

Sexuality and Society
SOCIOL 287 Winter 2025
Instructor: Skylar Davidson
Email: send a message using Canvas or to sdavidson@umass.edu

Official Course Description

The many ways in which social factors shape sexuality. Focus on cultural diversity, including such factors as race/ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity in organizing sexuality in both individuals and social groups. Prerequisite: 100-level Sociology course. (Gen.Ed. SB, DU)

Course Format

Our world is rapidly changing as a result of exponential growth trends, meaning that it is more important now than ever before to consider what we want out of the future and how to achieve it. Part of creating social change involves how we research, frame, and share information on issues we care about. To this end, our Sexuality and Society course is project-based, meaning that you will learn by doing. Each unit will introduce you to new techniques and thinking tools to support you in using social science research to recommend methods of positive social change.

Assignments and Grading

You will be graded on two types of assignments: Individual Assignments (which you turn in to the instructor only) and Discussion Assignments (where you post your work to a forum and comment on other students' work). Each assignment prompt will lead you through a different critical thinking tool that will guide you through the unit's required articles. Specific instructions and grading criteria for all assignments are on Canvas. Each unit has one assignment, all of approximately the same length. All assignments receive a grade from 0 to 100, and your final grade will be the mean of all assignments. For all assignments in the course, you are welcome to communicate with me to ask questions or let me look at your work before the due date and let you know if it needs improvement before you submit.

Final letter grades will be determined as follows.

Percentage Values	Corresponding Letter Grade
90.00-100.00	A
87.00-89.99	B+
84.00-86.99	B
80.00-83.99	B-
77.00-79.99	C+
74.00-76.99	C
70.00-73.99	C-
60.00-69.99	D
0.00-59.99	F

Course Policies

Missed Assignments

Extensions are granted only in cases of emergency (e.g., health-related or employment-related problem). Please communicate with me before completing any missed work.

Data Management

To avoid losing your work (in case of technology failure, hacking, theft, misplacing a device, or other problems), ensure to save your work to at least two different sources in two different physical locations. For example, save a copy of each assignment to both your computer and a cloud drive. Good data management also means saving your work every 10 minutes as you're working, or using a service that periodically saves your work automatically.

Turning in Assignments

Submit all work to Canvas. Submit your work in a commonly used filetype (.doc, .pdf, .rtf, or .odt); do not submit .pages files because they are only compatible with Apple devices. Do not type in the Canvas text box (because your work may be lost if Canvas encounters technical problems); save your work on your own device or cloud and then upload to Canvas once you're finished. If your work will not upload successfully, please email your assignment by the deadline.

Campus Policies

Students with Disabilities

Students who require accommodations for this course should register with [Disability Services](#) and should notify me as soon as possible. All documentation about your disability will remain confidential.

Academic Honesty

Students must comply with the university's [academic honesty policy](#).

Instructor Responsiveness

You are welcome to communicate with me about any assignment in the course, including to ask questions about the assignment prompt or reading material, as well as to let me check your work (or even portions of your work, like notes or a topic sentence) before you turn it in. I generally respond to emails within 24 hours and grade assignments within a week from the due date.

Calendar and Readings

Introductions

Assignment: Introduction Discussion Due 12/22

How do we build knowledge about sexuality?

Assignment: Individual Assignment 1 Due 12/24

Readings:

- Webber, Valerie, and Fern Brunger. 2018. "Assessing Risk to Researchers: Using the Case of Sexuality Research to Inform Research Ethics Board Guidelines." *Forum*

Qualitative Social Research 19(3).

- Irvine, Janice M. 2014. "Is Sexuality Research 'Dirty Work'? Institutionalized Stigma in the Production of Sexual Knowledge." *Sexualities* 17(5/6):632-656.
- Westbrook, Laurel, Jamie Budnick, and Aliya Saperstein. 2022. "Dangerous Data: Seeing Social Surveys Through the Sexuality Prism." *Sexualities* 25(5-6):717-749.

What will improve education about sexuality?

Assignment: Discussion Assignment 1 Due 12/29 and 12/31

Readings:

- Döring, Nicola. 2021. "Sex Education on Social Media." Pp. 1-12 in *Encyclopedia of Sexuality and Gender*, edited by A.D. Lykins. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Lieberman, Lisa D., and Eva S. Goldfarb. 2022. "Sex Ed in the Post-Roe World: Implications for Public Health Education." *Health Education and Behavior* 49(6):919-923.
- Holt, Martin, et al. 2019. "HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis and the 'Problems' of Reduced Condom Use and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Australia: A Critical Analysis from an Evidence-Making Intervention Perspective." *Sociology of Health and Illness* 41(8):1535-1548.

How do social norms about sexuality develop?

Assignment: Individual Assignment 2 Due 01/07

Readings:

- Sheff, Elisabeth. 2020. Polyamory Is Deviant – But Not for the Reasons You May Think." *Deviant Behavior* 41(7):882-892.
- d'Emilio, John. 1983. "Capitalism and Gay Identity." Pp. 266-274 in *Culture, Society and Sexuality: A Reader*, 2nd Edition, 2007, edited by R. Parker and P. Aggleton. London: Routledge.
- Kolehmainen, Marjo, Annukka Lahti, and Anu Kinnunen. 2022. "Affective Intensities of Single Lives: An Alternative Account of Temporal Aspects of Couple Normativity." *Sociology*.

Whose voices should be heard as we combat bias?

Assignment: Discussion Assignment 2 Due 01/12 and 01/14

Readings:

- Brainer, Amy, Mignon R. Moore, and Pallavi Banerjee. 2020. "Race and Ethnicity in the Lives of LGBTQ Parents and Their Children: Perspectives from and Beyond North America." In A.E. Goldberg and K.R. Allen (Eds.) *LGBTQ-Parent Families*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Bays, Annalucia. 2017. "Perceptions, Emotions, and Behaviors toward Women Based on Parental Status." *Sex Roles* 76:138-155.
- McMahon, Sarah, et al. 2021. "Comprehensive Prevention of Campus Sexual Violence: Expanding Who Is Invited to the Table." *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 22(4):843-855.

What makes for healthy online communities?

Assignment: Individual Assignment 3 Due 01/21

Readings:

- Hanckel, Benjamin, and Shiva Chandra. 2021. “Social Media Insights from Sexuality and Gender Diverse Young People During COVID-19.” Young & Resilient Research Center, Western Sydney University.
- Preston, Kayla, Michael Halpin, and Finlay Maguire. 2021. “The Black Pill: New Technology and the Male Supremacy of Involuntarily Celibate Men.” *Men and Masculinities* 24(5):823-841.

What could our long-term future look like?

Assignment: Discussion Assignment 3 Due 01/26 and 01/28

Readings:

- Berer, Marge. 2023. “Challenging the US Supreme Court’s Majority Ruling on Roe v. Wade at the International Human Rights Level.” *Health and Human Rights* 25(1):195-206.
- Izatt, Alyssa, Rebecca A. Greenberg, Julie Thorne, Joanna Erdman, and Nipa Chauhan. 2022. “Ethical and Legal Considerations for Sterilization Refusal in Nulliparous Women.” *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 142(6):1316-1321.
- Van Beers, Britta C. 2020. “Rewriting the Human Genome, Rewriting Human Rights Law? Human Rights, Human Dignity, and Human Germline Modification in the CRISPR Era.” *Journal of Law and the Biosciences* 7(1).