

Psychology 2840N
Comparative Sexuality



Instructor: Dr. Paul L. Vasey

Instructor's Office: D 852

Instructor's Office Hours: Tuesday 3-4pm, after class, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Jessica Parker

Teaching Assistant email: jessica.parker@uleth.ca

Teaching Assistant's Regular Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30 -3:30 (see below TA's extended office hours following the tests)

Teaching Assistant's Office: B 834

Lectures: Wednesday 18:00-20:50

Classrooms: PE 250

Course Description:

In this course, we will examine human sexuality from a comparative, biosocial perspective. As such, the influence of both biological and social processes on sexuality will be discussed. In addition, cross-species and cross-cultural comparative examples will be emphasized in class. Students will hopefully come to understand that sex can be studied scientifically and systematically using an evidence-based approach as opposed to one that is based on their personal value systems. We will examine processes that are common to almost all humans such as universal patterns of sexual attraction and arousal. However, *diversity* is a common theme that runs throughout this course. As such, some of the more unusual topics that we will examine in this course include: masturbation, intersexuality, homosexuality, paraphilias, and transsexuality

Required Readings:

Assigned Chapters and sections from:

LeVay, S., Baldwin, J., & Baldwin, J. (2009). *Discovering Human Sexuality*. Sunderland, Mass.: Sinauer Associates, Inc., Publishers.

Sex & Evolution (pdf of Chapter 2 from: LeVay, S. & Baldwin, J. (2011). *Human Sexuality*. Sunderland, Mass.: Sinauer Associates, Inc., Publishers. This pdf will be available on the course Moodle page)

Registering for the textbook companion website:

(1) Go to the *Discovering Human Sexuality* companion website:

<http://sites.sinauer.com/discoveringhumansexuality2e>

- (2) Click “Online Quizzes” in the list of resources on the left-hand side.
- (3) Click “Register.”
- (4) Enter your instructor’s email address <paul.vasey@uleth.ca> and click “Submit.”
- (5) Follow the instructions to create an account.
- (6) Once registration is complete, students can take a quiz immediately by going back to the chapter quiz page and clicking “Login.”

Course Assessment:

Tests: Three online Moodle tests will consist of multiple-choice questions. The tests are conceptually cumulative. Note that the Testing Center closes at 5pm on Fridays.

Test 1: (February 11-15): 35%

Test 2: (March 24-28) 35%

Test 3: (April 24-28): 30%

With respect to the Tests in this course, as per the University calendar section 9.b.3 (p. 86), “*Students may be expected to apply what has been taught in the course to new situations, to analyze different examples, or to synthesize original responses to questions that remain within the realm of fairness, even though the particular applications, examples or circumstances may not have been explicitly addressed in course lectures and readings.*”

Teaching Assistant Schedule

Extended Office Hours following Test 1:

Monday, Feb. 18, 9 - 11am

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 10am - 12 noon

Wednesday, Feb. 20, 1 – 4 pm

Extended Office Hours following Test 2:

Tuesday, April 2, 10am - 12 noon

Wednesday, April 3, 1 – 4 pm

Thursday, April 4, 10am - 12pm

Extended Office Hours following Test 3:

Monday, April 29, 9 - 12am

Tuesday, April 30, 10am – 1 pm

Wednesday, May 1, 1 – 4 pm

Course Policies:

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

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

In accordance with the University of Lethbridge Calendar,

A = Excellent

B = Good

C = Satisfactory

D = Poor

F = Fail

(2) The lectures, readings, and films will deal frankly with controversial issues pertaining to biological sex, gender diversity and sexuality. Much of the course content is sexually explicit. This content may shock some people and make them uncomfortable. Consequently, such people may be unable to follow lectures, complete assignments or even attend classes. Such individuals should seriously reflect upon this possibility before they commit to taking this optional course.

(3) 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 (see Section 6.b.I of the University Calendar).

(4) The lectures compliment the material presented in the textbook. Some lectures will follow the material in the textbook closely; other lectures will focus on material not present in the textbook. In some instances, material presented in the textbook will not be dealt with in the lectures to any great extent. Regardless, students are responsible for all the assigned reading material and all the material presented in lectures whether or not one overlaps with the other.

(5) Students in the course are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non-academic offenses in accordance with the University Calendar.

As per the University Calendar, Section 6.h.I.: *“When a student disrupts instructional activities, the instructor may exclude the student immediately from instructional space and/or from future scheduled instructional meetings of that course pending further actions by the Dean.”* When students talk among themselves during lectures it disrupts instructional activities and, consequently, I will respond accordingly by asking the student(s) to be quiet. If the student(s) continue to talk I will ask them to leave the class. If the disruption continues in a second class, I will notify the Dean, who will then take the appropriate action.

(6) All questions pertaining to the course material must be asked during class or on the Moodle discussion board for the course. Do not email the instructor or the teaching assistant with such questions. Posting questions on Moodle or asking them in class ensures that we do not answer the same question multiple times and, in addition, everyone in the class benefits from the information. Questions asked on the Moodle discussion board will be answered by the teaching assistant in consultation with the Instructor. Students are allowed to post questions on the discussion board once per day. Posts should be written using correct grammar and spelling. The teaching assistant will respond to posted questions once per day. Responses to posted questions will cease at

4pm on the day before a test is scheduled. *We will not respond to any questions about the test material during the period in which the test is open.*

(7) Test answers will not be provided online. Students should not copy the test questions in any format. Students found with copies of any of the test questions will be given an automatic “F” in the course. Following tests, the teaching assistant will be available to meet with you, discuss your exam results, and show you the correct answers. See the teaching assistant schedule above for available meeting times. The teaching assistant is not available to meet with students about their test results outside of these scheduled times. Therefore, students who wish to meet with the teaching assistant about their test results should plan their schedules accordingly. Students who wish to meet with the teaching assistant to discuss their results should come prepared with specific questions and explain why they think there might be a problem with a particular question (i.e., I think I should have gotten a mark for this *because* on page XX of the assigned reading, it says “XXXX”). If students meet with the teaching assistants as part of a fishing expedition for marks (i.e., “I think I should have gotten a mark for this! Tell me why I didn’t!”), then the TA will simply ask them why they think they should have gotten a mark.

(8) Students can write missed tests if they provide documentation from a doctor stating that they were ill *over the entire period during which the test was open on the Moodle system* and that their test performance would have been seriously affected by this illness. The documentation must have the doctor’s name, address and phone number. Non-medical reasons for missed exams (i.e., a death in the family) must also be supported with appropriate documentation. With respect to these personal issues, students can email the teaching assistant directly <jessica.parker@uleth.ca> who will then communicate this information to the instructor and the appropriate accommodations will be made. If you email the TA be sure to include your course number in the subject line. Missed tests for which students are unable to provide appropriate documentation will be assigned a zero.

(9) My course notes/powerpoint presentations will not be provided to students. I will, however, send students selected slides from my powerpoint presentations that contain graphics that are not available in the textbook. In such cases, I will notify students in class that such a slide will be emailed to them. I reserve the right to decide which slides will be emailed to students in this manner.

(10) I do not provide study guides for tests.

(11) Additional work will not be assigned for those who wish to improve their grades.

(12) I will not change the weighting of the tests if you do better on one of them compared to the other(s).

(13) If you miss any of the films shown in class, they cannot be borrowed from the instructor and there will not be a second screening.

(14) As per the University calendar section 9.b.4 (p. 87), you are expected to monitor your university email for messages pertaining to this course.

(15) Please do not use the internet during lectures and please turn your cell phones off prior to the beginning of the lecture.

(16) 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 TH218. The number at the counseling center is 317-2845. The website is: <<http://www.uleth.ca/counselling/>>.

Reading Schedule

Note: I will try to follow this reading schedule as closely as possible, but I reserve the right to deviate from it.

Week 1 (Jan. 9)

Introduction to the course

Reading: Chapter 1

Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 198-202 up to and including *Attitudes in other countries differ from those of the United States*

Reading: Chapter 10, Box 10.4. p. 326

Weeks 2-4 (Jan. 16-30)

Sex differences in sexuality: Proximate and evolutionary perspectives

Reading: *Sex & Evolution*. A pdf of this reading by can be found on the Moodle webpage for the course

Reading: Chapter 4, p. 103- 120 read from *Gender is a Central Aspect of Personhood* up to and including *Gender Development is Interactive*. Note: you do not need to read Boxes 4.1, 4.2 or 4.3 for this part of the course.

Reading: Chapter 5, pp. 123-142, read from *Sexual Attraction: It takes two* up to and including *Perceived attractiveness varies around the menstrual cycle*.

Reading: Chapter 7, p. 202-204, read *Casual Sex Has More Appeal To Men Than To Women*. Also read, Chapter 7, p. 224-229, from *Love, jealousy and infidelity may be intertwined* up to and including *Extra pair relationships are uncommon*.

Reading: Chapter 11, Box 11.4

Reading: Chapter 16, *Sexual Assault, Harassment and Partner Violence*

Week 5 (Feb. 6)

Sexual Behavior & Sexual Relationships

Reading: Chapter 6, pp. 166-184 up to and including *Sex toys are used to enhance sexual pleasure*. Also read, pp. 188-191, from *Many disabled people have active sex lives* up to and including

Many intellectually disabled people are competent to make sexual choices.

Reading: Chapter 3, p. 90-91, read *Nudity is culturally regulated.*

Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 204-207, *Hooking up—the new norm?*

Also read pp. 208-224 from *Negotiating sex involves flirting up to and including How couples deal with conflict affects the stability of their relationship.*

Reading: Chapter 10, p. 310-314 from *Some forms of childhood sexual expression are common up to and including Cultures vary in their attitudes toward childhood sexuality.* Also read, p. 327, read *Males Masturbate More Than Females.* Also read, p. 325-326, *There are social influences on teen sexual behavior.* Also read, p. 327-332 from *The sexual behavior of American teens has increased and diversified up to and including Traditional social patterns have been modified.*

Reading: Chapter 11, pp. 338-354, read from *In young adulthood, conflicting demands influence sexual expression up to an including Does marriage have a future.* Also read, pp. 360-365, *The Sex Lives of Old People Have Traditionally Been Ignored up to and including Sex can be highly rewarding for older people.*

*****Test 1 open (February 11-15)*****

**Week 6
(Feb. 13)**

Women's Bodies

Reading: Chapter 1, read Box 1.1

Reading: Chapter 2, *Women's Bodies* (the sections of Chapter 2 for which you are not responsible include: pp. 44-46, *Cancer can affect the cervix or the endometrium up to and including Should Hysterectomy Be So Common?*, pp. 53-54, *Women Use Pads, Tampons, or Cups during Menstruation*, pp. 57-58, *Menstrual pain may or may not reflect underlying pelvic disease*, p. 61-65 from *Breast Cancer Mortality Can be Reduced up to and including Most Women with Breast Cancer Return to an Active Sex Life*, Boxes 2.3, 2.7).

Reading: Chapter 11, read pages 355-369, from *Menopause marks women's transition to infertility to Ethnicity influences the psychological experience of menopause*

**Week 7
(Feb. 20)**

Reading Week

**Week 8
(Feb. 27)**

Men's Bodies

Reading: Chapter 3, *Men's Bodies* (the sections of Chapter 3 for which you are *not* responsible include: Boxes 3.3, 3.4 or 3.5. As well, you are not responsible for the material on p. 74-76, pertaining to Balanitis, Phimosis, Paraphimosis, Peyonie's disease and penile cancer.)

Reading: Chapter 11, pp. 359-360, read *Men's Fertility Declines Gradually With Age*.

**Week 9
(March 6)**

Sexual Differentiation and Intersexuality

Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 96-103, read from *Genes and hormones guide sex development* up to and including *The gonads or genitals may be sexually ambiguous*. Also read Box 4.1 and 4.2.

Reading: Chapter 10, pp. 318-324, from *Preadolescence may be marked by an increase in sexual interest* up to and including *Many cultures have puberty rites*. Note for this part of the course you do not need to read the section entitled *Strict gender norms may traumatize children who become gay adults* (p. 318-319)

**Week 10
(March 13)**

Sexual Arousal

Reading: Chapter 5, read p. 144-160, from *Sexual Arousal Has Multiple Roots* up to and including *The Masters and Johnson cycle may be incomplete*.

Reading: Chapter 6, pp. 191-192, read *Spinal Cord Injuries Present a Major Challenge to Sexual Expression*.

*****Test 2 open (March 18-22)*****

**Week 11
(March 20)**

Sexual Orientation

Reading: Chapter 5, pp. 142-144, read *Some People do Not Experience Sexual Attraction* (p.141)

Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 207, read *Casual Sex Is More Accepted in the Gay Male Community*.

Reading: Chapter 10, pp. 318-319, read *Strict gender norms may traumatize Children who become gay adults*

Reading: Chapter 12

*****Please see the special note at the end of this document regarding special circumstances of the March 20th class*****

**Week 12
(March 27)**

No Class

**Week 13
(April 3)**

Transgender and Transexual individuals

Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 119-127, read from *Transgender people cross societies deepest divide to Transgender and transsexuals struggle for awareness and acceptance.*

**Week 14
(April 10)**

Paraphilias

Reading: Chapter 10, pp. 314-318, read from *Some children have sexual contact with adults up to and including Strategies to prevent adult-child sex are quite effective.*

Reading: Chapter 13

*****Test 3 open (April 22-26)*****

Special note for Spring 2013 Psych 2840N regarding the March 20th class

A film crew from CBC's the *Nature of Things* with David Suzuki will be filming in one class of Psyc 2840N on March 20th as part of a documentary they are making on the evolution of homosexuality. If you attend this class, you will be asked to sign waiver forms, which are required for filming. If this poses a problem for anyone, please contact me.