

## **Social Investigations II: Sociology of Sexualities**

SOC/SW 301 Sec. 1W  
Spring 2017, CCC 104  
Sec 1W: MW 1100-1215

Dr. Helena L Alden

Office Hours: TR 11-1.00, MW 12.30-2 and by appointment

CCC 454

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*Bear in mind that while sex itself is universal – it exists in all cultures at all times – our ways of understanding it are not universal, they are variable across cultures and through history*

Deborah Cameron and Don Kulick

*Sex is today understood as fundamentally social. The aspects of sex that scholars – and ordinary folks are interested in – such as issues of desire, pleasure, identity, norms or sexual behavior, and intimate arrangements are recognized as...social phenomena.*

Steven Seidman

*If you read the newspaper or internet news headlines regularly, you're likely to come across ones that express fear that our culture is becoming morally corrupt. This moral corruption is often linked to sex...one thing to keep in mind when thinking about...sexual immorality is that sexual acts have no meaning in and of themselves – it is only the surrounding culture which gives sexual practices or the people who engage in them particular meanings.*

Nancy Fischer.

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**Sex and sexuality may seem like a personal and intimate topic. However, we will see that sexuality is a social phenomenon that includes bodies, communities, identities, norms, status, sexual acts, emotions, and even laws. Sexuality has become a fundamental concept in the organization of self and community, and serves as a boundary between “right” and “wrong.” In this class, we will examine sexuality from a sociological framework. We will begin by examining our understandings of sex categorization and methods of study. We will continue by investigating aspects of sexual culture in the US, including media representation, bodies, and sexual violence.**

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Course objectives: This course is designed to deepen students' understanding of the social processes involved in sex and sexuality. By the end of the course, students will:

- Discuss the diversity of sexual behaviors and identities in various social contexts in an informed manner.
- Be familiar with the history of scholarly investigation into sex and sexuality
- Question implicit assumptions about sexuality that students take for granted as the norm.
- Understand how sexuality is related to power and inequality inside and outside social institutions.
- Understand and explain and how sexuality is a fluid concept influenced by culture and society.
- Understand how sociologists analyze sexuality both methodologically and theoretically.

As a writing emphasis course, students will also be able to critically analyze specific aspects of US sexuality and write a coherent, well-informed paper about those issues.

Reading assignments:

There is one required textbook at text rental.

Mindy Stompler et. al, *Sex Matters (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*

There is an optional purchase book available:

*American Sociological Association Style Guide (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*

In addition, a series of readings will be posted weekly on electronic reserve.

**COURSE DISCLAIMER:**

The subject matter of this class requires that we speak openly and frankly about sexuality. We will read, observe and discuss topics that may be explicit, controversial or sensitive. As such, you may find some of the material embarrassing or difficult to discuss. Students worried about the content of the course may want to discuss their apprehensions with me before embarking on this field of study.

Sexuality is also highly personal, as well as social. Sociological study of sexuality examines a wide variety of ideologies and practices with which you may disagree. I encourage free and open discussion, but you must remain respectful at all times. Any challenges you raise in the classroom should not be moral sentiments and should focus on critical analysis of the issue at hand. The classroom environment must remain free of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation.

Finally, some of the material covered will be particularly sensitive to some students. We all take a responsibility in creating and maintaining a safe space for every student. I would further suggest that material shared in the classroom be treated as confidential.

**Course Requirements:**

Attendance: Attendance is required. Lectures and discussions will complement and expand on the material in the book and additional readings. Students will be expected to read the material before coming to class. However, I will not monitor attendance.

Class Participation: I see my role in the classroom as being discussion leader, as opposed to a lecturer who stands in the front and lectures all class period, every class period. As such, I value class discussion and interactive learning. I am actively involved in teaching and expect you to be actively involved in learning. I will do everything I can to make this class engaging, as I believe this is the best way to learn. Be prepared to participate!

Exams: There will be two exams, each worth 25 % of your grade. These exams will be a combination of multiple choice and short-answer questions. The midterm will be Monday March 13<sup>th</sup>, and the final Weds May 17<sup>th</sup> 1230-1430

*Please take careful note of the examination dates. In particular, take note of the date and time of the final examination. Earlier exam times will not be offered.*

**NO MAKE UPS FOR MISSED EXAMINATIONS ARE AVAILABLE EXCEPT IN DOCUMENTED EMERGENCIES.**

**Communication in the Major.** This course fulfills the requirements for GEP communication in the major;

Communication in the Major courses provide students with systematic opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills in the context of their chosen fields, beginning the process of learning to communicate effectively in discipline-specific formats and styles.

*Upon completing this requirement, students will be able to:*

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication.

**Final Paper:** You will be required to prepare a multi-step paper that will constitute 40% of your final grade. The completed product will be due Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup>. Late and emailed papers will not be accepted, except in the case of documented emergencies. These steps will include preparing an outline, draft, engaging in peer editing, detailed knowledge of correct citation formatting, and the selection of an appropriate topic/audience. Detailed instructions will be given in class.

**Final presentation:** You will be required to give an oral presentation to the class as a critical part of your final grade. The presentations will be given during the last week of class. This will constitute 10% of your grade. Further details will be given in class.

**Other Policies and Procedures:**

**Classroom etiquette:** In addition to discussion “rules,” I ask that you arrive on time for class, and turn off your cell phones. I reserve the right to ask anyone texting to leave the classroom. Similarly, if you have to use a laptop, I expect you to use this only for class purposes, and only if absolutely necessary for your success in class. I would prefer that you do not use laptops or tablets in the classroom unless it is a necessary learning tool. Please notify me as soon as possible if you must use a laptop or tablet.

**Email:** I make an effort to respond to your emails as quickly as possible. Please understand that this does not mean I will necessarily be able to respond within a few minutes or a few hours. Typically, you can reasonably expect a response from me within one business day (note that weekends are not business days). When writing to me, please ensure you do not use text speak!

**Grade scale:** I do not negotiate final grades

	A = 92 to 100	A- = 89.5 to 91.5
B+ = 86.5 to 89.4	B = 82.5 to 86.4	B- = 79.5 to 82.4
C+ = 76.5 to 79.4	C = 72.5 to 76.4	C- = 69.5 to 72.4
D+ = 66.5 to 69.4	D = 59.5 to 66.4	F = Less than 59.5

**Students with Special Needs:** Students with special needs as documented by the Office of Disability Services should identify themselves at the beginning of the term. The Department

of Sociology is dedicated to providing these students with necessary academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to facilitate their participation and performance in the classroom.

Academic Misconduct: Academic integrity is central to the mission of this institution. UWS 14 defines academic misconduct as any “action which a student:

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance;
6. assists other students in any of these acts.”

UWS 14 allows for disciplinary sanctions that range from an oral reprimand to suspension or expulsion from the University. You can obtain a copy of the full academic misconduct policy through the Student Services office.

If I observe academic misconduct, or if suspicions of cheating are reported to me, I will request that the identified parties come to my office to discuss the situation, and the procedures set out in UWS 14 will be followed.

I recognize that the rules regarding academic misconduct can sometimes be confusing for students with respect to specific assignments or course work. If you have questions, I encourage you to come and see me. I am always prepared to help clarify any aspects of the work for this course that may be confusing. If you have questions or concerns about a particular assignment, you should talk with me before the assignment is submitted. Ignorance or misunderstanding of the UW System policy will not serve as a valid excuse for academic misconduct.

*I reserve the right to change the syllabus to suit the pedagogical needs of the class.*

**TOPICS AND READING SCHEDULE:**

**Other readings will be added to e-reserve and D2L regularly**

Week 1 - Sexual identity	Reading 1
Week 2 - Sexual identity	Chapter 1
Week 3 - Measuring sexuality	Chapter 2
Week 4 - Monday Feb 13 Paper day	
Sexuality and media	Reading 16
Week 5 - Sexuality and media	Readings 12, 13, 14, 17
Week 6 - Sex ed.	Chapter 4
Week 7 - Sex ed.	
Weds Mar 8 <sup>th</sup> Paper day	
	<b><i>Week 8 - Exam 1 Monday March 13<sup>th</sup></i></b>
Week 8 - Bodies	Reading 25
SPRING BREAK	
Week 9 - Bodies	Chapter 5
Week 10 - Monday April 3 <sup>rd</sup> Paper day	
Sexual disease	Reading 40
Week 11 - Sexual disease	Chapter 7
Social control	Reading 43
Week 12 - Social control	Readings 44, 45, 46, 48, 49, 50
Week 13 - Sexual violence	Chapter 9
Week 14 - Commercial sex	Readings 57, 60
Week 15 - Presentations	

**Final paper due Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup>**

***Final exam - Weds May 17<sup>th</sup> 1230-1430***