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:

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 subheadings 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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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.

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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:

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

Week 5 (February 9/11): Love, marriage and sex
PS: Chapter 4
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
Chapter 9


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

BW: Chapter 10

**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

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**