

**SOCY 498X: Sex & Love in Modern Society**  
**Autumn 2014**  
**TuTH 9:30-10:45am**  
**ASY 3203**

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Sex and love are topics that virtually everyone finds interesting. In this class, we will investigate why and how sociologists study these topics scientifically. The course is organized into 4 subsections. We will begin by discussing sociological theories of gender and sexuality. Next, we will examine the validity of theories by exploring empirical research on women's and men's sexual behavior and attitudes. We will explore how gendered sexuality varies by key social characteristics and how various institutions construct and "control" gendered sexuality. We will then discuss how sexuality varies over time and relationship types, focusing in particular on changes in sexual desire and behaviors and on the changing meaning of marriage in U.S. society. Last, we will explore contemporary debates about sexuality. It is important to understand that these topics are listed separately to organize the course but they overlap and in many ways mutually constitute each other.

### **Course Objectives**

- Synthesize and critically examine sociological theory on gender and sexuality
- Critically examine popular and scholarly work on contemporary sexual practices and attitudes
- Demonstrate understanding of how heterosexuality and gender operate as institutions that organize social life and structure social institutions.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

I'm certain each of you is aware of this, but I'd like to remind us all that in order to talk about society, we must all feel comfortable to express ideas and restate them sociologically. In this classroom, we will respect all positions provided that each contribution is situated in an informed model of sound academic and sociological inquiry. Respectful participation is welcome and we must all do our best to be considerate and listen to what any member of the class has to say. Discrimination or intolerance based on social characteristics such as sexual preference, disability, race, gender, religious preference or ethnicity will not be tolerated. Thus, we will respect sociologically informed positions from our peers while retaining the right to disagree.

In this course, we will read and discuss *sensitive* and sometimes *sexually explicit* material. If you feel uncomfortable with such readings and discussions you may want to reconsider taking the class. Historically, members of society have found difficulty in constructing a comfortable language for talking about sexuality. Humor has often been the antidote to break the boundaries between the distant clinical languages of academic and medical sexuality and private, ubiquitous sexual slang used in everyday situations. The problem is that the level of "tastefulness" may differ among peers so it is important to recognize how the audience at large may receive your comment or presentation of a joke. If you become upset with *any* aspect of the course you are strongly encouraged to directly discuss these feelings with me during an office appointment.

### **Course Materials**

One book is required for the course and is available as an ebook and in print at the campus bookstore: *The Gender of Sexuality (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)* Virginia Rutter and Pepper Schwartz, Rowman and Littlefield, 2012.

Journal articles are also required reading for some classes. These are available online through the course ELMS site.

### **Expectations of Students**

Students are expected to attend class, participate in class discussions and activities, complete 3 assignments, and take a midterm and a final exam. Readings for each day should be completed **before** class. Course materials will be explained more fully in lecture and some material will be presented only in lecture. Class time will

consist of lectures, discussions, and small group activities. Your active participation and attendance are important to the success of the course for both you and your classmates. You are responsible for being present when assignments are distributed and for obtaining any information, assignments or schedule changes that you may have missed. I do not post lecture notes or summaries of materials covered in class.

Participation accounts for 10% of your grade and will be assessed based on active involvement in class discussions and activities. Attendance does not count for participation. Each of you has something significant to contribute to our understanding of gendered sexuality and love. A respectful, tolerant, and actively questioning attitude is crucial to a successful discussion. All students are expected to contribute meaningfully and productively to the class.

If you are having difficulty in the course for any reason, I encourage you to see me, either during my office hours or by appointment. My responsibility to you as your professor includes answering questions, clarifying class materials, and pointing you towards additional resources. Barring an emergency, I will be available during my scheduled office hours. If you have a scheduling conflict, I am happy to meet with you at a mutually convenient time. I will also respond to straightforward questions about the course over email. However, please note that I do not routinely respond to emails outside of standard business hours (9am-5pm M-F).

I allow students to use laptops or tablets to take notes and review class materials. **If you choose to use a laptop in class, you are required to sit at the front of the classroom.** If you use your laptop or tablet for any other reason you will lose the privilege of bringing the device to class. All other technological devices, including phones, MP3s, calculators, gaming devices, and so forth, are prohibited. I will ask you to leave class if I see or observe use of these devices in class. If these devices are seen and/or used during an exam, I will collect the exam and you will not be allowed to complete the exam and the exam score will be entered as a 0 (zero). Please turn off all devices (your phone, tablet, ipod, etc...) during class.

## Assignments

1. In class group presentation: You will team up with 3 other students to develop and present a 25-30 minute analysis of an event or media clip relevant to that week's class material. You will also submit a 2-3 page paper that analyzes the topic selected by your group. I will randomly assign groups and all groups will sign up for a presentation date in class on **Thursday, 9/11/2014**.
2. Reflection Papers: On 10 of 11 occasions, you will be asked to summarize the readings for a given topic in a reading reflection paper (RRP). You may choose to opt out of 1 of the 11 required reflection papers. RRP's should be no longer than 1 double spaced page. They are due on the course ELMS site by 9:00am on the date specified in the course schedule. Each RRP should include a brief restatement of the author's main points and at least two observations about the reading. Observations should ask for clarification about something in the readings, relate the assigned readings to other class material or to a public event or media story, or ask about the implications of the readings.
3. Media Analysis. This assignment consists of a 5-6 page paper that requires you to describe and interpret depictions of gender and sexuality in the media. **Due 9am WEDNESDAY 11/26/2014**.

Rubrics for each assignment will be provided in class. Assignments should be submitted to the course ELMS site by **9am** on the date listed in the syllabus. Without **PRIOR** approval from me, no late work will be accepted. Late work and work turned in outside of ELMS will be accepted only in unusual circumstances and, depending on the circumstances, may have 10 points deducted. Please use the American Sociological Association or American Psychological Association citation style in your papers. Use 12 point, double spaced, Times New Roman font. Please proofread your paper before submitting it; points will be deducted for papers with egregious spelling or grammatical errors.

## Midterm and Final Exams

The midterm and final exam will consist of short answer and essay questions and will cover material from lectures, class discussions, and course readings. Exams will not highlight memorization of exact numbers or dates, but will focus on generalizations from research, the arguments made by various authors, and the evidence and reasoning they provide in favor of their arguments. I am not expecting you to provide every detail about the topic or a perfectly polished answer BUT I do expect you to demonstrate a working knowledge of the course material and engage in some critical thinking. You will be permitted one 3x5 notecard, double-sided, to use as an aid for exams. You may place any notes you wish on the notecard as long as it conforms to the specified dimensions. Make-up exams will be given only in emergency situations for which you provide written documentation.

## Course Grading

Following the University of Maryland's grading scale, the following criteria will be used to assign letter grades:

- A excellent mastery of the subject and outstanding scholarship (90-100 points)
- B good mastery of the subject and good scholarship (80-89 points)
- C acceptable mastery of the subject and basic performance (70-79 points)
- D borderline understanding of the subject and marginal performance (60-69 points)
- F failure to demonstrate understanding of the subject and unsatisfactory performance (0-59 points)

Assignments and exams will be graded on both content and form. Content refers to the degree to which you complete the requirements, how well you demonstrate understanding of course material, and the level of analysis applied. Form refers to the clarity of the work you present in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and writing style. Work that is adequate in demonstrating basic familiarity with the material will earn a C. Work that is organized, coherent, and demonstrates above average understanding of material will earn a B. Work that is organized, coherent, and presents a strongly developed and supported thesis, and also demonstrates superior understanding of material, will earn an A. I will follow University conventions in assigning plus and minus letter grades.

Your final grade is calculated as follows:

Requirement	Final Grade %	Due Date
Class Participation	10%	Ongoing
Group Presentation & Paper	15%	Ongoing
Response Papers	15%	Ongoing
Midterm	20%	Tu 10/21
Assignment 3	20%	WED 11/26
Final exam	20%	Tu 12/16

**Major scheduled grading events include your Group's Presentation scheduled date, the midterm scheduled on 10/21/2014, and the final exam scheduled on 12/16/2014 from 8-10am.**

## Disabilities

I rely on the Disability Support Service (DSS) Office for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. Students requiring accommodation should register with the DSS and provide me with a current, written University of Maryland Accommodation form. Only written DSS documentation of the accommodation will be considered as I am legally allowed to accommodate only students with a disability registered through DSS. The form must be presented to me no later than September 26, 2013.

## Academic Misconduct

Please review the Honor Pledge at <http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code>. You will be asked to handwrite the honor pledge, and sign and date it, on the cover page of every exam and assignment in this class.

The Honor Pledge is written below this paragraph. Please note that I will refer students to the Student Honor Council if a student violates the Code of Academic Integrity. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating on tests, misrepresenting yourself or your work, including passing off other's work as your own or copying papers off the Internet, and plagiarism. **If you are uncertain whether something constitutes academic misconduct, please ask!**

Honor Code: *"I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment / paper / examination."*

## **Medical Excuses**

Regular attendance and participation in the class is the only way to understand fully the theories and research discussed. However, I understand that sometimes you must miss a class because of illness. In the event that a class must be missed due to an illness, the policy in this class is as follows:

1. For every medically necessary absence from class, send me an email in advance of the class. When you return to class, bring a note identifying the date of and reason for the absence and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate. You must also state that if the reason for your absence is found to be false, you understand that you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.
2. If you are absent because of illness more than twice, you are required to bring documentation signed by a health care professional identifying the dates of and reason for the absence.
3. If you are absent because of illness on exam days or dates when assignments are due, you are required to notify me in advance. When you return to class, you must bring documentation of the illness, signed by a health care professional. If you do not inform me when you return to class and if you do not provide written documentation, you will receive 0 points for the exam or assignment.

## **Religious Observance**

By September 18, students must provide me with a written request for a make-up exam date if you are unable to be in class on the scheduled exam dates because of a specific religious observance. You must specify the religious event in the written request. Please refer to the University's Online Catalog Policy on Religious Observance. Please remember that accommodations are not made for travel to and from the religious observance.

## **University Closings**

In the event that the University is closed for an emergency or unanticipated extended period of time, I will email or contact you to indicate schedule adjustments. If the University is closed for an emergency or inclement weather on major grading event dates, these events will be rescheduled. Official closures and delays are announced on the University website <http://www.umd.edu>. The snow phone line is 301-405-SNOW (7669); you may also check your local radio and TV stations for information.

## **Copyright**

All course materials (lectures, PowerPoints, assignments, handouts, etc.) are the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized recording or distribution of these materials to any sharing website, or third party, is a violation of the law.

<b>SOCY 498X COURSE SCHEDULE</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READINGS</b>
<b>UNIT I: Studying Gender &amp; Sexuality</b>		
Tuesday 9/2	Introduction	None
Thursday 9/4	Theoretical Perspectives	Rutter & Schwartz, Ch. 1 pages 1-35 Christina 1992
Tuesday 9/09	Gendered Bodies <b>RRP #1 Due</b>	Fausto-Sterling 2000
Thursday 9/11	Gendered Sexual Identities	Dozier 2005
<b>UNIT 2: Gendered Sexual Behaviors</b>		
Tuesday 9/16	Sexual Behavior & Attitudes	Rutter & Schwartz, Chapter 2
Thursday 9/18	Sexual Behavior & Attitudes <b>RRP #2 Due</b>	Alexander & Fisher 2003
Tuesday 9/23	Heteronormativity: families & peers <b>RRP #3 Due</b>	Martin 2009
Thursday 9/25	<b>Group Presentation: Group 1</b>	Review 9/23 readings
Tuesday 9/30	Sex Education & Heteronormativity <b>RRP #4 Due</b>	Garcia 2009
Thursday 10/2	<b>Group Presentation: Group 5</b>	Review 9/30 readings
Tuesday 10/7	Uncommitted Relationships <b>RRP #5 Due</b>	Rutter & Schwartz, Chapter 3 Shalet 2010
Thursday 10/09	College Sexuality <b>RRP #6 Due</b>	Hamilton, Armstrong, England 2010 Reid 2011
Tuesday 10/14	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
Thursday 10/16	<b>Group Presentation: Group 2</b>	Review 10/14 readings
<b>Tuesday 10/21</b>	<b>Midterm</b>	

<b>UNIT 3: Sexuality &amp; Relationships</b>		
Thursday 10/23	College Sexuality: Violence	Armstrong, Hamilton, and Sweeney 2006 Recommended: Pierotti 2013
Tuesday 10/28	<b>Group Presentation: Group 3</b>	Review 10/23 Readings
Thursday 10/30	Interracial Relationships <b>RRP #7 Due</b> ( <i>either Wilkins or Childs or both</i> )	Wilkins 2012 Childs 2005
Tuesday 11/4	<b>Group Presentation: Group 4</b>	Review 10/30 Readings
Thursday 11/6	Changing Meaning of Marriage	Rutter & Schwartz, Chapter 4 Cherlin 2004
Tuesday 11/11	Cohabitation	Ortyl 2013 Bates & DeMaio 2013
Thursday 11/13	<b>Group Presentation: Group 6</b>	Review 11/11 readings
Tuesday 11/18	Relationship Emotion Work <b>RRP #8 Due</b>	Elliott and Umberson 2008 Pfeffer 2010
Thursday 11/20	Polyamorous Relationships <b>RRP #9 Due</b>	Sheff 2005 Wilkins 2004
Tuesday 11/25	<b>Group Presentation: Group 8</b>  <b>ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE 11/26 9AM</b>	Review 11/20 readings
Thursday 11/27	Thanksgiving Break	No assigned readings
<b>UNIT 4: Debates about Sexuality</b>		
Tuesday 12/2	Cultural Debates about Sexuality: Marriage Promotion  <b>RRP #10 Due (write on Heath)</b>	Rutter & Schwartz, Chapter 5 Heath 2013
Thursday 12/4	<b>Group Presentation: Group 7</b>	Review 12/2 readings
Tuesday 12/9	Cultural Debates about Sexuality: Same Sex Marriage & Polyamory  <b>RRP #11 Due</b>	Sheff 2011
Thursday 12/11	Wrap Up & Review	Rutter & Schwartz Chapter 6
<b>Tuesday 12/16</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM, 8:00-10:00am</b>	