Course time and location: TR 1:30-4:20pm, BSB108

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Office hours: TBA

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Please note: This syllabus – including scheduling, topic order, topics themselves, and assessment strategy – is subject to change. You will be informed of any changes in class and on our Avenue to Learn website.

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Course Description. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to research and theory on human sexual attitudes and behaviours. We will discuss sexuality mainly from evolutionary and social psychology perspectives. Our main topics will be: sex drive; evolutionary perspectives on mate choice; attraction/attractiveness; love; and non-normative sexuality.

Readings.
Required: You will read several articles. Some of these are listed in your syllabus; others may be announced on Avenue to Learn as we go.
Recommended for students with no evolutionary psychology background: Buss’ The Evolution of Desire and/or Dawkins’ The Selfish Gene. I did not requisition these from the bookstore, but they’re easy to find.

E-mail Policy. E-mail must originate from your designated McMaster e-mail account. Should we need to communicate with you about individual matters, the e-mail will be sent to your mcmaster.ca account. You should monitor this account regularly. E-mail sent from third-party providers (yahoo, hotmail, cogeco, sympatico, etc.) will be ignored. We have this policy for three reasons: (1) to reduce the amount of incoming spam to our accounts; (2) to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; and (3) to teach the professional use of e-mail. Remember: E-mails to your professors are professional communications. They should include correct spelling and punctuation, should have an informative subject line, and should be polite and to the point.
Website Policy. This course has an Avenue to Learn website. You are expected to check this website with regularity for announcements, updates, discussion board postings, and other valuable information. It is your responsibility to keep up with the information provided on this site.

Use of the website’s discussion boards is strongly encouraged, and, in the case of non-private inquiries (e.g., questions about course content and the running of this course, but not emails reporting illness or other private matters) is preferred to email communications. Questions asked on the discussion board allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer (and therefore not have to ask the question themselves). They also provide a learning experience for students who attempt to answer these questions themselves.

Please see the first post on each discussion board for directions on how to use the board. Posts that ignore these directions will be deleted. The professor reserves the right to ban students from the course website if they use the board inappropriately (e.g., posting mean or other inappropriate comments). This will involve lost access to slides and other important course information.

Finally, students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Policy re. the Recording of Lectures. No student is permitted to record lectures in this class, unless they have CSD documentation that they require this service due to disability (e.g., dyslexia, injury). Those with permission to record lectures may not share their recording with others. Any infraction of this policy will be harshly dealt with.

Why do I have this policy? In the real world, you will not have the luxury of recording the things your boss or colleagues tell you! You must learn to listen effectively to the right things, or you will have difficulties. Note-taking gives you practice in this very important real-world skill.

Assessment. Your final mark will be based on one midterm and one final. Your better performance will be worth 55%; your worse performance will be worth 45%.

The tests will be non-cumulative (exception: running themes in the course, such as evolutionary explanations of human sexual behavior), and will cover lecture material and assigned readings, even readings not discussed in class.

Please see the schedule, below, for assessment dates.

Test-Taking Policy. Electronics must stay in your bag, turned off. If a phone rings or vibrates during a test, you will be penalized 1% off your final grade in the course. The only things allowed on your desk and/or outside of your bag during testing sessions are pens, pencils, erasers, something to drink if needed, tissues if needed, and your student ID.

Missed Tests. This is absolutely not recommended in a summer course. However, if you must miss a test, it is your responsibility to submit all excuses for missed tests to the office of the Associate Dean of your faculty within one week of the original test date. It is also your responsibility to speak with your professor as soon as possible (within hours or one day after the missed test is optimal). Senate regulations for petitions for special consideration have always required that: “40. The student shall make a prompt and timely request for special
consideration.” No requests for special consideration will be accepted if they are received more than one month after the missed test date.

If you miss a midterm, a makeup test will be provided for you within one week after the missed test. If you miss this make-up, then you must once again supply an excuse to your Associate Dean; otherwise, you will receive a mark of zero (0) on the midterm. If you can provide an acceptable excuse to your Associate Dean for having missed the make-up, then an alternate make-up test or assignment will be designed for you.

**Final Grade Calculations.** Your final grade will be converted to a letter grade, according to the following scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
<th>Percentage (Grade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100 (A+)</td>
<td>77-79 (B+)</td>
<td>67-69 (C+)</td>
<td>57-59 (D+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89 (A)</td>
<td>73-76 (B)</td>
<td>63-66 (C)</td>
<td>53-56 (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84 (A-)</td>
<td>70-72 (B-)</td>
<td>60-62 (C-)</td>
<td>50-52 (D-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0-49 (F)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Please Note.** The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on a individual basis, in the light of special circumstances.

**Please Note as Well.** I do not do special favours for any given student when assigning my final marks. Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. I believe that special favours to one student are unfair to the multitude of students who, for whatever reason, do not receive those same favours.

**Academic Integrity:** You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., a grade of zero (0) on an assignment, loss of course credit with a notation on the transcript (“grade F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is **your** responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on academic dishonesty, please refer to Mac’s Academic Integrity Policy, at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

**How to Do Well in This Course**

This term, my testing methods for this course are changing substantially. Previously, tests in this course were exclusively in written (essay) format. However, this summer, we will be trying out a mix of multiple choice (MC), true-false (T/F), fill-in-the-blanks, and written responses. Test items will be a mixture of fact-based questions (e.g., “what was the finding?” or “what is the definition of X?” or “what was the main argument of reading Y?”), conceptual questions (e.g., “what does the finding mean?” or “why is this particular finding important?” or “how do you know that the interpretation of this finding is correct?”), and applied (e.g., “given what you know about topic A, how would a person behave in situation B?”). The questions will be written as we go, and I will, if necessary, expand on this description during term.

Please keep in mind that there is little readings-related support for what we will be discussing in class. Testing will focus very heavily on lecture content, although reading will be tested, even if I don’t explicitly address them in class. In order to do well in this class, you must attend lecture, and you must do the readings!
IMPORTANT DATES, TOPICS, AND READINGS

**Basic structure of the course.** On page 5, you will find a list of topics (and associated readings) that I expect to cover this term. This syllabus does not contain exact dates other than those associated with tests. I do this in order to allow us flexibility in timing of topics. I will keep you updated on where you should be in your readings in class, and on the announcements section of our website.

**A note on the readings.** Extra readings may be assigned as we go (it is your responsibility to keep track of added content by checking Avenue often). Plan carefully so that you do not find yourself “cramming” the readings at the last minute. I will not always explicitly discuss a given reading but read and learn all readings anyway.

**How to read journal articles.** You will be reading two types of articles.

First, you will read several review/theoretical articles. These tend not to present original research, but instead discuss and evaluate ideas. The best way to approach these is to ask yourself, about once per paragraph or section, questions such as: “what is the argument in this paragraph/section? Is it supported? Why or why not? What are the implications of this argument for the grand scheme of this topic?”.

Second, you will read several research articles. These present original research, and can be intimidating for students who are not used to reading methods and results sections. Not to worry! You should certainly read these sections, but don’t drive yourself nuts trying to memorize (or even understand) every detail. The best way to approach these is to be able to answer the following questions when you’re done reading: “why was this study done?”, “how was it done?”, “what (broadly!) was found?”, “how does this research relate to our course?”. The answers to these types of questions are far more important than remembering that the authors did a t-test or had 293 participants (which aren’t important at all for the purposes of this course).

**How to find your readings.** First, look at the citation. The order of what you see is: Author. (Date). Title. Journal name, volume(issue), pages.

Second, find the article. My method (but you may have one you like better): Go to the McMaster Library website (http://library.mcmaster.ca/). Click on the “Articles/ Databases” tab, and then type “PsychINFO” into the box. Then, select “Scholars Portal Interface”. This will bring you to a typical search page. Here, click on “Advanced Search”. The best way to find an article is to enter the authors’ names. If there’s only one author, you might also narrow the date-range to within a year of publication (look under the search box for this function). Example: For your first article, by Cecil et al., you would select “author” in the right-hand drop-down menu for all three rows, and type “Cecil” in row 1, “Bogart” in row 2, and “Wagstaff” in row 3. With this many authors, you need not specify a date. Note that there are “AND”s between rows, but “OR”s between columns – you want “AND”. The only article that pops up when you do this is the correct article. If nothing comes up, check your spelling and that you’ve specified “author” for each row.

**A note on dates and deadlines.** The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with an explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

**Test dates.**
Midterm: 12 July (in class; rooms TBA)
Final Exam: 4 August (in class; rooms TBA)
Schedule of Topics and Readings

Topic 1. Introduction to the study of human sexuality.
- Hatfield on Golden Fleece Awards (posted in entirety on Avenue to Learn)

Topic 2. What is sex?


Topic 4. Erotic plasticity.

Topic 5. The Evolutionary Approach
- Overarching themes:
  - Buss & Schmitt. (1993). Sexual Strategies Theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review, 100*(2), 204-232. Tip: *This is a long theoretical article that supports what we’ll be learning in class. Read it before we begin the evolution section, but don’t worry about the details – you’ll learn those in class.*
- Women:
Men:
- Bering on the sperm displacement hypothesis (posted in entirety on Avenue to Learn).

**Topic 6. The Social Psychology Approach**

**Topic 7. Love**
- Sternberg. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review*, 93(2), 119-135. *Tip: We’ll be discussing this model in some detail. Use this article for support.*

**Topic 8. Non-Normative Sexuality 1: Homosexuality**
- Kunzig on the biology of homosexuality (posted in entirety on Avenue to Learn)