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SOCIOLOGY 2800

MAY 04 1999

Grande Prairie Regional College

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Regional College

## HUMAN SEXUALITY

(Winter 1999)

### Course Description:

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

Instructor: Alan Segal

Office: C410, 539-2011

Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays: 1 - 2pm  
Wednesdays: 6 - 6:25pm  
By appointment

### GOALS:

1. To understand how sociological concepts may help us analyze and comprehend human sexuality.
2. To develop analytical and critical thinking skills through discussions of issues relevant to sexuality.
3. To become aware of historical and contemporary attitudes, practices, and values relevant to sexuality.

Course Co-requisite/Prerequisite: SOCIOLOGY 1000

CREED AND CAUTION: This course will examine a wide scan of sexual thought, fantasy, portrayal, understandings, considerations, and general behaviour. Its approach assumes that in a mature society no question is beyond scrutiny. No course can withstand entirely the social politics of its content, however, and thus the capacity to offend some who enroll in it. This is true especially of a course in human sexuality. Nevertheless, this course 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. It will discuss, however, how in any society particular forms of sexuality become "normal" and others "abnormal," and whether such a distinction helps or hinders us intellectually or sexually. Feature films and documentaries, and magazines, will be shown occasionally 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 substantially offensive, you should reconsider remaining in it.

### Required Reading:

What's love got to do with it? The evolution of human mating - Meredith Small

The invention of heterosexuality - Jonathan Ned Katz

Public sex: The culture of radical sex - Pat Califia

Blue politics: Pornography and the law in the age of feminism - Dany Lacombe

### Assignments:

**Major Assignment** - due the last class of the semester. Marked on a 1-9 scale; there is a lateness penalty of a 1/2 stanine per day.

**3 Journals** - due the first classes of February, March, and April. Each is worth a maximum of 2 stanines. Details below

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 15. Your marks will be totaled out of 15, a percentage will be obtained, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final stanine grade according to the following table.

Stanine Grade	Percentage Equivalent
9	90 - 100
8	80 - 89
7	72 - 79
6	65 - 71
5	57 - 64
4	50 - 56
3	45 - 49
2	26 - 44

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

NOTE: BONUS possibility: Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, you may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the QUALITY of your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by doing your reading and completing the required assignments. The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3.

### Major Assignment

This can be on any topic that interests you, even one not addressed in class discussions or lectures, providing it is relevant to the course. If you choose to write an essay, do not write a descriptive report. The essay must be an analytical exploration about the ideas you express. If you write an essay additional research is expected (for example books, articles, newspapers, journals). Be precise; reason rather than merely express opinion, and be grammatical. Grammatical mistakes may affect your mark. The required length is 2000 words. Your essay can, however, surpass the word limit. You must include a "Works Cited" section. Your mark will be reduced by a half-stanine for inadequate length. **Type and double-space** the essay. All disks or hard copies must clearly stipulate your name, ID number, date of submission of the essay, and the title of the essay. All assignments must be stapled.

If you write an essay and it is late, a half-stanine penalty per day will be in effect, including weekends. If you hand in your assignment late, have another faculty member or a full-time regular employee of the College sign and date it. In-text referencing and a "Works Cited" section are required, and all documentation must be in the MLA style. Should either reference section be omitted, your assignment will be reduced by 1 stanine per section.

If you opt for a different kind of major assignment, for example a fine arts project, critical thinking must still be evident. Consult with me about how this might be done.

### Journals

**Each journal is to be one typewritten page or two handwritten pages.** Anything pertaining to sexuality, ideas introduced in class discussions or lectures, class interaction, etc., is suitable. Observations about, and suggestions for, the course are also suitable. No research is necessary or expected. The journals are an informal type of communication with me.

## DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

### Introduction to course

1. General and Sociological
2. Historical background

### Biological Eternity, Anthropological Possibility

3. What's love got to do with it?: Introduction, Chapters 1 & 2
4. Same book: Chapters 3 - 5

Explain your understanding of communication. Does this understanding change if we refer to sexual communication? Is all thought ethical? What sexual decisions, if any, are irrelevant to ethics? What ethical stances would be favoured, do you think, by sociological advocates of interactionism, functionalism, structural functionalism, and different branches of feminism?

5. Same book: Chapter 6
6. Same book: Chapter 7

### Sexual Inventions, Sexual Representations

7. The Invention of heterosexuality: Foreword & Chapter 1

Why does Katz write of inventing sexuality? Compare his views to Meredith Small's.

8. ...Invention...: Chapters 2 & 3

How might we explain what a sexual body is? How is the very concept of a sexual body sociologically influenced? How might different sociological

schools of thought explain both the fact of representation, and the experience(s) that come from it?

9. ...Invention...: Chapters 4 - 6

10. Sports, bodies, and representations - lecture by Ray Kardas

11. ...Invention...: Chapters 7 & 8, Afterword

### Sexual Ventures, Sexual Control

12. Public sex: Introduction

13. PS: Pages 175-182

What is gender, and what is gender bending? Is there social value in bending our understandings of gender?

14. PS: Pages 199-213

What is desire? Are fantasies reliable indicators of our "real" desires? Do you think that fantasies and desires differ according to gender? Do other factors in human experience influence desire, fantasy, and our awareness/understanding of them? How might different schools of sociological thought explain fantasy and desire?

15. PS: Pages 242-248

16. PS: Pages 157-174, 190-198, 222-230

17. PS: Pages 27-82, 136-147

What is consent? What is informed consent? Do we educate for either?

18. PS: Pages 95-135

19. Blue Politics: Chapters 1 - 3

Are you persuaded by some feminist positions on what is causality and harm? Should we distinguish between rationales and rational explanations?

20. BP: Chapters 4 - 6

If you were asked to write an anti-obscenity law, what would be its most important concept[s]?

21. BP: Chapter 7 & Epilogue

22. Course Wrapup:

Can notions of normalcy, and the power exerted to enforce it, stand up to the range of sexual identities, sentiments, and expressions? What kind of sexuality education would we have if you were asked to establish such a program? What principles would frame your "curriculum?"