Sex, Sin, and Kin
in Early Europe

The course will consist of weekly readings, discussions, and papers presented in class. In addition to the common weekly readings, each student will explore a specialized topic selected from those suggested in the syllabus, write a critical paper (5-7 pp., app 1250-1750 wds. each), and make a short presentation to the rest of the class. The class will culminate in a larger project in which the student will build on a command of the secondary literature in order to explore a primary source in greater depth. Research into the primary material will culminate in a class research presentation culminating in a paper (10-15 pp., 3000-45000 wds.) in weeks 13 and 14. Your grade will depend on class participation (20%), a preliminary papers (20% each), the primary source project (40%) and a final (20%).

In the past generation, research devoted to the history of marriage, kinship, family, and sexuality has grown exponentially. An overview of the field can be gained from the following specialized bibliographies, some already somewhat dated (these include M. Sheehan and Jacqueline Murray, Domestic Society in Medieval Europe: A Select Bibliography (Toronto, 1990); Joyce E. Salisbury, Medieval Sexuality: A Research Guide (New York, 1990) - the latter is particularly valuable for source materials). An online bibliography can be found on [http://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/Default.aspx](http://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/Default.aspx). ** Indicates books available in the bookstore.

I. An Historical Look at Family, Kinship, and Sexuality. Week of Aug. 31

a) Introduction and Class Organization

b) Comparative Approaches to Kinship and Sexual Taboos

   John Cassian, Institutes, Bk. 6 (fornication).

II. Family and Sexuality in Late Antiquity. Week of Sept. 7

a) Marriage and alliance


b) The Roman Family


III. Chastity and Social Discontinuity: Bodies between Heaven and Earth. Week of Sept. 14

a) The Struggles of the Flesh: Asceticism and the Social Body

b) Toward Control: Marriage and the Control of Sexuality

Selections from Augustine on Marriage

Special Topics

A. Radical Sex: Chastity and The Third Gender


IV. Family and Kin in the Early Medieval West: Protection and Property. Sept. 21

Herlihy, Medieval Households, pp. 29-78.


Special Topics

A. The Nature of Kinship

B. Phillpotts, Kindred and Clan in the Middle Ages and After: A Study in the Sociology of the Teutonic Races (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 1-8, 245-76.


B. Relatives and Property.

F.W. Maitland, Domesday Book and Beyond (Cambridge and Boston, 1897), pp. 220-58, 340-56.


V. Christianizing the Family: Sexuality and Salvation. Sept. 28


Special Topics:

A. Did Christianity Reshape Family and Kinship?


B. Reshaping Marriage: From Polygamy to Monogamy?


VI. Family and Nobility: The Emergence of Patrilineages. Oct. 5

Herlihy, Medieval Households, pp. 79-111.


Special Topics:

A. The Origins of the Noble Families: From Sippe to Geschlect?


B. How Cohesive Were Noble Families?


VII. Aristocratic Families in the High Middle Ages. Oct. 19

** G. Duby, The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest, tr. B. Bray (N.Y., 1983).

Karras, Sexuality in Medieval Europe, pp. 59-86.

Special Topics:

A. Ecclesiastical Control on Marriage: Medieval Liberation?


B. Blood and Power


**VIII. Shaping Bodies: Sexual Theories and Contraception. Oct. 26**


**Special Topic:**

A. Medieval Views of Sexuality


B. Contraception.


**IX. An Antidote to Marriage: Courtly Love. Nov. 9**


**Special Topics:**

A. Love: Heresy or a New Civilization?


B. Romance and Power


X. Bounding Sexuality: Same Sex Relations and Prostitution. Nov. 16


A. Immodest Acts: Sex between men – on the edge of homosexualisty?


M. Jordan, *The Construction of Sodomy in Christian Theology*


B, Selling the Flesh and Social Control


XI. Conferences. Nov. 23

XII and XIII. Presentations. Nov. 29 – Dec. 5