

# LS 819: Sex and Gender in the North American Sixties: Cold War to Counterculture and Beyond

Spring 2017 | Dr. Lara Campbell

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Is Hugh Hefner feminist? What was the relationship between women's liberation, student radicalism, and the hippie counterculture? How did men survive the experience of war? Was it possible to build a new and better world?

In *Sex and Gender in the Sixties* we will explore these questions by examining how gender and sexuality were challenged and re-conceptualized in the North American postwar period. Against the backdrop of the Cold War and the fear of nuclear war, North Americans questioned what seemed to be fundamental truths of mid 20th century society: the structure of the heterosexual family, the meaning of sex, the relationship of the individual to the community, the responsibility of men to serve and defend their nation.

We will examine the intersection of gender and sexuality with cold war politics, the rise of mass culture, drug culture, family relationships, second wave feminism, the New Left, and popular culture. Together we will examine the ways in which gender and sexuality have interacted with race, ethnicity, and class. The focus of our reading will be historical assessments of the period, but we will also explore the 60s through multiple genres: biography; novels; memoir; essays, political manifestos; and critical theory.

## COURSE ASSESSMENT:

- Thesis proposal/annotated bibliography: 20%
- Research Assignment: 35% (due last week of class)
- Participation: 25%
- Class presentation: 20%

## POTENTIAL COURSE READINGS:

- Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts: Canadian Women, Child Safety, and Global Insecurity*
- Heather Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War*
- Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*
- Lauren Groff, *Arcadia*
- Jennifer Scanlon, *Bad Girls Go Everywhere: The Life of Helen Gurley Brown*

- Ian Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada*
- Alice Echols, *Scars of Sweet Paradise: The Life and Times of Janis Joplin*
- David Austin, *Fear of a Back Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal*

All other course readings available on Canvas.