

University of North Dakota, Department of Psychology, Spring Semester, 2008

SPECIAL TOPIC: HUMAN SEXUALITY (PSY 299)

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Required Text:

Nevid, J.S., Fichner-Rathus, L., & Rathus, S.A. (2007). *Human Sexuality: In a world of diversity (7th ed)*, New York: Allyn and Bacon.

Course Description:

Human sexuality is often a difficult topic to address in our society. Our treatment of sexual subjects is very different from our treatment of other topics pertaining to human behavior. As such, I hope that one outcome of this course will be for you to increase your comfort level in expressing, inquiring, and learning about sexual subjects.

Human sexuality is a multifaceted topic. All aspects of human existence seem to be pertinent to any discussion of sexuality. To understand human sexuality, one must understand its biological aspects, psychological aspects, social/cultural aspects, and moral or spiritual/religious aspects. Discussions of sexuality can and should include information about anatomy, physiology, gender roles, sexual identity, love, interpersonal relationships, social/cultural factors as revealed in community standards and laws, and moral/spiritual/religious effects on sexuality.

In this course you will learn about a variety of issues pertinent to human sexuality. Many of these topics will be quite sensitive (meaning they might embarrass people, they might be at odds with someone's personal/religious values, they might be considered abnormal, sick, or sinful by some people).

I would be surprised if any one of you didn't find at least one topic to be personally distressing or distasteful and incongruent with your views of sexuality. It is not my intention to upset anyone nor is it my intention to shock for the sake of shocking. However, I do plan to cover all aspects of human sexuality - with explicit, forthright lectures, discussions, and appropriate media presentations. Some allowances can be made for individuals bothered by a particular topic or presentation. However, if upon examination of this syllabus and the required text you feel uncomfortable with several of the topics you should carefully consider whether you should remain in the course.

Course Goals:

In general, the goal of this course is to acquaint you with the multifaceted aspects of human sexuality, and to help you increase your understanding of how human sexuality is influenced by and influences so many other parts of our lives. I also hope that through this course you become more aware of your own unique human sexuality; by this I mean, that you

understand the biological, psychological, social, and cultural influences on your sexual feelings, attitudes/values, and behaviors.

Specific goals or objectives include: a) understanding how attitudes about sexuality have changed throughout history, b) becoming familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of research on human sexuality, c) being able to identify male and female sexual and reproductive anatomical structures, d) understanding the physiology of sexual arousal and reproduction in men and women, e) becoming familiar with the range of contraceptive methods, f) understanding the issues surrounding abortion, g) learning about the process of gender differentiation during infancy and childhood and differentiating gender identity and gender role, h) being able to thoroughly describe the changes that occur during puberty, i) becoming familiar with changes (e.g., marriage, divorce, menopause) that occur during adulthood that impact sexuality, j) be able to describe stereotyped gender role behavior and differentiate between sex differences and gender differences, k) describe the major characteristics of love and differentiate between love and sexual desire, l) define intimacy and understand gender differences in intimacy and communication styles, m) become familiar with ways to enhance sexual relationships, n) be able to describe the changes in attitudes towards homosexuality throughout history and understand current issues pertinent to homosexuality (e.g., "coming out" homophobia, nature vs. nurture), o) examine the range of sexual behaviors engaged in by adults, p) address how we determine whether a particular sexual behavior is normal or abnormal and become familiar with the paraphilias, q) be able to describe the different meanings for the act of rape from ancient times to the present while focusing on aspects of rape and other coercive sexual behaviors in the present, r) become familiar with the symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases and be able to offer suggestions for minimizing the risk of contracting such diseases, s) understand the realities of HIV infection and prevention and the symptoms of AIDS, t) understand the various sexual dysfunctions and sex therapies, and u) become familiar with society's attempts (in the past and present) to legislate sexual activity.

COURSE RULES:

1. What is said in this class is **CONFIDENTIAL**. You certainly may share ideas and experiences outside the class; however no information referring to personal identities should be shared. ** However, you may want to be judicious about what you reveal since I cannot guarantee that this rule will be respected.

2. In discussion, no one has the right to challenge someone's opinion or feelings. It is appropriate to acknowledge that your opinion or feeling differs, but with the understanding that it is okay to have different opinions and feelings. In other words, it is okay to express disagreement with someone's opinion or even his/her behavior, but it is not okay to express this disagreement by personally attacking the other person. Such behavior will not be tolerated and you will be withdrawn from the class.

3. Everyone has the right to challenge someone's statements on the accuracy of the facts.

4. Everyone should have a sincere desire to learn about human sexuality. This means that I expect everyone to participate in class assignments and discussions to the fullest extent possible given their personal comfort level with discussing sexuality in general and their own sexuality in particular.

Course Requirements:

Journals -- You are required to complete a journal for this course which will include 5 different assignments (journal is due 4/22/08) . There are several possible journal assignments already described on Blackboard. You must select FIVE assignments to complete. This journal will be anonymous. Instead of your name you will select a pseudonym, i.e., fake name to use on your journal. At the final examination you will inform me of your pseudonym so I can award you the proper credit. Journals will be graded in the following manner: 10 points for each assignment (6 for the content of your entry and 4 for your ability to effectively communicate your thoughts/ideas in writing). Each assignment should consist of at least 1 page of double-spaced, 12 pt, typed text.

Examinations — There will be four multiple-choice, in-class, examinations, worth 100 points each. The first test will be on 02/05/08, the second test will be on 03/13/08, the third test will be on 04/08/07, and the fourth test will be on 05/01/08. In addition, there will also be a cumulative final examination, worth 150 points, on Thursday, May 08, 2008 at 3:15 PM.

“My Blackboard” — This course will use the online program “My Blackboard.” This is an online service which the University of North Dakota is using to enhance course communication and foster the use of computer technology in the classroom. The online address is <http://www.und.edu> The course syllabus will be posted on this site along with materials relevant to lectures (e.g., powerpoint presentations), supplementary materials (e.g., audio files, video files, pictures, and web links). Journal assignments will also be listed on this site. Announcements will be made via this site and your UND email account. Grades will be posted on this site throughout the semester and occasional extra credit course surveys will be administered via this site as well. It is expected that you will logon to this site at least twice a week (i.e., on the day we have class) to make sure you receive any announcements, but it is suggested that you check this site each day.

Missing Examinations:

One of three things may happen if you do not show for a course examination.

1. If you contacted Dr. Holm **BEFORE** the test, and your absence is judged to be unavoidable and warranted, then a make-up examination will be given without penalty. You may be asked to provide “proof” to substantiate an excuse.
2. If the case above applies except that you contact Dr. Holm **AFTER** the test and your absence is judged to be unavoidable and warranted, then a make-up examination will be given but may carry a penalty up to a 25% reduction. Judgements of what is unavoidable and warranted will be much more stringent when the instructor is notified after a test and will usually include only emergencies that would preclude someone from reaching a phone.
3. If your excuse for missing a test is unacceptable (whether you notify an instructor before or after a test), then you will be assigned a zero score.

Extra Credit: You may earn up to 15 extra credit points in this class. These points are added to your final point total. You may earn extra credit in one of two ways:

a) Participation in some of the activities during class will occasionally garner extra credit points. These activities include in-class activities, on-line surveys, and in-class pop quizzes.

b) Participation in a psychology research project also qualifies for extra credit. These projects are often described in folders located in the alcove on first floor of Corwin-Larimore Hall (south side), announced on flyers located on bulletin boards in Corwin-Larimore Hall, or you are sometimes contacted by phone based on some screening questionnaire completed in class. When you complete one of these experiments you should receive a signed slip indicating the experiment name and/or number and how much time you spent (1 extra credit point will be awarded for each 1 hour of time). You should then place the slip in the "Research Credit Box" in the Student Lounge on the second floor of Corwin-Larimore Hall.

Course / University Regulations:

Each student is responsible for understanding and abiding by the rules and regulations published in the university course catalogs and student code of life. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in your failing the course. Other policies that you should be aware of include the drop/add schedule, the last day to withdraw from the course, incomplete grade policies, and grade appeals.

Department Ombudsperson

The Department of Psychology is concerned about the welfare of our psychology majors and all other students who take courses within our department. If you have concerns about how you are treated in this course, you are encouraged to try to resolve the matter with your teaching assistant and/or Dr. Holm, the instructor of this course. If you feel unable to meet with one or both of these people or if the attempted resolution does not produce an acceptable solution, you are encouraged to consult the Department of Psychology's ombudsperson, Dr. Jim Antes (777-3451). The ombudsperson's role is to assist students in reaching a satisfactory solution to complaints related to their functioning within the Department of Psychology.

Human Sexuality: Readings

The Scientific Study of Sex or Just a Way to Look at Dirty Pictures??

Chapter 1: What is Human Sexuality?

Chapter 2: Research Methods in Human Sexuality

What's He Got. What's She Got, and How Does That Stuff Work??

Chapter 3: Female Sexual Anatomy and Physiology

Chapter 4: Male Sexual Anatomy and Physiology

Chapter 5: Sexual Arousal and Response

Test 1: 02/05/08

Becoming a Sexual Being: Going from Creeps to Hotties and Hunks!

Chapter 11: Conception, Pregnancy & Childbirth

Chapter 6: Gender Identity and Gender Roles Chapter

Chapter 10: Sexual Orientation

Chapter 13: Sexuality in Childhood and Adolescence

Chapter 14: Sexuality in Adulthood

Test 2: 03/13/08

Sex: What Do People Do? How Do They Do It? And Whom Do They Do It With?

Chapter 9: Sexual Techniques and Behavior Patterns

Chapter 17: Atypical Sexual Variations

Sex: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!

Chapter 7: Attraction and Love

Chapter 18: Sexual Coercion

Test 3: 04/08/08

Sexuality and Health

Chapter 12: Contraception and Abortion

Chapter 16: Sexually Transmitted Infections

Chapter 15: Sexual Dysfunctions

April 22, 2008 Turn in Journals!!!!

Show Me The Money!!

Chapter 19: Commercial Sex

Test 4: 05/01/08

Final Examination -- Thursday, May 8th, 2007 at 3:15 PM

Grading Scale

540 to 600 = A

480 to 539 = B

420 to 479 = C

360 to 419 = D

000 to 359 = F