CAS/GRS New Course Proposal Form

This form is to be used when proposing a new CAS or GRS course.

This form should be submitted to Senior Academic Administrator Peter Law (617-353-7243) as a PDF file to pgl@bu.edu. For further information or assistance, contact Associate Dean Joseph Bizup (617-353-2409; jbizup@bu.edu) about CAS courses or Associate Dean Jeffrey Hughes (617-353-2690; hughes@bu.edu) about GRS courses.

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: Religion & WGS

COURSE NUMBER: RN454/GRS RN754/WS 454

COURSE TITLE: Sexuality and Religion in the U.S.

INSTRUCTOR(S): Anthony Petro (RN & WGS)

TO BE FIRST OFFERED: Sem./Year: S / 2018

SHORT TITLE: The “short title” appears in the course inventory, on the Link University Class Schedule, and on student transcripts and must be 15 characters maximum including spaces. It should be as clear as possible.

S | E | X | & | R | E | L | I | N | U | S

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is the description that appears in the CAS and/or GRS Bulletin and The Link. It is the first guide that students have as to what the course is about. The description can contain no more than 40 words.

Religion and sexuality in the U.S., including theoretical and historical approaches to religious and sexual desire, identity, ritual, and regulation. Possible topics include religious and sexual freedom, plural marriage, the Sexual Revolution, reproductive justice, sex and secularism, and LGBTQ rights.

PREREQUISITES: Indicate “None” or list all elements of the prerequisites, clearly indicating “AND” or “OR” where appropriate. Here are three examples: “Junior standing or CAS ZN300 or consent of instructor”; “CAS ZN108 and CAS ZN203 and CAS PQ206; or consent of instructor”; “For SED students only.”

1. State the prerequisites:

   None

2. Explain the need for these prerequisites:

CREDITS: (check one)

☐ Half course: 2 credits
☐ Full course: 4 credits
☐ Variable: Please describe.
☐ Other: Please describe.

Provide a rationale for this number of credits, bearing in mind that for a CAS or GRS course to carry 4 credits, 1) it must normally be scheduled to meet at least 150 minutes/week, AND 2) combined
instruction and assignments, as detailed in the attached course syllabus, must anticipate at least 12 total hours/week of student effort to achieve course objectives.

In addition to meeting for 150 minutes per week, this course requires substantial reading time and time for viewing films and documentaries outside of class. Added to writing assignments, these requirements will require at least 12 hours of student effort per week.

DIVISIONAL STUDIES CREDIT: Is this course intended to fulfill Divisional Studies requirements?

X No.
☐ Yes. If yes, please indicate which division ______________________ and explain why the course should qualify for Divisional Studies credit. Refer to criteria listed here and specify whether this course is intended for “short” or “expanded” divisional list.

HOW FREQUENTLY WILL THE COURSE BE OFFERED?
☐ Every semester  ☐ Once a year, fall  ☐ Once a year, spring  X Every other year
☐ Other: Explain:

NEED FOR THE COURSE: Explain the need for the course and its intended impact. How will it strengthen your overall curriculum? Will it be required or fulfill a requirement for degrees/majors/minors offered by your department/program or for degrees in other departments/school/colleges? Which students are most likely to be served by this course? How will it contribute to program learning outcomes for those students? If you see the course as being of “possible” or “likely” interest to students in another departments/program, please consult directly with colleagues in that unit. (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course is intended to serve students in specific other programs. See FURTHER INFORMATION below about cognate comment.)

The Department of Religion offers a broad range of courses in Religious Studies. We have several faculty offering courses on religion and women, gender, and/or sexuality. Given this depth, I am pitching this course as an advanced undergraduate seminar with a graduate section. (This usually translates to about 15 undergraduate students and 5 graduate students). I also designed this course so it can be cross-listed with the Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I hope that cross-listing this course will help attract more students who otherwise may have never had considered religious studies as an option, and I hope to contribute to the very strong relationship that already exists between Religion and WGS.

This will be the first permanent course at BU on the topic of sexuality and U.S. religions and one of the few courses at BU covering the history of sexuality, including queer history, in the U.S. This course complements existing gender/sexuality themed courses in the Department of Religion, which include RN224 Women and Religion, RN337 Gender and Judaism, RN435 Women, Gender, and Islam, and RN452: Topics in Religion and Sexuality. RN 452 is the only course that might seem to compete with the one I am proposing, but it has a very different focus. RN452 emphasizes a “comparative religions” approach to the topic, which focuses on primary texts from a number of world religions. This course also enhances WGS offerings, as it would be a great follow up to WS101 and 102, which is the interdisciplinary introduction to gender and sexuality. Finally, this course complements offerings in the Department of History—including HI303 Sex, Love, Family: Relationships in Recent American History and Pop Culture and HI584 Labor, Sexuality, and Resistance in the Afro-Atlantic World—without repeating topics already covered there.
ENROLLMENT: How many undergraduate and/or graduate students do you expect to enroll in the initial offering of this course?

I estimate enrolling about 15-20 undergraduate and 5 graduate students.

CROSS-LISTING: Is this course to be cross-listed or taught with another course? If so, specify. Chairs/directors of all cross-listing units must co-sign this proposal on the signature line below.

Yes – this course will be cross-listed with the Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

OVERLAP:

1. Are there courses in the UIS Course Inventory (CC00) with the same number and/or title as this course?
   X No.
   □ Yes. If yes, any active course(s) with the same number or title as the proposed course will be phased out upon approval of this proposal.
   NOTE: A course number cannot be reused if a different course by that number has been offered in the past five years.

2. Relationship to other courses in your program or others: Is there any significant overlap between this course and others offered by your department/program or by others? (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course might be perceived as overlapping with courses in another department/program. See FURTHER INFORMATION below.)

   There is no significant overlap with other courses in Religion or in WGS. Also see above, “Need for the Course.”

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: What, if any, are the new or special facilities or equipment needs of the course (e.g., laboratory, library, instructional technology, consumables)? Are currently available facilities, equipment, and other resources adequate for the proposed course? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

n/a

STAFFING: How will the staffing of this course, in terms of faculty and, where relevant, teaching fellows, affect staffing support for other courses? For example, are there other courses that will not be taught as often as now? Is the staffing of this course the result of recent or expected expansion of faculty? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

This course will be taught by existing faculty, with no added cost to the university or department.

BUDGET AND COST: What, if any, are the other new budgetary needs or implications related to the start-up or continued offering of this course? If start-up or continuation of the course will entail costs not already discussed, identify them and how you expect to cover them. (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

n/a
EXTERNAL PROGRAMS: If this course is being offered at an external program/campus, please provide a brief description of that program and attach a CV for the proposed instructor.

FURTHER INFORMATION THAT MUST BE ATTACHED IN ORDER FOR THIS PROPOSAL TO BE CONSIDERED:

- A complete week-by-week SYLLABUS with student learning objectives, readings, and assignments that reflects the specifications of the course described in this proposal; that is, appropriate level, credits, etc. (See guidelines on “Writing a Syllabus” on the Center for Teaching & Learning website.) Be sure that syllabus includes your expectations for academic honesty, with URL for pertinent undergraduate or GRS academic conduct code(s).

- Cognate comment from chairs or directors of relevant departments and/or programs. Use the form here under “Curriculum Review & Modification.” You can consult with Joseph Bizup (CAS) or Jeffrey Hughes (GRS) to determine which departments or programs inside and outside of CAS would be appropriate.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT NAME AND POSITION:

DEPARTMENT CONTACT EMAIL AND PHONE:

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL: 

[Signature]

Department Chair 

2/1/17 Date

Other Department Chair(s) (for cross-listed courses)

[Signature] 

2/11/17 Date
DEAN'S OFFICE CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATOR USE ONLY

CAS/GRS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

☐ Approved  Date:____________________
☐ Tabled   Date:____________________
☐ Not Approved  Date:____________________

Divisional Studies Credit:

☐ Endorsed

☐ HU
☐ MCS
☐ NS
☐ SS

☐ Not endorsed

______________________________
Curriculum Committee Chair Signature and Date

Comments:

PROVISIONAL APPROVAL REQUESTED for Semester/Year __________________________

______________________________
Dean of Arts & Sciences Signature and Date

Comments:

CAS FACULTY:  Faculty Meeting Date: __________________________  ☐ Approved  ☐ Not Approved

______________________________
Curriculum Administrator Signature and Date

Comments:
COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course traces the intersections and tensions between religion and sexuality in the U.S., while also paying attention to theoretical tools scholars in religious studies and in feminist and queer studies have used to think about religious and sexual desires, identities, bodies, communities, and times. Indeed, one goal of our class will be to think critically about “religion” and “sexuality” as particular kinds of categories developed in the modern West—categories that not only have histories but that also structure much of 20th and 21st century Western thought. Our course will survey a range of topics in the modern United States, focusing especially on Protestant, Catholic, African diasporic, and secular histories, with comparative examples drawn from other historical and national contexts. We will also pay attention to the roles of gender and race throughout this course. The syllabus is organized around four themes: Orientations; Regulations; Formations; and Pleasures & Play. It might be tempting to read this movement as a narrative of progress. Resist this temptation. Ask, instead, how this narrative constantly disrupts itself through our readings. Ask how it could—how it should—be organized otherwise.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) All students: Regular attendance, careful reading, and thoughtful participation in class are necessary to succeed in this course. For undergrads, required reading will usually be capped at ~200 pages per week and often less; selections to focus on will be noted by the professor. You have one free absence, no questions asked. Each additional unexcused absence or tardiness will lower your overall course grade. Please note that missing class for most minor illnesses will not count as excused absences. Exceptions are made in the event of major illnesses that may impact your performance in class. Exceptions will also be made for absences necessitated by religious observance—though it is your responsibility to obtain class notes and make up any work missed.

2) All students: Weekly in-class reading responses. At some point each week, we will spend about 10-15 minutes writing during class. I will offer a prompt (a question, a provocation …) about the readings or a subset of the reading and/or film to which you will need to respond as thoroughly as possible, as though you were answering questions on an exam. This writing should reflect your thoughtful consideration and analysis of course texts. I will not announce in advance which text or texts the prompt will focus on, so you will need to complete all the readings/screenings to be prepared for the response. Note: this writing is not a personal reflection. It is a critical response to class readings or viewings. When preparing for class, consider the following questions for each of the assigned readings or films:

- What is this author’s central argument (or set of arguments)?
- Who are this author’s conversation partners, both imagined and in the body of the text?
- What key themes or ideas does this work add to our analytical vocabulary?
- How would you defend this author’s argument?
- How would you critique this author’s argument?

Reading responses will be marked High Pass (A), Pass (B), or Fail (F). You should participate in the writing assignment each week, but you only need to submit 10 of these over the course of the semester (in other words, you can drop three).  

3) Undergrads: Two thesis essays + final essay or creative project.

- Students will write two “thesis essays.” They should each be about 1000 words (roughly 4 pages); focus on class texts (no outside research or reading); and articulate an original thesis or argument. Please underline your thesis statement in the essay. These essays are due by Tuesday at 3pm during Week 5 and Week 10. There is a 2-day “grace” period for these essays.

- Final essay or creative project: You have the option of submitting a 10-page final research paper on a topic of your choice OR a creative project. One limitation to note upfront: the creative work should not be autobiographical. Consider this work (like the other essays in this class) as an opportunity to decenter yourself and to think about the world around you. Creative work should include a short (2 page) rationale upon final submission. You should consult with the instructor before week 10 to discuss your ideas for the final essay or creative project. The final essay will be due one week after the last day of class. The creative project, if you select this option, should be ready during the last week of classes, so you can share it with the class. The rationale and final version should be submitted within one week of the final day of class.

4) Grads: Submit a research paper or literature review on a topic of your choice. This assignment will come in two stages: First: submit a short proposal/abstract (1-2 pages) due by week eight. Second: the final paper (~20 pages, double spaced, 1” margins, Times New Roman or Garamond font) will be due one week after the final day of class.

GRADING: Undergraduate
20% -- Participation
30% -- In-class reading responses
30% -- Thesis papers (15% each)
20% -- Final essay or creative project

GRADING: Graduate
20% -- Participation
30% -- In-class reading responses
50% -- Final paper

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1 I adapted this assignment, including some of the wording, from one designed by Professor Jennifer Knust.
GRADING SCHEME

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COURSE CONTENT WARNING
At times, the material we read and our discussions in class will broach potentially disturbing or sexually explicit topics, including sexual and religious violence and pornography. It would be irresponsible to study religion and sexuality without paying attention to such topics. I ask that we all try to confront and work through these topics as best we can, realizing that confronting difficult texts and ideas (whether because of their style or their content) is critical to the work we do as students of the humanities and as members of the BU community. If you feel it would be helpful, you are always welcome to meet with me before or after discussions or assigned readings to discuss personal reactions to such topics.

A NOTE ON WRITING
Unless otherwise stated, all writing for this class must be rendered in formal, academic prose, with correct grammar and punctuation, attention to style, and proper citation. Ideally, this means that your writing will be free of basic spelling and grammatical errors and will also work toward eloquence in form and style. It is acceptable to use personal pronouns—i.e., “In this essay, I will argue that…”—but they should be employed judiciously. For this course, you should very rarely employ personal pronouns to index the evidence of personal experience. Rather, evidence should come from readings or screenings (primary and secondary sources). Remember: your analysis is your own, but your evidence, which you use to support your analysis, is public. When you write, assume that your audience is intelligent, but not expert in your topic. Provide the proper background necessary to draw them in and allow them to follow your argument. Also, do not refer to our class in your formal writing (i.e., “Since we read chapter four this week, I think …”—don’t assume your imagined reader would know that you read chapter four or what that chapter was about!).

LATE WORK
Essays will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for every day late (after the 2-day “grace” period). Should you need an extension on an assignment, you must request it before the day on which the assignment is due. Your request may or may not be granted depending on the assignment and the circumstances for requiring extra time.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
You are responsible for knowing, understanding, and obeying the Academic Conduct Code and policies regarding plagiarism. This policy is outlined here: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/). If you have questions, please ask the instructor. For further direction, you can consult the Chicago Manual of Style at [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

NOTE ON CELL PHONES AND LAPTOPS
We have much ground to cover collectively, and the temptations of the Internet are too great for us all. Let’s view class time as an opportunity to unplug. Barring certain class exercises during which the use of electronic devices might be encouraged, please plan not use a laptop, e-reader, or smartphone during our time together. If you need an exception to this policy, please speak with me as soon as possible. I hope the absence of a laptop (or smart phone or other electronic devices) might also free us from the burden of viewing class time as extended dictation sessions. Rather than taking down everything I say, try to focus on key themes and figures that we discuss in class and encounter in our readings.

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS
If you are a student with a disability and need accommodations, please see the instructor and contact the appropriate program under BU’s Disability Services: [http://www.bu.edu/disability/](http://www.bu.edu/disability/).

DIVERSITY STATEMENT
Consistent with the BU’s commitment to inclusivity, I promise to do my best to run class in a manner that is respectful of difference, which includes, but is not limited to, physical and mental ability, age, socio-economic status, religious identity, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, and veteran status. You are
expected to be respectful of these differences in your conduct in class and on campus. As a sign of this respect, you should write in a way that recognizes diversity. In other words, you should at the very least strive to be mindful of metaphors that may have problematic religious, racial, class, sexual, or (dis)ability connotations. Attention to the diversity of your audience makes your writing and thinking stronger.

OFFICE HOURS
I am happy to meet individually to discuss any matters relating to the course or other academic questions and concerns. My office hours are by appointment. If you have a lot to cover, please feel free to book two consecutive (15 min) appointments. To book a time, please go here: apetro.youcanbook.me

REQUIRED READINGS
The following required texts have been ordered at BU Barnes and Noble; these books are also available (new or used) from numerous online sellers and (for free!) in the library. Any print edition is fine. Additional assigned readings, marked (Bb), are available on Blackboard.

- **Michel Foucault**, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1: An Introduction* (Vintage, 1978)
- **R. Marie Griffith**, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity* (California, 2004)
- **Joy Ladin**, *Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey between Genders* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2013)

REQUIRED SCREENINGS
We will host screenings of the following either during class or outside of class, as announced in advance. Attendance at screenings outside of class is optional, but you are still required to view films and documentaries. They are available for free at the BU Library (in the video collection).

- *Stop the Church*, dir. Robert Hilferty
- *Daughters of the Dust*, dir. Julie Dash
- *Transparent* (seasons 1-3), created by Jill Soloway

COURSE SCHEDULE

**I. Orientations: Narratives of Religion, Gender, and Sexuality**

**Week One**

Tuesday, 1/24: *Between Religious Studies and Sexuality*
- Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” in Parker and Aggleton, eds., *Culture, Society, and Sexuality*, 143-178 (Bb)

Week Two

Tuesday, 1/31: Modernity, the Homo/Hetero Binary, and Narratives of Conversion
• Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 1-90
• James Baldwin, “The Threshing Floor,” from *Go Tell It On the Mountain*, 225-263 (Bb)
• Michael Warner, “Tongues Untied” *Village Voice*, 215-224 (Bb)

Recommended: Sedgwick, “How To Bring Your Kids Up Gay,” in *Social Text*, 18-27 (Bb); Michael Cobb, “James Baldwin and His Queer, Religious Words,” in *God Hates Fags*, 53-78

Week Three

Tuesday, 2/7: Discipline/Regulation/Desire
• Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1: An Introduction*
• Ann Laura Stoler, “Placing Race,” in *Race and the Education of Desire*, 19-54 (Bb)

Recommended: Mark Jordan, “Chatting Genitals,” in *Convulsing Bodies*, 93-118 (Bb)

II. Regulations

Week Four

Tuesday, 2/14: Forming Bodies, Shaping Desires
• R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies: Flesh and Spirit in American Christianity*


Week Five

Tuesday, 2/21: NO CLASS (“BU Monday” schedule)
• Watch Season One of *Transparent*
• Read Susan Stryker, Susan Murray, Benjamin Kahan, Tey Meadow, and Jeanne Vaccaro, “Virtual Roundtable on *Transparent*,” *Public Books* (Bb)
• First Thesis Essay Due!

Week Six

Tuesday, 2/28: Religion, Gender, and Sexual Freedom
• *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014), read the excerpts from Ginsburg (Bb)
• Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Love the Sin*

Recommended: Seth Dowland, “‘Family Values’ and the Formation of a Christian Right Agenda,” *Church History*, 606-631 (Bb); Linell Cady and Tracy Fessenden, *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference*

Week Seven

Tuesday, 3/7: NO CLASS (Spring Break)
• Watch Season Two of *Transparent*
• Read Daniel Boyarin, “Are There Any Jews in *The History of Sexuality,*” *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 333-355 (Bb)

**Week Eight**

Tuesday, 3/14: **Political Morailties: Monogamy, Promiscuity, Pornography**

- Rebecca Davis, “Prologue: The Pursuit of Marital Happiness” and “The State of Marriage,” in *More Perfect Unions,* 1-10; 214-260 (Bb)
- Heather White, “Sanctified Heterosexuality,” in *Reforming Sodom,* 108-137 (Bb)
- Whitney Strub, “Resurrecting Moralism” and “Pornography Is the Practice,” in *Perversion for Profit,* 179-255 (Bb)
- Douglas Crimp, “How to Have Promiscuity in an Epidemic,” *October,* 237-271 (Bb)

**III. Formations: Genealogies of the Religious and the Erotic**

**Week Nine**

Tuesday, 3/21: **Film, Myth, and the Erotics of History**

- *Daughters of the Dust,* dir. Julie Dash
- Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic,” in *Sister Outsider,* 53-59 (Bb)
- Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” in *Signs,* 631-660 (Bb)
- J. Jack Halberstam, “Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies,” in *In a Queer Time and Place,* 1-21 (Bb)

*Recommended: José Muñoz, Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity; Elizabeth Freeman, Time Binds: Queer Temporality, Queer Histories; L.H. Stallings, Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures*

**Week Ten**

Tuesday, 3/28: **Islam, Sexuality, Nationalism**

- Mehammed Amadeus Mack, *Sexagon: Muslims, France, and the Sexualization of National Culture*
- **Second Thesis Essay Due!**


**Week Eleven**

Tuesday, 4/4: **Catholic Desires and Queer Times**

- Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions*
- Amy Hollywood, “‘That Glorious Slit:’ Irigaray and the Medieval Devotion to Christ’s Side Wound,” in *Acute Melancholia,* 171-188 (Bb)
- Kent Brintnall, “Content|Form,” in *Ecce Homo,* 101-134 (Bb)

*Recommended: Zeb Tortorici, “Masturbation, Salvation, and Desire: Connecting Sexuality and Religiosity in Colonial Mexico,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 355-372 (Bb); Carolyn Dinshaw,
IV. Pleasures and Play

Week Twelve

Tuesday, 4/11: Religious Camp, Anti-Catholicism, Queer Protest

- *Stop the Church*, dir. Robert Hilferty (in class viewing)
- George Weigel, “The New Anti-Catholicism,” *Commentary* (Bb)
- José Muñoz, “Sister Acts,” in *Disidentifications*, 119-142 (Bb)

Recommended: Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp,’” in *Against Interpretation*, 275-292 (Bb); Anthony Petro, “Protest Religion!” in *After the Wrath of God*, 137-185 (Bb); Mark Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, 4/18: Feminist and Queer Arts of the Sacred

- Karen Gonzalez Rice, *Long Suffering*, 1-88
- Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?,” *October*, 197-222 (Bb)
- Ron Athey, “Gifts of the Spirit” and “Deliverance,” in Dominic Johnson, ed., *Pleading in the Blood*, 42-54; 100-109 (Bb)
- Catherine Gund, “There Are So Many Ways to Say Hallelujah!” in Dominic Johnson, ed., *Pleading in the Blood*, 55-63 (Bb)

Recommended: Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject*

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, 4/25: Affect, Copresence, and Bodies-in-Motion

- Aisha Beliso de Jesús, *Electric Santeria: Racial and Sexual Assemblages of Transnational Religion*


Week Fifteen

Tuesday, 5/2: Telling Stories/Crossing Genres

- Joy Ladin, *Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey between Genders*
- *Season Three of Transparent*

Recommended: Lori Hope Lefkovitz, *In Scripture: The First Stories of Jewish Sexual Identities*; J. Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*