov 24 Topic: Men Have Gender and Sexuality, Too
 Discussion facilitators: TBD
 Readings:
- Wilkie, *The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi* Prologue-Act III
- 13 Dec 1 FINAL PRESENTATIONS

FINAL PAPERS WILL BE DUE TO MYCOURSES ON DECEMBER 8 BY 11:59 PM.