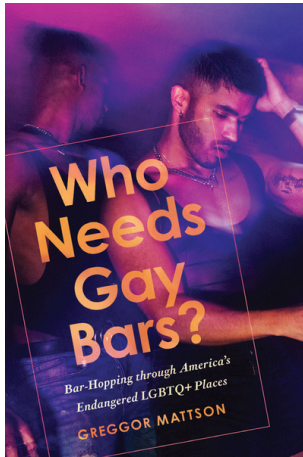




Gender and Sexualities Workshop Book Club

spring 2023 | This meeting will take place digitally over Zoom

The Sociology Department's Gender and Sexualities Workshop is a group of faculty and graduate students who meet regularly to present and discuss new research.



Sociology Gender and Sexualities "Digital Book Club" Discussion

Who Needs Gay Bars?

Bar-Hopping through America's Endangered LGBTQ+ Places

Greggor Mattson

Professor and Chair, Sociology Department
Oberlin College

Friday, May 19th @ 1:00-2:30pm

Gay bars have been closing by the hundreds. The story goes that increasing mainstream acceptance of LGBTQ+ people, plus dating apps like Grindr and Tinder, have rendered these spaces obsolete. Beyond that, rampant gentrification in big cities has pushed gay bars out of the neighborhoods they helped make hip. Jarred by the closing of his favorite local watering hole in Cleveland, Greggor Mattson embarks on a journey across the country to paint a much more complex picture of the cultural significance of these spaces, inside "big four" gay cities, but also beyond them. No longer the only places for their patrons to socialize openly, Mattson finds in them instead a continuously evolving symbol; a physical place for feeling and challenging the beating pulse of sexual progress.

From the historical archives of Seattle's Garden of Allah, to the outpost bars in Texas, Missouri or Florida that serve as community hubs for queer youth—these are places of celebration, where the next drag superstar from Alaska or Oklahoma may be discovered. They are also fraught grounds for confronting the racial and gender politics within and without the LGBTQ+ community. The question that frames this story is not asking *whether* these spaces are needed, but *for whom*. Mattson logged 10,000 miles on the road to all corners of the United States. His destinations are sometimes thriving, sometimes struggling, but all offering intimate views of the wide range of gay experience in America: POC, white, trans, cis; past, present, and future.

Greggor Mattson, is Professor and Chair of Sociology at Oberlin College. He is the author of *The Cultural Politics of European Prostitution Reform* (2016). His work has appeared in the *Annual Review of Sociology*, as well as in *Slate*, *Literary Hub*, *Belt Magazine*, and *The Daily Beast*. He has published widely within sociology as well as for the broader public and he is actively engaged in the Sexualities Section of the ASA, among other organizations and spaces.

