

HUMAN SEXUALITY – SPRING 2009
CRN# 36731/4 Credits/128 Chiles/MW 4:00 – 5:20
Course Webpage available at: <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu>

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30 – 3:30 & by Appointment

Required Text:

Hyde, J. S., & DeLamater, J. D. (2007). *Understanding Human Sexuality*. McGraw-Hill, 10th Edition.
Posted Readings available on Blackboard.

Overview:

Welcome to Human Sexuality! This course is designed to facilitate a frank, honest, and respectful conversation about the nature of our sexuality and how psychological and sociological science has studied sexuality in its many forms. Through readings, lectures, discussions, and film clips, we will explore and expand together our multiple meanings and constructions of sexuality.

Some of the questions we will address are: Why is such a basic part of human functioning sometimes thought to be “wrong” or “dirty?” What makes sexuality so difficult to talk about and understand? Why are people’s conceptions of male and female sexuality so often divergent? How does sex “work” and how do people study it? What is sexual “dysfunction?” To provide a starting point in answering some of these questions, we will discuss the biology, physiology, evolution, and psychology of sexuality, with a strong focus on societal conceptions and interpersonal aspects of sexuality.

Class Philosophy:

The advancement of knowledge depends on all of us, and learning requires **active** involvement; simply reading the material and showing up for class is not enough. You should *think* about what you are reading, watching, and discussing, and relate it to experiences in your own life, rather than just remembering facts.

The material covered in this class often elicits a strong reaction in those who engage with it, and I encourage these reactions and strongly support all forms of *respectful* interaction with the material, each other, and with the ideas presented in class. As we make our way through the course, there will be many opportunities to engage with the material, and we should all reflect on the impact our sexuality has on us, particularly within the context of our culture.

Although many human sexuality courses use heterosexuality as the standard model of healthy sexuality, and often consider homosexuality and bisexuality as anomalies, I (and the authors of your text) take the position that there can be many sexual orientations. Accordingly, heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or other forms of sexuality that don’t fit neatly into one of the above are all equally considered as valid expressions of *human* sexuality. What this means is that you will be presented with images and descriptions of both other-sex and same-sex relationships and sexual practices in lecture and in your text.

This class promotes respect for cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Although we live in the U.S., the predominant cultural beliefs in this country about sexual practices, sex roles, and communication are not the only views that exist in the world, or even within this country. As such, we should all try to understand and celebrate the diversity of human experience. The multiple cultural, ethnic, and religious views about sexuality that exist are as valid as mainstream American beliefs, and all of human behavior should be viewed within the context of broader social, political, and cultural backgrounds.

My Expectations:

The active process of learning involves a constantly evolving dialogue that has no clear beginning or end. Because of this, it is important to establish some ground rules to which we can all agree. First of all, class attendance is necessary -- not coming to class is similar to walking out in the middle of a conversation. Still, it is not enough to merely be there; to make this class a satisfying experience for each person individually and to create a climate that encourages learning for everyone, we all must come **prepared** to class. This means having done the readings for the day *prior* to coming to class.

Second, it is *vitaly important* that we all share the responsibility of being open to the variety of thoughts, ideas, and feelings held by all of us about the material. If there are 50 of us in the room, we can expect 50 different perspectives. Because the material covered in this course can be sensitive in nature, we all need to respect that no one type of experience or viewpoint is more important or valuable than others. You may not always agree with the views expressed by me, your text, or other students in class, but we must all agree to respect each individual's right to have and share an opinion. At the least, hearing and listening to the perspectives of others should create greater understanding of the diversity of experience in contemporary American society.

This course is designed to comply with the psychology department's guidelines for teaching and learning. Please review these guidelines at <http://psychweb.uoregon.edu/guidelines/index.htm>.

Guidelines:

Small group discussions, in-class writing, and other in-class assignments will be a part of class, as well as several random non-graded (pass/fail) exercises which make up part of your grade. Your participation, as such, is a required part of class. Lecture will **often** overlap with the readings, but not all of the material from the text will be covered in lecture, and lectures may cover topics from outside of the readings. Film-clips and guest speakers may also be a part of class. You are responsible for **all material** - i.e., exams can legitimately cover **any material** from readings, lecture, group discussions, films, etc., regardless of whether the content was explicitly covered in lecture. I also recommend that you check your email and the blackboard website often, as I will use these forms of communication to post important class information.

Required Readings:

Required readings **should be completed before the class period to which they are assigned**. There is one required text, and additional readings will be posted on the course website. It will be difficult to do well on exams and writing exercises if you do not keep up with the reading. Although you are not expected to master the material on first reading, you need to expose yourself to the concepts we will be covering in order to make lectures and group activities more meaningful and productive. Furthermore, class discussions will often focus on material from the readings and you may find yourself lost or unable to participate if you have not kept up with the reading.

Individual assessments:*Exams:*

Two exams will be given, which are meant to assess your knowledge of and attention to the readings, in-class films and lectures, and class discussions. Questions will be primarily multiple choice, but there may be true/false and short answer questions also. Questions will generally be drawn from the readings and lectures assigned prior to the exam. Sometimes a question will refer to material covered earlier in the course, or issues discussed in class. If you have been to class, done the readings, and thought about the material, you should be in good shape for the exams. There will be **no final exam**. Make up exams will not be given, so your presence at during exam periods is mandatory. If you require special testing circumstances (e.g., you are on a sports team, have special learning needs), you need to discuss this with me very early in the course.

Short Paper:

Toward the end of the term, each student will write a reaction to one of several questions I will provide (either given out in class or posted on BB). This paper is meant to be a critical analysis of a topic from the readings, discussions, or lectures. This paper will allow you to take a stand on an issue, to *engage* with and *react* to the material, and to make a *persuasive argument* in support of or against some idea or topic. This paper should be **3 pages maximum in length, double-spaced, with 1" margins and a 12 point font.**

Ideal papers will integrate knowledge of the material presented up to that point, and will demonstrate *clear, original* thought. Correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc., is expected, and serious flaws in grammar or style will cost points. If you don't own it, I suggest picking up Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* (1999). This is a classic, excellent, and very short reference book that anyone who writes should own. You can also get writing hints from this classic at: <http://www.orwell.ru/library/others/style/index.htm> or <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>.

Make sure to cite other people's words or ideas. Have fun, be interesting, think clearly, and write carefully; if you do all of these things, you should do well on your papers!

Group work:

Over the course of the term, you will be working closely with other students in a "working group." As a group, you will complete several assignments, and you should think of and use your working group as a resource. Your group can help you clarify and sharpen your thinking about human sexuality. Groups should have 4-6 members, and you will be expected to meet as a group outside of class in order to complete group assignments. I *may* (depending on schedule) also provide some *limited* time in class for group meetings.

Because you will be completing assignments as a group, as well as doing individual work, you should try your best to not procrastinate in either area. Before you know it, it will be your group's turn to debate, present, turn in a paper, etc. If you wait until the last minute to meet, the lack of preparation may be reflected in your group (and individual) grades. I suggest that you meet with your group right away and work out a schedule or timetable for when you will meet, what you will discuss, and what objectives you should have reached by the time of the meeting. Group assignments are discussed below.

Group assignments:

Debates: Over the course of the term, there will be 5 short debates on topics in human sexuality. These debates will coincide with topics being covered in lecture and the readings, and will be followed by a whole-class discussion. In order to be fair to all individuals in class, groups will be **randomly assigned** to take a position on an issue in human sexuality, and then debate another group about the topic on the day of the debate. Each group will participate in one debate with another group. Of course, individual members of groups, or groups as a whole, may agree or disagree with the positions you are asked to take, perhaps strongly. Still, aside from personal opinion, debate is an intellectual exercise based on logic, thought, and persuasive speaking. If you find yourself in a group where you don't agree with the position you are asked to take, try to treat the debate as such, and do your best anyway. In fact, it's much more difficult (and perhaps rewarding) to take a position in debate that goes *against* your personal beliefs – but you learn much more! I will, however, allow groups to trade topics with other groups, so long as all individual group members involved agree.

Grading for these debates will take 3 forms. In terms of the debate itself, 1) the grade will be pass/fail (meaning, if you do not take part or are absent on the day of your debate, you will receive a zero grade). 2) You will turn in a brief (1 page) summary of your group's main debate "points." 3) Each member will evaluate the contribution of each other member toward preparation for the debate. These ratings will be averaged, and "evaluation" points will be weighted by these averages.

Group paper: As a group, you will choose an empirical journal article that your group will read relating to human sexuality. I've posted several possible articles you might use on Bb, and if you have ideas for an article from outside of these readings, you **must** first clear this idea with me. For this assignment, you will each **individually** read the article. Then you will meet as a group to discuss the article (I'll give you a separate handout relating to this assignment and what I expect from you – more detailed information on grading will also be given). Then, using ideas generated from your group discussion, you will each **individually** write a short (appx. 2 pages) paper that summarizes your discussion.

Grading for this assignment will take 4 forms. 1) I will grade your **individual** papers for clarity, grammar, syntax, logical flow in presentation, etc. This will assure that if you work hard on your paper individually, you will receive credit for this work. 2) You will turn in "working notes" that outline your **individual** ability to synthesize information out of the article. 3) Cohesiveness: because I want you to work on this assignment **as a group**, the only differences in papers should be in the way the information is presented. The information itself, however, should be the same for everyone. So, I will give a "group" grade to each individual based on whether it seems like you actually met and discussed the paper, and arrived **as a group** at your conclusions. 4) You will each **evaluate** each group member's contribution to the assignment (e.g., ideas, critical thinking, etc.), and points for this portion of your grade will be weighted by these averages.

Group project: Each group will, together, choose some topic of interest in human sexuality. Together, each group will investigate this topic, using materials drawn from **outside** of the text, lectures, and assigned readings. Just about any topic relating to human sexuality is fair game, including topics we do not cover in class. Either way, you will need to **clear this topic with me**. Then, toward the end of the term, as a group, you will give a 10 minute presentation on this topic of your choosing (plus a few minutes for questions from the class), and also turn in a portfolio of your work (this may include visual aids to your presentation, a list of references used, or anything you use in your presentation or that you used to investigate this topic). These presentations are meant to be **fun, but educational**. In other words, you will become somewhat expert on some topic, and will share what you learned with me and to the class.

Grading for this project will take 3 forms. 1) I will assign a grade for the presentation itself. 2) I will assign a grade for your portfolio materials. 3) Each member of the group will evaluate the contributions of the other members toward completing the assignment. Points for this portion of your grade will be weighted by the average rating given to each member by the other members.

Attendance, participation, & other in-class activities:

Participation is crucial in this course, and we will have many class discussions. Occasionally, there will be specific activities that are worth credit on a pass/fail basis (basically, if you are there and take part, you will get credit). There will be small groups work and sometimes short writing assignments or other in-class activities. These activities will sometimes be turned in to track attendance.

Extra credit

You may earn up to 2% extra credit for participating in research studies run through the Psychology Human Participant Pool (1% per *hour* study). This is meant to be an educational experience, so you must also write a *very* short (1/2 – 1 page) description of each study you participated in. This description should identify the hypothesis (if any) of the study, the basic design (experimental, correlational, etc.), the independent and dependant variables (if any), and should also address what the real-world implications of the research are (if any). If you are interested in doing this, you will need to set up an account through the Sona system. Go here for information on how to sign up: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~hscoord/hs-students.html>

General Advice:

Procrastination is not your friend. Therefore, it is my official advice that you keep up with your reading and not wait until the last minute to write papers or start studying for exams. Cramming is not only a poor strategy for doing well on exams; it also doesn't advance learning very well. A better idea is to keep up with reading, *think* about the material you are taking in and try to link it to experiences and feelings in your own life, and write papers early, leaving time for revision. In this way, you can integrate what you learn into your life, creating a lifetime of knowledge.

Grading:

2 Exams	40%
Individual Reaction Paper	15% (note: papers that are late will lose 10% a day until they are turned in)
Group Project	20%
Group Paper	10% (note: papers that are late will lose 10% a day until they are turned in)
Group Debates	10%
Attendance, participation	5%

Grades will be approximately based on the following:

A > 90%, B > 80%, C > 70%, D > 60% **Pass** > 70%, **No-pass** < 70%

Additional Notes

Communication

Because this course is work-intensive from the first week on, it is important that we communicate effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. Come to class and contribute; see me in my office; make sure you check Blackboard and your email several times a week. In my experience, there are few problems that cannot be solved by open and effective communication.

Academic Honesty & Cheating

I do not tolerate any form of cheating and have failed students who have cheated in the past (e.g., copied somebody else's paper or exam questions). Don't do it! If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism (i.e., copying or paraphrasing information or ideas from any source, interview, print or electronic, without citation) or cheating, contact me. Violations will be taken seriously and are noted on student disciplinary records. If you are in doubt regarding any aspect of these issues as they pertain to this course, please consult with the instructor before you complete any relevant requirements of the course.

http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/academic-dishonesty.htm

<http://www.uwosh.edu/departments/llr/citing.html>

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor *on the first day of class*. If you have a non-documented disability, contact Molly Sirois as soon as possible. Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability. [Counselor for Students with Disabilities: Molly Sirois, 346-1155, TTY 346-1083, disabsrv@uoregon.edu] Remember that problems can arise when issues are not discussed at the outset with instructors; it is better to make arrangements early than to deal with potential problems later.