Forbidden Fruit
Mark D. Regnerus

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Americans remain deeply ambivalent about teenage sexuality. Many presume that such uneasiness is rooted in religion. This book tackles such questions as: how exactly does religion contribute to the formation of teenagers' sexual values and actions? What difference, if any, does religion make in adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors? Are abstinence pledges effective? Who expresses regrets about their sexual activity and why? The book combines analyses of three national surveys with stories drawn from interviews with over 250 teenagers across America. It reviews how young people learn, and what they know about sex from their parents, schools, peers, and other sources. It examines what experiences teens profess to have had, and how they make sense of these experiences in light of their own identities as religious, moral, and responsible persons. The author's analysis discovers that religion can and does matter. However, the analysis finds that religious claims are often swamped by other compelling sexual scripts. Particularly interesting is the emergence of what the author calls a “new middle class sexual morality”, which has little to do with a desire for virginity but nevertheless shuns intercourse in order to avoid risks associated with pregnancy and STDs. And strikingly, evangelical teens aren't less sexually active than their non-evangelical counterparts, they just tend to feel guiltier about it. In fact, the analysis finds that few religious teens have internalized or are even able to articulate the sexual ethic taught by their denominations. The only-and largely ineffective-sexual message most religious teens are getting is: “don't do it until you're married”. Ultimately, the author concludes, religion may influence adolescent sexual behavior, but it rarely motivates sexual decision making.
This chapter explores how adolescents learn about sex and sexuality. It discusses various parental strategies for the socialization and education of children about sex and contraception, focusing on distinctions between moral education and information exchange. It shows that religion influences what parents say about sex and contraception, with whom they discuss it, how often, and with what degree of ease. The association between religion and developing homosexual and bisexual identities, attractions, and practices in adolescence is also considered.

Social hygiene reform developed in the 1910s from the coalescence of the religious social purity movement and the more scientifically inclined antivenereal disease movement. Social hygienists, many of them physicians, claimed science rather than morality as the basis of their proposals. They promoted conservative sex education that sustained Victorian ideas of gender segregation and difference and idealized motherhood and marriage. Nevertheless, they challenged public reticence about sexuality because they believed prostitution and venereal disease represented so great a social threat that ignorance could no longer be tolerated. Sex education programs provided opportunity for some white women to articulate and criticize men's power and sexual freedom. African American participants promoted better sexual health for blacks and challenged racist understandings of venereal disease.
In the early 1960s, fundamentalists and evangelicals were divided over civil rights, and that division was reflected in the election of 1964, when fundamentalist leaders supported Barry Goldwater, while more moderate evangelicals did not. But between 1964 and 1968, a common reaction against cultural liberalism brought evangelicals and fundamentalists into a unified conservative coalition that Richard Nixon called the “silent majority.” Evangelicals and fundamentalists joined forces in campaigns against pornography and sex education, and both groups supported private Christian schools. They also found common ground on civil rights, with fundamentalists abandoning their defenses of legal segregation, and evangelicals exchanging their support of civil rights legislation for a call for “law and order.” By 1968, the emerging culture wars united both groups in support of Nixon and the conservative wing of the Republican Party.

Sex, God, and the American Flag
June Melby Benowitz

This chapter looks at moral issues that attracted the attention of right-wing women during the 1950s to early 1970s. The women actively campaigned against sex education in schools, while pushing for a Constitutional amendment to restore prayer to public schools. Many of the women believed that the Supreme Court’s decision that banned prayer in public schools was directly related to a decline in moral values among America’s youth. The chapter also looks at how rightist women defined patriotism, and examines their complaints that Americans, youth in particular, were unpatriotic. Some baby boomers’ thoughts on moral issues and also included in the chapter.
‘What've a boiling kettle got to do with a baby?’ 1
Kate Fisher

in Birth Control, Sex, and Marriage in Britain 1918-1960

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This chapter explores the tension between the proliferation of information about birth control methods (condoms, caps, female pessaries, and forms of abortion) in the early 20th century, and the evidence that many individuals remained bewildered about issues of sex and contraception. The gendered aspects of knowledge acquisition are discussed: whilst men actively aimed to obtain birth control information, many women sought to maintain their innocence by ignoring it, resisting the urge to rectify gaps in their knowledge and adopting an ignorant persona in social situations and personal relationships. Moreover, assertions of complete ignorance, while sometimes exaggerated, are shown to be rhetorical strategies through which respondents drew attention to the difficulties they experienced in obtaining, interpreting, and using the information they acquired. Many struggled to decode euphemisms or distrusted their sources of knowledge. Therefore, despite increased information, a feeling of profound ignorance dominated their approach to sex and birth control.

Object Matters
Nicole Vitellone

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During the mid-1980s, the object of the condom became associated with the prevention of HIV/AIDS. This book investigates the consequences of this shift in the object's meaning. Focusing on the US, British and Australian contexts, it addresses the impact of the discourse of safer sex on our lives and, in particular, the lives of adolescents. Addressing AIDS public health campaigns, sex education policies, sex research on adolescence and debates on the eroticisation of safer sex, the book looks at how the condom has affected our awareness of ourselves, of one another and of our futures. In its examination of the condom in the late twentieth century, it critically engages with a range of literatures, including those concerned with sexuality, adolescence, methods, gender and the body.
This chapter recounts this book's author's own experiences of teaching Durkheim and introducing feminist theory, which have always occurred in settings where the dominant approach is reading and discussion. Each section takes a similar approach, beginning with an overview of the existing work on Durkheim in a particular area, continuing with an analysis of its relevance to the Elementary Forms of Religious Life, and including a series of possible discussion questions for classroom use. Topics covered include women, sex, and gender in Durkheim's works; Durkheim on divorce and sex education; and feminist theory and Durkheimian social realism.

As a modern female style undermined a Victorian motherhood-centered ideal, whites and African Americans debated conceptions of women's sexuality and marriage. In the 1910s social hygiene reformers anxious about venereal disease called for scientific sex education but still romanticized motherhood, while sex radicals demanded birth control, free love, or the right to interracial relationships or homosexuality. The book emphasizes more conventional reformers, who by the 1920s hoped to contain the potential for modern women's independence from men and marriage in “companionate marriage.” This incorporated birth control, easier divorce, and intensified sexual intimacy. The most popular version involved free-spirited flappers who did not seriously challenge male authority or women's ultimate focus on motherhood. Some more equitable minority versions were African American partnership marriage, which included wives' employment, and feminist marriage, in which white and black women imagined a more thoroughgoing equality of work and sex. Sexual advice literature flooded onto the market in the 1930s, offering women conflicting messages about achieving sexual pleasure but also pleasing husbands. Despite the unsettling of an older
femininity, deep and persistent structural inequalities between men and women limited efforts to create gender parity in sex and marriage. Yet these cultural battles subverted patriarchal culture and raised women's expectations of marriage in ways that grounded second-wave feminist claims.

Sex education and the condom
Nicole Vitellone

in Object Matters: Condoms, Adolescence and Time
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This chapter analyses the social effects of sex education for adolescents. Focusing on the period post-1986, it examines the impact of AIDS education, and in particular safer-sex education in the classroom. The main point of concern is the framing of sexual knowledge of the condom in public secondary high schools. By comparing and contrasting the provision of sex education in the US, UK and Australia, the chapter draws attention to the differences and similarities in present and past histories of sex education, and in so doing, highlights how the regulation of adolescent sexuality in the era of AIDS concerns the object of the condom. The overall argument is that sex education concerns the regulation of the adolescent's sexual future.

The Modern Female Body as a Mass Phenomenon
Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska

in Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain 1880-1939
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This chapter posits women's physical liberation alongside political emancipation, greater gender equality, expanding employment opportunities after 1918. A modern femininity was constructed by means of clothes and beauty products, but it also required a managed body. Building on the pioneering efforts during the Edwardian period, women enthusiastically embraced a wide range of activities including keep-fit classes, dancing, swimming, and hiking. These provided new opportunities for female companionship and mixed-sex sociability. The modern female body became a mass phenomenon during the interwar
years. Sex reform was a prerequisite of the modernization of women's bodies and hygienists advocated birth control and sex education. Nevertheless, extreme practices such as competitive sport or slimming for the sake of fashion remained controversial. The modern woman was portrayed as a race mother whose civic duty to manage her body for the well-being of the nation paralleled men's obligation to become healthy and fit workers and soldiers.

Informing and Advising: Sexual Welfare
Adrian Bingham

in Family Newspapers?: Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978
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This chapter outlines the way in which popular newspapers gradually assumed the task of informing and advising their readers about matters of sexual welfare. In the inter-war period, the popular press reported the fierce public debates about contraception, sex education, and the birth rate, but journalists were cautious and euphemistic in their writing. During the Second World War, the Daily Mirror challenged this evasiveness and started to adopt an explicitly educational role, with a high profile campaign warning the public about the dangers of venereal diseases. By the mid-1950s issues such as contraception, abortion, and divorce were covered far more extensively than before the war. Popular newspapers made an important contribution to the climate of reform that produced the legislative changes of the late 1960s. But the press's idealistic rhetoric of sexual reform gradually faded, and was gradually superseded by a more hedonistic and consumerist discourse of sexual liberation.

Equality and the right to education: let’s talk about sex education
Meghan Campbell

in Human Rights and Equality in Education: Comparative Perspectives on the Right to Education for Minorities and Disadvantaged Groups
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This chapter addresses the challenges girls face in accessing human rights-based sex education. Sex education sharply brings into focus the discriminatory gender norms that influence and undermine a girl's right to education and the accountability challenges that are becoming increasingly pervasive throughout all of education. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the prominent legal instrument on women's rights, offers new ways of conceptualising and addressing these challenges. There are specific obligations referring to sex education in the treaty and most importantly there is a positive obligation on the state to provide sex education to fulfil the fundamental rights of girls and women. Indeed, sex education is a necessary measure to ensure girls and women's right to life, health, education, gender equality, and freedom from violence.

The Sex Education Debates
Nancy Kendall

Educating children and adolescents in public schools about sex is a deeply inflammatory act in the United States. Since the 1980s, intense political and cultural battles have been waged between believers in abstinence until marriage and advocates for comprehensive sex education. This book upends conventional thinking about these battles by bringing the school and community realities of sex education to life through the diverse voices of students, teachers, administrators, and activists. Drawing on ethnographic research in five states, the author reveals important differences and surprising commonalities shared by purported antagonists in the sex education wars, and illuminates the unintended consequences these protracted battles have, especially on teachers and students. Showing that the lessons which most students, teachers, and parents take away from these battles are antithetical to the long-term health of American democracy, she argues for shifting the measure of sex education success away from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates. Instead, the author argues, the debates should focus on a broader set of social and democratic consequences, such as what students learn about themselves as sexual beings and civic actors, and how sex education programming affects school–community relations.
The fifth chapter explicates a Connecticut case of alleged sexual assault committed against a significantly physically and cognitively disabled woman. The facts and fallout of the case facilitate an analysis of sex and sexual ethics that applies, synthesizes, and qualifies the three core criticisms of consent (insufficiency, scope, and inappositeness) leveled across the other chapters. The examination of the case shores up several ways in which consent fails to deliver sexual justice. Hilary O’Connell and I propose legal remedies and social reforms that would better facilitate sexual and intimate possibilities not only for the alleged victim in the Connecticut case and people similarly disabled but also, if more speculatively, for people positioned across the spectrum of ability. The legal remedies are grounded in a feminist reconstruction of sexual autonomy that rejects the equation of autonomy with consent. The social reforms are grounded in a disability-studies reconstruction of access that promotes institutional arrangements facilitating people’s equal participation in politics, education, employment and sex.

“it's a local thing”: sex education as compromise and choice in wyoming

Nancy Kendall

This chapter examines how community-school relations and curricular decisions made in a decentralized policy environment affected the sex education approach adopted by a school and its teachers in Wyoming. While the school board adopted a scripted curriculum to try to control the content of the sex education class, three teachers created entirely different educational experiences for their students. One adopted a directive approach and presented an informal Abstinence Only Until Marriage education (AOUME) curriculum; the other two used the official Comprehensive Sexuality education curriculum, but in different ways silenced their own and students' voices to avoid potential confrontation.
with community members. The story of locally negotiated sex education in Wyoming thus stands in sharp contrast with the top-down story of sex education in Florida.

‘Pet your dog …’: sex education, abstinence and contraception
Ashbee Edward

in The Bush Administration, Sex and the Moral Agenda
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This chapter analyses the views of George W. Bush on the issues of sex education, contraception and abstinence, and considers how his election campaign was influenced by these issues. It suggests that the Christian right secured much from the Bush administration's sex education policy and explains that the dramatic expansion of funding for abstinence-only programmes not only fulfilled the moral agenda advanced by social conservatives, but also created an influential and vocal constituency which had a direct interest in the maintenance and development of abstinence projects. The chapter argues that the character of public opinion influenced the decision of the Bush administration to give a great deal of political ground to the Christian right on the issue of sex education.

Flesh and Bones
April R. Haynes

in Riotous Flesh: Women, Physiology, and the Solitary Vice in Nineteenth-Century America
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“Flesh and Bones” examines the work of Sarah Mapps Douglass, an African American teacher and lecturer, as an example of ongoing resistance to the racialization of female sexuality. A leader of interracial moral reform efforts, Douglass joined the campaign for universal physiological education to eliminate the solitary vice. By the 1850s, growing concern about masturbatory insanity drew popular support for the first wave of sex education in public schools. The chapter reconstructs the content of Douglass’ distinctive sexual counterdiscourse at the Institute for Colored Youth. After the coalition ended between
black abolitionists and white moral reformers, Douglass retained some white contacts. Along with Sarah Grimké, she participated in a community of discourse that fused physiology with Orson Squire Fowler’s theory of the feminine love principle in contemplating heterosexual pleasure. Douglass observed continuing debates over purity and virtue but no longer tried to convince whites of African American women’s moral equality. Instead, she selectively reworked physiological theories of sex to challenge craniology, affirm her students’ needs for love and pleasure, and offer contraceptive and prophylactic resources. The rhetoric of solitary vice masked, authorized, and infused this explicit sex education. Similar arguments reached generations of African American students.

Rethinking Gender Equality
Juliet A. Williams

in Separation Solution?: Single-Sex Education and the New Politics of Gender Equality
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This chapter begins by discussing the rise of single-sex education in K-12 public school classrooms across the United States. It then sets out the book’s purpose, which is to offer insight into the shifting ways that gender differences are being defined and accounted for in an era of formal legal equality for men and women. It does so by considering nearly three decades of debate over single-sex public education in the United States. The book demonstrates that the most vociferous challenges to single-sex public schooling initiatives have emanated not from dogmatic commitment to gender neutrality but rather from the empirically grounded charge that even the most well-intentioned single-sex initiatives open the door to rampant gender stereotyping. Still the debate over single-sex public education too often has been reductively represented as a controversy pitting those who acknowledge gender differences against those who deny the basic facts of human nature.

The Right to Comprehensive Sex Education
Hazel G. Beh

in Children, Sexuality, and the Law
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This chapter addresses children's rights to sexual information, including affirmative sexual education in schools, sexual health services, and contraception. Over the last several decades, the federal government and conservative religious organizations have joined together to develop and implement abstinence-only sex education within the public schools. These curricula have been regarded by some as so overtly deceptive, narrowly focused, and discriminatory as to be harmful to children. Critics of abstinence-only sex education have argued that minors, as sexual beings, need and deserve comprehensive sex education. At the very least, if the government funds sex education, then the information provided should be factually accurate, inclusive toward all citizens, and non-discriminatory.