

Anthropology 471/671: Evolution of Human Sexuality

Lecture: 1:00-2:15 Tuesdays, Thursdays, WRI C 144

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Catalog Description:

This course examines human sexuality from an evolutionary perspective. Major themes of the class include basics of evolutionary theory, comparisons with other non-human primates, cross-cultural and historical variation in human sexuality and consideration of the neuroendocrine bases of sexual behavior. Topics addressed include sexual selection, mate preferences, mating systems, and sexual orientation, among other things.

Course Objectives:

Students will grapple with current theoretical and empirical evidence concerning the evolution of human sexuality. Students will gain insight into the similarities and differences in sexuality between humans and other animals, especially non-human primates. Through readings, students develop critical thinking skills to assess evolutionary-oriented research on human sexuality. Through a research paper, students have the opportunity to apply course theory to a topic of particular interest.

Reading:

Assigned readings originate from two assigned texts and several PDFs available in e-reserve through the UNLV library. The assigned texts are: 1) Bolin A & Whelehan P. 2009. *Human Sexuality: Biological, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.; and 2) Potts M & Short, R. 1999. *Ever Since Adam and Eve: The Evolution of Human Sexuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The five PDFs available on e-reserve are noted in the class schedule below.

Grading:

Grades will be based on a midterm exam (25%), a non-cumulative final exam (25%), a research paper due at the end of the course (30%), performance on either a worksheet completed during a visit to the Las Vegas Erotic Heritage Museum or a behavioral observation exercise (10%), and scores from four pop quizzes (10%). Makeup exams are not permitted without medical documentation. No late term papers will be accepted. Graduate student grades are determined by these assignments and additional criteria: participation in additional discussions of research papers; writing a professional quality and slightly longer (approximately 20 pages) term paper; and guiding in-class discussions of papers assigned from e-reserves.

The research paper involves addressing a topic that falls under the broad scope of this course. The paper may be structured either as a review paper or as a paper based on the formulation and testing of a research hypothesis. For example, one might postulate based on life history theory and endocrine research that breastfeeding will have dampening effects on female sexuality (investing in current child rather than preparing for the next), then test the hypothesis that breastfeeding women will report lower proceptive sexual behavior and perhaps additionally lower receptive sexual behavior than control women. Your paper should be approximately 15 pages of text, double-spaced, using 12-point font. Your paper should include a clear title, employ sub-headings to help structure components of it, and cite at least 15 scholarly references. Further support concerning writing mechanics is available through the UNLV writing center at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

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UNLV is committed to providing equal access to its programs and services for students who experience disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) was established to support these goals and to provide assistance with college learning through provision of recommended academic adjustments, auxiliary services, and advocacy. Students wishing support must register with the DRC and provide recent and appropriate documentation. The documentation should provide an assessment of the current impact or functional limitations of the disability on academic performance. DRC professionals will determine student eligibility for services based on the presented information, and offer reasonable adjustments or accommodations that support college learning for each eligible student. So that services can be arranged and provided in a timely manner students are encouraged to begin the registration process as early as possible. Please refer to DRC for the application forms and other relevant information at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>

UNLV Religious Holidays Policy:

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the last day at late registration of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could not be avoided.

UNLV Academic Integrity and Misconduct Code:

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Please refer to UNLV's "Student Conduct resources in general at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/integrity.html>
Also, please make sure to read UNLV's Academic Integrity Misconduct Policy" at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>

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For more information on copyright policy of the university, please refer to:
<http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright.html/>

Course Outline:

Week 1 (January 12/14): Introduction. Course mechanics. Evolutionary, comparative, cross-cultural and neuroendocrine approaches to human sexuality.

Bolin and Whelehan (BW): Chapters 1,2

Potts and Short textbook (PS): Introduction, Chapter 1

Week 2 (January 19/21): Evolution of human sexuality

BW: Chapter 3

PS: Chapter 2

Week 3 (January 26/28): Human sex differentiation

BW: Chapters 4,7

Week 4 (February 2/4): Male and female reproductive anatomy and physiology

BW: Chapters 5,6

Strassman BI. 1996. Menstrual hut visits by Dogon women: a hormonal test distinguishes deceit from honest signaling. *Behavioral Ecology* 7: 304-315.

Week 5 (February 9/11): Love, marriage and sex

PS: Chapter 4

Wellings K et al. 2006. Sexual behaviour in context: a global perspective. *The Lancet* 368: 1706-1728.

We will also watch a 45 minute video in class entitled "Libido"

Week 6 (February 16/18): Pregnancy and birth

BW: Chapter 8

PS: Chapters 5,6

Week 7 (February 23/25): Watch "Kinsey" movie in class and brief midterm review

Week 8 (March 2/4): Midterm (Tuesday) and library visit (Thursday)

Week 9 (March 9/11): Early childhood sexuality

BW: Chapter 9

PS: Chapter 7

Chau MJ et al. 2008. Is play behavior sexually dimorphic in monogamous species? *Ethology* 114: 989-998.

Week 10 (March 16/18): Puberty and adolescence

BW: Chapter 10

Wilson CG. 2008. Male genital mutilation: an adaptation to sexual conflict. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 29: 149-164.

Week 11 (March 23/25): Human sexual response

BW: Chapter 11

Week 12 (April 6/8): Fertility and its control

BW: Chapter 12

Week 13 (April 13/15): Gender identity and gender roles

BW: Chapter 13,14

PS: Chapter 3

Bailey NW and Zuk M. 2009. Same-sex sexual behavior and evolution. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 24: 439-446.

Note: no class on Thursday (conference) but continue with guest discussant April 20

Week 14 (April 20/22): STIs and the globalization of sex

BW: Chapters 15,16

PS: Chapter 10

Note: topic begins Thursday April 22, and ends April 27

Week 15 (April 27/29) Course wrap-up