



Gender and Sexualities Workshop

Fall 2023 Presentations

fall 2023 | See below for meeting format and space

The Sociology Department's Gender and Sexualities Workshop is a group of faculty and graduate students who meet regularly to present and discuss new research.



"Exacerbating Social Inequalities via Consent Discourses: A Case Study of BDSM Communities"

Cierra Raine Sorin

Graduate Student, UCSB Sociology

Friday, October 13, 12:00-1:15pm

SSMS 3105 (in person)

Why do consent violations happen in communities so focused on educating and practicing consent well? And what role does consent play in these communities when violations occur anyways? Drawing on over 75 hours of audio data from interviews with 56 BDSM practitioners in more than 20 distinct communities in the United States, I examine consent discourses within BDSM communities to answer these questions. Though consent is often invoked as a social equalizer within interactions, I find that consent discourses in BDSM spaces sometimes do the opposite. At both the interpersonal level of practitioners engaging in individual activities, and at the group level regarding participants' inclusion in play spaces more broadly, I find that discourses of consent including responses to consent violations, are used to exclude BDSM practitioners with more marginalized identities, exacerbating already-existing social inequalities within communities that are relatively privileged. I thus argue that consent rhetoric is a weaponization of neoliberal responsibility focused on the individual, rather than the group, which hinders the creation of an inclusive culture of care that both prevents and adequately responds to various forms of harm.

"Chemistry or Harassment? Relational (Mis)matches in Orientations Toward Work in Pornography Production"

Hannah Wohl

Associate Professor, UCSB Sociology

Friday, NOVEMBER 17, 12:00-1:15pm

Zoom: see dept calendar for link



Interacting with coworkers is tricky work. To collaborate effectively, coworkers must build rapport while also not overstepping personal boundaries. Navigating this boundary between the personal and the professional is riskier when one's job requires having sex with different coworkers every day. I explore this core workplace tension by drawing on an extensive ethnographic study of the Los Angeles pornography and adult content creation (i.e., OnlyFans) industry, including 70 interviews with industry members, observations of over 50 pornographic shoots, and fieldwork at other events. I examine how performers navigate efficiently producing pornographic scenes, while also managing sexual intimacy both on and off camera. Building on relational approaches from cultural and economic sociology, I reveal how conflicting orientations toward sexual appropriateness—potentially leading to allegations of sexual misconduct—rarely center around sex acts themselves, but instead develop from mismatched interpretations of the symbolic meaning of their work.