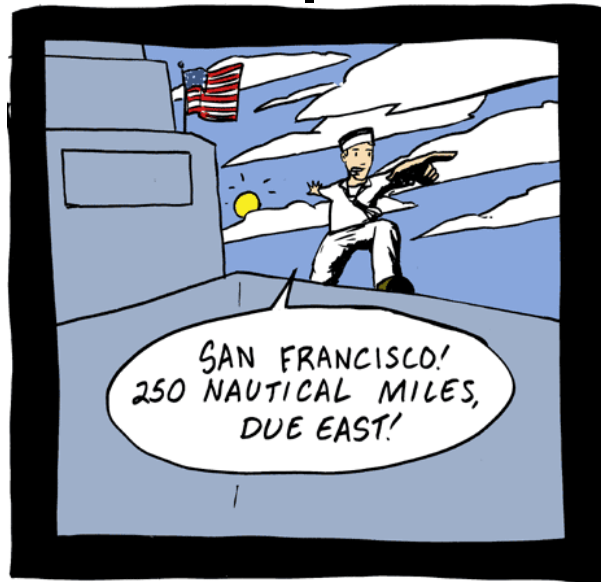


**Psychology 4000B**  
**The Psychobiology of Sexual Orientation**



Their GPS disconnected, their radio dead, the crew of the Arizona are forced to use the only tool they have left: Dave's gaydar.

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

**Instructor's Office:** D 852

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

**Teaching Assistant:** Lanna Petterson

**Teaching Assistant email:** l.petterson@uleth.ca

**Teaching Assistant's Regular Office Hours:** Tuesday 14:00-15:00

**Teaching Assistant's Office:** B 834

**Lectures:** Tuesday and Thursday 1:40-2:55

**Classrooms:** B650

**Prerequisite:** Psyc 2850 & Psyc 3845

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine the psychobiology of sexual orientation. We review some of the history of research on this topic. We critically examine psychosocial (learning) theories pertaining to sexual orientation and we examine whether homosexuality is a curable mental disorder. We then review behavioral, hormonal, genetic, neurobiological and physiological evidence indicating that sexual orientation has a biological component. We conclude with a discussion of homosexual behavior in animals.

### **Required Readings:**

LeVay, S. (2010). *Gay, Straight and the Reasons Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional required readings from other sources will be available in the reserved reading section of the library. These readings are marked with an asterik (\*) below.

### **Course Assessment:**

**Tests:** There will be three short-answer tests on the course material

**Test 1:** (February 14) 40%

**Test 2:** (March 28) 40%

**Test 3:** (April 11): 15%

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.*”

Question (5%): Students will be required to prepare a question based on the readings and pose this question to Simon LeVay on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **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) This seminar course will deal frankly with controversial issues pertaining to 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 tolerated (see Section 6.b.I of the University Calendar).

(4) Students in the seminar 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 classes 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) Following tests, the teaching assistant will be available to meet with you, discuss your exam results, and show you the correct answers. 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 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 assistant 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 on the day the test was scheduled 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 <l.petterson@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.

(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/>>.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Week 1:**

Jan. 10            Introduction to the course

#### **Week 2:**

Jan. 15            Introduction (Textbook)  
                      What is sexual orientation? (Textbook)

Jan. 17            \*Hirschfeld and the Third Sex (Queer Science)

#### **Week 3:**

Jan. 22            Film: *The Einstein of Sex*

Jan. 24      \*Surveys and Inkblots (A Natural History of Homosexuality)

**Week 4:**

Jan. 29      Film: *Changing our Minds: The Story of Dr. Evelyn Hooker*

Jan. 31      \*The Talking Cure (Queer Science)

**Week 5:**

Feb. 5      \*Learning and unlearning homosexuality (Queer Science)

\*The failure of psychosexual theories (Born Gay)

Feb. 7      \*Sickness or Health? (Queer Science)

**Week 6:**

Feb. 12      Radio Broadcast: *81 Words*

Feb. 14      Test 1 (40%)

**Week 7: Reading week**

**Week 8:**

Feb. 26      Film: *Brainwashed: Homosexuality*  
Why we need biology (Textbook)

Feb. 28      Outline of a Theory (Textbook)

**Week 9:**

March 5      Childhood (Textbook)

March 7      Characteristics of gay and straight adults (Textbook)  
\*Are there different types? (Born Gay)

**Week 10:**

March 12      The role of sex hormones (Textbook)

March 14      The role of genes (Textbook)

**Week 11:**

March 19      The brain (Textbook)

March 21      The body (Textbook)

**Week 12:**

March 26\*      Film: *The genetics of sexual orientation*

March 28\*      Test 3 (40%)

**Week 13:**

April 2      The Older Brother Effect (Textbook)  
Conclusion (Textbook)

April 4      \*Against Nature? (Queer Science)

**Week 14:**

April 9      Film: *Out in Nature*

April 11      Test 5 (15%)

**Week 15:**

April 16      Skype with Simon LeVay

April 18      No class