

ASH/WOH 3931: Global History of Prostitution

Spring 2021 / T/TH Period 5-6/6 (11:45AM -1:40 PM/12:50-1:40 PM) / Hyflex

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Office Hours: TH 2-4 pm via Zoom & by appointment ([Schedule Here on Calendly](#))



An American GI and sex workers in Calcutta, 1945 (Source: Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania)

Course Description

This course introduces students to prostitution as a complex historical and contemporary phenomenon related to gender, sexuality, labor, law, and migration. The common assumption that prostitution is the “world’s oldest profession” suggests that sex work is both timeless and homogenous. In this course, students will learn to investigate the varied forms of gendered intimacies and economic relations that came to be consolidated under the category of “sex work.” We will examine the myriad ways that sex work was historically situated and experienced, and investigate changing social attitudes, policies, and policy debates towards commercialized sex and sex trafficking. The organization of the course is both thematic and loosely chronological, tracing the period from the eighteenth century to present day. Topics covered include: courtesan culture in early modern Asia; medical interventions into sex work in the nineteenth century; the origins of “white slavery” narratives; the link between militarism and prostitution; colonialism, race, and intimate labor regimes; postwar sex tourism in the global South; and pornography and contemporary debates on the regulation of sex work.

Throughout the course, students will consider pertinent questions that animate debates among historians, policymakers, sex worker activists, and radical feminists. Is prostitution work or sexual violence? Why does terminology (“prostitute” vs. “sex worker”) matter? Who sold sex and why? How have states historically regulated sexual labor? In what ways did gendered norms shape the economics of sex work? How does global inequality in the 21st century shape the sex trade? Questions of consent, coercion, the agency of “victims,” gendered market places, colonial empires, and state policies will animate our class discussions. Through lectures, podcasts, film screenings, and discussions, students will learn to engage more broadly with the history of sex work and the politics of contemporary anti-sex trafficking movements from a global perspective, with a special focus on Asia.

*There are no pre-requisites and no expectation of prior knowledge. Welcome!

Course Objectives

With the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify key terms, policies, and historical changes related to the history of prostitution
2. Articulate the major concepts, themes, as well as historiographical and legal debates about sex work
3. Analyze how the intersection of race, gender, and class have impacted the lives of historical subjects involved in the sex industry
4. Evaluate how urbanization, colonialism, nation-building, wars, migration, globalization, and economic neoliberalism have shaped the social attitudes, policies, and practices of sex work
5. Develop writing and oral communication skills
6. Research and write papers related to sex work that make compelling arguments based on thoughtful engagement with primary and secondary sources

Class Format

This is a HyFlex class that meets twice a week. On Tuesdays, students will attend class in-person or online (depending on the sections they enrolled in) for lecture-based sessions. On Thursdays, we will all meet online via Zoom. For these online sessions, class will consist of workshops and discussion-based activities. On occasion, the course schedule may change to enhance learning objectives and student interests. Please refer to Canvas Announcements / Modules for any changes.

Covid-19 Statement

These are not normal times. I am committed to being as flexible as possible to support all students in our class as we navigate life and learning amid a pandemic. I will prioritize your humanity, physical and mental health, and general well-being while also aiming to provide a worthy learning environment during the global pandemic. Collectively, I hope that we will be able to build a community that maintains social connections and academic engagement – one that also recognizes that personal accommodations may be necessary to foster that environment. If you are experiencing Covid-19-related challenges, please reach out to me if you feel comfortable doing so and/or contact the [Dean of Students Office](#).

Required Texts and Materials

1. Durba Mitra, *Indian Sex Life: Sexuality and the Colonial origins of Modern Social Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020)

2. Donna Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1995)
3. Kimberly Hoang, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015)
4. Jessica Spector, *Prostitution and Pornography: Philosophical Debate About the Sex Industry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006)*

*With the exception of *Prostitution and Pornography*, all other books are available on electronic course reserve at the UF Library.

This class uses Canvas, a Web-based course management with password-protected access at <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>. Additional readings, both primary and secondary sources, will be posted under the Modules section. Class announcements will also be posted online. It will be your responsibility to check the website frequently to make sure you are updated on the course work.

Assignments and Grading

Participation (15%) – In order for the class to be successful, your participation during our class sessions is crucial. You are expected to have completed course readings, actively engage in discussions by raising thoughtful questions and contributing your ideas and viewpoints. If you are uncomfortable participating in class, please book an office hour session with me, and we can figure out a plan for you to contribute. During the pandemic, there will be no strict attendance policy in this course. However, please keep in mind that to do well, regular attendance is important. If you have difficulty attending class due to Covid-19-related (and/or other) challenges, please reach out to me and it will not impact your final participation grade.

Reading Reflections (30%) – Starting in Week 3, you will write three reading reflection papers (worth 10% each), over the course of the semester, based on your choice of weekly readings. The papers must be both descriptive and analytical, succinctly summarizing the selected week's readings and offering insightful observations about the major themes and debates. You should also consider drawing on our lectures and discussions to supplement your analysis. At least one of your reflections must be based on a required monograph for the course. Each piece should be double-spaced, 12-point font, and between 2-3 pages. Reading reflections for the week must be submitted via Canvas by noon on Thursdays.

Midterm Exam (20%) – The take-home midterm exam will be an essay format; it is open book and open note. Students will receive a prompt in class on Thursday (3/4) and will turn in their midterm exam the following Thursday (3/11) by 6 PM. Based on the prompt, students should formulate an argument, provide evidence, and compose thoughtful and coherent prose. The essay should draw extensively on class lectures, readings, films, and discussions, providing citations when appropriate. A rubric with additional details will be provided. **DUE: Thursday, 3/11 by 6 PM**

Final Project (35%) – Create a digital history project about sex work in a modern city. A list of possible cities will be provided, but students are free to choose their own after consultation with me. Your task is to construct and tell a story of how prostitution evolved in the city over time, dating back to at least the beginning of the twentieth century. Using [Timeline JS](#), your research should include key legislations and reforms on prostitution, important characters involved in the sex

industry (such as abolitionists, regulationists, “pimps”/ “brothel madams,” sex workers, and/or activists), and key images, texts, and/or media. It must draw from at least six sources (primary / secondary) – which must be approved in advance. The final timeline will include a minimum of 10 annotated slides. We will discuss the various stages of the project in greater detail over the semester. Here are some key components (with more information to follow) and deadlines to keep in mind:

- i) Annotated Bibliography (5%) **DUE: Thursday, 3/25 by 6 PM**
- ii) Completed Final Timeline (20%) **DUE: Thursday, 4/15 by 6 PM**
- iii) Reflection (10%) **DUE: Tuesday, 4/20 by 6 PM**

*There will also be extra credit opportunities throughout the course. Keep an eye out for those announcements.

Grading Scale

93.3-100% = A	73.3-76.6% = C
90-93.2% = A-	70-73.2% = C-
86.7-89.9% = B+	66.7-69.9% = D+
83.3-86.6% = B	63.3-66.6% = D
80-83.2% = B-	60-63.2% = D-
76.7-79.9% = C+	Below 60 = E

Course Policies & Resources

Attendance and Participation

The success of our class and fulfillment of your learning objectives depend on your active engagement and contribution! That being said, these are difficult times. If you are experiencing Covid-19-related and/or other challenges, please get in touch with your instructor as soon as possible for alternative ways of engaging with the course materials. Students' participation grade will not be penalized for excused absences.

Deadlines

Late assignments will be marked down by a grade fraction for each 24-hour period beyond the due date and time. Assignments that are more than 72 hours late will not be accepted. Exemptions will be allowed for serious illnesses, family emergencies, and university-approved functions, but students must notify me *before* the deadline. In cases of unforeseen emergencies, please get in touch with me as soon as possible after your absence. For more on policies related to make-up exams and assignments, please visit:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Privacy and Online Learning

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or

shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated on the basis of your attendance and your participation in class activities. Since the pedagogical approach of this course depends heavily on student engagement and interaction, you are required, at a minimum, to participate in class activities through the audio function of Zoom. Your video presence is invited as well.

Communication

I will send important reminders and announcements via email to your UF account. It is your responsibility to check your account regularly to stay up to date. Students are also very welcome to email me at sandychang@ufl.edu. Please note that I will respond to every student's email within 24 hours during weekdays. I do not check emails regularly on weekends (from Friday, 6 PM to Monday, 8 AM), so please plan accordingly.

I highly encourage students to come to my [virtual office hours](#). Since the course is in Hyflex format, office hours offer an opportunity for me to get to know you a little better. I am available for discussions about assignments, readings, course content, graduate school applications, or any other relevant topics.

Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

<https://disability.ufl.edu>

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available from the [Gatorevals website](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email

they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the [evaluation system](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at the [public results website](#).

U Matter, We Care

Your well-being during these uncertain times is of utmost importance to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Course Schedule

*Note: This schedule represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the learning objectives. Such changes are not unusual and should be expected.

Week	Topics, Readings, and Assignments	Reminders and Deadlines
1/11	<p>The “Oldest Profession”?: Unpacking the History of Sex Work</p> <p>I. Introduction: Course Overview and Defining Key Concepts</p> <p>II. Discussion</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose <u>ONE</u> of the following to read: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Carole Pateman “What’s Wrong with Prostitution?” in Jessica Spector (ed.), <i>Prostitution and Pornography</i>, pp. 50-79. ii) Scott Anderson, “Prostitution and Sexual Autonomy: Making Sense of the Prohibition of Prostitution,” in Jessica Spector (ed.), <i>Prostitution and Pornography</i>, pp. 358-393. 2. Listen to The Oldest Profession Podcast: Lou Grahams (17:06) 3. Introduce Yourself to Class on Padlet 	
1/18	<p>Courtesans in Early Modern Asia</p> <p>I. Learned Women, Talented Artists: Courtesans and Sexual Politics in Early Modern China and Japan</p> <p>II. Discussion</p> <p>Things to do:</p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Veena Talwar Oldenburg, "Lifestyle as Resistance: The Case of the Courtesans of Lucknow, India," <i>Feminist Studies</i> 16, no. 2 (1990): 259-287. 2. Watch Film: <i>Umrao Jaan</i> (1981) 	
1/25	<p>From Households to Markets: Capital, Urbanization, and the Commercialization of Sex</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Private Acts/Public Places: The Brothel as a Liminal Space II. Discussion <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Ashwini Tambe, "Brothels as Families: Reflections on the History of Bombay's <i>Kothas</i>," <i>International Feminist Journal of Politics</i> 8, no. 2 (2006): 219-242. 2. Read Gail Hershatter, "The Hierarchy of Shanghai Prostitution, 1870-1949," <i>Modern China</i> 15, no. 4 (1989): 463-498. 3. Watch Film: <i>Flowers of Shanghai</i> (1998) 	
2/1	<p>The Medicalization of Sex in the Nineteenth Century</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Vice and Venereal Disease in the British Empire II. Discussion <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Philippa Levine, "Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India," <i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i> 4, no. 4 (1994): 579-602. 2. Listen to Dig - A History Podcast: Locked Up and Poxed (54:00) 	Begin reading Durba Mitra's <i>Indian Sex Life</i>
2/8	<p>Sex, Gender, and Race in European Imperialism</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Colonial Social Reforms and the Management of "Deviant" Female Sexuality II. Discussion <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finish reading Durba Mitra, <i>Indian Sex Life</i>. 	
2/15	<p>Historicizing Male Prostitution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Male Prostitution and the Regulation of Homosexuality II. Discussion* <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Andrew Ross, "Sex in the Archives: Homosexuality, Prostitution, and the Archives de la Préfecture de Police de Paris," <i>French Historical Studies</i> 40.2 (2017): 267-290. 	Guest visit from Professor Andrew Ross on Thursday, 2/18

	<p>2. Julian Marlow, “Men in the Sex Industry,” in Jessica Spector, <i>Prostitution and Pornography</i> pp. 349-357.</p> <p>*This week, Professor Andrew Ross will be joining our discussion session to chat about his article, “Sex in the Archives.” Please prepare 1-2 questions / observations about the readings for our discussion.</p>	
2/22	<p>“White Slavery” Panic: New Discourses in the Era of Internationalism</p> <p>I. White Slavery: Myth or Reality?</p> <p>II. No Class (UF Recharge Day)</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Julia Laite, “Traffickers and Pimps in the Era of White Slavery,” <i>Past & Present</i> 237, no. 237 (2017): 237-269. 2. Read Jessica Pilely, “Vice Queens and White Slavery: The FBI’s Crackdown on Elite Brothel Madams in 1930s New York City,” <i>Journal of Sexuality</i> 25, no.1 (2016): 137-167. 3. Listen to Slavery and its Legacies Podcast: On Trafficking and Sex Work (41:17) 	
3/1	<p>Pimps, Madams, Traffickers, and Middlemen</p> <p>I. Brokering Sex Work</p> <p>II. Discussion</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin reading Donna Guy, <i>Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires</i>, Introduction – Chapter 3 (pp. 1-104). 	
3/8	<p>Midterm Week</p> <p>I. Optional Online Review Session</p> <p>II. No Class (Extended Office Hours)</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attend Optional Review Session (3/9 on Zoom) 2. Submit Midterm Essay Online (3/11 by 6 PM)* <p>*No readings this week! Review and complete take-home midterm. Submit midterm essay online (3/11) at 6 PM.</p>	<p>Midterm Due Thursday, 3/11 by 6 PM</p>
3/15	<p>Sex, Family, and the Nation</p> <p>I. Nationalism, Modernity, and the Prostitute</p> <p>II. Discussion</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finish reading Donna Guy, <i>Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires</i>, Chapter 4 – Conclusion (pp. 105-210). 	

3/22	<p>Sex Work, Immigration Laws, and Border Control</p> <p>I. From the Page Act (1875) to the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (2001)</p> <p>II. Discussion</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Grace Pena Delgado, "Border Control and Sexual Policing: White Slavery and Prostitution Along the US-Mexico Borderlands, 1903-1910," <i>Western Historical Quarterly</i> 43, no. 2 (2012): 157-178. 	<p>Annotated Bibliography Due Thursday, 3/25 by 6 PM</p>
3/29	<p>The Sexual Front</p> <p>I. War, Militarism, and Prostitution in the Twentieth Century</p> <p>II. Discussion*</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Yuri Doolan, "Transpacific Camptowns: Korean Women, US Army Bases, and Military Prostitution in America," <i>Journal of American Ethnic History</i> 38, no.4 (2019): 33-54. 2. Watch Film: <i>Shusenjo: The Main Battleground of the Comfort Women Issue</i> (2018). <p>*Note: This week, Professor Yuri Doolan (Brandeis University) will be joining our discussion. Prepare 1-2 questions / observations about his article for our discussion.</p>	<p>Guest visit from Professor Yuri Doolan on Thursday, 4/1</p>
4/5	<p>"Modern-Day" Slavery and the Trafficking Paradigm</p> <p>I. Carceral Feminism and the Rescue Industry</p> <p>II. Discussion</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Kimberly Hoang, <i>Dealing in Desire</i>, Introduction – Chapter 3 (pp. 1-77) 2. Read Nicolas Kristof, "The Children of Pornhub," New York Times (December 4, 2020) 3. Listen to Peepshow Podcast: Pornhub, Payment Processing and Nicolas Kristof with Melissa Gira Grant (60:04) 4. Optional Reading: Elizabeth Bernstein, "Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Anti-Trafficking Campaigns," <i>Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society</i> 36, no.1 (2001): 45-71. 	
4/12	<p>Postwar Mobilities: Globalization, Travel, and Sex Tourism</p> <p>I. Transnational Desires and Sex Across Borders</p> <p>II. Discussion</p>	<p>Final Digital History Project</p>

	<p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finish reading Kimberly Hoang, <i>Dealing in Desire</i>, Introduction-Chapter Four (pp. 78-180). 	<p>Due Thursday, 4/15 by 6 PM</p>
4/19	<p>Conclusions</p> <p>I. The “Nordic” Model and New Sex Work Debates (Last Class)</p> <p>Things to do:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Niina Vuolajarvi, “Governing in the Name of Caring – the Nordic Model of Prostitution and its Punitive Consequences for Migrants Who Sell Sex,” <i>Sexuality Research and Social Policy</i> 16, no. 2 (2018): 151-165. 2. Read Theresa A. Reed aka “Dark Lady,” “Private Acts versus Public Art: Where Prostitution Ends and Pornography Begins,” in Jessica Spector (ed.), <i>Prostitution and Pornography</i>, pp. 249-257. 3. Optional reading: Emily Bazelon, “Should Prostitution Be a Crime?” <i>The New York Times</i> (May 5, 2016). 4. Submit Final Reflection Paper Online (4/20 by 6 PM) 	<p>Final Reflection Paper Due Tuesday, 4/20 by 6 PM</p>

Additional Academic Resources

Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

E-learning technical support

Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

[Career Connections Center](#)

Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support](#)

Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

On-Line Students Complaints

[View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#)

[Teaching Center](#)

Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.