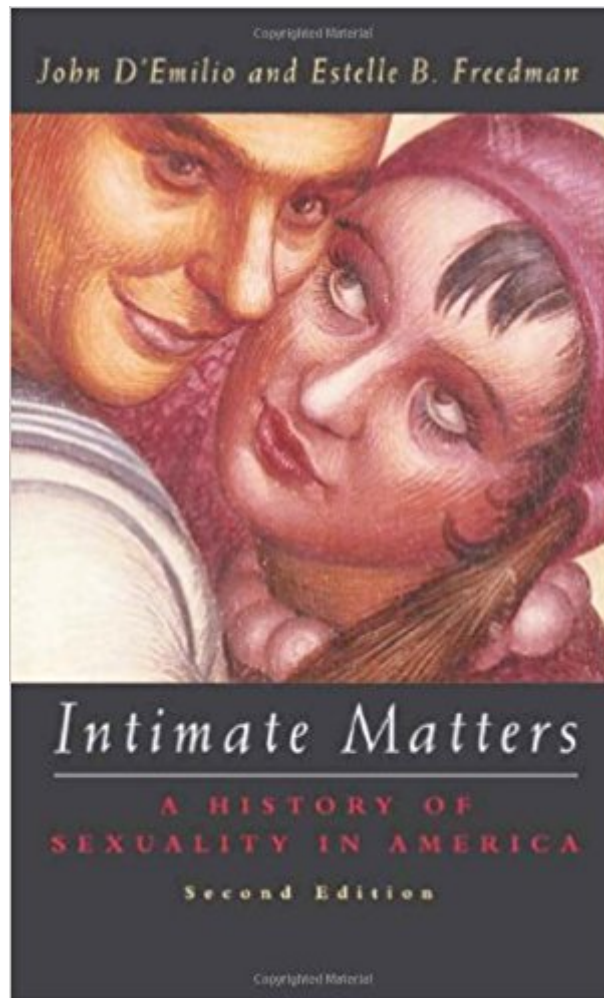




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# Intimate Matters: A History Of Sexuality In America



## Synopsis

The first full length study of the history of sexuality in America, *Intimate Matters* offers trenchant insights into the sexual behavior of Americans, from colonial times to today. D'Emilio and Freedman give us a deeper understanding of how sexuality has dramatically influenced politics and culture throughout our history. "The book John D'Emilio co-wrote with Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, was cited by Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy when, writing for a majority of court on July 26, he and his colleagues struck down a Texas law criminalizing sodomy. The decision was widely hailed as a victory for gay rights--and it derived in part, according to Kennedy's written comments, from the information he gleaned from D'Emilio's book, which traces the history of American perspectives on sexual relationships from the nation's founding through the present day. The justice mentioned *Intimate Matters* specifically in the court's decision."--Julia Keller, *Chicago Tribune* "Fascinating. . . . [D'Emilio and Freedman] marshal their material to chart a gradual but decisive shift in the way Americans have understood sex and its meaning in their lives." --Barbara Ehrenreich, *New York Times Book Review* "[With] comprehensiveness and care . . . D'Emilio and Freedman have surveyed the sexual patterns for an entire nation across four centuries." --Martin Bauml Duberman, *Nation* "Intimate Matters is comprehensive, meticulous and intelligent." --Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post Book World* "This book is remarkable. . . . [Intimate Matters] is bound to become the definitive survey of American sexual history for years to come." --Roy Porter, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Legitimately interesting reading. One of the best textbooks ever used in a class. Used for Women's Studies. I still hold onto it for reference.

Have to read this for class. Verrrrry long and detailed, but useful information. Pretty interesting as well, told primarily through anecdotes.

As the title implies, this lays out a history of sexuality in the US, and I know of no better text if that's your topic of interest.

Fantastic quality!! Speedy delivery!

Many of the other reviewers are marking this book down for being "textbook-like," all the while forgetting it is a history book. It does precisely what it purports to do: regale us with the fascinating sexual history of the United States in great detail. It does not claim to be the next pop-hit or a coffee table book. This is a book for people who want to learn something, and that makes it wonderful. Beginning just before the foundation of the colonies, this book walks us step-by-step through the history of sexuality in America. D'Emilio and Freedman provide direct primary quotes from the individuals who were experiencing the sexual norms in each time period. They also provide interesting and enlightening anecdotes, court cases, laws, and images which help us to better understand the history of sexuality in America. This book will help you to better understand the origin of puritan thoughts on sex in America and beyond. It does exactly what it purports to do in the clear, concise prose of historians who know their stuff.

The product is worth the price, it looks very beautiful. I am very satisfied with it, since received, I have been using. Overall, I am very satisfied with it. These are pretty cool and very handy! just plain magic all year long. good product at a fair price Very pretty and not difficult to work with at all. Met all my expectations and I am very happy with it.

Intimate Matters provides a comprehensive analysis of the history of sexuality in America through an engaging and thoughtful narrative. It is useful for the professional historian--it is well documented with references to existing historical literature on the topic (although it is not original research). However, it also will prove very interesting to the casual reader. The book itself provides a broad descriptive introduction to the history of sexuality and reproduction from the colonial era to the

present, but also presents a clear argument that is easy to follow. The authors claim that sexuality in America has gone through three distinct phases, from family governed sexuality in the colonial era, to privatized but conservative sexuality in the nineteenth century, to our era of comparative sexual freedom, often governed by consumerist values, in the twentieth century. Beyond that, it is simply fun to read. The book does use language that might be considered objectionable by some, but these words are quoted directly from contemporary historical sources. They help to give an honest impression of the way sexuality was discussed in the past. It is a very good book.

D'Emilio and Freedman have provided their readers with a thoughtful, entertaining, and concise history of American sexuality. As their title suggests, their perspective is historical rather than psychological. Like most social histories, "Intimate Matters" adopts a bottom-up approach, choosing to emphasize how groups of people experience (and have experienced) sexuality within their own economic, racial, gendered, and cultural contexts, rather than on the decisions of elite policymakers. There is plenty of interesting information here, ranging from the sexual practices of the early colonists to grassroots campaigns to censor sexually explicit literature. The authors capitalize on a wide variety of evidence, citing both quantitative and qualitative research to buttress their arguments. "Intimate Matters" is an important contribution to a neglected area of historical inquiry, and offers readers important insight into how economic and cultural forces shape, and are shaped by, human sexuality.

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