

Psychology of Sexual Behavior (PSY 210)

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Office Hours

This semester I'm in class from 9:00-10:50 am and 12:00-12:50 pm on M-W-F, and 3:00-4:15 pm on T-Th. I should be in my office from 11:00-11:45 and 1:00-3:00 on M-W-F and before 2:45 on T-Th. Otherwise, simply set an appointment to reserve a time to meet.

Course Objectives, Goals, and Content

The primary goals in this course are for each student to:

- 1) understand sexuality from a behavioral science (psychological and sociological) perspective
- 2) think critically about knowledge claims and research having to do with human sexuality
- 3) develop a greater appreciation for the social issues and diversity included in human sexuality

Preparing for Class

The purposes of assigning materials outside of class is to facilitate learning of new material and to provide an experience that all students have in common and can therefore use as a theme for classroom discussion. In this course, all such materials will be accessed on the Internet. For links to each assigned reading or viewing, go to **www.SmellsLikeCollege.com** and click on the link for PSY 210. The resulting page contains links and brief instructions for material to be accessed prior to each date the class meets. As a way to ensure that out-of-class preparation is carried into the classroom, we'll start each class meeting by asking for your answers to the discussion questions that are posted with the links to the materials.

WARNING:

Given the topic of the course, some of the material you will encounter will be sexually explicit (for example, visual images of nudity and sexual behavior, discussion of cultural "slang" terms or unusual sexual practices). The intent of such material is not to offend you or to make you uncomfortable, but rather to accurately cover the range of human sexual experience. To meet the goals and objectives of the course we need to be able to discuss sexuality in frank terms without feeling as though we are going to be embarrassed or criticized by others in the class. Accordingly, I will do everything I know to do to foster an atmosphere of tolerance and respect for each person's feelings and contributions to the class. Each student needs to do her individual part to ensure that issues of sexuality can be discussed safely, respectfully, and intelligently in class. You will never be expected to disclose information regarding your own sexuality. Still, if you believe that this course might be a source of considerable discomfort or moral conflict for you, please seriously consider withdrawing from the course (this course is not required).

Special Arrangements

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share, or if you need special arrangements in the event the building must be evacuated, please see me right away.

In Case of an Emergency School Closing

If we have an unexpected evacuation or closing of the college, continue to follow the assigned reading schedule. If an exam falls on a cancelled day, the exam will be held the next time the class meets (so be prepared to take the exam). If the college closes for a substantial length of time, monitor your college e-mail account for information and contact the instructor via e-mail at Michael@mindingthemind.com

Please Note: If class is canceled, either due to weather or instructor illness or some other reason, please stay on schedule according to the syllabus. We will attempt to get back on schedule quickly.

Threaded Discussions

(2 possible points each – 20 possible points total)

To foster out-of-class thinking and discussion about topics related to class, we will conduct several ongoing threaded discussions via Koala Connection. Go to the PSY 210 course link in your Koala Connection account and select “Collaboration” and then “Forum” to join in on an existing discussion (I will open a new thread for each course topic). Each thread will be prompted by a question or brief instructions to respond to something specific from the course.

Each substantial entry a student makes to a discussion adds 2 points to her grade, up to a possible 20 total points. “Substantial” means a contribution that furthers the discussion by 1) relating other course material to the topic in a new way, 2) relating the course material to events and/or information outside of the course, or 3) raising important questions that prompt further discussion in new directions. Note that substantial contributions go beyond simply agreeing or disagreeing with previous posts, or sharing a personal example. Each student may earn a maximum of 2 points per individual threaded discussion. Of course students are encouraged to contribute more than one entry per discussion topic, and more than the minimum 10 entries required for the full 20 points. In other words, there is no limit on the number of substantial posts, but the total possible score is 2 points per thread topic and 20 points overall.

Posts that are considered not substantial will be removed by the professor. That is not to say that such posts are “bad,” but this way the remaining posts will be the most meaningful, and each student will be able to keep track of how many points she has accumulated thus far. I will provide feedback via e-mail as to why one or more of your posts were removed.

Remember that printed text does not contain the “tone of voice” or facial expressions involved in talking with someone. So, it can be easy to “misread” the tone with which something was written. For example, an online posting may have been written with a good bit of humor intended, yet readers may simply interpret it as hostile. Always re-read your postings before submitting them. You want your postings to accurately communicate your intended message.

Brief Take-Home Essay Exams

(20 possible points each – 80 possible points total)

There will be a 4 take-home exams in which you will be asked to integrate particular aspects of the material covered since the previous exam. Each exam will consist of a single essay question or topic, and answers are to be typed double-spaced, 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides. No need for a title or header (other than your name). Limits will be placed on the length of each exam (most likely no more than 2 pages), so strong answers will be concise and well-written. Revise and polish so that you have the most comprehensive answer condensed into the space allotted. The exam questions and due dates will be posted at the web site used for the course readings. You may e-mail your exam answer as an attachment, but be sure it is in Microsoft Word, Corel WordPerfect, or Rich Text Format (RTF). None in Microsoft Works please. If I receive an e-mail from you, I will respond. If you do not receive a response, check to make sure your e-mail was sent successfully. A matrix will be provided in advance of each essay exam, so that you’ll know how each will be graded.

Overall Course Grade

There will not be opportunities for extra credit. Your course grade is based on the following scale:

90-100 (90-100%) = A	80-86 (80-86%) = B	70-76 (70-76%) = C
88-89 (88-89%) = B+	78-79 (78-79%) = C+	60-69 (60-69%) = D less than 60 = F

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
Jan. 20	Introduction to the Course
Jan. 22	Setting the Stage for Getting the Most Out of This Course: The Process Begins

Research, Theory, and Critical Thinking

Jan. 25	How do researchers study human sexuality?
Jan. 27	How do sexuality researchers collect data on human sexuality?
Jan. 29	Why was Alfred Kinsey so important in the history of sex research?
Feb. 1	How is human sexuality explained from primary theories?
Feb. 3	How do we explain our sexual attitudes?

Gender, Anatomy, & Identity

Feb. 5	Is there a cultural double standard based on gender?
Feb. 8	Playing with Gender: What motivates drag queens and drag kings?
Feb. 10	How do the bodily sexual systems develop and function?
Feb. 12	What does “Intersex” include? Should Infants with Ambiguous Genitals Receive Surgery?
Feb. 15	Why do some adults change their sex and gender identity?
Feb. 17	What societal issues do transgendered individuals face?

Sexual Response, Functioning, & Dysfunction

Feb. 19	Who were Masters and Johnson, and why were they important?
Feb. 22	What determines sexual interest and disinterest?
Feb. 24	What is “sexual addiction” or compulsive sexuality?
Feb. 26	What determines sexual arousal?
March 1	What is paraphilia? Do Deviant Desires Indicate a Disorder in Need of Treatment?
March 3	What motivates sexual bondage and sado-masochism?
March 5	What influences orgasm and sexual satisfaction?
Mar. 8-12	No Class – <i>Spring Break</i>
March 15	What role does body image and self-schema play in sexuality?

Sexuality in Developmental Context

- March 17 What is childhood sexuality? What is childhood sexual abuse? What are its effects?
- March 19 What role does sex and formal sex education programs play in teens' lives?
- March 22 How does sex change later in life? Sex surfaces in the nursing home?

Attraction & Sexual Orientation

- March 24 What influences sexual attraction between two individuals?
- March 26 What do we mean by "Sexual Orientation"?
- March 29 What determines someone's sexual orientation? Can/should homosexuality be changed?
- March 31 Should gay and lesbian couples be allowed to marry?
- April 2 **No Class** – *Easter Holiday*
- April 5 What are the concerns and realities of gay and lesbian parents?

Sexual Relationships

- April 7 How do two people get together for a potential romantic/sexual relationship?
- April 9 What do love and attachment have to do with sexual behavior?
- April 12 How does sex change over the course of the relationship?
- April 14 Monogamy, Polygamy, and Infidelity
- April 16 What constitutes jealousy?

Rape & Harassment

- April 19 What constitutes rape? What motivates perpetrators?
- April 21 What constitutes sexual harassment?

Commercial Sex

- April 23 What forms of commercial sex exist? Should pornography be restricted or illegal?
- April 26 What are the effects of commercial sex? Should prostitution be legal?
- April 28 Who are sex workers? How does sex work affect these individuals?
- April 30 What are the actual risks of sex, and why don't people protect themselves?
- May 5, 7 **Final Exam Periods** – Wed., 8:30-10:00 (*Honors section*) and Fri., 8:30-10:00 – *Film TBA*