



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2015

SO2800 (A2) HUMAN SEXUALITY – 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Alan Segal

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12:15 - 12.45. Thursdays 11:30 – 12. Or by appointment.

PREREQUISITE(S)/CO-REQUISITE: SO1000

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Sexuality: A Very Short Introduction - Veronique Mottier

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: An inquiry into ideas and behaviour of sexuality, and their personal, cultural, and societal implications.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 Credits / 3 hours per week

DELIVERY MODE(S): Class and Group Discussion, Lectures, Film Analyses

NOTE: This course will examine a wide scan of sexual thought, philosophy, fantasy, portrayal, cultural viewpoints and personal understanding, and general behaviour. This approach indicates that in a mature society no question is beyond scrutiny. The premise of this course is not to communicate truth or confirm authority of information, but to foster inquiry. How social authority affects the scope and substance of what we examine is a necessary aspect of such inquiry. No course can withstand entirely the politics of its content, however, therefore creating a capacity to offend some who enroll in it. This is especially true of a course in sexuality. Nevertheless, SO2800 will not treat sexual variety as a series of perversions, nor will it assert the normalcy of one kind of sexuality as opposed to another. We will discuss how, in any society, particular forms of sexuality become "normal" and others "abnormal", how they become acceptable topics of contemplation and conversation, and whether such distinctions help or hinder us. Films and magazines may be shown in class, the subject matter of which might be

controversial and offensive. If anything in this statement causes you to think you might find this course terribly offensive, you should reconsider remaining in it.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Become more knowledgeable about concepts of ideology, discourse, power, social dynamics, hegemony, as they inflect sexual expression and underlying assumptions.
2. Become more knowledgeable regarding sociological theories that might explain or challenge sexuality in the 21st century.
3. Become aware of, and conversant with, debates and controversies in societies about sexual understanding and behaviour.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Use particular theories to address aspects of sexual life in our or other societies.
2. Integrate historical information about sexuality with asking questions about contemporary sexual phenomena evident in social experience.
3. Employ sociology to analyze the politics of current debates regarding sexuality, law, social policy, and culture.

TRANSFERABILITY: UA, UC, UL, AU, Concordia UC, & KUC

Grades of 'D' or 'D+' may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions.

Students must be aware it is their responsibility to contact receiving institutions to ensure transferability.

| Grading Conversion Chart | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Alpha Grade | 4-point Equivalent | Percentage Guidelines | Designation |
| A+ | 4.0 | 95 – 100 | EXCELLENT |
| A | 4.0 | 90 – 94 | |
| A- | 3.7 | 87 – 89 | FIRST CLASS STANDING |
| B+ | 3.3 | 83 – 86 | |
| B | 3.0 | 80 – 82 | GOOD |
| B- | 2.7 | 77 – 79 | |
| C+ | 2.3 | 73 – 76 | SATISFACTORY |
| C | 2.0 | 65 – 72 | |
| C- | 1.7 | 60 – 64 | |
| D+ | 1.3 | 55 – 59 | MINIMAL PASS |
| D | 1.0 | 50 – 54 | |
| F | 0.0 | 0 – 49 | FAIL |
| WF | 0.0 | 0 | FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline |

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas from a sociological standpoint, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors' ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific details that help you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are philosophical, analytical inquiries that advance through your and others' ideas and investigations. Deciding what questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions are valuable but aren't obligatory for any of my assignments.

| | |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| Assignment 1: First Essay | Weight: 33.3% |
| Assignment 2: Midterm Essay or project | Weight: 33.3% |

Take home final exam (essay or project) Weight: 33.4%

The two assignments and the take home final exam are equally weighted. Each assignment and the final take home exam will be given a letter grade (A to F) corresponding to a numerical score value (4 to 0) as per the grading criteria table shown above. The final grade for the course will be determined by the average of the scores on the two assignments and the final take home exam. The following example illustrates the determination of how the grade is calculated:

| Task | Grade | Score | Final score & Grade | |
|--------------|-------|-------|-----------------------------|--|
| Assignment 1 | B | 3.0 | 3.0 | |
| Assignment 2 | A- | 3.7 | 3.7 | |
| Final Exam | B+ | 3.3 | 3.3 | |
| | | | $(3.0+3.7+3.3)/3=3.33=B+^*$ | |

***Please note that your final grade will be based on the two assignments and the take home final exam. However, your grade may go up by at least one letter grade beyond the average of these three assignments as a result of participation as outlined later in this document.**

First Essay Assignment

Due Date: October 9th Minimum Length: 1200 words

Select any of the articles in the **Course Pak Handout**. Write a sociological, critical commentary on the position of the author(s). This means far more than just summarizing the details of the article, and even out class discussions. Go beyond what might have been stated, think about approaches and aspects not amplified already. What was left unsaid or unconsidered? How well does the article articulate its logic and thread of argument development? No research or referencing is necessary for this assignment. However, be aware that our strong inclination is to offer an opinion on whether some behaviour is or is not sexually deviant, psychologically abnormal, or morally repugnant. This course explores the types of logic, theories, and sociocultural experiences of sexuality, and this should be evident in how you address the specific details and implications of the article you choose. When reading it may be easier for us to identify bits of a published piece rather than understand its overall purpose and how successfully it communicated this purpose. Aim for comprehension on both levels. Opinions are valuable in this case only if they can be incorporated into a rigorous discussion of ideas.

Midterm Essay or Project

Due Date: November 27th. Minimum Length: 1600 words

Choose a topic within the field of sexuality that has global/international meanings and implications. The possibilities are extensive but try to avoid the obvious ones. All are acceptable but many areas in Sexuality Studies don't receive media exposure. You can examine a proposed change in law or policy; you might detect a gap between what we are taught about sexuality and what our culture demands of us sexually, and want to investigate this; perhaps you have traveled to another society and became intrigued by cross-cultural similarities or differences, and you want to follow the intrigue further. For all the possibilities critical analysis is emphasized here, using your own and others' ideas. Do not write just a descriptive or summarizing report. Explain why these ideas perplex, unsettle, reassure, or persuade you. Setting up your essay as a debate can help you structure this assignment because it can clarify questions that will help you probe the topic. If you favour a project, you and I must discuss your suggestion before moving ahead with the work. They cover a range of possibilities. In the past people have written short stories or a collection of poems; or created something of an artistic nature, such as sculptures, paintings, etc. One individual created a short film, another person a choreographed dance. Projects must be accompanied by a written component, but not one as minimally long as an essay

Please note: This assignment requires research. In-text and Works Cited citations must be in MLA Style, Three academic research sources are mandatory. More than 3 are welcome. This means more than pulling a sentence out of a book and quoting it in the essay. You must read fully each source and explain its logic and applicability. I will know this by how you incorporate it into your analysis. Not following these will cause a mark reduction. Projects are also evaluated by other faculty appropriate to the kind of work you submit to me.

Final Exam – Essay or Project

Due Date: TBA Minimum Length: 1000 words

Your final exam will be a take-home essay. I will specify at least one theory that you must use as a basis of inquiry into a topic of your or my choice.

Please Note For All Assignments:

GRADES WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE LETTER GRADE IF THE ASSIGNMENT IS LESS THAN MINIMUM LENGTH. GRAMMAR IS IMPORTANT FOR PRECISE COMMUNICATION. WHILE NOT VALUED AS HIGHLY AS CONTENT, POOR GRAMMAR CAN AFFECT YOUR MARK FOR THE ASSIGNMENT. ALL WRITTEN/PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SENT BY EMAIL, TO MY COLLEGE ACCOUNT: asegal@gprc.ab.ca YOU MUST INCLUDE THE WORD

‘ASSIGNMENT’ IN THE SUBJECT LINE. INDICATE YOUR NAME, COURSE NUMBER (AND SECTION IF I AM TEACHING MORE THAN ONE OF YOUR COURSE). ALSO STATE CLEARLY IN THE SUBJECT BOX WHICH ASSIGNMENT IT IS.

Discussion Bonus: (A, B, C, D)

Every person in the course may (but not necessarily will), receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading the books and completing all written assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 1 class.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

University courses provide the best intellectual and perhaps social experience, when students arrive prepared for the day’s work. My classes are heavily discussion -oriented and therefore require commitment from students.

1. Read assignments.
2. Participate in class conversation about the material.
3. Complete all written work.
4. Indicate on submitted material your name; section and course number; and which assignment is being sent to me.
5. *All written work must be sent via email to asegal@gprc.ab.ca You MUST use the word ‘assignment’ in the subject line.*
6. *Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave their cell phones on ‘vibrate’, and leave the room if a response is required. Otherwise, texting or use of phones will result in you having to miss that particular class. Please do not put me in a position of having to do this.*

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

In an academic setting, presenting others’ work as your own is a serious violation. However, referencing articles and books and online academic products do not prevent you from building on their ideas and speculations. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at

<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/> or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/**

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE:

1. *Introduction to course*

2. *Sexuality: Introduction; Chapter 1 - Before Sexuality*

Class Discussion:

Prior to enrolling in this course, did you think there was a 'before sexuality' human history? If you did, what led you to this thought? If not, what explains not thinking of it, and are you surprised that some imagine the possibility? Why does Mottier use this title?

Our society invests heavily in biological, body-founded assumptions of sexuality. But we also explore myth and mythology. Are myth and mythology descriptive of the same elements of human existence? What conceptual value is there, so far, in Mottier's reference to myth? Why does she mention it?

The chapter contains much detail of sexual expression through epochs of human history. Does the author indicate these constitute a sexuality, or something else? What is this 'something' if not sexuality?

When Mottier looks into ethos of sexuality, is she also reviewing myth? Are myth and ethos connected in this chapter?

What logic propels the position of the book so far, and how effectively does the author outline her purpose and her early arguments?

3. *Sexuality: Chapter 2 - The Invention of Sexuality*

Class Discussion:

From popular-culture, religious, and scientific standpoints, how might a concept of power contribute to our understanding of sex?

When we speak of sex and sexuality, are we alluding to the same phenomena?

Some people assume the absurdity of saying sexuality is invented. Do we believe that breathing is an invention? If not, what meaning does 'the invention of sexuality' have?

We are always part of, subjected to, and 'permitted' to be who and what we are, through social discourse. We will examine what concepts sociologists activate when they discuss discourse, and also paradigm.

The easiest response we can experience is to review what humans thought or believed many years ago, and ridicule those alive in those eras, for their ignorance or superstition. Prepare to discuss in

class the variety of perspectives on sexuality cited by the author, and to imagine what we embrace today that might also be lampooned by our ancestors.

4. *Sexuality: Chapter 3 - ...Feminist Critiques of Sexuality*

Class Discussion:

What establishes a critique as feminist? Mottier has indicated a plural outlook on feminist assessment of sexuality. Why has she done this if 'feminist' appears to be all-inclusive? I will discuss epistemology, commodification, consumption, inscription, transgression, and representation. All are types of discourse. From this point onward we will include them in our discussions of course material.

5. *Lecture - The Body*

6. *Sexuality: Chapters 4 & 5 - The State in the Bedroom; The Future of Sex*

Class Discussion:

In my introduction to the course I indicated that sex, and sexuality, are substantially political. From what you recall of that introduction, can you conclude closeness or separation of ideas between my outlook and Mottier's?

How is the state involved in our sexuality, does it have a future in it, and will we continue referring to it as being 'in the bedroom'?

We do not exist only in intellectual atmospheres. We live material lives. Therefore, some social developments instigate demands for action, others are exploited by the state to create new policy or law, or change or re-entrench other policy or law. Specify the particular examples given to us by the author, and be ready to discuss if she has identified worthwhile examples.

Who or what make up the state?

7. *Reading #1 - Are We Having Sex or What?*

Class Discussion:

Is the title of the article rhetorical only? Could there really be disputes over whether people have sex?

How does the author outline the variability of the question?

8. *Reading #2 - Sexuality in a Virtual World; Lecture on Representation*

Class Discussion:

In sociology, **Representation** is an extremely important concept. A simple word encapsulates a host of ideas, assumptions, ontologies, and expectations. Who speaks for who is crucial in our analyses of social and political life.

One aspect of this surging of analysis and debate includes references to myth and reality. Another refers to the 'outcomes' of sexual expression. What is the virtual world in Costello's view, and what is sexuality in it? If you had to explain to someone who knew nothing of sexuality, what it 'is', would your explanation change if the context was a virtual world?

9. *Lecture on Subjectivity*

10. *Reading #3 - Str8 Dude Seeks Same: Mapping the Relationship Between Sexual Identities, Practices, and Cultures*

Class Discussion:

Do you think the author assumes that subjectivity, normative desire, and non-normative desire, help us understand the mapping he writes of? Given conventional comprehension of labels and meanings, why might a straight dude seek out another male?

11. *Reading #4 - Sexuality and Social Theorizing*

Class Discussion:

Are we helped during the ordinary questioning and uncertainty of knowing ourselves and others sexually, by sociological theory? When the authors bring social theorizing into a contemplative equation about society, life, and sexuality, what do they conclude about the value of theorizing? If we theorize, we must also have theorists. Who are mentioned in the article?

12. *Reading #5 - Sick Sex*

Class Discussion:

Before you read the article, what thoughts on sick sex would populate your mind? In the past, have you rejected outright the idea that sex could be sick? If so, why? What is Windsor's position in this article? About what is he attempting to convince you? Is persuasion his main goal?

13. *Reading #6 - 'Reclaiming Raunch'? Spatializing Queer Identities at Toronto Women's bathhouse Events*

Class Discussion:

In some of our popular culture's representation of them, women and feminism are synonymous. Are queer women and feminism classified similarly? What is the reclamation cited in the title? How important is this to the rest of the title's meaning? In this article, what and who are queer? And what is identity?

14. *Reading #7 - The Social Control of Adult-Child Sex*

Class Discussion:

'Social Control' arouses numerous images and thoughts, flowing through the entire range of positive and negative perceptions. Where would you place the authors in this flow?
Is the topic they write on a good framework for sociological debate about social control and sexuality?

15. *Reading #8 - The Death of the Stork*

Class Discussion:

Prepare to address the ideas about teaching about sex and sexuality to children. Are Simonds and Jungels pessimistic or optimistic, or neither, regarding how we educate young people about their sexualities and sexual existence? What evidence do they present regarding the form and the substance of this education?

How would you respond to their final question: 'So what should we tell the kids?'