

**Course Syllabus: Psychology 2850**  
**Human Sexuality**



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

**Instructor's Office:** D 852

**Office Hours:** after class or by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Miranda Abild

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

**Lecture Time:** Wednesday 18:00-20:50

**Classroom:** PE 250

**Course Description:**

In this course, we will examine human sexuality from a comparative, biosocial perspective. As such, both biological and social processes will be discussed with an emphasis on the former. 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 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, polyamory, paraphilias, and transexuality.

**Required Readings:**

Assigned Chapters from:

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

Additional readings that have been assigned can be found in .pdf format online in the Psychology 2850 Courseware library on WebCT.

**Course Assessment:**

**Tests:** Three WebCT tests will consist of 75 multiple-choice and/or fill-in-the-blank questions based on the lecture material, the reading material, the films and any classroom discussion. Fill-in-the-blank questions must be spelled correctly. Some questions may involve labeling diagrams. The tests are conceptually cumulative.

**Test 1** (February 7-13): 33.3%  
**Test 2:** (March 18-24) 33.3%  
**Test 3:** (April 8-14): 33.4%

**Bonuses Marks**

**Participation in Department of Psychology projects (maximum 2%):**

After your final grade has been calculated, you can have an additional 2% added onto your final grade if you have participated in some research projects in the Department of Psychology that pertain to *sexuality or sex/gender differences*. This might include a cognitive psychology experiment investigating sex differences in perception or a study on genital arousal, to name only a few examples. This will give you an opportunity to experience how psychological research is conducted.

A list of potential projects in which you can participate can be found at <http://psychleth.sona-systems.com>. Your username for this site is the same as the name used in your uleth email (e.g., john.smith). The password for the site will be mailed to you after the add/drop date for the course. Because research projects start up throughout the semester, additional projects may be listed through the course.

**Teaching Assistants Post-Test Office Schedule**

Test 1: February 14 (11-4pm), February 15 (5-8:30pm), February 16 (11-4pm)  
Test 2: March 25<sup>th</sup> (11-4pm), March 28<sup>th</sup> (12-4pm), March 29<sup>th</sup> (11-4pm)

Please be prepared for your meetings with the Teaching Assistant with specific questions. See “Course Policy (7)”.

**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 make some people uncomfortable and, as such, unable to follow lectures, complete assignments or even attend classes. Such individuals should seriously reflect upon this possibility before committing 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)

(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 amongst 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. Please do not use the internet during lectures.

(6) *All questions pertaining to the course material must be asked during class or on the WebCT discussion board for the course.* Do not email the instructor or the teaching assistant with such questions. Questions posed on the WebCT discussion board will be answered by the teaching assistant in consultation with the Instructor. Students are allowed to post questions on the WebCT discussion board **once per day**.

WebCT posting should be written in with correct grammar and spelling. If WebCT postings are writing in text-speak (e.g., Hey! i want 2 kno R u assignin Ch. 2 4 da next test?) we will not respond to them. The teaching assistant will check respond to WebCT questions once a day. The TA will answer all questions about the test that are received up until **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) WebCT test answers will not be provided online. Students may **not** copy the test questions in any format. Students caught with copies of any of the test questions will be given an automatic “F” in the course. Following tests, teaching assistants will be available to meet with you and discuss your test results and show you the correct answers. See the teaching assistant schedule for available meeting times. Teaching assistants are not available to meet with students about their test results outside of these scheduled times. Students who wish to meet with teaching assistants to discuss their test 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 textbook, 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!” or “Why is this wrong?!”), then **we will deduct one additional mark** from the student’s test for each such question they pose and to which we respond, *unless a legitimate error on our part has been made*.

(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 WebCT test was open* and that their test performance would have been seriously affected by this illness. If a student was the exclusive caregiver of a family member that was ill *over the entire period during which the WebCT test was open*, then they must provide a doctor’s note stating this. Documentation must have the doctor’s name, address and phone number. Non-medical reasons for missed tests (i.e., a death in the family) must also be supported with appropriate documentation.

With respect to these and other personal issues, students can email the teaching assistant directly <[miranda.abild@uleth.ca](mailto:miranda.abild@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 and use correct grammar and spelling. Be sure to provide your full name. Messages that are incomprehensible due to bad spelling and grammar will be deleted without a response.

(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 will 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 weight of the tests if you do better on one then 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) For information about the Test Center see:  
<[http://fusion.uleth.ca/crdc/testcenter/testcenter\\_student\\_info.htm](http://fusion.uleth.ca/crdc/testcenter/testcenter_student_info.htm)>.

(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 TH 218. The number at the counseling center is 317-2845. The website is:  
<<http://www.uleth.ca/ross/counselling/index.html>>.

## **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 12)**

#### **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

### **Class 2 (Jan. 19)**

#### **Sex & Evolution**

Reading: *Sex & Evolution*. This reading by can be found on the online course Blackboard library

### **Class 3 (Jan. 26)**

#### **Sexual Selection & Humans**

Reading: Chapter 1, read Box 1.2

Reading: Chapter 5, read pp. 130-141

Reading: Chapter 7, read *Negotiating Sex Involves Flirting* (p. 205)

Reading: Chapter 7, read pp. 223-227

Reading: Chapter 11, Box 11.4

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

Reading: Chapter 17: *Sex as a Commodity*

### **Class 4 (Feb. 2)**

#### **Women's Bodies**

Reading: Chapter 1, read Box 1.1 and 1.2

Reading: Chapter 2, *Women's Bodies* (the sections of Chapter 2 you are *not* responsible this week 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 Breast 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).

**Test 1: Open Feb. 7-13 (covers material in Classes 1-4)**

**Class 5 (Feb. 9)**

**Men's Bodies**

Reading: Chapter 3, *Men's Bodies* (the sections of Chapter 3 you are *not* responsible this week include: Boxes 3.3, 3.4. As well, the material on p. 69 pertaining to Balanitis, Phimosis, Paraphimosis, Peyonie's disease and penile cancer will not be covered in Test 1.)

Reading: Chapter 11, read pages 358-363

**Class 6 (Feb. 16)**

**Sex and Gender Differences**

Reading: Chapter 1, read about the research by Malamuth et al. (2000) on p. 11, paragraph 4.

Reading: Chapter 4 (excluding *Sex Development May Go Awry, Chromosomal Anomalies Affect Growth and Fertility, The Gonads or Genitals May Be Sexually Ambiguous* (pp. 96-9), Box 4.1, and pp. 117-124).

Reading: Chapter 7, pp. 201-204, excluding Box 7.3

Reading: Chapter 10, read *Preadolescent Children Segregate by Sex* (p. 321) and pp. 322-330.

**No class (Feb. 23)**

**READING WEEK**

**Class 7 (March 2)**

**No class**

**Class 8 (March 9)**

**Intersexuality**

Reading: *Sex Development May Go Awry, Chromosomal Anomalies Affect Growth and Fertility, The Gonads or Genitals May Be Sexually Ambiguous* (Chapter 4, pp. 96-9) and Box 4.1.

Reading: DeVore, H. (1998). Growing up in a Surgical Maelstrom. In: *Intersex in the Age of Ethics*, A.D. Dreger (ed.), pp. 78-81. Hagerstown, Md.: University Publishing Group. This reading by can be found on the online course Blackboard library

**Class 9 (March 16)** **Sexual Arousal & Behavior**

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

Reading: Chapter 5, read p. 141-161.

Reading: Chapter 6, read p. 164-183.

**Test 2: Open March 18-24 (covers material in classes 5-9)**

**Class 10 (March 23) Sexual Disorders/ /Sexual Health**

Reading: Chapter 6, pp. 185-189.

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

Reading: Chapter 14

**Class 11 (March 30) Sexual Orientation**

Reading: Chapter 6, read Box 6.2

Reading: Chapter 7, read pp. 204-205 and Box 7.3

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

Reading: Chapter 12

**Class 12 (April 6) Atypical Sexuality**

Reading: Chapter 4, read pp. 117-124.

Reading: Chapter 10, read pp. 312-319, Box 10.2

Reading: Chapter 13

**Class 13 (April 13) Love and Relationships**

Reading: Chapter 7, read pp. 206-223.

Reading: Chapter 11, read pp. 342-358

**Test 3: Open April 19-25 (covers material in classes 10-13)**