

# Psychology and Sociology of Sexual Behavior (PSY 210)

**Instructor:** Michael Wiederman, Ph.D.  
**Telephone:** 786-3630 (*office*), 446-6367 (*cell*)

**E-Mail:** mwiederman@columbiasc.edu  
Michael@mindingthemind.com

## Office Hours

This semester I'm in class from 9:00-10:50 am, 12:00-12:50 pm, and 2:00-3:15 on M-W-F. So, I should be in my office from 11:00-11:45 and 1:00-1:45 on M-W-F and from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on T-Th. Sometimes I have committee meetings or other obligations. Feel free to set an appointment to reserve a specific time to meet.

## Course Objectives, Goals, and Content

The primary goals in this course include 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 awareness of the diversity and social controversies 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 each class.

## **WARNING:**

Some of the material you will encounter will be sexually explicit (for example, visual images of nudity, verbal descriptions of sexual behavior, discussion of cultural "slang" terms or unusual sexual practices). The intent of such material is not to offend, shock, or titillate, 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. 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 the material and issues can be discussed safely, respectfully, and intelligently in class. You will never be expected to disclose information regarding your own sexuality or experience, and nothing is discussed or shown in class simply for "shock value."

## Special Arrangements

If you need accommodation due to 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 schedule. 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 for any reason, please stay on schedule according to the syllabus (including submission of assignments that are due). We will get back on schedule quickly.

## Graded Assessment of Learning

### **Exams on KC** (20 possible points each – 100 possible points total)

There will be a 5 online exams designed to evaluate your knowledge and familiarity with the material covered in the course up to that point. The format of each exam will be multiple-choice. Most of the material evaluated in each exam will come from the period since the previous exam. However, some material may appear from any earlier point in the semester (including items repeated from previous exams).

To ensure that the exams assess student learning as opposed to the ability to successfully search the course materials for the answer, each exam will have tight time limits. In other words, there will not be time to search the material during the exam. Also, each exam will be available on KC only on the day scheduled (from 8:00 am to 11:59 pm).

Because illnesses and emergencies sometimes arise, you may have to miss an exam. To account for such circumstances, there will be 6 online exams, but only the best 5 grades for each student will apply to her overall course grade. That way, if you miss an exam, that is the one that does not count.

### **Written Issue Analyses** (20 possible points each – 40 possible points total)

The overall course grade will include the scores on 2 brief, written analyses of controversial topics in sexuality that have been covered in class. Each paper is limited to one typed page, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and Times-New Roman 12-point font. No need for a title or any header information other than your name.

Each analysis will be graded according to how accurately, clearly, and thoughtfully the analysis summarizes the primary issues involved in the controversial topic under discussion. The goal is to construct a complete, concise analysis of the different sides or perspectives on the sexuality issue; describing the different sides, their strengths and weaknesses, motivating factors, etc. The ideal summary will present each side of an issue in such a balanced way that it would be difficult to discern the personal opinion of the student who wrote it. Given the space limitations, it's important that the paper be well-written and organized. Utilize the Writing Lab.

### Set One Topics (choose one)

Sex Research: Should government funding support such research?

Sex Education in Schools: What should be taught and when?

Double Standard: Should males and females be treated exactly the same with regard to sex?

Pedophilia: How should society address the fact that some members are pedophilic?

### Set Two Topics (choose one)

Cheating: What constitutes "cheating" and how it should be addressed?

Sexual Aggression: To what extent might a culture promote sexual harassment and rape?

Pornography: Should there be limits on pornography?

Prostitution: Should prostitution be legal? Regulated?

## Overall Course Grade

There will *not* be opportunities for extra credit. Course grades are based on the following:

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

**DATE****Sex Research, Critical Thinking & Theory**

Jan. 15–29

How can we best approach the study of human sexuality?  
How do sexuality researchers collect data on human sexuality?  
Why was Alfred Kinsey so important in the history of sex research?  
How is human sexuality explained from primary theories?

**Attitudes & Developmental Context**

Jan. 31–

What influences our sexual attitudes as individuals and a culture?

Feb. 12

Is there a cultural double standard based on gender?

What is “normal” childhood sexuality? What is childhood sexual abuse?

What role does sex education play?

**Feb. 13****Exam 1****Gender, Bodies, & Identity**

Feb. 14–24

What motivates drag queens and drag kings?

How do the bodily sexual systems develop and function?

What does “Intersex” include? What’s the best response?

Why do some adults change their sex and gender identity?

What societal issues do transgender individuals face?

**Feb. 25****Exam 2****Sexual Response: Functioning, & Dysfunction**

Feb. 26–

What influences sexual interest? Arousal? Orgasm? Satisfaction?

March 21

What role does body image and self-schema play in sexuality?

What is “sexual addiction” or compulsive sexuality?

What is paraphilia? Do deviant desires warrant intervention?

What motivates sexual bondage and sado-masochism?

**March 24****Exam 3, *First Controversies Paper Due*****Attraction & Sexual Orientation**

March 24–

What influences sexual attraction between two individuals?

April 2

What do we mean by “sexual orientation”? What influences it? Can it change?

What causes homophobia, homonegativity, and discrimination?

What are the concerns and realities of gay and lesbian marriage, parenting?

**April 3****Exam 4****Sexual Relationships**

April 4–9

How does sex change over the course of the relationship? Why?

What are monogamy, polygamy, and extradyadic sex? What motivates each?

What do we know about infidelity and jealousy?

**Rape & Harassment**

April 11-14

What constitutes sexual harassment? What constitutes rape?

What motivates perpetrators? How are victims affected?

**April 15****Exam 5****Commercial Sex & Sex Work**

April 16-25

What forms of commercial sex exist? What are the effects of commercial sex?

Should there be limits on pornography? Should prostitution be legal?

Who are sex workers, and how are they affected by their work?

**April 25****Exam 6, *Second Controversies Paper Due*****Final Exam Period** – April 28, 8:30-10:00 (Sec. 1), or May 2, 8:30-10:00 (Sec. 2) – *Film Clips*