

**Psychology 2840**  
**Comparative Sexuality**



**Instructor:** Dr. Paul L. Vasey

**Instructor's Office:** D852

**Office Hours:** before or after class, during the class break or by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Ednei Barros dos Santos

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**Lectures:** Tuesday 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 highlighted 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 seemingly universal patterns of sexual attraction and arousal. However, sexual *diversity* is a common theme that runs throughout this course. As such, some of the less traditional 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)

### **Course Assessment:**

**Tests:** Three online Moodle tests will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the lecture material, the reading material, the films and classroom discussion. The tests are conceptually cumulative. *Note that the Testing Center closes at 5pm on Fridays.*

**Test 1:** (Jan 29-February 4): 25%

**Test 2:** (March 19-25) 40%

**Test 3:** (April 22-28): 35%

### **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) 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. On this note, please turn your cell phones off prior to the beginning of the lecture.

(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. Questions posed 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) Students will be able to review their exams after they have been completed. 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. 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 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 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. We routinely receive messages from students that are completely incomprehensible. If you send us such a message, it will simply be deleted.

(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) Please do not use the internet or social media during lectures.

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

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

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

(14) 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.

(15) 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/>>.

### **Registering for the Online Quizzes**

Here are the steps you should follow in order to register for your course on the site:

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 and click “Submit.”
5. Follow the instructions to create an account.

Once registration is complete, a student can take a quiz immediately by going back to the chapter quiz page and clicking “Login.”

### **Reading Schedule**

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

#### **Class 1** (Jan. 13)

#### **Introduction to the course**

Reading: Chapter 1, pp. 20-21

Reading: Chapter 1, read about Kinsey on p. 15

Reading: Chapter 6, read *Some Cultures Have Discussed Sex More Openly than Others* (p. 183) up to and including *Mangaia Exemplifies a Sex-Positive Society* (p. 184-185).

Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 194-201

Reading: Chapter 10 Box 10.4

**Classes 2-3**  
(Jan. 20-27)

**Sexual Selection in Animals and Humans**

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

Reading: Chapter 1, read Box 1.2

Reading: Chapter 4, pp. 100-116

Reading: Chapter 5, read pp. 130-141

Reading: Chapter 7, *Casual Sex Has More Appeal To Men Than To Women* (p. 201-203) and read pp. 223-227

Reading: Chapter 11, Box 11.4

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

**\*\*\*Test 1 open (January 29-February 4)\*\*\***

**Class 4**  
(Feb 3)

**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: *Uterine Cancer Can Affect the Cervix or the Endometrium* (p. 38-39), *Other Uterine Conditions Include Fibroids, Endometriosis, Abnormal Bleeding and Prolapse* (pp. 39-40), *Should Hysterectomy Be So Common?* (p. 40), *Women Use Pads, Tampons, or Cups during Menstruation* (p. 47-48), *Menstrual Problems are common but Treatable* (p. 50), *Menstrual Pain May or May Not Reflect Underlying Pelvic Disease* (pp. 50-51), *Premenstrual Syndrome Has Physical and Psychological Aspects* (pp. 51-52), *Menstruation Stops During Pregnancy and at Other Times* (pp. 52-53), *Breast Cancer Mortality Can be Reduced* (p. 55), *Several Risk Factors affect a Woman's Chances of Developing Brest Cancer* (pp.55-57), *Early Detection is Important* (p. 57), *Treatment Depends on the Diagnostic Findings and the Woman's Choice* (pp. 58-59), *Most Women with Breast Cancer Return to an Active Sex Life* (p. 59-60), Boxes 2.2, 2.6, 2.7).

Reading: Chapter 11, read pages 358-363

**Class 5**  
(Feb. 10)

**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. As well, you are *not* responsible for the material on p. 69 pertaining to Balanitis, Phimosis, Paraphimosis, Peyonie's disease and penile cancer.)

Reading: Chapter 11, *Men's Fertility Declines Gradually With Age* (p. 363)

**Feb 17**

**Reading Week – Enjoy!**

**Class 6**  
(Feb. 24)

**Sexual Differentiation and Intersexuality**

Reading: Chapter 4, read pp. 90-98 and Box 4.1

Reading: Chapter 10, 322-327

Reading: Chapter 11, read from pp. 363-369 starting with *The Sex Lives of Old People Have Traditionally Been Ignored*

**March 3**

No class

**Class 7**  
(March 10)

**Sexual Arousal**

Reading: Chapter 1, read about Masters & Johnson on p. 7

Reading: Chapter 5, read p. 142-161 starting with *Sexual Arousal Has Multiple Roots*.

Reading: Chapter 6, read *Spinal Cord Injuries Present a Major Challenge to Sexual Expression* (pp. 187-188)

**Class 8**  
(March 17)

**Sexual Behavior & Sexual Relationships**

Reading: Chapter 6, pp. 164-183

Reading: Chapter 7, read pp. 205-223

Reading: Chapter 10, *Males Masturbate More Than Females* (pp.329-330) and *Noncoital Sex Is Popular Among Teens* (pp. 331-332) and Box 10.5

Reading: Chapter 11, read pp. 342-358

**\*\*\*Test 2 open (March 19-25)\*\*\***

**Class 9-11**  
(March 24-31)

**Sexual Orientation**

Reading: Chapter 7, read *Casual Sex Is More Accepted in the Gay Male Community* (pp. 204-205)

Reading: Chapter 10, read *Gender Norms May Traumatize Pre-Gay Children* (p. 321)

Reading: Chapter 12

**Class 12-13**  
(April 7-14)

**Atypical Sexuality**

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

Reading: Chapter 10, read pp. 312-321

Reading: Chapter 13

Reading: Chapter 4, read pp. 98-100 and pp. 117-124.

**\*\*\*Test 3 open (April 22-28)\*\*\***