Sex appears to us in our imagination as an intimate and private thought, but also as a social construct. Foucault makes a convincing case that the way we talk and think about sex has changed over time—the discourse around it has shifted and, for this reason, the meaning of sex and sexuality has changed. But his account stops some time ago.

Analyze a popular text or texts to show how the classical inquiries we have been discussing thus far—about science, gender identity, history, etc—are reflected in recent debates. In other words, analyze or interrogate texts (media, film, music, news events, TV, diaries, etc) to see how they engage ideas, messages, discourse about sex and sexuality. What is it saying or telling us about sex, apart from just the content? What are the larger social implications? You should also refer to at least two texts we have read in class.

Present the finished product as a five-seven page essay, 1.5 spacing. Use TNR 12 point font and reasonable margins; include page numbers and a title. Save all drafts as SOAN402_#XPaper_YOURMIDDEMAILPREFIX. Email as a word attachment to mcallum@middlebury.edu. Deviation from these instructions is bound to cause a problem.
Helpful hints for successful sociological writing:

These papers are an opportunity for you to engage with the theoretical ideas we’ve been discussing in class. What do I mean by “engage”? Here’s my attempt to explain:

1. Add (and multiply). Take ideas from the class and apply them in a way that adds to the theories and our discussions of them. Do not just summarize the readings.

2. Let me repeat: Don’t just summarize. Explain enough of the idea that will help you apply it to the specific example(s) you’re engaging with, but this is not a book report. Don’t simply tell me what an author said wrote – show me. Please make sure you add enough of these authors’ ideas into your project that I know you’ve read them and have thought about them.

3. Everyone has an opinion, but don’t give them to me in this project. This is not about whether or not you think society “should” work harder or longer or shorter. Take your topic of interest and analyze it, which is different than editorializing. If there are current debates on the topic, use the ideas that we are discussing you’re working with to explain the nature of these debates.

4. Write drafts. Good papers are the result of writing and re-writing.

5. Writing Tutors—Middlebury College provides writing tutors for students. Use them. Having someone else read over drafts of your paper is probably the best editing exercise you can do. More info here: http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/resources/ctlr/writingcenter

6. Talk to me, people! Stop by my office hours to discuss your paper. Come with questions about your topic so that meeting can be most effective.