

Human Sexualities

across cultures

SOC/PSY 333 WMS 332

Credits: 3.0

1/24-4/30 2008

Center for Distance Education (CDE), University of Alaska Fairbanks

Artwork: Lady of Pazardzik, All-Seeing Eye of Power. Thracian Goddess of fertility, birth, & death. Central Bulgaria, circa 5500-4500 BCE.

Course description

This course analyzes human sexualities across historical and contemporary cultures, and is cross-listed with three different disciplines: sociology, psychology, and women's studies. Because your professor is a sociologist, this section of the course will focus on sociological analyses of sexuality. As you will discover, sociology offers unique ways of exploring sexuality that complement other disciplinary approaches.

Learning objectives

There are several enduring understandings that you will have upon completion of the course. These enduring understandings highlight what sociologists believe is the *social constructedness* of all aspects of social life:

- there are three major sociological paradigms: structural functionalism, critical power conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism
- sexuality is socially constructed within particular historical and cultural contexts
- the meanings of sex, romance, and love are socially constructed
- societies create some body parts and behaviors as sexual, and others as not sexual
- sexual identity is socially constructed
- sexuality is controlled, legitimated, and regulated by social and sexual institutions
- communities and cultural identities increasingly are formed around sex
- sexuality is both personal and political
- sociological insights about sexuality apply to the “real” world as well as the virtual, online world

Required prerequisites

Junior status.

Required text

Introducing the New Sexuality Studies, edited by Steven Seidman, Nancy Fischer, and Chet Meeks (2007). New York: Routledge. ISBN10: 0415399009.

In addition to the text, there are several websites you will visit, all of which are noted in the Schedule.

Deadlines

Due dates will be strictly enforced. Late assignments or quizzes will not be accepted.

Instructor contact info

Sine Anahita, Ph.D. (call me Dr. Anahita—pronounced “Ah-nah-hé-tah”)

email: sine.anahita@uaf.edu

webpage: <http://www.uaf.edu/sociology/Anahita.html>

virtual office hours (live chat) by appointment



Organization of the course

This course is organized around three sociological paradigms, or sets of interrelated theories. There are several vecture (virtual lectures) that describe the three paradigms and apply each to a question about sexuality. The text barely mentions the sociological paradigms by name, but as you learn more about the paradigms through the vecture, you will recognize them in the text. Near the end of the course, you should be able to apply them to the text and to other materials. The course is presented in Blackboard <<http://classes.uaf.edu/>>, and is divided into ten sections. A typical section may contain these items:

- Enduring Understandings—these are the core concepts you will understand after you finish the section
- Listen for One Minute—a one-minute audio recording to introduce the section
- Vecture—a virtual lecture applying the sociological paradigms to a particular topic
- Vecture Quiz—a graded quiz to evaluate your understanding of the vecture
- Reading—assigned reading from the text, in article form, usually between 40-60 pages a week
- Concept Quilt—a table you will fill out to demonstrate your understanding of the readings
- Forum Entry—your contribution to the class discussion, usually on a specified question
- Discussion Questions—near the end of the course, a set of questions that will require you to integrate all of the readings, websites, vecture, and class forum discussions

Grading and assignments

You can earn up to 100 points in this class. See descriptions below for details.

Grading Scale

A+ = 97>	B + = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F <59
A = 93-96	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66	
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62	

Assignments	Points	Due by
Concept Quilts (you can skip one)	7 that count @ 9 points each = 63 points	Mondays by noon AKT see Schedule for details
Forum entries	10 @ 1 point each = 10	
Vecture quizzes	5 that count @ 3 points each = 15	
Discussion questions (sets of 2-5)	3 sets @ 4 points each = 12	

*****Note: Late assignments or quizzes will not be accepted*****

Forum Entries (FE) points value: 10 @ 1 point each = 10 points 10% of final course grade

Contribute at least one comment per section to the class forum. Click on the Forum Entry link in each section to read the question you are expected to discuss. I hope our class forum will become an interactive online community, and that we all enjoy posting and reading others' posts. To ensure that students are learning how to apply sociological perspectives, I will Sociologize the Discussion (StD) by contributing sociological insights. Avoid personal attacks, stay on topic, use sociological insights, don't flame others, and be a good virtual citizen. Your posts must be excellent and sociological to earn their points, and you are limited to earning only 1 point per section. Although you may post as often as you wish, only your first post per section will be graded.

Vecture Quizzes 5 @ 3 points each = 15 points 15 % of final course grade

Each quiz covers material in one of the vecture (virtual lectures). Each quiz contains six multiple choice questions worth one-half point each. Read and study the vecture before you take the quiz. You may find it helpful to print out each vecture as well as the Shorthand Guide to the 3 Sociological Paradigms so that you can use these materials as you work on the quiz. There are six quizzes, but only five will count. I will drop your single lowest grade or you can skip one quiz. Once you start a quiz, you must finish it. Once you click submit, you cannot go back and work on your quiz.

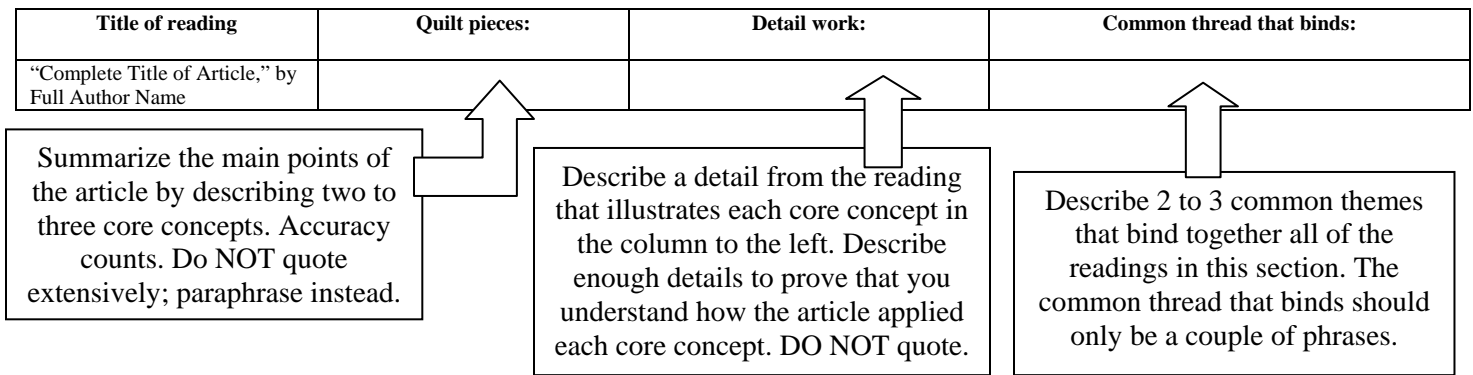
Concept Quilts (CQs)

7 @ 9 points each = 63 points

63% of final course grade

After you carefully study the readings, complete a Concept Quilt (CQ) summarizing the core concepts for each article and describing the common thread that binds the section’s reading together. **Summarize and paraphrase: DO NOT QUOTE extensively.** You will be evaluated on the accuracy of your CQs. Thoroughly read each article—skimming will not work. Take notes as you read. CQs are the largest part of your grade, so allow yourself plenty of time. From Blackboard, under Assignments, download each CQ to your computer and save it in a folder where you can easily find it. Save the first CQ as CQ#1--YourName (with YourName being your last name). For example, if your last name is Wood, you would save your first CQ as CQ#1--Wood in a folder on your computer. CQ #2 would be labeled CQ#2--Wood, and CQ #3 would be CQ#3--Wood, etc. When you complete your assignment, turn it in by going back into Blackboard and following the View/Complete Assignment link. Attach your file using the Browse button to locate your assignment on your computer, and click Open, Then Submit. Your assignment must be time-stamped by noon AKT on the due date or they will not be accepted. There are eight CQs, but you only have to do seven. This means you may skip one CQ. If you need technical help, contact the Help Desk 450-8300 or 800-478-8226 or contact the Center for Distance Education.

Concept Quilt How-To Guide:



Discussion Questions (DQs)

3 sets @ 4 points each = 12 points

12% of final course grade

Near the end of the course, there are several sets of discussion questions that you will answer, using terms and concepts from the readings and lecture. The discussion questions are integrative questions, meaning that you will have to draw from many readings and external websites for information that you will weave together in your answer. Your answers should be in complete sentences, free from errors, and logically organized. I will deduct points from answers that contain misspellings, errors of usage, are poorly organized, or are otherwise difficult to comprehend. Stay on topic when you are writing your answers. Focus on the course material, and use only sociological perspectives when writing. Do not write about your opinion; do not explain whether you agree with the material or not; do not challenge the readings as being immoral, wrong, stupid, offensive, or unnatural; do not talk about your own personal experience; do not bring non-sociological perspectives into your answers. Instead, answer the questions sociologically by using the sociological perspectives that you are learning in class. Name your first set of Discussion Questions like this: DQs#1--LastName, with your actual last name. For example, if your last name is Wood, your first set of Discussion Questions would be saved as DQs#1--Wood on your computer. Name your second set DQs#2--Wood, and etc. When you complete your assignment, turn it in by going back into Blackboard; click on the link to the assignment; under Assignment Materials, click Browse to locate the assignment you saved on your computer; click Open; click Submit. Your assignment must be time-stamped by noon AKT on the due date or they will not be accepted.

****There are time restrictions on assignments and quizzes****
****Late assignments will not be accepted****

Course policies

I may alter this syllabus during the semester. If you have questions about my policies, please contact me.

Contacting me

The best way to contact me is through email. I try to answer emails within 24 hours, but I do not check my email on weekends or at night. It is difficult to reach me by phone.

Reading

Study the readings carefully so that you can complete the assignments. As you read, think about the core concepts of each reading. You will find it helpful to take notes or write in the margins of your text. I read with a dictionary handy; I suggest you adopt this habit as well, because you will surely encounter new words in your reading. Plan to commit sufficient time to do the reading in a comprehensive manner.

How to turn in assignments

After you have completed your assignment and saved it to your computer: 1) click on the assignment in Blackboard; 2) under Assignment Materials, click Browse to locate the assignment you saved on your computer; 3) click Open; 4) click Submit. No emailed or FAXed assignments.

Late assignments

Assignments must be received no later than noon Alaska Time. Late assignments will not be accepted. If you experience technological or other difficulties that prevent you from turning in assignments, please contact the Center for Distance Education at once to discuss your options.

Time restrictions

There are time restrictions on assignments and quizzes. You must submit them by noon Alaska Time on the due dates or they will not be accepted. The time restrictions are in place so that students will work steadily on their coursework. Please plan your schedule accordingly.

Participation

I welcome lively discussion on the class forum, but you must demonstrate that you studied the assigned materials and stay on topic. I expect you to be respectful of others, including those who disagree with you. You do not have to agree with me, other students, or course material, but you **ARE** required to utilize sociological perspectives when writing about your ideas.

Sensitive topics

This course has material that you may find offensive, embarrassing, shocking, contradictory to your religious or political beliefs, or otherwise difficult. Please work to manage your emotional responses to the material. If you are having a great deal of difficulty with the material and cannot work past your reactions, please contact me. I will try to help you deal with the material, but we also may decide that you should withdraw from the course.

Extra credit

There are no possibilities for extra credit assignments.

Incompletes, Withdrawal

I will give an Incomplete grade (I) only in rare circumstances. Unresolved Incompletes become permanent Fs. Expect an instructor-initiated withdrawal if you fail to substantially participate in the class, such as not turning in assignments in a timely manner or consistently refusing to use sociological concepts.

Academic Honesty

Expect an F and/or instructor-initiated withdrawal from the course if you engage in academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or falsification.

Disability

UAF's Disability Services Office offers assistance, including academic accommodations, to students who have a documented disability. Please contact them for more information: website: www.uaf.edu/chc/disability.html; phone: 907-474-7043; email: fydso@uaf.edu

Schedule

Section	Topics: <i>Enduring Understandings</i>	Major concepts: <i>Essential Questions</i>	Assignments: <i>Readings, lectures, quizzes, and activities</i>	Assignment Due Dates
<p>#1</p> <p>Sex as a social fact</p>	<p>Sexuality is socially constructed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is sociology? • What is the sociological imagination? • What do sociologists mean when they claim that sexuality is socially constructed? • What is social constructionism? • What is essentialism? • What are commonsense assumptions about sexuality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #1 • Vecture: What is Sociology? • Vecture Quiz #1 • read text pp. 1-25 • Concept Quilt #1 • Forum Entry #1: <u>Everybody Knows That...</u> List and briefly explain 5 commonsense assumptions about sexuality. Review the Vecture to find out about commonsense assumptions. 	<p>2-4</p>
<p>#2</p> <p>Sexual Meanings</p>	<p>The meanings of sex are socially constructed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does sex mean? • How can it mean different things? • Why do different groups of people put different meanings on sex? • What kinds of questions do other students have about sexuality? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #2 • Vecture: What You Want to Know • Vecture Quiz #2 • read text pp. 27-78 • Concept Quilt #2 • Forum Entry #2 	<p>2-11</p>
<p>#3</p> <p>Sexual Bodies and Behaviors</p>	<p>Societies construct some bodies, body parts, and behaviors as sexual, and others as not sexual, depending on the social context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why do some body parts, some bodies, and some behaviors become defined as sexual, while others are not? • Why and how are some bodies and behaviors constructed as deviant, unimportant, or sexually invisible? • What are the three sociological paradigms, and how can they be used to analyze sex? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #3 • Vecture: Substitution Talk, Sex, and the Three Paradigms • Vecture Quiz #3 • read text pp. 79-132 • Concept Quilt #3 • Forum Entry #3 	<p>2-18</p>

Section	Topics: <i>Enduring Understandings</i>	Major concepts: <i>Essential Questions</i>	Assignments: <i>Readings, lectures, quizzes, and activities</i>	Assignment Due Dates
#4 Sexual Identities	Sexuality identities are socially constructed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence do sociologists use to demonstrate that sexual identity is socially constructed, not natural? • How are behaviors sexualized? • How are sexual behaviors and body parts managed? • How do the sociological paradigms analyze the penis? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #4 • Vecture: Managing the Penis • Vecture Quiz #4 • read pp. 133-194 • Concept Quilt #4 • Forum Entry #4 	2-25
#5 Sexual Institutions and Sexual Commerce	Sexual institutions legitimate, regulate, and control sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are sexual institutions? • How and why are sexual institutions changing? • What is AI, and what does it mean? • How do the sociological paradigms analyze AI and its legitimation, regulation, and control? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #5 • Vecture: What Does AI Mean? • Vecture Quiz #5 • read pp. 195-250 • Concept Quilt #5 • Forum Entry #5 	3-17
#6 Sexual Cultures	Communities and cultural identities are increasingly formed around sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do communities form around sexual behaviors? • How and why does a particular sexual community get created? • Why the sociological silence and the feminist noise about the clitoris? • How do the sociological paradigms analyze the clitoris? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #6 • Vecture: The Three Paradigms Find the Clitoris • Vecture Quiz #6 • read pp. 251-313 • Concept Quilt #6 • Forum Entry #6 	3-24

Section	Topics: <i>Enduring Understandings</i>	Major concepts: <i>Essential Questions</i>	Assignments: <i>Readings, lectures, quizzes, and activities</i>	Assignment Due Dates
<p>#7</p> <p>Sexual regulation and inequality</p>	<p>Sexuality is controlled and regulated by social institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why do social institutions such as religion, schools, the legal system, the gender system, psychological therapy, pop culture, and medicine, regulate sexuality? • How is inequality a result of sexual regulation by social institutions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #7 • Vecture: Outlawing Same-Sex Marriage • Vecture Quiz #7 • read pp. 315-402 • Concept Quilt #7 • Forum Entry #7 	<p>3-31</p>
<p>#8</p> <p>Sexual Politics</p>	<p>Sexuality is both personal and political</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are sexual politics? • How can sexual politics be simultaneously personal, cultural, and institutional? • What are some specific examples of sexual politics? • How do the sociological paradigms analyze sexual politics? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen for One Minute #8 • read pp. 403-469 • Concept Quilt #8 • Forum Entry #8 • DQs #1: <u>Sexual Politics</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose ONE reading in this section, and sociologically analyze the issue discussed using all three of the sociological paradigms. In your answer, demonstrate your thorough understanding of the three sociological paradigms. 2. Sociologically speaking, how can sexual politics be both personal and political at the same time? (In your answer, use the definition of “personal” that is implicit in the text, and avoid mention of your own personal opinion or experiences.) 	<p>4-14</p>

Section	Topics: <i>Enduring Understandings</i>	Major concepts: <i>Essential Questions</i>	Assignments: <i>Readings, lectures, quizzes, and activities</i>	Assignment Due Dates
<p style="text-align: center;">#9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sexualized Body Parts on the Internet</p>	<p>Though both the clitoris and the penis are online, they are not sociologically homologous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence is there on Big Pharma’s websites to demonstrate sociologists’ claims that the penis is medicalized for profit? • What kind of art of resistance has developed around the clitoris, and what politics does it illustrate? • How and why are the internet portrayals of the clitoris and the penis sociologically different? • How would the three sociological paradigms analyze sexualized body parts on the internet? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum Entry #9 • DQs #2: The Penis and the Clitoris <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>The Penis</u>: explore the Viagra site <www.viagra.com>, then answer these questions, using the text and lectures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose one sociological paradigms and use it to analyze the material on the Viagra website. For example, how might CPC analyze the ideologies invented to get men to purchase the drug? How would SF analyze the medicalization of the penis? 2. Does the Viagra website sexualize the penis? Explain your answer, using concepts and terms from the text and lectures. B. <u>The Clitoris</u>: “The Dinner Party” by Judy Chicago: www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/dinner_party/ Read about the installation; click the “360° Virtual Tour” link. Click and drag your mouse to see the Dinner Plates and read about the Dinner Guests. Click on plates to read about them. Use material from the text and lectures to answer the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Choose one sociological paradigm to analyze the Dinner Party. For example, would SI analyze the multiple roles played by the Dinner Party Guests? How would CPC analyze the Dinner Party as an example of feminist resistance to oppression? 4. Is the clitoris sexualized by The Dinner Party? Explain using terms and concepts from the course. 5. The clitoris and the penis are not sociologically homologous on the Viagra and Dinner Party websites. Discuss the two contrasting portrayals, and explain why they are not sociologically homologous, using at least one sociological paradigm. 	<p style="text-align: center;">4-21</p>

Section	Topics: <i>Enduring Understandings</i>	Major concepts: <i>Essential Questions</i>	Assignments: <i>Readings, lectures, quizzes, and activities</i>	Assignment Due Dates
<p style="text-align: center;">#10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Heterosexual Imaginary</p>	<p>Ingraham’s concept of the heterosexual imaginary applies to the virtual world as well as the “real” world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the heterosexual imaginary present in online dating websites? • How does the heterosexual imaginary manifest in online wedding planning websites? • How would the three sociological paradigms analyze the heterosexual imaginary, and its processes of normalization, commercialization, and diversion? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum Entry #10 • DQs #3: The Heterosexual Imaginary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <u>Online Dating</u>: explore an online dating service (do not register or subscribe, just look at what is “free”). Suggestions: <match.com>, <perfectmatch.com>, <eharmony.com>. Use material from the text and lectures to answer these questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What evidence is there of the heterosexual imaginary, described in your text, on the website(s) you chose? Identify the websites in your answer. 2. Analyze the website(s) using your choice of the sociological paradigms. For example, how would SF analyze the function of the normalization process? What would CPC have to say about the emphasis on romance as a diversionary strategy? B. <u>Online Wedding Advice</u>: explore the Wedding Basics site <http://www.yourwedding101.com/wedding-basics/> and answer these questions, using material from the text and lectures: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Choose one Wedding Basics from the column on the left (e.g. Gay Weddings), and analyze it in terms of your choice of the readings from the text. 4. Choose one sociological paradigm to analyze one aspect of Wedding Basics. For example, what would SF claim is the function of Second Time Marriages? What group would CPC say benefits from Destination Weddings? What kinds of backstage behavior would SI say must be done for the Proposal and Engagement? 	<p style="text-align: center;">4-28</p>