

WSU34001: Sexuality and Gender in England, 1885-1967

Module Organiser: Dr Clare Tebbutt

Duration: All year

Contact hours: 3 hours per week

Weighting: 20 ECTS

Assessment: 60% Examination, 40% Essay

Module Description: This module examines how modern concepts of gender and sexuality impacted individual lives and communities in modern England, especially for those who transgressed sexual and gendered norms. The course is informed by queer theory and feminist theory and by research being done in the history of sexuality and gender more broadly. Students have the opportunity to take these theoretical approaches to topics such as 'the birth of the homosexual', 'the invention of heterosexuality', gender fluidity, changing ideas of masculinity and women's emancipation, and explore these ideas through diverse case studies. The module begins with the Sexual Offences Act of 1885 and ends with 1967's (partial) decriminalisation of sex between men in England and Wales. The focus of the module is predominantly on social and cultural histories, but the ramifications of political and legal decisions will also be explored. Where possible, the perspectives of those being discussed will be brought to the fore, and students will have the chance to engage with sources including newspaper articles, court transcripts, novels, oral history interviews, activist manifestos and photographs. This is a history of shifting ideas of gender and sexuality, but also of the changing face of England, necessarily involving discussion of migration, race, class, power and activism.