

## **Sexuality, Gender Identity, & the Politics of US Public Schooling**

Graduate School of Education

05:300:465:90

Asynchronous Virtual Course

### **Instructors:**

Hilary Tackie (she/they)

Email: [hilary.tackie@gse.rutgers.edu](mailto:hilary.tackie@gse.rutgers.edu)

A Pollicino (they/them)

Email: [a.pollicino@gse.rutgers.edu](mailto:a.pollicino@gse.rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Every Tuesday via zoom from 12-1pm (or by appointment)

### **Reaching us:**

The BEST ways to reach us are via email or through Canvas. We will be working collaboratively as co-instructors. Please contact both of us with any comments, questions, or concerns. If you contact one of us, we will be sharing your message with the other unless there is an explicit reason not to do so (ie. you are making a grievance).

### **Course Description and Learning Objectives**

As Americans have become increasingly aware of diverse orientations and gender identities, school has become a site of progressive identity affirmation for some and hostile debate for others. Progressive policy and practice has been met with culture war backlash that affect student safety, wellbeing, and identity development. Concerns over trans rights, age appropriate curriculum, and what bodies are safely allowed to attend, engage in extracurricular activities, and even teach at our K-12 institutions are common issues in US schools. Moral panic, deliberate misinformation, and confusion stoked by a polarized political climate plague school board meetings and classrooms grappling with how to best serve all community members. We will engage in topics relating to this current climate, with a student centered approach, to best address some of the pressing concerns districts face nationally.

This undergraduate course seeks to explore the intersections between gender, sexuality, and the politics of US public schooling. Drawing on a host of disciplinary perspectives, including history, law, political science, sociology, feminist theory, queer theory, and critical trans studies students will examine the politics of US public schooling, its gendered and sexualized roots, and how various policies shape the gendered identities of those who work, live, and play in school settings.

As part of the work for this course, students will:

- a) Be introduced to a range of theoretical perspectives for considering issues of gender, sexuality, and the politics of education.
- b) Engage their peers in asynchronous discussions using Canvas.
- c) Respond to the class readings and current events by crafting two (2) brief response papers and one culminating final project.

### **Teaching methods:**

This class is being taught asynchronously, however, we expect regular engagement throughout the semester. Regular discussion posts, two reflection papers, and a final project will give students multiple opportunities to bring their own understandings and experiences to the discussions of gender, sexuality, and the politics of education. Although group engagement will be limited we encourage students to use the discussion boards and all opportunities for intellectual exchange.

We recognize students' prior experiences and identities as relevant to the learning in this course and so encourage students to be reflective. However, we also recognize that issues of gender and sexual identity are very personal and can be attached to trauma. You should never feel pressure to disclose any personal information about yourself. Please come talk to us if you feel this boundary is being infringed upon.

**Required Materials:**

We will use a range of texts including books, articles, videos, podcasts and websites. All of these materials (including the syllabus, calendar, & assignments) can be found on Canvas. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to access any of the course texts.

We will also be posting short lecture videos to provide context and connections across weeks. If you would like access to the video transcripts, please let us know.

**Grading for the Course:**

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Participation	On-going	15
Discussion Posts	Thursdays @ 11:59; Reply by Monday @11:59	10
Reaction Paper 1	Monday, Feb. 19th	20
Reaction Paper 2	Monday, March 18th	25
Final Assignment	Wednesday, May 1st	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

***Preparation & Participation (15 points)***

As you read for class, take time to reflect on the concepts presented by the authors and make connections with your own experiences. Reflect on similar and contrasting examples or theories that you have encountered in your professional and academic life. Take notes, write down questions, and “talk back” to the text. This kind of engaged reading facilitates learning. It will also be useful when you participate in group discussion posts and complete written assignments.

***Discussion Posts (10 points)***

Since this is an asynchronous course participation in the discussion forum is a vital component of this class. Students are expected to engage in discussion about the assigned readings, to teach and to learn from each other in the spirit of intellectual inquiry and personal growth, and to assist in crafting a dynamic and shared learning experience. Knowing we all come to these discussions with varied lived

experience and perspectives, please be thoughtful and intentional with how you engage with each other throughout the term.

Each week we will post a discussion prompt, using the discussion section of Canvas. All students will be assigned randomly to a reading group. Students should post an initial response to the prompt by Thursday night and then respond to at least one peer's post by Monday of the following week. Students are required to participate in at least 10 discussions.

**Reaction Paper 1** (20 points)

**Reaction Paper 2** (25 points)

Students will write two brief reaction papers in response to the course readings. Reaction papers should describe the **salient points** of the text and explain the reader's own reactions and understandings of the readings. Connect the readings with at least one current event and cite an article from a reputable news source. Each brief reaction paper will be 4-5 pages long.

**Final Project** (30 points)

This project can be a culminating essay or creative project.

*Culminating Essay*

If you choose an essay: your paper should describe your reflections and understandings of the texts and how your understandings about sexuality, gender and the politics of US schooling have changed over the term. You will not be able to cover all the course content; however, you should write clearly and thoughtfully about a subset of key points. The culminating essay will be between 8-10 pages in length, no more, no less (excluding cover and references).

**OR:**

*Zine*

For this option, you can either create a personal reflection zine (essentially the culminating essay in another format) or you can create an educational zine. For the latter option, we are asking that you create a zine that educates an audience of your choice about a gendered or sexual issue relevant to K-12 education. For either option, you should use course texts as well as news articles, media, and visuals to convey your topic and share your learning from the course. Further details related to format and submission guidelines will be posted on Canvas.

For more on zines: <https://www.binderymke.com/what-is-a-zine>

**Submitting Written Work**

All written work should be submitted via the Canvas assignment tab. If you are having trouble understanding assignment goals or meeting deadlines please reach out via email.

**Formatting Written Work**

All written work should be proofread for clarity, spelling, grammatical errors and professional tone. Your written work should conform to the formal standards articulated by the American Psychological Association 7<sup>th</sup> Edition and outside sources should be referenced appropriately. Purdue Online Writing Lab (Purdue OWL) provides a useful online guide. Most importantly:

- Times New Roman, 12 point font
- One-inch margins on all sides

- Page numbers
- Cover page that includes title, course, student, professor, date
- Left alignment with default spacing between words and letters
- Double spaced lines with only one hard return between indented paragraphs.

For support: Rutgers Writing Center <https://writingctr.rutgers.edu/>

### **University Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** I expect that you will comply with standards of academic integrity in this course. If you need assistance in understanding an assignment or course content, please see me. Assignments should be your own work. No copying of any kind is allowed, unless copied text is placed within quotations and author/source is appropriately cited. You should not turn in the same work in two separate classes without the specific written approval of the faculty members involved. Evidence of plagiarism will likely result in a grade of F for the assignment AND course.

The consequences for violating policies of academic integrity and other elements of the student code of conduct are serious and can have a tremendous negative impact on your academic progress and future career. Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on academic integrity: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>. Related regulations may also be found in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education Catalog.

**Disability Accommodation Policy.** Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact The Office of Disability Services for Students (<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>). Any student who has already received a letter of accommodation should contact me privately to discuss implementation of his/her accommodations. Failure to discuss implementation of accommodations with the instructor promptly may result in denial of your accommodations.

**Policy Prohibiting Discrimination & Harassment.** Rutgers University policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based upon: race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, genetic information, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, military service, veteran status, and any other category protected by law. The Rutgers University Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment can be viewed at <http://policies.rutgers.edu/PDF/Section60/60.1.12-current.pdf>

### **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, & Anti-Racist Pedagogy:**


We strive to foster an environment that addresses equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist pedagogy. We aim to embody the principles of justice-oriented content through the organization of this course. This includes being aware of our positionalities, our commitment to inquiry and empathy, and our dedication to critical pedagogy, anti-racism, and challenging cis-hetero norms. As a learning community we invite everyone to be aware of and collectively address how norms in our educational institutions are often reflective of white supremacist values that have become normalized and may discount our diverse knowledges, languages, and experiences. We hope we can be attuned to addressing these inequities within our collective learning. Please be respectful and honor the names and pronouns of your peers. If either of these change over the course of the semester and you would like the class to know, please communicate that with us, or share this directly with the class. If you have an issue with misgendering, or something else tied to your identity, please reach out for support.


## Course Calendar

As you read for class, please remember to read for “**big ideas**” and **key concepts**. You will not be asked to memorize or recall details. Rather, our aim is to uncover new meanings and build understanding in ways that deepen our overall knowledge of the topics at hand. Refer to Canvas modules for full description of each week's themes, lecture video, and expectations.

**Note:** Although the course syllabus and calendar have been carefully constructed, it is subject to change as we learn more about your interests and get a better sense of the course progression. Assignments or course sessions may be added, deleted, or altered. Moreover, the final class has been left intentionally open-ended and the readings/resources for those dates will be determined later in the semester.

**Please see Canvas Modules for most up to date readings and assignments.**

1	Jan 16	<p><b>Introduction: Welcome to Sex, Gender, and Politics in US Public Schools!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Fill out <i>Who are You?</i> survey in the welcome module</li><li>● Review welcome content and instructor video</li></ul> <p>Watch:  <a href="#">BODIES AS RESISTANCE: Claiming the political act of being oneself   Sony...</a></p>
2	Jan 22	<p><b>Overview: Understanding sex, gender &amp; sexuality</b></p> <p>This week includes an overview of three key concepts that are frequently misunderstood: sex, gender, &amp; sexuality.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Meyer, E. J. (2010). <i>Gender and sexual diversity in schools</i> (Vol. 10). New York, NY: Springer. <b>Ch. 1 p. 3-7 &amp; Ch. 2</b></li><li>● <i>Science, Sex, and Society</i> from <a href="#">Queer Sex Ed Links to an external site.</a></li></ul> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <a href="#">Berkeley professor explains gender theory   Judith Butler</a></li><li>● <i>Gender Revolution</i> (available in <i>Reading List</i> tab)</li></ul>
3	Jan 29	<p><b>Schools &amp; Social Control of Sexuality</b></p> <p>This week we begin to examine the effects of how gender is made and reinforced in schools. We will be working to understand how gendered and sexual practices in schools impact all students.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Miceli, M. S. (2007). 50 Schools and the social control of sexuality. <i>Handbook of the New Sexuality Studies</i>.</li><li>● Sadker, M., Sadker, D., &amp; Klein, S. (1991). Chapter 7: The issue of gender in elementary and secondary education. <i>Review of research in education</i>, 17(1), 269-334.</li><li>● <a href="#">Florida Just Expanded the 'Don't Say Gay' Law. Here's What You Need to Know</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Florida's New 'Don't Say Gay' Laws: What They Mean for Kids   TIME</a></li></ul>
4	Feb 5	<p><b>Intersex Identities &amp; Biological Essentialism</b></p>

		<p>The “I” in LGBTQIA+ is often under-discussed and/or misunderstood by those outside the inter community. We will review a foundational text exploring the genealogy of how we conceptualize sex today. Then we will get a sense of what it means to be intersex from advocates within the community, treating lived experience as expertise.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). The Five Sexes, Revisited. <i>Sciences (New York Academy of Sciences)</i>, 40(4), 18-23.</li> </ul> <p>Listen: <a href="#">Radiolab Presents Gonads</a>, episodes 3-5</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Episode 3: X &amp; Y, June 30, 2018</li> <li>2. Episode 4: Dutee, July 22, 2018</li> <li>3. Episode 5: Dana, July 22, 2018</li> </ol> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●  <a href="#">Intersex activist Pidgeon Pagonis shares journey of trauma, triumph, and...</a></li> </ul>
5	Feb 12	<p><b><i>Sports, Athletics &amp; Biological Essentialism</i></b></p> <p>School and professional sports have been a site to police norms around sex categories. This week we will unpack how these norms have often affected racialized cisgender athletes historically, while institutions further scrutinize students and athletes in relation to gender diversity today.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Title IX Turns 50: It Changed Society—but Now It Must Go Further   BU Today</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Transforming Title IX   School of Law</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Biden proposes using Title IX to stop blanket bans on transgender athletes   PBS NewsHour</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">USA Boxing Now Requires Trans Boxers to Get Surgery in Order to Compete   Them</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Florida passes bill requiring some girls to undergo genital inspections for school sports - LGBTQ Nation</a></li> </ul> <p>Listen: <a href="#">This trans college athlete is being faced with an impossible decision : NPR</a></p>
6	Feb 19	<p><b><i>Masculinities</i></b></p> <p>This week we will continue to consider multiple marginalizations and intersecting identities as we look into masculinities. The readings allow us to think about what masculinity means for various people and the power dynamics that vary over school settings and context.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● McCready, L. T. (2004). Understanding the marginalization of gay and gender non-conforming Black male students. <i>Theory Into Practice</i>, 43(2), 136-143.</li> <li>● Givens, J. R., Nasir, N. I., Ross, K., &amp; de Royston, M. M. (2016). Modeling manhood: Reimagining Black male identities in school. <i>Anthropology &amp; Education Quarterly</i>, 47(2), 167-185.</li> <li>● Katch, H., &amp; Katch, J. (2010). Voices Inside Schools: When Boys Won't Be Boys: Discussing Gender with Young Children. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i>, 80(3),</li> </ul>

		379-391. <b>Due:</b> Reaction Paper 1
<b>7</b>	<b>Feb 26</b>	<p><b><i>Sex Education</i></b> Sex education has long been a topic of debate in schools. This curriculum varies widely depending on the school, state standards, and teacher training among other factors. This week’s discussion will bring up issues of inclusivity, political influence, and our personal experiences with sex education.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allen, L., &amp; Allen, L. (2021). <i>Breathing life into sexuality education</i> (pp. 27-47). Springer International Publishing.</li> <li>● <a href="#">How Accessible Sex Ed Helps Young Adults With Developmental Disabilities Form Healthy Relationships – Mother Jones</a></li> <li>● Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. <i>Harvard educational review</i>, 58(1), 29-54.</li> <li>● <a href="#">The Future of Sex Education</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">National Sexuality Education Standards</a></li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>Mar 4</b>	<p><b><i>Policing Gender</i></b> How we are policed and police others is highly dependent on what bodies we have and how they are perceived. This week we will explore how policing manifests considering the multiple identities we hold and the social spaces we move through.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Payne, E., &amp; Smith, M. J. (2016). Gender policing. <i>Critical concepts in queer studies and education: An international guide for the twenty-first century</i>, 127-136.</li> <li>● Halberstam, J. (1998). <i>Female masculinity</i>. Duke University Press. <b>(Pgs 20-29)</b></li> </ul> <p>Watch: <i>Pushout</i></p>
	<b>Mar 11</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK: Enjoy :)</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Mar 18</b>	<p><b><i>Gender Inclusivity &amp; Sexual Diversity</i></b> This week we will discuss how teachers and institutions have the power to create more inclusive environments for their students and the whole school community.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meyer, E. J. (2009). Creating schools that value sexual diversity.</li> <li>● Mangin, M. M. (2022). Teachers’ strategies for supporting transgender and/or gender-expansive elementary school students. <i>Educational Researcher</i>, 51(5), 324-335.</li> </ul> <p>Skim:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Guidelines for Affirming Gender Diversity through ELA Curriculum and Pedagogy - National Council of Teachers of English</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Gender Inclusive Schools Toolkit, Gender Spectrum</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Due:</b> Reaction Paper 2</p>
10	Mar 25	<p><b>Queering Education</b></p> <p>This week we will explore how queer identities and queer theories can encourage us to think more expansively about how schools should function.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brockenbrough, E. (2016). Becoming queerly responsive: Culturally responsive pedagogy for Black and Latino urban queer youth. <i>Urban Education, 51</i>(2), 170-196.</li> <li>● Meyer, E. J. (2007). "But I'm not Gay": What Straight Teachers Need to Know about Queer Theory.</li> </ul>
11	Apr 1	<p><b>New Jersey Context</b></p> <p>NJ has been the site of many educational policy debates. This week we will consider how progressive policies like NJ 5756 and 713 have been some of the most recent examples of how inclusivity attracts backlash and why.</p> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Riverview High School Student</a></li> </ul> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Out, A. E., &amp; Out-Sponsors, A. E. Concerns about school policies which will harm LBTQIA+ youth in New Jersey.</li> <li>● <a href="#">NJ Student Bill of Rights</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">NJ Mandate on LGBT &amp; Disability Histories</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">NJ Transgender Student Guidance for School Districts</a></li> </ul>
12	Apr 8	<p><b>Queer &amp; Trans* Self-Determination in Schools</b></p> <p>This week we witness some of the ways queer and trans* students navigate schools and institutions, make space for themselves, and engage in self-definition.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nagoshi, J. L., Brzuzy, S. I., &amp; Terrell, H. K. (2012). Deconstructing the complex perceptions of gender roles, gender identity, and sexual orientation among transgender individuals. <i>Feminism &amp; Psychology, 22</i>(4), 405-422.</li> <li>● Keenan, H. B. (2017). Unscripting curriculum: Toward a critical trans pedagogy. <i>Harvard Educational Review, 87</i>(4), 538-556.</li> <li>● Adelman, M., Nonnenmacher, S., Borman, B., &amp; Kosciw, J. G. (2022). Gen Z GSAs: Trans-Affirming and Racially Inclusive Gender-Sexuality Alliances in Secondary Schools. <i>Teachers College Record, 124</i>(8), 192-219.</li> </ul>
13	Apr 15	<p><b>Youth Activism</b></p>



		<p>Historically schools have long been a site for social change and activism. This week we take a student centered look at uprisings and social actions that push against harmful systems and structures.</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iskander, L., &amp; Shabtay, A. (2018). Who runs the schools?: LGBTQ youth activism and Ontario’s Bill 13. <i>Journal of LGBT Youth</i>, 15(4), 339-352.</li> </ul> <p>Watch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Marley Dias   Black America</a></li> </ul> <p>Skim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queer Youth Assemble [<a href="#">website</a>]</li> </ul>
<b>14</b>	<b>Apr 22</b>	<p>TBD (class discussion and student interests will be taken into account)</p> <p>* <b>Final Paper Due <u>May 1st</u></b></p>

### Selected Bibliography:

- Allen, L., & Allen, L. (2021). *Breathing life into sexuality education* (pp. 27-47). Springer International Publishing.
- Fausto-Sterling, A. (2000). The Five Sexes, Revisited. *Sciences (New York Academy of Sciences)*, 40(4), 18-23.
- Fine, M. (1988). Sexuality, schooling, and adolescent females: The missing discourse of desire. *Harvard educational review*, 58(1), 29-54.
- Givens, J. R., Nasir, N. I., Ross, K., & de Royston, M. M. (2016). Modeling manhood: Reimagining Black male identities in school. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 47(2), 167-185.
- Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. Duke University Press, 20-29.
- Katch, H., & Katch, J. (2010). Voices Inside Schools: When Boys Won't Be Boys: Discussing Gender with Young Children. *Harvard Educational Review*, 80(3), 379-391.
- Mangin, M. M. (2022). Teachers' strategies for supporting transgender and/or gender-expansive elementary school students. *Educational Researcher*, 51(5), 324-335.
- Miceli, M. S. (2007). 50 Schools and the social control of sexuality. *Handbook of the New Sexuality Studies*.
- McCready, L. T. (2004). Understanding the marginalization of gay and gender non-conforming Black male students. *Theory Into Practice*, 43(2), 136-143.
- Meyer, E. J. (2007). "But I'm not Gay": What Straight Teachers Need to Know about Queer Theory.
- Meyer, E. J. (2009). Creating schools that value sexual diversity.
- Meyer, E. J. (2010). *Gender and sexual diversity in schools* (Vol. 10). New York, NY: Springer.
- Out, A. E., & Out-Sponsors, A. E. Concerns about school policies which will harm LGBTQIA+ youth in New Jersey.
- Payne, E., & Smith, M. J. (2016). Gender policing. *Critical concepts in queer studies and education: An international guide for the twenty-first century*, 127-136.
- Sadker, M., Sadker, D., & Klein, S. (1991). Chapter 7: The issue of gender in elementary and secondary education. *Review of research in education*, 17(1), 269-334.
- ZINES | Queer Sex Ed CC. (n.d.). Queer Sex Ed CC. <https://www.queersexedcc.com/zines>