

SYLLABUS¹
PSYCHOLOGY 3AC3: HUMAN SEXUALITY
Department of Psychology, Neuroscience, and Behaviour
McMaster University
Winter Term 2017

COURSE DAYS/TIMES **COURSE LOCATION**
MR 12:30, T 1:30 MDCL 1102

PROFESSOR

Dr. Jennifer M. Ostovich
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Office hours: TBA; watch *Avenue*

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

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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.

Note: This syllabus is divided into two parts. **Part I** includes a description of the academic aspects of this course (basic course requirements, readings, and important dates); **Part II** (page 6) includes a description of the various administrative aspects of this course (policies re. emails, *Avenue to Learn*, recording lectures, and absences).

PART I: COURSE REQUIREMENTS

READINGS. You will find a list of required readings beginning on page 3 of this syllabus. These readings are meant to supplement lectures and to provide you with independent learning opportunities. Hence, some readings will closely support lectures, but some will be quite different from lecture content: you are expected to read and learn all of the readings, regardless of whether they are covered in class.

The easiest way to find your readings is to use *Google Scholar*. Go to *Scholar's* homepage. At the top of the page, you will find a link to "Settings". Select that. This will take you to a page with a menu along its left-hand side: select "Library links". Type McMaster University into the textbox. Now that you've done this, articles available at Mac will have the tag "get it @ Mac" next to them; sometimes articles are available in the public domain – these links will also be visible. Sometimes, *Scholar* fails you. When that happens, it's time to go to the McMaster Library, and find the *PsychInfo* database, and search for the article there. *PsychInfo* almost never fails you.

If you have no evolutionary psychology background, read Buss' *The Evolution of Desire* and/or Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene*. I did not requisition these from the bookstore (they're merely recommendations), but they're easy to find. *The Selfish Gene* is a very important book – all people should eventually read it, I believe. Please think of *all* information provided on the course website (*Avenue to Learn*) as *required* reading. Everything posted on *Avenue* is fair game for tests, including the syllabus, the course FAQ (which gives tips on how to

¹ **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. If there are no announcements, assume no changes.

perform optimally on tests, among many other things), and a handful of articles I have posted on note-taking and studying. It is your responsibility to read and study these resources.

EVALUATION. Your final mark will be based on your performance on two midterms (Midterm 1 @ 25%; Midterm 2 @ 30%) and one cumulative final exam (@ 45%). Tests will cover lecture materials *and* assigned readings, *even* readings not discussed in class. Dates available below (page 3).

The tests will combine multiple-choice and very short answer items (definitions, brief explanations, fill in the blanks). Test items are designed to be challenging. They will assess your knowledge of details (key terms, definitions, data/results of studies and experiments) and your conceptual understanding of research and theories presented in the course. Rote memorization of the material will be not enough for most students to get more than a D or C in the course.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE. Tests will be comprised of some mix of multiple choice (MC), fill-in-the-blanks, and brief written responses. 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?” or “what is the key term used to describe A?”), 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 questions (e.g., “given what you know about topic A, how would a person behave in situation B?” or “Person X did Y. Why?”).

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, but readings *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!*

Check out our *Avenue to Learn* website for an [FAQ](#) with more details on what you can do to optimize your performance in this course.

IMPORTANT DATES, TOPICS, AND READINGS²

Basic structure of the course. This syllabus *does not contain exact dates* other than those associated with tests. I do this in order to allow us flexibility in the 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 *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?”.

² **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 the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If a 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.

Second, you will read several *research (empirical) 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 (these factoids aren't important at all for the purposes of this course).

For more tips on reading articles, see: <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/~sspencer/psych253/readart.html>

Test dates.

- Midterm 1: Monday 6 February during class time, in MDCL 1102 and T13 123.
- Midterm 2: Monday 13 March during class time, in MDCL 1102 and T13 123.
- Final Exam: To be scheduled by the Registrar's office

TOPICS AND READINGS

TOPIC	READINGS
Introduction to the Study of Human Sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hatfield on Golden Fleece Awards (posted on <i>Avenue to Learn</i> under "Content" → "Readings") ▪ Yeater, Miller, Rinehart & Nason. (2012). Trauma and sex surveys meet minimal risk standards: Implications for Institutional Review Boards. <i>Psychological Science, 23</i>, 780-787.
Topic 1. Defining "Sex"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cecil, Bogart, Wagstaff, Pinkerton, & Abramson. (2002). Classifying a person as a sexual partner: The impact of contextual factors. <i>Psychology and Health, 17</i>(2), 221-234. ▪ Medley-Rath (2007). Am I still a virgin?": What counts as sex in 20 years of <i>Seventeen</i>. <i>Sexuality & Culture: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly, 11</i>(2), 24-38. ▪ Horowitz & Spicer (2013). "Having sex" as a graded and hierarchical construct: A comparison of sexual definitions among heterosexual and lesbian emerging adults in the UK. <i>Journal of Sex Research, 50</i>(2), 139-150. ▪ Hill, Rahman, Bright, & Sanders. (2010). The semantics of sexual behavior and their implications for HIV/AIDS research and sexual health: US and UK gay men's definitions of having "had sex". <i>AIDS Care, 22</i>(10), 1245-1251.
Topic 3. Sex Drive And Its Correlates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baumeister, Catanese, & Vohs. (2001). Is there a gender difference in strength of sex drive? Theoretical views, conceptual distinctions, and a review of relevant evidence. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5</i>(3), 242–273. <i>Tip: Read for main points; don't try to memorize every detail.</i> ▪ Lippa. (2006). Is high sex drive associated with increased sexual attraction to both sexes? It depends on whether you are male or female. <i>Psychological Science, 17</i>(1), 46-52. ▪ Simpson & Gangestad. (1991). Individual differences in sociosexuality: Evidence for convergent and discriminant validity. <i>Journal of Personality</i>

and *Social Psychology*, 60, 870-883.

- Clark. (2006). Are the correlates of sociosexuality different for men and women? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 41, 1321–1327.
- Webster & Bryan. (2007). Sociosexual attitudes and behaviors: Why two factors are better than one. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41(4), 917-922.

Topic 4. Erotic Plasticity.

- Hyde & Durik. (2000). Gender differences in erotic plasticity – evolutionary or sociocultural forces? comment on Baumeister (2000). *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(3), 375-379.
- Andersen, Cyranowski, & Aarestad. (2000). Beyond artificial, sex-linked distinctions to conceptualize female sexuality: Comment on Baumeister (2000). *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(3), 380-384.
- Baumeister, Catanese, Campbell, & Tice. (2000). Nature, culture, and explanations for erotic plasticity: Reply to Andersen, Cyranowski, and Aarestad (2000) and Hyde and Durik (2000). *Psychological Bulletin*, 126(3), 385-389.

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 memorizing the details – you'll learn those in class.
- Schmitt. (2003). Universal sex differences in the desire for sexual variety: Tests from 52 nations, 6 continents, and 13 islands. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85(1), 85-104. *Ditto tip above.*
- Gallup & Frederick. (2010). The science of sex appeal: An evolutionary perspective. *Review of General Psychology*, 14(3), 240-250.
- Little, Jones, & DeBruine. (2011). Facial attractiveness: Evolutionary based research. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 336, 1638-1659.

Topic 5A: Women's Long-Term Mating Preferences.

- Gangestad, Simpson, Cousins, Garver-Apgar, & Christensen. (2004). Women's preferences for male behavioral displays change across the menstrual cycle. *Psychological Science*, 15(3), 203-207.
- *Economist* article on disease rates and women's desire for masculine vs. feminine men (posted on *Avenue to Learn*)

Midterm 1 Should Happen Around Here

(Watch Avenue for confirmation of readings/topics to be covered.)

Topic 5B: Men's Long-Term Mating Preferences

- Singh & Singh. (2011). Shape and significance of feminine beauty: An evolutionary perspective. *Sex Roles*, 64, 723–731.
- Haselton & Gildersleeve. (2011). Can men detect ovulation? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20(2), 87-92.
- Bering on the sperm displacement hypothesis (posted on *Avenue*).

Topic 5C: Short Term Mating

- Schmitt, Shackelford, & Buss. (2001). Are men really more 'oriented' toward short-term mating than women? A critical review of theory and

Preferences

research. *Psychology, Evolution & Gender*, 3(3), 211-239.

- Li & Kenrick. (2006). Sex similarities and differences in preferences for short-term mates: What, whether, and why. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(3), 468-489.

Topic 6. The Social Psychology Of Close Relationships.

- Dion, Berscheid, & Walster. (1972). What is beautiful is good. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 24(3), 285-290. *Tip: This is a relatively difficult article. Read it for understanding, skipping over difficult statistical stuff if you need to.*
- Murray, Griffin, Derrick, Harris, Aloni, & Leder. (2011). Tempting fate or inviting happiness? Unrealistic idealization prevents the decline of marital satisfaction. *Psychological Science*, 22(5), 619-626.
- Montoya & Horton. (2014). A two-dimensional model for the study of interpersonal attraction. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18, 59-86.
- Joel, Teper, & MacDonald. (2014). People overestimate their willingness to reject potential romantic partners by overlooking their concern for other people. *Psychological Science*, 25(12), 2233-2240.

Midterm 2 Should Happen Around Here

(Watch Avenue for confirmation of readings/topics to be covered.)

Topic 7. Love

- Dutton & Aron. (1974). Evidence for heightened sexual attraction under conditions of high anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 30(4), 510-517.
- Galperin & Haselton. (2010). Predictors of how often and when people fall in love. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 8(1), 5-28.
- 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.*
- Fehr, Harasymchuk, & Sprecher. (2014). Compassionate love in romantic relationships: A review and some new findings. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31, 575-600.

Topic 8. Non-Normative Sexuality 1: Sexual Orientation

- Bem. (1998). Is EBE theory supported by the evidence? Is it androcentric? A reply to Peplau et al. (1998). *Psychological Review*, 105(2), 395-398.
- Zietscha, Morleya, Shekara, et al. (2008). Genetic factors predisposing to homosexuality may increase mating success in heterosexuals. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 29, 424-433.
- Bailey. (2009). What is sexual orientation and do women have one? (posted on Avenue)
- Kunzig on the biology of homosexuality (posted on Avenue)

Topic 9. Non-Normative Sexuality 2: Paraphilias

- Wise. (1985). Fetishism – etiology and treatment: A review from multiple perspectives. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 26(3), 249-257.
- Moser & Kleinplatz. (2006). DSM-IV-TR and the Paraphilias: An Argument for Removal. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 17, 91-109.

PART II: ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy re. the Recording of Lectures: If you feel that recording lectures will help you perform optimally in the course, then feel free to do so. You are especially encouraged to record lectures if you find my pacing a bit fast. HOWEVER: Consider the lectures **copyrighted material**: you **cannot post recordings anywhere online**, including on our *Avenue* website.

Test-Taking Policy. Electronics must stay in your bag, turned off. If a phone rings or vibrates during a test, you will be penalized **5%** 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 eat or drink if needed, tissues if needed, and your student ID.

Missed Tests/Absences: Report your absence to McMaster and to Dr. Ostovich **within 2 days of the missed test**. Failure to comply with the **two-days rule** could result in your earning a mark of zero on the missed test. All missed tests will result in the value of that test being placed onto the final exam.

In order to receive this accommodation, I must receive an official university email indicating that you've complied with university regulations, as well as your personal email requesting accommodation.

How to report an absence to McMaster: In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should *carefully* review and follow the regulations outlined in the undergraduate calendar, "[Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#)". Please note that these regulations have changed beginning Fall 2015. Any deviation from these regulations will result in a mark of "0" for the missed work. Note that you may only use an MSAF for work valued at *less than* 25%. Therefore, any absence in this course must be properly documented through your Associate Dean's office.

How to report an absence to Dr. Ostovich: Send an email to Dr. Ostovich that does the following: (a) *briefly* explains why you've been forced to miss the test (less detail is best!); (b) requests relief for the missed work, and (c) indicates whether you have submitted documentation to the university, and if not, when that will be happening. The content of your email will be kept confidential.

E-mail Policy: E-mails must originate from a valid McMaster account. Note that *Avenue* and *mcmaster.ca* cannot "talk" to one another. That is, *Avenue* will reject *mcmaster.ca* emails, and *vice versa*. Therefore, emails from *Avenue* must go to *Avenue* only, and emails from *mcmaster.ca* must go to *mcmaster.ca* only. I recommend that you **never send an email from the Avenue system**: that way, all emails will reach their destination. Email sent from third-party providers (e.g., hotmail, cogeco, google) will be ignored. McMaster has this policy for *two important reasons*: (1) to ensure that we know with whom we are communicating; and (2) to teach the professional use of e-mail. *Remember*: E-mails to your professors are professional communications. They should (1) include correct spelling and punctuation, (2) have an *informative subject line*, and (3) be brief.

Website Policy: You are expected to check our course website on *Avenue to Learn* regularly 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 communication*, due to my high volume of email from 700+ students per term. Questions asked on the discussion boards allow other students with the same questions the chance to see the answer (and therefore not have to ask the question themselves). Discussion board questions also provide a learning experience for students who wish to answer these questions themselves.

Please see the top of 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 inappropriate comments).

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.

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

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

Note: The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, depending on overall performance in the course. Students *who do not pass the cumulative final*, or whose final exam mark is their *lowest mark* in the course, will *not* have their mark adjusted up under any circumstances.

Note as Well: I do *not* do favours for one student that I do not also do the whole class. Your final mark is your final mark, unless a marking or mathematical error has been made. Special favours to one student are unfair to the multitude of students who neither ask for nor get those same favours. Therefore, if you are concerned about your final mark, it is your responsibility to visit with me or with one of your TA's, well in the advance of the final exam, for study help.

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>.