Consider three familiar categories that structure so much of life: sex, gender, and desire. Standardly, we assume that sex is the biological fact that determines our gender, and our gender, in turn, determines our sexual desires. In this course, we analyze this "sex/gender/desire" conception of the self, with a special focus on the efforts societies make in creating and enforcing conditions that are supposed by those societies to be "natural." We will frame the issue by looking at Michel Foucault's landmark *Discipline and Punish*, which highlights the extent to which we are the product of disciplinary institutions as well the way those institutions attempt to pass themselves off as natural and inevitable rather than as the historical accidents that they are. We will then make a first go of analyzing the gendering project by examining the ways in which both men and women are the product of robustly normative systems. Subsequently, we'll examine the specific role that sexuality plays in the gendering process, highlighting the normative privilege that heterosexual identity brings with it. In the final sections of the class, we will consider how the lives of trans and intersex persons complicate theories of gender and sexuality as well as what might constitute the proper moral and political responses to deeply ingrained practices based upon compulsory heterosexuality. Due to the subject matter of the course, we will be considering—in addition to philosophical texts—work in biology, sociology, history, and psychology. Additionally, we will be drawing on the resources of mass culture, including television and film, as source materials for inquiry and discussion.

**Required Texts**

There are two required books for the course:

1. Michel Foucault—*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*
2. Judith Butler—*Gender Trouble*

**Topics and Readings**

**Social Institutions and the Internalization of Norms**

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

**A first go a gender**

- Marilyn Frye, "Sexism"
- Sandra Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, chapter 5. ("Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization Power of Patriarchal Power")
- William Pollack, *Real Boys*, Chapter 2 ("Stories of shame and the haunting trauma of separation: how we can connect with boys and change the 'boy code' ")

*Discipline and Punish* describes the internalization of norms by examining the operations of "discipline" on "docile bodies" in institutions throughout post-Enlightenment culture.

*There is much to say about gender, but here we focus on how gender is the embodiment of norms. This introduces the distinction between sex and gender, which later sections will problematize various ways of drawing that distinction.*
• Pat Califia, “Manliness”

• **Media:** “Boys will be girls” and “Girls will be boys,” Harvard Sailing Team
  http://harvardsailingteam.com/

• **Media:** The Simpsons: Homer’s Phobia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer%27s_Phobia

_The Trouble with “Gender”_


• Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Experience”

*Butler, Sex/Gender/Desire, and the “Subject” of Feminism*

• Butler, _Gender Trouble_

• Nussbaum, “The Professor of Parody.” _The New Republic_, 1999-02-22

_Sex/Gender/Desire and Science_

• Birke, “Unusual Fingers: Scientific Studies of Sexual Orientation”

• Ingraham, “Heterosexuality: Its Just Not Natural!”

• Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes” and “The Five Sexes, Revisited”

• Fine, _Delusions of Gender_ (excerpts)

_The Medicalization of Gender_

• Spade, “Mutilating Gender”

• Rubin, “The Logic of Treatment”

_Histories of Western Heterosexism_


• Hall, “A Brief, Slanted History of ‘Homosexual’ Activity”

_Theoretical Perspectives on Heterosexism and Cissexism_

• Sedgwick, “Epistemology of the Closet”

• Edelman, “Tearooms and Sympathy or The Epistemology of the Water Closet”
• Bettcher, “Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers: On Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion”

• Namaste, “Genderbashing: Sexuality, Gender, and the Regulation of Public Space”