

SOC 291 Syllabus – Fall 2009

Course Title	SOC 291 Human Sexuality
Semester	Fall 2009
Date & Time	Tuesday/Thursday 8:55 to 10:05 a.m.
Location	PPH 223
Instructor	Melanie J. Davis, M.Ed.
Office Hours	T-TH Thursday afternoon by appointment
Office Location	Rm. 310, Sociology Department, PPH Academic Complex
Phone	908-722-1632 (off campus)
E-mail	Melanie@honestexchange.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The physical, psychological, relational, and cultural aspects of sexuality influence us from before birth through death. This course will employ interactive class work, lecture, and readings to increase your understanding of lifespan human sexuality; to engage you in critical thinking about sexual messages and issues; to help you identify and critique your sexual values and attitudes; and to enable them to make informed relational and sexual decisions. Due to the nature of the subject matter, classroom discussion and educational materials may incorporate language and images that will challenge your comfort and attitudes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will

- Gain a broader and deeper understanding of human sexuality from a biopsychosocial perspective
- Critically reflect upon your sexual values, experiences, attitudes and beliefs
- Understand diverse sexual attitudes and behaviors
- Increase your knowledge about sexual health and behaviors

Disclaimer - This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester; you will be notified of any changes.

TEXT & SUPPLIES

- *Sexuality Now: Embracing Diversity* (3rd) by Janell Carroll. Available from the campus bookstore and Amazon.com.
- *Guide to Getting it On*, (6th ed.) by Paul Joannides (**This is not required**, but it's highly recommended.)
- 30 3x5 white index cards, lined or unlined
- 2-pocket folder with your name or student ID # written on the front cover

EVALUATION

Your grade for this course is based upon the level of scholarship, self-assessment and reflection as demonstrated in completed assignments, coupled with your active participation in class. Class participation includes active engagement with the course material during class, taking part in discussions with peers and the instructor, asking and responding to questions/comments, and helping to maintain a classroom environment that is safe, positive and constructive.

Attendance and participation	3%
Discovering Optimal Sexuality Paper	5%

Journal	12%
Midterm exam	25%
Personal Experience Paper	30%
Final exam	25%

Points earned for assignments and attendance will be scaled to 100 before being factored into your final grade. You have one week to discuss graded assignments and exams with me; thereafter, the results will stand. I will apply quantitative and qualitative standards in determining grades.

Grading Scale

A = 100 – 94	B+ = 89 – 88	C+ = 79– 78	D = 60 – 69
A- = 93 –90	B = 87 – 83	C = 77 – 73	F = 59 – 0
	B– = 82 – 80	C– = 72 – 70	

POLICIES

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to follow the college’s standards of academic honesty as published on page 8 of your Student Handbook. Plagiarism and cheating are grounds for course failure.

Accommodations

If you wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability, contact Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Office of Learning Services.

Attendance

You are allowed 3 absences for any reason – no excuses or notes required. Unexpected emergencies and illness may come up, as may out-of-town athletic events. Anticipate the unknown and bank your absences wisely. After 3 absences, you must provide an authenticated excuse letter (e.g., a physician’s note) for each absence; otherwise, I reserve the right to lower your grade one full letter grade for each absence beyond the first 3. Chronic lateness and early departures will factor into your attendance grade.

- You are responsible for knowing the material presented on the days you are absent, so identify one or two peers you trust to pass along the material.
- If you miss an exam, you may take a different and potentially more difficult exam within 48 hours of the original exam date.

Courtesy

The use of personal electronics (phones, iPods, Blackberries, etc.) is prohibited during class. Laptops are discouraged because they can distract you and others around you.

ASSIGNMENTS

Due dates and readings are listed in the Course Assignment Calendar, which will be distributed the first week of class. You are expected to complete the each day’s readings prior to class.

Format for all assignments: White paper, typed double spaced in 12-point Times Roman font. 1” margins on all sides. Conserve paper: You may print double sided, and you may recycle paper by drawing a slash through the previously used side. Staple multiple pages at the top left corner. Your name or ID# should be on every assignment. Edit and proofread, as sloppiness will affect your grade.

Submit all assignments on the due date in your personal folder. If you will be absent, you may email me your work by the start of the class period. Late assignments, even if emailed later on the day they are due, will lose two (2) points per day, including weekends. Please note that romantic difficulties, busy Computer Lab printers, and demanding work schedules do not count as extenuating circumstances.

Assignment #1: JOURNAL

The journal consists of 12 weekly 300-word (1 full page) entries typed and double-spaced. Answer the assigned question *and* briefly respond to one of the week’s reading assignments. You are not required to reveal details about your personal sexual behaviors or interests. The assigned topics will help you examine your beliefs, assumptions, and values. If you feel you cannot respond to an assigned topic, contact me for an alternate topic.

Your journal grade will be based on submission of all required entries in the correct length and format. Your entries must demonstrate personal reflection on your part, i.e., do not restate the main points of the reading or class discussion; rather, state your thoughts about or analysis of them.

Assignment #2: DISCOVERING OPTIMAL SEXUALITY

Read the article, “Building Blocks toward Optimal Sexuality,” which is posted on Blackboard. Address the following topics and answer the questions provided in 3 to 5 pages.

Rubric for Discovering Optimal Sexuality Paper

Points	Expectations	Points
2	List the three specifically defined groups of research participants.	
3	One of the authors noted that within three days of each other, three sex therapy clients came to her with Inhibited Sexual Desire. How did they describe the best sexual experiences of their lives?	
5	List six components of optimal sex as described in the article.	
5	Give a quote, description, or example of each of the six components.	
5	Describe why being sexually functional is neither necessary nor sufficient for optimal sexual experiences, according to the article.	
5	Grammar, editing, and readability.	
25	Total Points	

Assignment #3: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ESSAY

Experience something related to sexuality for the first time, and write a 5-8 page paper about your experience. Describe the experience, explain why you chose it, and address whether it differed from or met your expectations, how it related to your values, how it challenged your thinking, etc. The experience you choose should be challenging or eye-opening to you in some way. However, you are not required to participate in sexual activities or to do anything that would compromise your values or morals. You may even choose to do something as simple as attending a meeting of the campus’ Spectrum group or being tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Your grade will depend in part on your willingness to think deeply about how your sexual values and morals affected your choice of and participation in your experience.

At least 1 page of your paper will feature academic research you have done on the subject you are experiencing, i.e., if you are getting tested for STIs for the first time, you will include cited data about STIs, transmission rates, testing and/or treatments. If you have concerns about this assignment, contact me immediately.

Rubric for Personal Experience Essay

Points	Comments	Points
10	• Clearly defines and describes your experience	
10	• Explains how it challenged your assumptions, attitudes and/or sexual values.	
10	• Addresses whether the experience differed from or met your	

5	expectations • Explains why you chose the experience	
5	• Presents your story in a logical manner.	
5	• Sentences and paragraphs are well constructed and transition well	
5	• Free of typos and spelling errors	
50	Total Points	
	Earned	

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

The mid-term exam will be based on assigned readings in the textbook, assigned websites in the syllabus, and classroom learning. You will receive a test booklet in which to write your answers. The questions will be a mix of matching terms, fill-in, labeling (anatomy), and short answers.

FINAL EXAMINATION

The final exam will be based on assigned readings in the textbook, assigned websites in the syllabus, and classroom learning. The exam will be posted on Blackboard, and you will complete the exam independently before emailing it back to me on the scheduled final exam date.