

Excerpt from “Studying Sex”

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In a large classroom packed with students, Professor Nick Baham is teaching a course called African American Sexuality. The course has been taught here in the Ethnic Studies department of California State University—East Bay (formerly CSU-Hayward) since the mid-'80s, with Baham taking over as professor in 2000. The students settle in as he turns their attention to a guest lecturer, who is visiting to discuss images of people of color in feminist pornography.



Most of the students in the class are themselves Black, and mostly female. They tend to range in age from late 20s to early 30s, and between 50 to 60 people take the class when it's offered several times a year. Most students identify as heterosexual. As far as Baham knows, it is the only course in the country specifically on African- American sexuality. For today's lecture, Baham and his guest field questions about Black female sexual agency, the involvement of Black people in alternative sexual communities, and even representations of pleasure and orgasm. ...

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