

Sexual Diversity
Psychology 4000 N
Spring 2009

Instructor: Dr. Paul L. Vasey
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Office Hours: after class or by appointment
Time: Tuesday 18:00-20:50
Classroom: C610

Seminar Description:

In this seminar, we will explore the question: “*What is sexual orientation?*” As such, we will *not* be primarily concerned with the proximate or ultimate *causes* of sexual orientation. Rather, what concerns us here is to more accurately identify what the term “sexual orientation” encompasses so that we can then characterize the component parts of this phenomenon in as accurate a manner as possible. Some of the questions we will be addressing include: What is sexual behaviour? What is the nature of sexual fantasy? What is sexual attraction? What is sexual arousal? How do sexual orientation identities develop? Do the various measures of sexual orientation characterize this phenomenon in a consistent manner? Are there sex differences in sexual orientation? Does sexual orientation exist on a continuum, or is it categorical? Can sexual orientation change over time? What is the relationship between love and sexual desire? Does attraction and arousal to particular sexed bodies encompass the totality of one’s sexual orientation?

We will also examine some of the recent controversies surround human sexuality research.

Required Readings:

- (1) Bailey, J. M. (2003). *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender Bending and Transsexualism*. Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press. (available online through the U of L library system).
- (2) Diamond, L. M. (2008). *Sexual Fluidity: Understanding Women’s Love and Desire*. Harvard, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (available in the bookstore).
- (3) Additional readings will be placed on reserve in the library.

Grading:

The following ranges will be employed in assigning grades in this course:

A+	≥ 89.5	C+	66.5-69.4
A	84.5-89.4	C	63.5-66.4
A-	79.5-84.4	C-	59.5-63.4
B+	76.5-79.4	D+	56.5-59.4
B	73.5-76.4	D	50-56.4
B-	69.5-73.4	F	≤49.9

In accordance with the University of Lethbridge Calendar,
A = Excellent
B = Good
C = Satisfactory
D = Poor
F = Fail

Seminar assessments:

Participation (20%): As with any seminar, this class emphasizes student participation. Therefore, a substantial percentage of your grade will be based on participation. Participation will be evaluated based on: (1) the frequency with which you contribute to classroom discussion through comments and questions but, *much more importantly*, (2) the quality of your participation (i.e., did your comments and/or questions contribute a novel, insightful and well-reasoned perspective to the discussion?). It should be the case then, that each student has read and thought about the reading material prior to its discussion. The job of non-presenters is to come to class with questions or thoughts that can initially be posed to the presenters, but which then should lead to general classroom discussion about the conceptual issues under investigation.

Presentations (15%): You will be required to conduct a classroom presentation based on an assigned reading.

During your presentations, you should cover the following key points: (1) What is the key issue(s) being examined in the reading? (2) What contribution has this reading made in terms of us better understanding sexual orientation?

Following each presentation, there will be a question and answer period that you moderate. As such, you should conclude your presentation by highlighting controversial or debatable points that the study raised. This should act to facilitate discussion in the seminar.

Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes in length. This is the standard length of a podium presentation at a scientific conference.

Do not read your presentation. Presentations should be accompanied by visual aids; either Powerpoint slides or overheads. The visual aids should act as notes both to prompt you during your presentations and to help the audience digest the information you are presenting.

You will be graded on the style and content of your presentation.

Weekly Assignments:

Critical Thinking Questions (45%)

With respect the readings provided, you will be required to address the following:

What contribution has this reading made in terms of us better understanding sexual orientation? These 2-page (maximum) assignments are due at the beginning of the class the week after they are assigned. Place the full citation for the reading at the beginning of the assignment.

On a separate page, you will be required to provide two questions relating to the assigned readings. These questions should contribute toward class discussion following presentations.

Exam (20%)

A final take home exam will consist of short answer questions pertaining to the course material

Seminar Policies:

- (1) In addition to the readings, documentary films on sexuality will be screened during the last hour of some seminar classes. If you miss the films, they cannot be borrowed from the instructor and there will not be a second screening.
- (2) Additional work will not be assigned for those who wish to improve their grades.
- (3) The due date for the written assignments will not be extended.
- (4) The seminar will deal frankly with controversial issues pertaining to sexuality. This content may make some people uncomfortable. Some of the course material will be sexually explicit. Such individuals should seriously consider this possibility before they commit to taking this seminar.
- (5) Given the controversial nature of the course material, a diversity of viewpoints will inevitably exist in the classroom. Voicing well-reasoned disagreement with others viewpoints is perfectly fine (even encouraged!); being disrespectful towards others is not.
- (6) If students need to talk about some sexual or gender related issues that are troubling them I strongly recommend they make an appointment with the councilors at the student-counseling center. The Student Counseling Office can be found in TH 218. The number at the counseling center is 317-2845. The website is: <<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/counselling/index.html>>.