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Syllabus - "Selling Sex: Feminist Discourses on the Sex Work Industry" (Cornell College, Women's Studies Course)

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Georgia State University

From the SelectedWorks of Amanda "Mandy" J. Swygart-Hobaugh

October 2005

Syllabus - "Selling Sex: Feminist Discourses on the Sex Work Industry" (Cornell College, Women's Studies Course)

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WST 303 Selling Sex: Feminist Discourses on the Sex Work Industry

Block 3, 2005-2006

Professor: Amanda (Mandy) Swygart-Hobaugh, Ph. D.

Course Description: We will examine competing feminist discourses regarding women's involvement/portrayal in the sex work industry. As debates regarding sex work have in the past and continue to rage in feminist (and other) circles, this course will allow a thorough exploration of this multi-faceted issue. Grounded in feminist theoretical and methodological perspectives, our discussions will be guided by the following considerations:

- ❖ What are the competing feminist discourses regarding sex work, and what are the similarities/differences between these discourses?
- ❖ How are these competing discourses deployed in a global context, and what issues/concerns arise within a global consideration of sex work?
- ❖ Is sex work inherently degrading/objectifying to women, or can one allow that it may also be sexually liberating?
- How might one's social situatedness (i.e. social class, race/ethnicity, gender, education, non-sex worker, sex worker etc.) influence his/her perspective of sex work? How does this problematize these perspectives?
- What other social discourses regarding sex work (e.g., freedom-of-speech, religious) clash and/or complement the feminist discourses?
- ❖ How do discourses deployed by women outside of the sex work industry (i.e. academics, human rights activists) clash and/or complement those of sex workers?

Primary Course Objectives:

- ❖ To challenge you to consider the various "sides" of this issue and critically evaluate the merits and pitfalls of a presumed unilateral "feminist" perspective. Thus, you will further hone your critical thinking skills as well as your ability to apply feminist theoretical/methodological approaches to specific topics.
- ❖ To gain a better understanding of how subjectivity/social situatedness permeates theoretical and methodological perspectives.
- ❖ By completing an extensive original-research project collaboratively, you will gain practice in feminist, social-scientific research methodologies, researching, and writing.

Important Disclaimer: Due to the nature of this course, we will be discussing/watching/reading some material with graphic content. For example, we will be watching documentaries on sex work that include clips of pornographic material, possibly reading/analyzing some short erotic stories, and reading/watching some candid descriptions of sex workers' experiences in the industry. Likewise, students will engage in a collaborative original-research project on a topic of their choice, and some of these will likely include graphic content. At all times, we will approach the course material professionally and with scholarly aims. However, I wanted to state this up front to give people the chance to rearrange their course schedule if they feel it necessary.

Required Texts, Readings, and Library Resources: All readings are to be completed <u>before</u> the class period in which they appear on the Course Calendar/Moodle. Two required texts:

¹ This course will focus primarily on the experiences/perspectives of women; however, if time allows we will discuss men's portrayal/involvement in the sex work industry (e.g., male prostitutes, male erotic dancers, males as consumers of pornography/prostitution, etc.). Also, the collaborative original-research project will enable exploration of men's involvement/portrayal in the sex work industry for those particularly interested in this area.

- Chapkis, W. (1997). Live sex acts: Women performing erotic labor. New York: Routledge. [Chapkis...]
- Kempadoo, K., & Doezema, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Global sex workers: Rights, resistance, and redefinition.*New York: Routledge. [**K&D...**]

The bracketed information indicates how these sources will be referenced in the Course Calendar/Moodle. Also, I will make available via reserves various course readings supplementing the required texts.

The following library resources, available in the 3rd-floor Reference Collection, may prove useful for gaining background information on content/methodological areas with which you are not familiar and/or for jumpstarting your research. Occasionally I will assign sections of these as required readings:

- Cuba, L. (2002). A short guide to writing about social science (4th ed.). New York: Longman. Call#: REF 808.066 C891s 2002 [**Cuba...**]
- Kramarae, C., & Spender, D. (2000). Routledge international encyclopedia of women: Global women's issues and knowledge. New York: Routledge. Call#: 305.4 R765 2000 [RIEW...]
- Lewis-Beck, M. S., Bryman, A., & Liao, T. F. (Eds.). (2004). *Sage encyclopedia of social science research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Call #: 300.72 L587s 2004 [**SocSciResMeth...**]

Also consult the library's *Research by Topic—Social Sciences* page for online databases for your library research; I will highlight those databases that will be most useful to you in our library session.

Academic Integrity: As a participant in a scholarly community and a producer of scholarship, you have a vested interest in protecting the intellectual property of yourself as well as other scholars. As such, you are bound by the rules of the Cornell scholarly community to uphold your own and others' academic integrity; these rules and consequences of their violation are explicitly delineated in *The Compass* under the subsections, "Honesty in Academic Work" and "Procedures for Dealing with Dishonesty in Academic Work":

http://www.cornellcollege.edu/student_affairs/compass/academicpolicies.shtml While you are ultimately responsible for maintaining your academic integrity, as your professor I believe it my duty to guide you in this effort. As such, at any time if you are unsure of how to properly document your sources and/or integrate others' works into your own scholarship via paraphrasing or directly quoting, feel free to consult the Writing Studio professional/peer consultants and/or myself for assistance. This course is approaching the topic of sex work from a social-scientific perspective; therefore, you are **required to use APA documentation style**, as it is best suited for documenting social-scientific works. There are APA Style Manuals available in the Writing Studio as well as at the 3rd-floor Reference Desk; likewise, the following online guide should prove very helpful for both in-text citing of sources as well as creating a list of references using APA-style guidelines:

http://dianahacker.com/resdoc/social_sciences/intext.html

Learning Needs: If you have a diagnosed learning disability or specific learning needs, speak with me about this **no later than the 3rd day of the block** and we will work together to make reasonable accommodations.

Moodle: We will be using this course management tool (http://www.cornellcollege.edu/moodle) for various aspects of the course, including my posting announcements, in-class/out-of-class exercises, take-home exams, and your participating in forum discussions when asked and posting completed exercises/exams/group-led discussion handouts/stages of your collaborative original-research project. Also, my plan is to post your grades on Moodle, thus allowing you to self-monitor your progress in the course.

Course Requirements and Percentage of Final Grade [1000 possible points total]:

- Class Participation/Attendance: 10% [100 points]
- ❖ Group-Led Class Discussion of Readings: 10% [100 points]
- In-Class/Out-of-Class Exercises: 10% [100 points]
- Take-Home Exams: 30% (2@15%) [2@150 points=300 points]
- Collaborative Original-Research Project: 40% [400 points]

Class-Participation/Attendance—10% of Final Grade [100 points total]: The majority of class time will involve class discussions of readings, films, etc. that will require ample class-participation. Students should come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss. Should it appear that students are not keeping up on the readings, pop-quizzes may be implemented.

Attendance is required. You are allowed one "get-out-of-jail-free" missed class period; a second and third missed class period will each result in a drop of ½ a letter of your final grade. Four or more missed class periods may be grounds for failure of the entire course. NOTE: I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.

- ♦ Assessing your Class-Participation/Attendance:
 - Your class-participation will be gauged both on quantity (do you regularly participate in class discussions) and quality (are your questions/comments thoughtful, engaging, provoke discussion, offer unique insights, enhance the class's understanding of the readings, etc.)
 - I will take attendance daily.

Group-Led Class Discussion on Readings—10% of Final Grade [100 points]: Once during the block you will collaborate with an assigned group to facilitate discussion of readings during an assigned class period. You should be prepared to lead discussion for approximately one hour. You will also create a handout to distribute to the class that must include the following:

- 1. Discussion questions/talking points that arose from the assigned readings and/or relate to previous readings/discussions/lectures/exercises in the block.
- 2. A proposed essay question(s) appropriate for inclusion on a take-home exam—you are required to have at least one question but may have multiples.
- ♦ Assessing your Group-Led Class Discussion:
 - Discussion Questions/Talking Points—Thoughtfulness of your questions, how engaged class members are in discussion, the uniqueness of insights you provide and/or provoke from class members, etc.
 - Discussion Mediation—Balance of the discussion (discussion facilitators shouldn't dominate the discussion, but should provide more than simply a few observations), discussion facilitators' equal participation (no discussion facilitator should dominate each facilitator should participate equally), and your keeping discussion on track.
 - Proposed Essay Question—Thoughtfulness/thoroughness of the question, how well it demonstrates your understanding of readings, and how well it integrates other relevant course content/discussions.
 - Evaluation of Own/Others' Contributions—You will evaluate your own and other group members' contribution to the discussion preparation and handout; thus, there is the possibility of different group members getting different grades.

In-Class/Out-of-Class Exercises—10% of Final Grade [100 points total]: Periodically I will ask you to complete short in-class or out-of-class exercises related to the course content. These will be fairly impromptu, and I am unsure of how many I will assign at this time. They will vary in nature, perhaps consisting of posting some brief comments to a Moodle discussion forum, providing a brief analysis of some provided data sources, reflecting on some discussions from class, etc. I will announce them in class and post them to Moodle with brief descriptions of the exercise, my expectations, and the due date.

- ♦ Assessing your In-Class/Out-of-Class Exercises:
 - You will receive partial credit just for completing the exercise.
 - Assessment criteria will vary by the exercise, but largely will be based on the thought and effort put into the exercise.

Take-Home Exams—30% (2@15%) [2@150 points=300 points total]: There will be two take-home exams (see the Course Calendar for due dates, abbreviated as **THEx1** and **THEx2**). I will post these to Moodle on the dates indicated on the Course Calendar. These exams will consist of essay questions, some of which may be drawn from the questions provided on the discussion handouts. You may consult your course readings, discussion handouts and notes, lecture notes, etc. to complete these exams **and** must cite your sources appropriately <u>using APA style</u>. You have the following three options for taking these exams:

- 1. You may work alone on the exam;
- 2. You may work collaboratively with classmate(s) discussing the exam questions but compose your answers alone; with this option, you must indicate on your exam (1) with whom you worked, and (2) that the answers were written solely by you;
- 3. You may work collaboratively with classmate(s) discussing the exam questions and compose your answers as a group; with this option, you must indicate on your exam (1) with whom you worked and (2) that the answers were written collaboratively. **NOTE:** For this 3rd option, your entire group will receive the same grade.
- ♦ Assessing your Take-Home Exams:
 - Organization/Clarity/Integration of Course Materials —Clear statement of a thesis and well-organized supporting of the thesis. Aptness of integrating information/insights from course readings, discussions, films, etc., into your answers, demonstrating understanding of the course materials and using them to support your thesis.
 - Documentation of Sources—Use of proper APA documentation of sources, <u>including</u> lecture notes, discussion notes, film notes, excerpts from discussion forums, etc.—see the APA Style Manual for how to cite these types of information.

Collaborative Original-Research Project—40% of Final Grade [400 points]: You and a partner (or a group of no more than three) will complete an original-research project on a research focus of your choosing. To aid in your success with this project, I have broken it into the various stages described below. Also, Cuba's Chapters 3 and 4 on writing a literature review and research proposal (PDF available in Moodle) and the sessions regarding library research and writing an original-research paper with Writing Studio Consultant Jen Rouse (Library 124, x4466, jrouse) will be crucial to your success with this project. Some other general guidelines:

- Use the following online guide for APA in-text citations, list of references, and manuscript format: http://dianahacker.com/resdoc/social_sciences/intext.html
- ❖ The final research paper should be approximately 15-20 pages, including the title, abstract, and references pages but not including appendixes. I have included approximate lengths for each section of the paper below.
- * Non-negotiable restrictions on your research:
 - o You are not allowed to do anything illegal. For example, your research cannot involve patronizing/procuring/practicing prostitution; your research cannot involve viewing any content that is classified as "obscene, child pornography or harmful to minors"; you cannot visit erotic dancing clubs and/or consume alcohol while researching these establishments if you are not of the legal age; you cannot visit an adult entertainment store and/or view/obtain pornographic media if you are not of the legal age.
 - o I am restricting anyone from doing research on pornographic websites, as I do not want anyone giving out credit card/personal information to these sites. If you wish to do research involving pornographic media and are uncomfortable with renting and/or buying materials, we can discuss your options.
- ♦ Assessing your Collaborative Original-Research Project
 - o Rubric—I am developing a detailed rubric for how this project will be assessed.
 - Self/Group Evaluation—You will evaluate your partner's/groups members' and your own effort and contribution toward the original-research project.

STAGE 1: Preliminary Research Proposal Materials + Research Proposal: 10% [100 points]

❖ Preliminary Bibliography + Brief Description of Research Focus—DUE Nov. 1 at Midnight

² "Obscenity and Pornography," *The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 602-604. [See description of Miller v California on page 603].

You should have a bibliography (not annotated) of two scholarly sources you think you'll be using in your literature review. Plus, you should bring these sources to the session with Jen Rouse and be prepared to write annotations (i.e., you should have at least skimmed these sources to glean the main points). Plus, you should have a brief description (couple sentences or so) of your research focus and bring that to the session with Jen as well.

Preliminary Research Proposal Materials—DUE Nov. 4 at meeting time

- o **Introductory paragraph(s)** [1-2 pg.]: Opening paragraph(s) that frame(s) the thesis of your paper and then outlines how you will support this thesis. It should also include hypotheses/propositions that you will test/explore [See Cuba (2002), p. 86-88].
- o **Annotated Bibliography:** You are required to have a <u>minimum of six scholarly sources</u> for this annotated bibliography that will become your literature review [See the "Writing an Annotated Bibliography" link on the library's *Research by Topic—Social Sciences*]. Your sources should include (if available) a mix of original-research works, literature reviews of previous research, and/or theoretical pieces; you may use course readings but you must have <u>at least three outside sources</u>.
- Research Methods [1-2 pg.]: Describes how you plan to collect and analyze your data—ask yourself, "What does my audience need to know about the research context/plan of analysis to adequately understand my research?" It should include (1) the data/data sources you will be analyzing, (2) discussion of your measurement instrument or plan of analysis, and (3) additional description of the research context [See Cuba (2002), p. 96-98].
 - We will discuss in the individual meetings how much data/data sources are sufficient to carry out your research.

❖ Research Proposal—**DUE Nov. 7—post to Moodle by Noon**

- Title Page [1 page]: See APA Manuscript Format link above for formatting and what should be included on title page.
- o **Introduction [3½-6 pg.]:** Includes (1) your revised introductory paragraph(s) [1-2 pages], (2) your literature review (<u>minimum six scholarly sources</u>) [2-3 pages], and (3) hypotheses/propositions that you will test/explore in your study [1/2-1 page].
 - Section Heading: Introduction, bolded and centered.
 - Subheadings: <u>Literature Review</u> and <u>Hypotheses/Propositions</u>, both underlined and centered.
- Research Methods [1½-2½ pg.]: Your revised research methods, with revisions driven by suggestions from our meeting. Plus, you should add a brief reflection on how your "social situatedness" relates to and/or might influence your interpretations/analyses of the data—see "reflexivity" discussion in SocSciResMeth, "Feminist Research" entry.
 - Section Heading: Research Methods, bolded and centered.
- References [1 pg.]: Include all referenced sources, using APA documentation style.
 - Section Heading: References, bolded and centered.

STAGE 2: Preliminary Data Analysis + Research Paper: 10% [100 points]

- ❖ Preliminary Data Analysis—**DUE Nov. 17 at meeting time**
 - You should bring notes on what data you've collected thus far and preliminary analysis you've written of this data. This may be in fairly rough form, but you must have some data collection/analysis completed by this meeting. My primary goal is to see where you are and how I can help you move toward your writing the Results and Discussion sections.

❖ Research Paper—DUE Nov. 23—post to Moodle by noon

- o **Title Page [1 pg.]:** See above.
- Abstract [1 page]: One paragraph summarizing (1) the focus of your research, (2) your research methods, and (3) the major findings of your research [See Cuba (2002), p. 85].
 - Section Heading: Abstract, bolded and centered.

- Revised RP [5-8½ pg.]: You should have incorporated all suggested revisions by now.
 Also, the RP's verb tense should be changed from the future (e.g., "We will be analyzing...") to the past (e.g., "We analyzed...") throughout.
- Results [3-4 pg.]: Reports the findings of your research [See Cuba (2002), p. 100-116]. This section will be largely descriptive but can contain some interpretation. If you are doing quantitative/statistical research, this section will likely include tables/figures that present your data.
 - Section Heading: Results, bolded and centered.
- Discussion [3-4 pg.]: In this section, you will provide your interpretation/analysis of your data [See Cuba, p. 116-118]. This section should include the following: (1) how your findings supported/refuted/informed your hypotheses/propositions; (2) how your findings relate to and/or enhance the present scholarship in this area; (3) your suggestions for further research in this area; and (4) a reflection on how your "social situatedness" relates to and/or might have influenced your interpretations/analyses of the data—see "reflexivity" discussion in SocSciResMeth, "Feminist Research" entry.
 - Section Heading: Discussion, bolded and centered.
- o **References [1 pg.]:** Include all referenced sources, using APA documentation style.
 - Section Heading: References, bolded and centered.
- Appendix/Appendixes: The following are examples of materials that might be included in an appendix/appendixes: (1) a copy of a survey used to collect data; (2) lists of data sources, such as newspaper articles, websites, erotic short stories, etc., documented using APA style; or (3) any additional materials you feel necessary to include for a reader to fully comprehend your research (e.g., diagrams of an exotic dancing club, some excerpts from prostitution/pornography laws, etc.).
 - Section Heading: Appendix (if only contains one) or Appendixes (if contains multiple), bolded and centered. With multiple appendixes, number, title, and underline each (e.g., Appendix 1: Interview Questions, Appendix 2: Diagram of Dance Club, etc.).

STAGE 3: Poster Presentation: 10% [100 points]—Nov. 22, 9-9:45am and 10-10:45am

- ❖ Each group will present their research via a poster presentation. We will have half the class's posters set up for each 45-minute session, and those class members not presenting will mingle from poster to poster. When presenting, you should be prepared to answer questions regarding all aspects of your research (hypotheses/propositions, methods, results, discussion, etc.) and note feedback given by your classmates and your professor that you wish to incorporate into your final research paper.
- Poster presentations can take various forms but all have key elements that make them effective; for some tips on what a poster presentation might look like/should contain, see the following sites:

http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/speaking/poster/index.cfm http://www.lcsc.edu/ss150/poster.htm http://www.aas.duke.edu/trinity/research/vt/postertips.html

❖ The <u>Instructional Media Studio</u> (2nd-floor Library, x5300) has a poster printer that you may use (you are not required); the following link has information about the costs/formatting suggestions, or contact Annette Beck (abeck, x4125) for assistance:

http://www.cornellcollege.edu/library/multimedia-studio/plotter.shtml

- Assessing your Poster Presentation:
 - Presentation of Research—Contains title/authors of paper; presents main points of introduction, hypotheses/propositions, research methods, results, and conclusions in a concise/organized manner—enough that viewer gets the gist of the research but can ask questions for clarification/further insights.
 - Visual Presentation—Visually appealing; appropriate font sizes/variations; use of graphics (e.g., tables, figures, etc.) are appropriate, well-presented; content is arranged so that viewer can understand order without narration/direction.

_ You should revise your paper to include feedback by your professor (both written feedback and during the poster presentations) and by classmates given during the poster presentations.

STAGE 5: Self/Group Evaluation + Reflection: 10% [100 points]—DUE Nov. 22 by 5pm—post to Moodle

- ❖ I will give you an evaluation form in which you will evaluate your partner's/groups members' and your own effort and contribution toward the original-research project. You will also be asked to give a "grade" out of 100 points to yourself and each of your group members and provide comments.
- ❖ Briefly reflect (roughly a page) on how you think this research project contributed to/changed your understanding of sex work, what kind of research would you do in the future on sex work (if you had all the time and the money in the world), the pros/cons of working in a group on such a project (if applicable), etc. I'm just curious about any thoughts you have to offer on your experience with this project.

READINGS AND FILMS

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- Alexander, Priscilla. (1997). Feminism, sex workers, and human rights. From Nagle, Jill (ed.), *Whores and other feminists* (pp. 83-97). New York: Routledge.
- Baron, Bernadette. (2002). Dancing on the Mobius strip: Challenging the sex war paradigm. *Gender & Society*, 16(5), 585-602.
- Bauserman, Robert. (1996). Sexual aggression and pornography: A review of correlational research. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 18(4), 405-427.
- Bell, Holly. (1998). Exploiter or exploited: Topless dancers reflect on their experiences. *Affilia*, 13(3), 352-368.
- Bryson, Valerie. (1999). Pornography. From Bryson, Valerie, *Feminist debates: Issues of theory and political practice* (pp. 172-194). New York: NYU Press.
- Busch, Noel Bridget, Bell, Holly, Hotaling, Norma, & Monto, Martin A.. (2002). Male customers of prostituted women. *Violence Against Women* 8(9), 1093 -1112.
- Cameron, Deborah, & Frazer, Elizabeth. (1996). On the question of pornography and sexual violence: Moving beyond cause and effect. From Jackson, Stevi and Scott, Sue (eds.), *Feminism and sexuality: A reader* (pp. 321-332). New York: Columbia University Press.
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- Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. (2000). So deep a violence: Prostitution, trafficking and the global sex industry [documentary film]. North Amherst, MA: Coalition Against Trafficking in Women.
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- Hardy, Simon. (2001). More black lace: Women, eroticism and subjecthood. *Sexualities, 4(4),* 435-453.
- Henaut, Dorothy. (1991). *Not a love story: A film about pornography* [documentary film]. New York: National Film Board of Canada.
- Jenness, Valerie. (1990). From sex as sin to sex as work: COYOTE and the reorganization of prostitution as a social problem. *Social Problems*, *37*(3), 403-430.
- Kempadoo, Kamala, & Doezema, Jo. (Eds.). (1998). *Global sex workers: Rights, resistance, and redefinition.* New York: Routledge.
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- Kramarae, C., & Spender, D. (2000). Entries on "Sex Work," "Erotica," "Pornography," "Prostitution," and "Sexual Slavery" from *Routledge international encyclopedia of women: Global women's issues and knowledge.* New York: Routledge.
- Lewis, Jacqueline. (2000). Controlling lap dancing: Law, morality, and sex work. Weitzer, Ronald (ed.), Sex for sale: Prostitution, pornography, and the sex industry (pp. 203-216). New York: Routledge.
- Lorde, Audre. (2000). Uses of the erotic: The erotica as power. From Cornell, Drucilla (ed.), *Feminism and pornography* (pp. 569-574). New York: Oxford University Press.
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- MacKinnon, Catherine. (2000). Only words. From Cornell, Drucilla (ed.), Feminism and pornography (pp. 94-120). New York: Oxford University Press.
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- McIntosh, Mary. (1996). Liberalism and the contradictions of oppression. From Jackson, Stevi and Scott, Sue (eds.), *Feminism and sexuality: A reader* (pp. 333-341). New York: Columbia University Press.
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