

SOCIOLOGY OF SEX AND SEXUALITIES

SOC 256, Fall 2018

12:30-1:20 M-TH, R-102



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Course Introduction:

Sex and sexuality surround us – in magazine advertisements and movies, at home and in schools, in discussions with our friends and partners. We label people sluts or players. We hear about sex drives, sex workers, sex positions, sex toys, sexting, sex addicts, and sex trafficking. Though many experts argue we are a sex-saturated society, our culture remains deeply ambivalent about overtly discussing sex and sexuality. This course explores the social and cultural aspects of sex and sexuality, a topic sometimes thought to be intensely personal and private. Throughout this course, we will ask questions like:

- Why do so many of us have shame around sexuality?
- Why is penis size so important to men and breast size so important to women?
- Is there a sexual double standard for women and men?
- Are prostitution, pornography, and the adult sex industry harmful to society?
- Do we have a rape culture?
- How has the web changed our sexual relationships?
- Why are kids being sexualized at such young ages and what consequences does this have?
- How does the law regulate sexuality?

If any or all of these questions interest you, then you are in the right place! Over the course of the quarter, we will explore these questions as well as many other fascinating topics pertaining to sex and sexuality. As an alternative to the biological, medical, and psychological stories that commonly circulate in popular culture, we will take a sociological approach in order to examine how our understandings of sexuality are shaped by our society and culture, and how sexuality shapes those structures in turn. Together we will both examine and challenge the presumption that sex (acts, positions, scripts) and sexuality (desire, pleasure, love, identity, the body) is simply a natural and biologically phenomenon, and explore the ways in which sexual behaviors and identities are in fact shaped by social norms, values and expectations -- or is, in other words, socially constructed. We will also take it as a given that not only it is impossible to understand sexuality in isolation from other dimensions of ourselves, such as race, class, gender, and/or disability, but that in order to fully understand our social lives and identities we must examine them in relationship with sexuality. Thus, this class is about sex. But it's not just about sex. It is also about gender, culture, and "deviance." It is about the body. It's about power, politics, inequality, and social change. Sociologists know that sex is tied up with history, culture, politics, and power. We will explore these connections over the next several weeks. Our major goal is to understand how the larger social environment fundamentally shapes our intimate, private sex lives for better or worse. So, strap yourself in and enjoy the ride!

Required Texts:

There is no textbook for this course. Articles will be scanned and are available on the Canvas course site under “files.”

Learning Atmosphere:

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an active and interactive course where you will often learn by doing. You are expected to observe the world, read, write, discuss, and participate. I think of our class as a collaborative learning community where we all teach and learn from each other. Every time you make a comment or ask a question, you teach something to the rest of us. I challenge you to abandon the traditional passive student role and to get involved with teaching and learning – I think you’ll enjoy it and learn a lot in the process.

A note about course content: Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we will sometimes talk about provocative material in class. Please be advised that when we explore controversial topics, they will be framed in an academic context. Topics run the gamut in sociology and at times there may be material that makes people uncomfortable. Keep in mind that when we find ourselves in a space outside of our comfort zone, it’s an opportunity for learning. You may be confronted with subject matter that is difficult to watch, see, discuss, or listen to. You are free to leave the room at any time, but please know you will be responsible for any course material you may have missed while you were gone. Also, profanity exists in our social world and thus will be used throughout this course - so please be advised. If you have any questions or concerns about course content or climate, don’t hesitate to let me know.

A note about instructor availability: I have noticed that, sometimes, students have unreasonable expectations about their Instructor's availability. Please be aware that I am not available 24-hours a day. In general, I am in my office for a couple of hours per day (before and after my classes), and I always check my email a few times a day. As a result, you will rarely be able to reach me by phone or by email in the evenings or on the weekends. I am, obviously, an active member of this course, but I do my coursework during the week, during daytime business hours. *Thus, please do not send me late-night or weekend emails expecting an immediate response.* Thank you in advance for your understanding and consideration.

A note about this classroom environment: It is important that *all* students feel welcome in this classroom. Please think about how your language (including body language) contributes to a safe/empowering or disempowering/unsafe learning environment. I want this class to be a space where everyone should feel comfortable enough to disagree with each other. Thus, this classroom needs to be safe space. Reflect on the ways you engage others with your own statements and how you react (with words, body language) to their statements. Also note that I cannot witness or hear everything that occurs in this classroom. If you overhear or witness something that would contribute to an unsafe classroom climate for yourself or fellow classmates, please let me know so that it can be dealt with immediately.

Learning and Course Outcomes:

After completing the course, a successful student will be able to:

1. Explain the difference between key concepts in the field, such as “sex,” “gender,” “sexuality,” and “sexual orientation”;
2. Discuss how sexuality is socially constructed and compare norms and cultural perspectives on sexual behavior across societies;
3. Describe the ways in which our culture and society shape our sexual opinions and experiences;
4. Illustrate how gender influences sexual attitudes and behaviors;
5. Better understand sexual practices and perspectives from a sociological perspective;
6. Recognize how sex and sexualities are marketed, packaged and sold by society; and
7. Critically examine how societies regulate sexual behavior.

General Course Rules and Expectations:

- **Attendance:** Attend all class meetings and come to class on time. Your presence in class contributes significantly toward your final grade in the course as I cover a lot of material in class that cannot be found in the readings. More than two unexcused absences or late attendances will lower your grade, and continue to do so as you miss more classes. To have an absence or tardy considered excused, you must discuss it with me prior to the absence or tardy, unless it is an emergency. Excused absences include doctor's visits, family emergencies, and sometimes work-related issues. If you miss class, please connect with your colleagues to find out what you missed. I highly recommend that you get the names and contact information of one or two of your classmates so you can contact them for any assignments or notes you may have missed while absent.
- **Preparation:** You should come to class having done all the assigned reading and homework and you should always bring the proper supplies with you daily, including your textbook. Note that the BC guideline for homework is two hours outside of class for each hour spent in class.
- **Late Work:** I believe that one of the major lessons students take away from college is the importance of meeting deadlines. As a result, **no late work will be accepted** unless you have had it approved by me BEFORE the due date. Late work will receive a zero grade.
- **Assignments:** All assignments are due at the start of the class period. Assignments, papers, homework, or exams must be typed, printed out, stapled, and handed in at the beginning of class (unless otherwise stipulated). Emailed assignments are not accepted. If you know you are going to be absent on the day an assignment is due, then turn it in early.
- **Contribution:** Learning about each other's experiences and perspectives is an integral part of the learning process in this course. I believe that you will learn a lot about yourself and your fellow classmates. Therefore, you are expected to be an active participant in our learning environment. An active participant can include contributing to discussions, but can also mean getting to class on time, taking notes, listening to your peers, and coming to class prepared. You should do your best to contribute to class discussions and activities.
- **Classroom Etiquette:** All electronic devices are prohibited in the classroom at all times. This includes cell phones, smart phones, laptops, music devices, tablets, etc. If you need a laptop to take notes, please talk to me early in the quarter. All texting devices should be placed in your bag for the duration of the class. Please note that that texting, excessive talking, or other disruptive behavior is not only disrespectful to me, it is also disrespectful to the people around you. Your participation grade will be affected and lowered by these types of behaviors.
- **Respect:** I expect that your behavior in class be respectful. Learning about diverse experiences is central to this course, so it is of the utmost importance that you respect your classmates' experiences, differences, and opinions. In order for us to learn from each other, we have to allow each other to make mistakes and to offer unpopular positions for debate. This is a college classroom and as such, I expect students to behave as adults. I do not tolerate excessive talking or whispering, consistent late arrivals, or early departures. *Students who are disrespectful to their classmates or the instructor will be asked to leave class and will be marked absent until arrangements are made with the instructor to return to class and will result in your participation credit lowering.*
- **Plagiarism:** Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. This is a serious offense which can result in possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College and go on your permanent academic record. Do not do it! If you cheat/plagiarize, you fail. No excuses will be taken into account. Your work must be your own, except when you are asked to work with other students. Furthermore, you are required to acknowledge in your papers if you have borrowed any ideas, terms or phrases. Do not copy and paste material from Wikipedia or any other website into your assignments, as with is a severe form of cheating (that is very easy to catch, by the way). In this class your assignments should be grounded in the textbook rather than web resources, which are often wrong. If you have any hesitation or if you are in doubt about one of these issues, feel free to ask me.

Bellevue College's Rules and Regulations

- **Incomplete:** If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I"). The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F").
- **F Grade:** Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F".
- **Final Examination Schedule:** The Social Science Division will adhere to the final examination schedule as stated in the BC Schedule. Final examinations will be held at the end of each quarter at fixed times. Instructors will not give examinations in advance of the regular schedule. A student who is absent from any examination held at any time during the quarter may forfeit the right to make up the examination. If, for illness or some other circumstance beyond the student's control, the student is unable to be present at any scheduled examination and has contacted the instructor on a timely basis, the student may be permitted to take such examination at a time designated by the instructor.
- **Withdrawal from Class:** College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.
- **Hardship Withdrawal:** Instructors may assign the grade of "HW" (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.
- **Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing:** Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services. If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Dean of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process.

Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is an additional access program available to you. Contact asn@bellevuecollege.edu or 425.564.2764. ASN is located in the Library Media Center in D125. www.bellevuecollege.edu/autismspectrumnavigators/

The DRC office is located in B132 or you can call our reception desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc

SOCIOLOGY DROP-IN TUTORING

Drop-in tutoring is an option for ALL students enrolled in classes at BC to seek assistance regardless of your current grade.

Maybe you have a question about a sociological concept or would like to have someone who specializes in Sociology look at your paper before you submit it.

Our Sociology tutor is available to help you!

Grading:

Grades are based on five factors. (1) Participation and Discussion, (2) In-class activities (3) Exams, (4) Notecards, and (5) Sex in the Field Homework Assignments. Each of these elements is awarded a specific number of points:

Participation/Discussion/Attendance	50 points
In-class activities (9 at 10 points/each)	90 points
Exams (2 at 100 points/each)	200 points
Notecards (10 at 10 points/each)	100 points
Sex in the Field - Homework Assignments (4 at 40 points/each)	160 points

TOTAL

600 points

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>555-600</i>	<i>93-100%</i>
<i>A-</i>	<i>537-554</i>	<i>90-92%</i>
<i>B+</i>	<i>525-536</i>	<i>88-89%</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>495-524</i>	<i>83-87%</i>
<i>B-</i>	<i>477-494</i>	<i>80-82</i>

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>C+</i>	<i>465-476</i>	<i>78-79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>435-464</i>	<i>73-77%</i>
<i>C-</i>	<i>417-434</i>	<i>70-72%</i>
<i>D+</i>	<i>405-416</i>	<i>68-69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>357-404</i>	<i>60-67%</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>356 & Below</i>	<i>59% & Below</i>

Description of the 6 Grading Components:

1. Participation/Discussion: (50/600 points)

Participation is essential to the format of this class and will therefore contribute significantly toward your grade. In short, your success in this class depends on your active participation. Participation includes attendance, getting to class on time, class discussions, and group work. As mentioned under *General Course Rules and Expectations*, more than two unexcused absences or late attendances will lower your grade, and continue to do so as you miss more classes. To have an absence or tardy considered excused, you must discuss it with me prior to the absence or tardy, unless it is an emergency. Excused absences include doctor's visits, family emergencies, and sometimes work-related issues. Furthermore, disruptive behavior, excessive talking, texting while in class, or other interruptions will lower this portion of your grade. See the *General Course Rules and Expectations* for details about what is considered disruptive behavior. Do not take this portion of your grade lightly!

2. In-Class Activities/Discussion Questions: (90/600 points; 10 points each)

Throughout the quarter, there will be 9 randomly-delivered in class activities. Each activity is worth 10 points each and will be based upon the readings or application of the readings for that given day. **These activities cannot be made up.** The purpose of these activities is to hold students accountable for reading and to ensure students attend class regularly.

3. Exams: (200/600 points; 100 points each)

Over the course of the quarter, you will take two exams that integrate the course's in-class activities (lectures, films, etc.) and readings. Exams are designed to make sure you understand important course concepts and themes. Exams will include multiple choice and short answer questions and will be taken on Canvas. Please note that you cannot make up missed exams. Your second exam will be over material discussed during the latter half of the class, so it will not be comprehensive. Please note that I do not give make-up exams or allow students to take exams early or late.

4. Notecards: (100/600 points; 10 points each)

For each day that a reading is assigned, you will need to submit a notecard about the readings for that day. If there are multiple readings, you must write on all readings assigned on a given day. At the beginning of each class period, I will collect your notecard. Notecards must be turned in at the start of class at 12:30 – late notecards will not be accepted and I will not accept notecards submitted at the end of the class period. The purpose of these cards is to help you keep up with the readings as well as help facilitate a more informed discussion for that day's class period. I will collect the cards every day in order to keep track of your attendance, although they won't always be graded. So if you are in class, but have not done the reading, turn in a notecard with your name on it so I can mark you as present for that day. Ten times during the quarter, however, I will announce at the beginning of class that "your notecards will be graded today." For those graded notecards, you will receive a score of between 0 and 10. Notecards must be a minimum of 5-6 sentences providing the thesis (or main ideas) of the article, and any definitions or key terms that is discussed in the reading. Doing notecards helps you retain information (I have LOTS of data to back this up!) and you will be able to use these on your exams – so spending some time now defining key terms, identifying major themes, and providing examples for yourself will help you when the exam comes. The suggested guidelines for submitting your notecards are as follows:

NAME	DATE
TITLE OF READING (pg. #s) & AUTHOR	
THESIS or Main Ideas presented in the reading- a minimum of 5-6 sentences or bullet points describing the main arguments of the article	
List/Define any Key terms discussed in reading	

6. Sex in the Field - Homework Assignments (160/600 points; 40 points each):

Each of these homework assignments requires you to make observations about some aspect surrounding sex and sexuality, and then write a brief paper about what you learned. Each assignment should be approximately 2-3 pages in length and is worth 30 points/each. Instructions for each assignment are on Canvas. Some of these assignments require surveying people and collecting data. Please plan in advance!

Instructor Notes:

If at any point throughout the quarter you are confused or unclear about the expectations of the course, course material, a grade you received, or any other matters, I strongly encourage you to come talk with me early. It is my goal that all students succeed in this course; but, I can only help you if you meet me half way. Furthermore, if you are having personal problems or other issues going on outside of school, please let me know. I recognize that we all have lives outside of school, and am very willing to work with students, but I can only do so if I know there is a problem!

Syllabus

You should be looking at your syllabus on a daily basis so you know what is expected of you in class. Also, you are expected to have read the readings assigned for the current day by the time you arrive in class!

****Though I will try to remain as faithful as possible to this syllabus, I reserve the right to make changes. These will be announced in advance in class. ****

Week 1

Monday, September 17th: Introduction to the Course

Go over syllabus; class introductions

Tuesday, September 18th: Thinking Critically about Sex, Gender and Sexuality

Wednesday, September 19th: Definitional Deep End

Readings: "Gingerbread 101"

Thursday, September 20th: The Social Construction of Sex

Readings: "The Five Sexes: Revisited"



Week 2

Monday, September 24th: Intersexuality: Where Science Meets Sex

Readings: "Bringing Intersex Back"

Tuesday, September 25th: Defining "Man" and "Woman"

Readings: "Gender Identity Explored"

Wednesday, September 26th: Transgender Identities and Complexities

Readings: "The Perils and Pleasures of Sex for Trans People"

Thursday, September 27th: Sexuality: Orientation or Preference?

Readings: "Sexual and Romantic Orientations"



Week 3

Monday, October 1st: Complicating Understandings of Sexuality

Readings: "Straight Girls Kissing"

Tuesday, October 2nd: No School

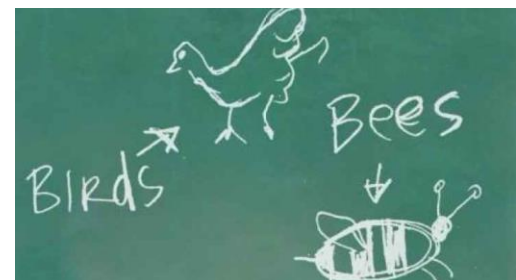
Wednesday, October 3rd: Complicating Understandings of Sexuality

Readings: "Straight Dude Seeks Same"

Thursday, October 4th: Learning About Sex

Readings: "The Death of the Stork"

Friday, October 5th: Sex in the Field Assignment #1 Due by 11:59 pm



Week 4

Monday, October 8th: Cultural Differences in Sex Education

Readings: "Sex, Love, and Autonomy in the Teenage Sleepover"

Tuesday, October 9th: Coming of Age Sexual Narratives

Readings: "Doing Desire"

Wednesday, October 10th: Contemporary Narratives of Young Adults

Readings: "Hooking Up: Sex in Guyland"

Thursday, October 11th: Media Music Influences on Young Adult Sexuality

Music Activity – submit via Canvas before class starts



Week 5

Monday, October 15th: The Male Sexual Body

Readings: "The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Why Can't We Stop Circumcising Boys"

"Hung: A Meditation on the Measure of Black Men in America"

Tuesday, October 16th: Masculinity in a Bottle

Readings: "Fixing the Broken Male Machine"

Wednesday, October 17th: Women's Sexual Pleasure

Readings: "Getting, Giving, Faking, Having: Orgasm and the Performance"

Thursday, October 18th: "Looking the Part"

Readings: "In Search of Better Sexual Pleasure: Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery"



Friday, October 19th: Sex in the Field Assignment #2 Due by 11:59 pm

Week 6

Monday, October 22nd: Imagining Queerness

Readings: "Out in the Country"

Tuesday, October 23rd: Social Control of Sexuality

Readings: "Deconstructing Down Low Discourse"

Wednesday, October 24th: Social Control: Queers of Color

Readings: "How Could You Do This to Me?"

Thursday, October 25th: Wrap up and Review for Exam 1

Friday, October 26th: Exam #1 Due by 11:59 pm on Canvas



Week 7

Monday, October 29th: Defining “Normative” Sexual Practices

Readings: “The Pursuit of Sexual Pleasure”

Tuesday, October 30th: Disability and Sexuality

Readings: “A Sexual Culture for Disabled People”

Wednesday, October 31st: Asexuality

Readings: “There’s More to Life than Sex”

Thursday, November 1st: BDSM

Readings: “Becoming a Practitioner: The Biopolitics of BDSM



Week 8

Monday, November 5th: Polyamory and Kink

Readings: “The Privilege of Perversities”

Tuesday, November 6th: Sex Toy Day

Wednesday, November 7th: Commercial Sex – Prostitution

Readings: “The Worst Part is the Screwing”

Thursday, November 8th: Sex Work

Readings: “Sex Work for the Middle Class”

Friday, November 9th: Sex in the Field Assignment #3 Due by 11:59 pm



Week 9

Monday, November 12th: No School

Tuesday, November 13th: What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas

Readings: “Marketing Sex: US Legal Brothels”

Wednesday, November 14th: Commercial Sex - Strip Clubs

Readings: “Strip Clubs and their Regulars”

“The Production of Identity and the Negotiation of Intimacy”

Thursday, November 15th: Sex Tourism

Readings: “Fantasy Islands”



Week 10

Monday, November 19th: Pornography

Readings: “Overcome: The Money Shot”



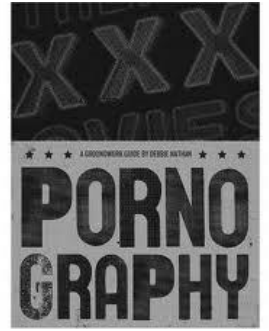
Tuesday, November 20th: Pornography

Readings: "Creating a Scene"

Wednesday, November 21st: No Class

Thursday, November 22nd: No Class

Friday, November 23rd: Sex in the Field Assignment #4 Due by 11:59 pm



Week 11

Monday, November 26th: Rape, Sexual Assault, and Rape Culture

Readings: "Rape Myths"

Tuesday, November 27th: "Rape-Prone" College Campuses

Readings: "Sexual Assault on Campus"
"Linking Sexual Aggression and Fraternities"

Wednesday, November 28th: Creating a Sex-Positive Society

Readings: "Sex Matters"

Thursday, November 29th: Wrap up and Review for Exam #2



Week 12

Monday, December 4th: No Class – Student Success Day

Final Exam is on Canvas and is due by 11:59 pm today

