

SOCI 4240: Sociology of Sexuality
University of North Texas
Spring 2022

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Course Description

This course will explore sexuality through the lens of sociology. After completing this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Identify sociocultural, discursive, and political-economic factors related to sexuality.
- 2) Identify, use and evaluate major theoretical perspectives within the study of sexuality.
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze claims about sexuality.
- 4) Demonstrate awareness of variation in sexual behavior in a given society.
- 5) Utilize a sociological understanding of sexuality to evaluate cultural trends in sexuality.

Requirements

Course Materials

Along with readings provided on Canvas, you will need to following:

Seidman, Steven. *The Social Construction of Sexuality*. Third edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014.
[ISBN-13: 978-0393937800](https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/9780393937800) (paperback or ebook)

Online Behavior

Discussions in this course will often involve controversial topics that you may have strong feelings about. I encourage you to express your thoughts on these issues in a manner that is both thoughtful and relevant. I expect you to be courteous toward others and avoid making comments that can be construed as personal attacks. The best way to approach this course is to consider all sides of an argument to understand where others may be coming from.

Course materials and discussion may contain information and images that some students may find offensive or controversial. This is not a required course. Students who feel this material is objectionable are encouraged to consider alternatives.

Course Grade

Assignment	Points
Reading Quizzes	240 (12 at 20 points each)
Getting Started Quiz	10
Unpacking Privilege: Introduction Discussion	50

Discussions	150 (3 at 50 points each)
Exams	400 (4 at 100 points each)
Fiction Media Analysis	150
Total	1000

Grade Determination

A = 90% or better (895+)

B = 80 – 89 % (795-894)

C = 70 – 79 % (695-794)

D = 60 – 69 % (595-694)

F = less than 60% (0-594)

Assignments

Weekly Quizzes

You will have weekly quizzes over the readings and materials. Assigned readings can be found in your book and on Canvas within each module. Reading quizzes are due by 11:59PM. each Sunday. You will have 14 quizzes. Of the 14 quizzes, only your 12 highest grades will be counted, so if you fail some or miss some, don't stress – you have wiggle room here! If you complete all 14 quizzes, your lowest grades will serve as extra credit.

Each quiz consists of 5-10 multiple choice or true/false questions. These questions are randomly pulled from a larger pool of questions over the chapter. Your exams will also pull questions randomly from this same large question pool.

Therefore, quizzes are a chance for you to 1) see exactly how the exam is formatted, and 2) possibly get answers to exam questions, if you get the same question on a quiz as an exam.

Other Quizzes

In addition to your weekly quizzes, you will have a course introduction quiz over the syllabus and course information. You will also have a ‘zip code’ survey, required by the university. These are both mandatory quizzes.

Discussions

We will have total of 4 discussions in this course. Your **introduction post** is an exercise where you will ‘unpack your privilege’ and introduce yourself to the class.

Weekly Discussions

Weekly discussions will have a major post and 3 minor posts (peer feedback). Major posts should be approximately 500 words and thoroughly answer the prompt and show that you read and processed the material.

This is your chance to prove you really understand and have critically thought about the material.

In addition to your original post, you will need to respond to 3 of your peers (~150 words). Each of these responses should include *at least two* of the following:

1. A question-- this can be a clarification question or a critical question you pose.
2. A disagreement-- respectfully and backed up with evidence.
3. A personal narrative that adds to the discussion.
4. A connection to the readings*
5. A connection to a current event or outside source* *You must cite any sources you use.

* One of the response posts can be a response to feedback you have received from your peers (I strongly encourage this)

Weekly Discussion Rubric (50 points total):

- **25 points** – thoughtfulness and incorporation of class materials
- **25 points**– feedback to peers
- **Minus ½ point** – each grammar or spelling error

- **Word count** – grade is docked based on percentage that is missing

Unpack Your Invisible Knapsack of Privilege – Introduction Discussion (Required)

What is privilege? Let's start with an illustration. *Monopoly* is a board game in which people buy property and pay fines, and the person who ends with the most money or property wins. Imagine you are playing a *Monopoly* game in which one player starts with \$10,000, and everyone else starts \$1,500, the standard starting money. Who do you predict will win? Most of us would say that the person who started with a lot more money had a big advantage from the beginning, and will probably win. We can also see that it wouldn't really be fair for the winner to say to the other players, "I'm such a better player than you;" they started with a huge advantage.

The *Monopoly* story illustrates what happens in real life; some people are born with advantages that others don't enjoy. Although we like to think that everyone's life is successful or not based on how hard they work ("successful people played the game of life better"), hard work is only part of what makes people successful. In fact, almost everyone was born with some advantages over others, and people who were born with more advantages tend to be successful more than people who were born without as many advantages. These life advantages are called "**privileges**".

In her now-famous essay, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," Peggy McIntosh explores some of the privileges she experiences as a white person. You can read this essay at:

<http://www.isr.umich.edu/home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf>

Using her original list as a guide, unpack your own invisible knapsack of privilege. Almost everyone is privileged in some ways and oppressed in others, but in this exercise, focus on an area of privilege, especially the privileges associated with your sexuality if you can. Do you experience the privilege of being heterosexual, cisgender, monogamous, vanilla, a socially normative body size, or having a normative gender presentation? (If your sexuality isn't privileged in any way, please write about some other form of privilege you experience.)

Using 500 or more words, list and elaborate 10-15 everyday privileges you experience as a result of some aspect of your sexuality. **Choose only one privilege to write about.** Give specific examples, in your own words, of how you experience privilege in your life. Here is an example:

1. Because I am straight, I can take my partner to family reunions without worrying about how my fundamentalist parents might react.
2. Because I am straight, I am not afraid to live with my partner in a religiously and politically conservative area.

Not everyone has this heterosexual privilege. Try to do the same for yourself. Think about the privilege you experience in your day-to-day interactions at work and school, with family and neighbors.

In your post, please also include a simple introduction (with your name, major, and classification).

Unpacking Privilege Exercise rubric (50 points total):

- **25 points** - thoughtfulness and incorporation of student's perspective
- **25 points** - feedback to peers
- **Minus ½ point** – each grammar or spelling error
- **Word count** – grade is docked based on percentage of that is missing

Fiction Media Analysis

Choose any discrete chunk of fiction media you are interested in analyzing. You could choose a movie, a season of a TV show, a single episode of a TV show, a novel, a comic book, or some other fiction narrative. You may also choose to analyze sexuality in audible media, such as music lyrics on a single music album. You can choose media aimed at kids, teens or adults. The only media that is off-limits are documentaries, other non-fiction sources, and porn, because in this assignment you will be analyzing the ways that mainstream media give us all subtle (not overt) messages about sexuality.

Using 500 words or more, analyze the subtle messages about sexuality you find in the chunk of media you chose. Here are some questions you could answer to help you get started with your analysis: What sexual orientation are characters assumed to have? How are the sex drives of different characters portrayed? Do asexual, bisexual, homosexual, or pansexual characters appear in the media you chose? Are characters' sexualities portrayed as matching up with stereotypes about people of different genders, ages, races, or classes? Does the media you chose parrot myths about sexuality which you have learned are incorrect based on class material? Is sexuality portrayed as intersecting with other social institutions, such as family, politics, healthcare systems, employment, religion, education, or some other institution? What does this media subtly teach viewers (or readers or listeners) about their own sexuality and the sexuality of other people? What does the media you viewed teach viewers about the sexual norms of their culture? How do you think the media you viewed would be different if it had been presented in a different time or place globally?

Does the media you chose present certain bodies as sexy, others as unsexy, and others as neither? How do the clothing, lighting, and camera angles used for different actors change the viewers' perception of sexiness? (If analyzing non-visual media, focus on how the creator's descriptions emphasize sexiness.) How do you think the sexiness of different actors would be portrayed differently if this media was created in a different time or place?

You do not have to answer all of these questions. In fact, if you simply answer all these questions in order, your paper will probably be disjointed and difficult to read. This list of questions is only to help give you ideas about how to analyze fiction media through the lens of sociology of sexuality. Fiction Media Analysis rubric (150 points total):

- **65 points – clear identification and description of media analyzed**
- **45 points – incorporation of in-class and textbook concepts**
- **40 points – thoughtfulness and incorporation of student's perspective**
- **Minus ½ point** – each grammar or spelling error
- **Word count** – grade is docked based on percentage of paper that is missing

Exams

There are a total of 4 exams in this course. Each exam will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions based on the readings, notes, and videos. Exams will open up for one week. Exams will be 2 hours long. All exams are open-book and open-note. There is no comprehensive final exam.

Late papers or assignments: All papers and assignments must be submitted via Canvas before the posted deadline to be graded. Late papers/assignments will not be accepted. Any paper or assignment sent via email or received in person will not be graded. Students should submit papers as a PDF or a Microsoft Word Document. Papers that are submitted in a different format or that cannot be opened will not be graded.

Make-up policy: NO make-up exams will be provided except for documented illness or emergency.

Academic Dishonesty

Dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. During this course, you may submit for evaluation only work that is your own and that is submitted originally for this course. Forms of conduct that will be considered evidence of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- Collaborating on exams
- Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment (e.g. discussing your answers to assignment questions prior to submission)
- Submission without proper acknowledgement of work that is based partially or entirely on the ideas or writings of others (traditionally, this is referred to as plagiarism)

Violation of the academic honesty policy will result in an automatic zero on the assignment and a report to judicial affairs. I adhere to and enforce UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). You should review the policy. Detailed explanations of the UNT's standards of academic integrity for students may be found in the UNT Policy Manual at <http://policy.unt.edu/policydesc/student-standards-academic-integrity-18-1-16>. I will address violations of academic integrity in this course in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy.

Accessibility Statement

I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices, and our interactions be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen and observe others carefully are crucial to universal learning.

Students requesting accommodations and services to improve accessibility are required to provide the authorization letter issued by the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) before their requests can be processed. Attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements. For more information, contact the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) at 940-565-4323. If you experience any issues concerning accessibility, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

Getting Help

If a student needs help with an assignment, contact the instructor. Every effort will be made to respond to the student's email within 24 hours. The student may also make an appointment to meet with the instructor or online via Zoom. Understand that, while the instructor is usually responsive during business hours, the response time may be longer after 5:00 PM on weekdays and on weekends.

Technical Assistance:

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. At UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues. Here is information about how to contact them.

Link: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm> Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

*This syllabus, with its course schedule, is based on the most recent information about the course content and schedule planned for this course. Its content is subject to revision as needed to adapt to new knowledge or unanticipated events. Updates will remain focused on achieving the course objectives and students will receive notification of such changes. Students are responsible for attending to such changes or modifications posted on the Canvas site (<https://unt.instructure.com>) for this course.

Course Schedule

Module	Date	Reading Material	Assignments
	Week 1 Jan. 18 – Jan. 23	Class Introductions and Course Overview	Getting Started Quiz Introduction Discussion
1	Week 2 Jan. 24– Jan. 30	Lecture Video: Male Sex Organs (Yarber and Sayad, 2013) Lecture Video: Female Sex Organs (Yarber and Sayad, 2013) Video: Clueless Guys Try Tell The Difference Between a Vagina and a Vulva Shane – The Juicy History of Squirting	Quiz 1
2	Week 3 Jan. 31 – Feb. 6	Seidman- The Science of Sex: Sexology and Psychoanalysis	Quiz 2
3	Week 4 Feb. 7 – Feb. 13	Seidman- Social Theories of Sexuality: Marxism and Feminism	Quiz 3 Discussion 1
Exam 1 (Modules 1-3) opens 2/14 and closes 2/16 at 11:59PM			
4	Week 5 Feb. 14 – Feb. 20	Seidman- Social Constructionism: Sociology, History and Philosophy Video: Everything We Know About Female Sexuality is Changing	Quiz 4
5	Week 6 Feb. 21 – Feb. 27	Seidman- Heterosexuality: From Behavior to Identity	Quiz 5
6	Week 7 Feb. 28 – Mar. 6	Seidman- Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Politics in the United States Seidman- The Revolt against Sexual Identity	Quiz 6
7	Week 8 Mar. 7 – Mar. 13	Blank- Straight Science Chapter 3 Glaude- The Biopsychology of Sexual Orientation	Quiz 7 Discussion 2
	Week 9: Mar. 14 – Mar. 20 SPRING BREAK	Spring Break!	Spring Break!
Exam 2 (Modules 4-7) opens 3/21 and closes at 3/23 at 11:59PM			
8	Week 10 Mar. 21 – Mar. 27	Seidman- The Promise and Perils of Cyber Intimacies Seidman- Youth Struggles to Negotiate Independence and Intimate Solidarity	Quiz 8 Discussion 3
9	Week 11 Mar. 28 – Apr. 3	Sexual Expression (Yarber and Sayad, 2013) Orenstein – Hookups and Hang-Ups (p. 103-140)	Quiz 9
10	Week 12 Apr. 4 – Apr. 10	Canaday- The Strange History of Sodomy Laws Seidman- Into Our Bedrooms: The State Takes Charge	Quiz 10
11	Week 13 Apr. 11– Apr. 17	Taub- Rape culture isn't a myth. It's real, and it's dangerous Young - The Injustice of the 'Rape-Culture' Theory Katz- Violence Against Women-- it's Men's Issue	Quiz 11
Exam 3 (Modules 8-11) opens 4/18 and closes 4/20 at 11:59PM			
12	Week 14 Apr. 18 – Apr. 24	Seidman- A Right to Sex Work? Grant -When Prostitution Wasn't a Crime	Quiz 12 Fiction Media Analysis

13	Week 15 Apr. 25– May. 1	Seidman- Sadomasochism, or, the Pleasures of Pain Williams- Sadomasochism to BDSM: Discourse Across Disciplines Williams, et al. - Is Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, and Sadomasochism Recreational Leisure? A Descriptive Exploratory Investigation	Quiz 13
14	Week 16 May 2– May 8	Dines – Is Porn Immoral? That Doesn't Matter: It's a Public Health Crisis Weitzer – Pornography's Effects: The Need for Solid Evidence Video: Over 18: The Question is Not Enough	Quiz 14
Exam 4 (Modules 12-14) opens 5/9 and closes 5/11 at 11:59PM			

Quizzes are due Sundays by 11:59PM.

This schedule is subject to change.