SCIENCES PO LILLE.

Descriptif d'enseignement – 2016/2017

2ème année

Intitulé du cours: **Sexual Politics in Britain (from the 1860s to the present day)**

Course's title: Sexual Politics in Britain (from the 1860s to the present day)

Enseignant(s) : Emmanuel Roudaut

Fonction(s) : Senior Lecturer in British Studies (MC civilisation britannique)

Type de cours : ☒Séminaire d'ouverture ☐Semestre 1 ☒ Semestre 2

Syllabus - targets:

This course begins with a moral crusade against an attempt to regulate prostitution in Britain under the **Contagious Diseases Acts** (CDAs, 1864-66-69), euphemistically presented as a prophylactic measure. It ends with David Cameron's efforts to "modernise" the image of the Conservative Party. This included an agenda of social liberalism at variance with the Thatcherite legacy, especially when it came to equality measures for sexual minorities such as the **Marriage (same sex couples) Act 2013**.

Partly inspired by the French model, the CDAs were opposed by moralists who objected to "the State condoning vice". The strength of the abolitionist campaign was largely due to the growing influence of religious Nonconformity (Methodism, Baptism, Quakers) already noticeable in the campaign for the abolition of slavery (1783-1833), which served as a model for subsequent "moral crusades". What was new in the anti-CDAs campaign was the emergence, alongside the main body, of an autonomous female association in the public sphere. In her denunciation of the "double standard" (treating the prostitute as a criminal and protecting her male client), its leader, Josephine Butler, who regarded prostitutes as victims and "sisters", can be regarded as a proto-feminist figure.

However, after the repeal of the CDAs in 1886, the repressive wing of the movement prevailed over its libertarian elements. An increasingly restrictive moral agenda reached a climax in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when agitation around prostitution, venereal diseases and unorthodox forms of sexuality coalesced into a crusade for "social purity", associated with growing concern over drink, gambling, and urbanisation. It was mainly between the 1880s and the First World War that a "puritanical" approach to sex, drink and gambling (the "unholy trinity") became the ***law*** of the land. The seminar will provide an overview of these developments, and attempt to assess the social, religious and political factors behind them.

These "Victorian" values remained the norm until the 1960s, although they were constantly challenged, with varying degrees of intensity (questioning the conflation of "moral" failings or "sins" with "legal" offences). The "permissive moment" of the "Swinging Sixties" should not be seen in isolation and its significance will be discussed, as well as the cultural and moral tensions triggered by the turmoil of the two World Wars.

Although the extent of the "permissiveness" of the 1960s might have been more limited than has been thought, it has often been reviled as a cause of national "decadence"(echoing some *fin de siècle* fears). The final sessions of the seminar will examine the specific political context of the 1980s, exacerbated by the onset of AIDS, which led to a "moral backlash". An overview of antagonistic campaigns in later decades will also highlight the shifting positioning of moral campaigns on the political spectrum (oscillating between progressive and conservative, even reactionary, politics, and making it a very elusive object of analysis).

Evaluation:

Essay or other writing assignment (mandatory)

Class participation will be encouraged

Plan – Séances:

1. Forerunners: Revival, Reformation of Manners, Anti-Slavery Campaign
2. Purity and reform: attitudes to prostitution in Britain (circa 1860-1914)
3. "Love in a Cold Climate": Homosexuality "between the Acts" (1885-1967)
4. From World War I to the "permissive moment"
5. New fault lines: sexual politics from Thatcher to Blair
6. Cameron and the "new" Conservative Party; discussion and feedback on the seminar

BIBLIOGRAPHIE:

A selective bibliography will be handed out at the beginning of the seminar