

Sexual Communication

Syllabus

Winterim 2017

Course Description:

Sex is a foundational activity in the development and maintenance of human relationships. Communication about sex happens in myriad domains, including interpersonal, group, organizational, and mediated contexts. Additionally, communication about sex and sexuality is inextricably linked to historical, cultural, and biological contexts and processes. This course explores the many ways in which sexual communication intersects our personal, relational, cultural, and institutional norms and values. Topics will include but are not limited to social norms about sexual communication (and the historical evolution of norms), family communication about sex, sexual health education, doctor-patient communication about sex, sex in relationships, and sex in the media. Theory and research on communication processes, history, culture, and biology will be used to elaborate how sexual communication can achieve multiple goals.

Readings: Selected readings will be posted to D2L.

Course Learning Outcomes: After completing this course students will *be able to*...

- Apply historical and social science perspectives to contemporary issues and practices regarding sexual communication.
- Explain how the individual or groups of individuals (e.g., men, women, LGBTQ) are influenced by social, cultural, or political institutions in their own culture.
- Identify the role of human agency (i.e., communication) in shaping events and historical change.
- Understand how historical shifts have impacted attitudes, values, and opportunities surrounding sexuality and sexual communication.

Enduring Understandings: After completing this course student will *understand* that...

- Sex, sexuality, and sexual communication has and will continue to evolve, reflecting changes in culture
- The historical evolution of sex and sexuality has shaped sexual communication norms within modern society.
- Communication about sexual communication has influenced our historical understanding of sex and sexuality within America.

Essential Questions:

- How have historical shifts impacted sexual communication patterns and norms?
- How does communication shape historical and modern perceptions of sex and sexuality within the U.S.?
- How can history and communication help us understand and assess more or less effective sexual communication?

Assignments and Grading

Weekly Self-Reflection Essays (Pre- and Post-Content): Every week you will spend time reflecting on that week's course content—once *before* you engage with course content (e.g., read reading, listen to lectures, etc.) and once *after* you engage with course content. This will allow you to ingest course material and see how it confirms, contradicts, and/or expands your previous thinking about the topic as well as demonstrate to me that you have critically reflected on and understand course material. You will hand in both reflections in one document at the end of the week (due dates listed on course calendar).

Popular Culture Engagement and Discussion: In addition to weekly self-reflection essays, you will also search for articles published in the popular press (e.g., any non-academic source) related to weekly course content and discuss these articles in an assigned discussion group. Specifically, you will discuss (a) how your article relates to course content, (b) pose two, insightful questions for your peers to answer, and (c) read and respond to *two* of your peers posted article and questions. Due dates for discussion threads are posted on the course calendar.

Final Paper Assignment—Documentary Viewing and Analysis: This assignment is a 4 to 6-page essay in which you will reflect on the course, using course concepts and outside readings, after watching one of two documentaries: *Miss Representation* or *The Mask You Live In* (available for rent or purchase online). On D2L, you will find detailed instructions about this assignment.

Graduate Students: Graduate students are required to complete an additional assignment, specifically a research proposal on an aspect of sexual communication. Graduate students are expected to contact the instructor during the first week of class to discuss the research proposal topic and criteria.

Grading: Your final grade will be calculated based on your scores from the aforementioned assignment:

Weekly reflection essays:	75 pts (25 pts each week)
Popular culture discussions:	90 pts (30 pts each week)
Final paper:	100 pts

265 pts total

Grading Scale: The following grading scale will be used to determine your final grade:

100% - 94% = A	79% - 77% = C+	59% or less = F
93% - 90 = A-	76% - 74% = C	
89% - 87% = B+	73% - 70% = C-	
86% - 84% = B	69% - 67% = D+	
83% - 80% = B-	66% - 60% = D	

Course Guidelines and Policies

Inclusivity: This class strives to be an inclusive learning community, respecting those of differing backgrounds and beliefs. As a community, we aim to be respectful to all citizens in this class, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Any students submitting work (written assignments or discussion posts)

that include language that is perceived as bias, racist, sexist, homophobic, or hate-speech will receive a zero for the assignment and be referred to Dean of Students office.

Sensitive Topics: In this course, we will discuss potentially sensitive topics through a historical, cultural, and communicative lens. If, however, any topic is overwhelming or triggering, please contact me right away and we will develop an alternative assignment for you.

Attendance and Late Work: As this is an online course, you can “attend” class whenever and wherever you like! However, assignments must be completed and submitted by the deadline listed on the calendar. There are no exceptions. The dropbox will close at the stated deadline.

Grade Inquiry for Writing Assignments: Students are encouraged to take action if they believe a paper section was scored inaccurately. Students should submit a typed essay within one week after the paper grade is posted. Essays should cite class material to convincingly argue for why the paper section should be re-evaluated.

Email Etiquette: Email is a quick and convenient way for us to communicate outside of class. Remember, however, that you are still communicating with your professor. That being said, I expect all emails to be professional and courteous. Please make sure that all emails include a subject, a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. Mikucki-Enyart, Hello Professor, etc.), content that is free of grammatical and spelling errors, a close (e.g., From, Sincerely, etc.), and your name. Also, be mindful of the tone of your email.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is central to the mission of higher education in general and UWSP in particular. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarisim, and helping others commit violations) is taken very seriously and will not be tolerated. The *minimum* penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. Students who violate the university’s academic code will be rigourously sanctioned. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/Academic%20Integrity%20Brochure.pdf>

To protect against cases of academic dishonesty, all writing assignments will be submitted through Dropbox via D2L and checked against Turnitin.

Disability Issues: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring education instiutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP’s policies, please visit: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accomodations, please register with the Disability and Assitive Technology Center and then notify me in writing within the first two weeks of the semester. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For more information, please visit the Disability and Assitive Technology Center, located on the 6th floor of the LRC. You can also find more information here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability>