

## **The Body and the Double Bind: Sex/ual/ized Stigmatization, Oppression, and Resistance**

### 2023 Summer Session in Gender/Sex/uality In/Justice

**Meeting time:** Thursdays, May 25<sup>th</sup> – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1-3pm ET (no session on June 29<sup>th</sup>)

**Zoom link:** x

**Facilitator:** Liam Heerten-Rodriguez, PhD (he/him)

**Organizer:** Sari van Anders, PhD (she/they)

**Administrative Support:** Kate Hunker or Benjamin Nguyen

### **Format**

The summer session is entirely online. There will be weekly meetings with facilitated discussion using Zoom (see last page for the Zoom link). Before each meeting, there will be materials for you to read/watch, and these are primarily academic.

### **Course Description**

In this course, we center the body as both a corporeal and socially constructed site in the experience of gender/sex/uality in/justice. Participants will explore the roles that body size, gender presentation, race/ethnicity, disability, and intersections of these play in sexual life, with particular attention to experiences of sex/ual/ized stigmatization, oppression, and resistance. Through readings, videos, reflection, and discussion, session attendees will critically examine the double-binds produced by both the processes of stigmatization and the experiences of oppression. These double-binds consist of paradoxical social norms, contexts, and structures that seek to limit resistance and maintain oppressive systems and their social hierarchies. These double binds are both documented by and, in many cases, replicated within dominant approaches to sexuality and gender research. Research approaches that uncritically accept the double binds of stigmatization and oppression serve to further marginalize subjugated groups by excluding their full lived experiences and reinforcing narratives that attempt to strip them of agency and power. To challenge these dynamics within our own practices, the summer session will assist participants in recognizing, identifying, and centering strategies of sex/ual/ized resistance, through which subjugated peoples seek to survive, mitigate, end, or transform the harms they have experienced.

### **Course Goals**

Through participation in the summer session, attendees will be able to identify processes through which some bodily characteristics come to be marked as undesirable and unworthy of sex, romance, love, and reproduction. Participants will be able to articulate some of the ways in which people with those bodily characteristics are both treated differently within the sex/ual/ity domain and how they respond to the differential treatment. And participants will reflect on their

relationships with sex/ual/ized stigmatization, oppression, and resistance and how these relationships influence their practices.

### **Goals for Summer Sessions in General:**

Build/create/sustain meaningful opportunities for engagement with research about/with/on gender/sex/uality that is situated within:

feminist and/or queer lenses with critiques of normative systems and mechanisms of oppression and/or explorations of progressive flourishing that intersect with gender/sex/uality and work towards community building, education/growth/learning, community relevance, social change, and more empirical and just understandings of gender/sex/uality.

### **Principles & Guidelines**

The summer session is a collective product and process. While the summer session theme and readings have been prepared for participants, how we engage with them and what we take from the experience will result, in part, from our individual and collective preparation and participation practices. We will discuss group guidelines during the first meeting and can have additional discussions throughout the session. In advance, the following expectations, guidelines and advice can help participants show up intentionally in the summer session:

Read the course material in advance of each session. Ideally, give yourself some time with the materials prior to the session, as some of your thoughts and ideas will take time to develop.

Take notes as you read, think about, and reflect on the content. Notes, however formal or informal, can help you participate thoughtfully and intentionally.

Plan to attend and participate in each session. Participation in discussion will be our primary learning mechanism.

Practice self- and other-awareness in our discussions. Think about how you can both take and make space in the conversation. Expect that participants will be coming with different backgrounds, experiences, and areas and levels of expertise.

Recognize that the systems of oppression that we are engaging with in the summer session are present within and between us. There will be power differentials in the room that cannot be erased but, especially for those in positions of power, can be thoughtfully attended to.

Center and uplift voices with lived experiences of oppression, especially in relation to the axes of oppression being discussed. However, no one is expected to speak for or represent a minoritized group; people can choose to speak from experience but should not be expected to do so.

As we learn and grow, we mess up. If someone says something hurtful, harmful, or problematic, our hope is that anyone in the space will feel the agency and empowerment

necessary to speak up. Whether you are addressing a concern or hearing a concern, a spirit of curiosity, education, and humility can help build community and accountability. We are all responsible for our learning. While others may offer us gifts of education and insight, they are not obligated to. But these are not scarce resources there are many paths to get the information and support that we need in order to learn and grow. To help facilitate community-building and support learning and growth, your video should be on, unless this is not possible for you. We understand that some people have internet speeds or situations that preclude this in general or at specific times.

or indicate a preference to us in another way.

helping to monitor and manage the space and guide discussions in productive and sometimes challenging directions. If you receive feedback about the direction of the conversation or the amount

with respect and a sense of community. You are always welcome to reach out to Liam directly with questions, concerns, and suggestions!

### **Accessibility**

Please let us know if there are ways we can make the summer session more accessible to you, whatever your dis/abilities and accommodation needs are. You can contact us with any questions or notes.

### **Required Knowledge**

Participation in the summer session does not require prior knowledge from any particular discipline or theoretical perspective. The session content draws heavily from psychology, sociology, sexuality and gender studies, and critical perspectives (fat studies, dis/ability/crip theory, queer theory, and critical race theory). Materials for each section attempt to bring both foundational and advanced knowledge for participants to engage with. Participants are expected to have a basic understanding of and commitment to social justice. The summer session will operate from a baseline understanding that stigmatization and oppression are real, systemic, complex, on-going, and result in unequal experiences of power and privilege. If needed or desired, a concise introduction to some of these ideas can be found in the following articles:

Desmond, M. & Emibayer, M. (2009) What is racial domination? *Du Bois Review: Social Science on Race*, 6(2), 335-355.

Frye, M. (1983). Oppression and the use of definition. In *The politics of reality: Essays in feminist theory*. Crossing Press.

Young, I. M. (1990). Five faces of oppression. In *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press.

Pescosolido, B. A., & Martin, J. K. (2015). The Stigma Complex. *Annual review of sociology*, 41, 87–116. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145702>

### **Location of Course Materials**

All required readings and course materials

McKinnon, R. (2014). Stereotype threat and attributional ambiguity for trans women. *Hypatia*, 29(4), 857-872.

#### **4. Oppression & Double-Binds**

Ciurria, M. (2022). Responsibility's double binds: The reactive attitudes in conditions of oppression. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*.

Santinele Martino, A. (2017). Crippling sexualities: An analytic review of theoretical and empirical writing on the intersection of disabilities and sexualities. *Sociology Compass*, 11, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12471>

Campbell, M. (2017). Disabilities and sexual expression: A review of the literature. *Sociology Compass*, 11, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12508>

#### **5. More Oppression, More Double-Binds**

Major, B., Tomiyama, A. J., & Hunger, J. M. (2018). The negative and bidirectional effects of weight stigma on health. In B. Major, J. F. Dovidio, & B. G. Link (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of stigma, discrimination, and health* (pp. 499-519). Oxford University Press.

Pausé, C. (2015). Human nature: On fat sexual identity and agency. In H. Hester & C. Walters (Eds.), *Fat sex: New directions in t*

