

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF HEALTH
YORK UNIVERSITY
HH/PSYC 3670 3.0M
PSYCHOLOGY OF SEXUAL ORIENTATION
WINTER, 2015
COURSE INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Erin C. Ross

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Office hours: Thursdays, 14:30-15:30 (drop in – no appointment necessary) OR
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Required texts: Patterson, C.J., & D’Augelli, A.R. (Eds.) (2013). *Handbook of Psychology and Sexual Orientation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
ISBN: 978-0-19-976521-8

Lecture materials from course Moodle site
<https://moodle.yorku.ca/moodle/>

Prerequisite: HH/PSYC1010 6.0 (or equivalent) – Introduction to Psychology - with a minimum C grade

1. The Purpose of the Course

Psychology of Sexual Orientation is an exploration of sexual orientation, focusing on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender identities/orientations and identities. While the course stresses the theory and research done in the academic discipline of psychology, we will frequently venture into other related disciplines, such as sociology, women's studies, biology and the more recent gender studies and queer studies. Numerous theories addressing different aspects of 'LGBTQ' (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) lives are explored, as well as research findings, often in a great deal of detail. The course covers both the more characteristic empirical research in psychology as well as the more recent (to psychology) qualitative research.

The course is designed to fill the gaps that exist in the traditional, largely heterosexually-focused curriculum in psychology. We cover topics such as the development of sexual orientations/identities, HIV/AIDS, societal attitudes, violence against LGBTQs, parenting, work/careers and love relationships. While there is more and more research being done in these areas, there is still much left to be done. So, in the long run, you will likely be left with as many (if not more) questions than you have answers.

Learning objectives for this course:

- Critically analyse theoretical approaches to sexualities and gender identities
- Identify social trends and processes related to sexualities and gender identities
- Discuss the origins of sexual orientations and transgender identities
- Describe how attitudes toward sexual and gender minorities vary across cultures
- Understand the social, cultural and psychological repercussions of racism, sexism, heterosexism and anti-homo/bi/trans sentiment
- Critique the assumptions of and quality of research related to sexual and gender minorities

2. Your Responsibilities

I will do all that I can to make this course an educational experience. I hope to be able to communicate why studying the varied aspects of GLBTQ lives is important. The course takes place in a 'largish' teaching environment and, as such, presents certain difficulties. First, there is a tendency for students to sit back and receive information and then recycle it for the examinations. Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask for clarification or to ask me to repeat information. It's highly likely that you will not be the only person encountering difficulty. Second, don't accept everything that I say uncritically. Everyone has biases and you should not be afraid to question my assumptions. I will try as much as possible to make them explicit, but I encourage you to think about what I say in a critical fashion. Third, you may not capture audio or video or still images of me without my explicit permission. This includes audiotaping lectures, using a webcam to capture images of me lecturing or taking still photographs of me. Do note that in this course, you will have access to audio lecture capture which includes the audio component of the lecture along with images of the material presented on the lecture hall screen (though video clips and movie content not in the public domain may be deleted from the recordings – you will see only a blank screen). Lecture capture is available through Moodle. Be aware, though, that (1) these recordings occasionally fail and will not be available; if this happens, I will not make the material available in any other medium. (2) Once the course is finished, you will no longer have access to these files, so if you think you will need them, download them before the end of the course.

You are expected to abide by the York University Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, available at <http://www.yorku.ca/oscr/pdfs/CodeofRightsandResponsibilities.pdf>. In class, I expect all cell phones to be placed in a non-ringing mode (vibrate or off). If your phone goes off during lecture, I expect you to leave the lecture hall to answer it. If you are using a laptop during the lecture and you are using it for purposes other than note-taking, I may ask that you shut it off as it may disturb other students around you. Headphones attached to MP3 players, phones, computers, etc. are not to be worn in class, as the noise emanating from them may be disruptive to other students. Conversations that take place when I am lecturing are disruptive to me and to the students around you. I expect that this will not be a problem, but should it be, I will take action to deal with it.

3. My Responsibilities

My responsibilities lie in three areas. First, as course instructor, I will respond to your inquiries as quickly as possible. There are also teaching assistants for this course who will serve as a resource for you. I hold office hours weekly. See page 1 of the syllabus for this information or see the contact information on Moodle. If you send an e-mail during my office hours, I will do my best to answer it during that time period. If you send an e-mail at other times, we endeavour to answer all e-mail within 24 hours on weekdays. An e-mail sent on the weekend is unlikely to be answered until the following Monday. I also set aside time at the beginning of every class to answer questions. Second, we will return graded material as quickly as possible. Marks will be posted on the course Moodle site. If you wish to see your exam, you may do so during office hours. Third, I come to lectures prepared and enthusiastic. I hope to encourage you to think about the material and engage with it as fully as possible.

4. Evaluation

There will be two exams, each worth 40% of the total course mark and a third exam worth 20% of the total course mark. To pass the course, you must receive a total course grade of 50% or better. The dates on which exams occur in this course are listed on the attached schedule of events. Exams 1 and 2 are multiple choice and short answer in nature and are 1 hour and twenty minutes in duration. On the dates of Exams 1 and 2, there will be lecture following the exam. Exam 3 consists solely of multiple choice items and is 1 hour long. More specific information about the exams will be posted on the course Moodle site – click on the exam information topic. When you come to the exams, you must present acceptable photo identification in order to be admitted – acceptable identification includes a York University identification card, a government issued card, such as a Health Card or Driver's Licence or a passport. **Please note** that there **are** chapters covered on each examination which will not be the topic of a lecture – students are responsible for this textbook material on their own, though I will gladly answer questions on the material in class.

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

(For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar) <http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2014-2015/academic/grades/index.htm>

5. Academic Honesty

I am reminding you that the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty will be strictly enforced in this course (Policy available at <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=69>). There is an academic integrity tutorial and quiz on the York University website – it reviews the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty and provides examples of problems with academic honesty. You can get to this site by clicking on the following link: http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/

I strongly advocate that you take this tutorial and read the assignment instructions very carefully. I take all breaches of academic honesty very seriously and strongly support the Senate policy on such matters. Don't jeopardize your academic career by engaging in academic dishonesty.

6. Missing an Exam

First and foremost, read the Psychology Department webpage on missed tests and exams, available at <http://psyc.info.yorku.ca/missed-tests-or-examinations/>

If you have a ***very serious and fully documented*** reason for being excused from an exam (e.g., death in the immediate family, formally documented visit to an emergency room or a condition that SERIOUSLY affects your ability to take the exam), you may take a make-up exam in lieu of the exam missed. You must contact me at least one day in advance of the exam and provide documentation in order to be permitted to take a make-up exam. In the case of an emergency, contact me as soon as possible. If you cannot reach me, a message can be left on my voice-mail, which records the date and time of your call. In order to write a deferred examination, you **MUST** follow the steps outlined below.

If you miss an exam for other reasons or cannot provide documentation, you will receive a grade of zero. If you miss the examination on the deferred Exam 1 date for ***whatever*** reason, then you will write an exam on the date of Exam 2 that covers the materials from Exams 1 and 2 (i.e., worth 80% of your course grade). If you miss the deferred Exam 2 date for ***whatever*** reason, then you will write an examination on the final exam date that covers the material from Exams 2 and 3 (i.e., worth 60% of your course grade). If you miss the final exam (Exam 3), you will write a deferred examination. If you miss the deferred final examination for whatever reason, a grade of zero will be recorded for you and you must then petition your home faculty to be permitted to write the final examination. More information about deferred examinations will be made available on the course Moodle site.

If you are requesting a deferred examination under the Religious Accommodation Guidelines, please familiarize yourself with the Senate Policy on Religious Observance available at:

<https://w2prod.sis.yorku.ca/Apps/WebObjects/cdm.woa/wa/regobs>

“Students who, because of a religious commitment cannot write a formally scheduled examination (December and April examination periods) on the date scheduled, should contact the course instructor and submit a [Religious Accommodation Agreement](#) to the department

offering the course **no later than three weeks prior to the start of the examination period** to arrange an alternative examination date.” (Senate Policy on Religious Observance)

If you are requesting a deferred examination for medical reasons, please read the following.

► For a missed **Exam 1 or 2**, you MUST include:

1. a statement by an attending physician which includes the following information: (taken verbatim from <http://psyc.info.yorku.ca/missed-tests-or-examinations/>)
 - i) full name, mailing address, telephone number of the physician.
 - ii) state the nature of the illness and its duration (i.e., specific dates covered), and
 - iii) an indication of whether the illness and/or medication prescribed would have SERIOUSLY affected the student’s ability to study and perform over the period in question.

NOTE: the physician's office may be contacted to verify that the forms were completed by the physician.

and

2. a completed Deferred Exam Request Form (available on the course Moodle site).

I must sign the Request Form - you must obtain my signature in person during my office hours or at class. **DO NOT LEAVE FORMS FOR ME TO SIGN.** Once I have signed your form, you will be informed of the date and time of this examination, which are determined by the Department.

► For a missed **final** examination (Exam 3), you MUST include:

1. a statement by an attending physician which includes the following information: (taken verbatim from <http://psyc.info.yorku.ca/missed-tests-or-examinations/>).
 - i) full name, mailing address, telephone number of the physician.
 - ii) state the nature of the illness and its duration (i.e., specific dates covered), and
 - iii) an indication of whether the illness and/or medication prescribed would have SERIOUSLY affected the student’s ability to study and perform over the period in question.

NOTE: the physician's office may be contacted to verify that the forms were completed by the physician.

and

2. a completed Deferred Standing Agreement Form (available from the Registrar’s Office at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/deferred_standing_agreement.pdf

I must sign the Registrar's Office Deferred Standing Agreement Form - you must obtain my signature in person during my office hours. The Deferred Standing Agreement Form is sent

to the Registrar's Office but no grade is submitted for you. Once your deferred examination is graded, I submit a grade to the Registrar's Office for you.

There may be non-medical circumstances in which you will be permitted to write a deferred exam. Tests/exams missed due to non-medical circumstances must be supported by appropriate documentation, e.g., death certificates, obituary notice, automobile accident reports, airline/bus ticket/receipt for emergency travel (with date of booking on ticket), etc.. Airline/train/bus ticket/receipts for emergency travel must indicate destination, departure, and return dates. This documentation must accompany the Psychology Department form noted above and, if the exam is a final exam, the Deferred Standing Agreement form.

Examination dates are in this course syllabus. You *know* that you will have your first exam on Feb 3, 2015 and your second exam on March 17, 2015 and that the final exam (Exam 3) on March 31, 2015 so if you have conflicting personal events scheduled at these times, drop the course now.

Be aware that the following are examples of reasons given by students in the past for requesting a deferred examination that are NOT considered to be legitimate (this is NOT an exhaustive list!).

- weddings
- feeling stressed
- family reunions
- coaching sports teams
- having one other examination within 24 hours of this one (see Registrar's Office regulations on examinations)
- studying so hard I made myself dizzy
- having to work
- mild colds
- holidays/vacations
- shift work
- not feeling prepared
- not having the course syllabus and not knowing when the exam was scheduled
- not being able to find the examination room
- losing my notes/textbook

For more information on deferred standing, see <http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/exams/deferred/>

7. Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

I am happy to accommodate students who write exams using the Alternate Examination Services. It's important that you have a clear understanding of the conditions under which I am willing to make these accommodations.

1.	Make sure you have reviewed the steps required for writing alternate examinations. Make sure you get forms filled in properly and in sufficient time to make the necessary accommodations. This means making sure you book your exams at least 3 weeks in advance of the exam. I will NOT accommodate students who do not book exams in sufficient time, no matter the reason.
2.	If you miss your exam for what is described in this course outline as a legitimate reason, you must get in touch with me as soon as possible and follow the process described in the course outline in the section entitled "Missing an Examination". You must fill in and have me sign the Alternate Exam and Test Rescheduling Form, available at Alternate Exam and Test Rescheduling Request form . If you do not complete the forms described in the course syllabus, no examination will be sent to the Alternate Examination Services. If you do not have a legitimate reason for missing the test or examination, you will receive a grade of zero.
3.	If you have a conflict with tests or exams because of a need for additional time, you must make arrangements with me during my office hours or at class.
4.	If there is some problem with making arrangements with one of the units providing disability services on campus, you must provide me with a contact name and e-mail address so I can verify this difficulty with the unit.
5.	You must arrange to write your examination at the same time as the rest of the class.
6.	I remind students to be familiar with the Senate Policy and attached Guidelines on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. It is available by clicking on the following link: http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/document.php?document=68

8. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Date	Topic	Chapter(s) from Patterson & D'Augelli
Jan. 7	Classes start - Introduction	Chs. 1 - 5
Jan. 14	Meanings of sexual orientation & gender identities	Chs. 1 - 5
Jan. 21	Meanings of sexual orientation & gender identities Demographic perspectives	Chs. 1 - 6
Jan. 28	Developmental Issues	Chs. 7 - 10
Feb. 4	EXAM 1 (LECTURE FOLLOWS) Relationships	Chs. 11-12
Feb. 11	Relationships	Chs. 11-12
Feb. 14-20	Reading Week	
Feb. 25	Physical Health	Chs. 13 - 14
Mar. 4	Mental Health	Ch. 15
Mar. 11	Attitudes	Ch.17
Mar. 18	EXAM 2 (LECTURE FOLLOWS) Attitudes	Ch. 17
Mar. 25	Victimization/Violence	Ch. 19
April 1	EXAM 3	
April 6	Classes end	

Examination 1 covers: Chs. 1 – 10 of textbook and lecture material from Jan. 7 – Jan. 28

Examination 2 covers: Chs. 11 – 17 of textbook and lecture material from Feb. 3 – Mar. 10

Examination 3 covers: Chs. 18 – 21 and lecture material from Mar. 17 – Mar. 24

Note the following important academic dates:

Jan. 19, 2015 Last date to enrol in Winter Term courses without permission of the course instructor

Jan. 30, 2015 Last date to enrol in Winter Term courses with permission of the course instructor

Mar. 6, 2015 Last date to drop a Winter Term course without receiving a grade.