

SOC 45: SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITY

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Demonstrated proficiency in English by placement via multiple measures OR through an equivalent placement process OR completion of ESLL 125 & ESLL 249.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area IV: Social & Behavioral Sciences
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Explain the trajectory of large-scale social change in sexual mores, subcultures, gender expectations, self-concept, and values through the lens of major social institutions such as politics, religion, the economy, and the family.
- Identify and propose sociologically motivated solutions to persistent inequalities in sexual health, reproductive health, and vulnerability to sexual violence as influenced by social identities such as race, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and religion.
- Explain the ethical standards, interpretation of data, and social implications of sociological research methods used to investigate human sexuality.

Description

This course provides an introduction to human sexuality through the lens of the sociological imagination, a core concept in sociology. Using key theoretical concepts from the discipline, the course traces the following: the social construction of sexuality; the socio-historical transformation of ideas about sex and sexuality as they relate to gender, race, disability, sexual practice, and sexual representation; social movements and activism in opposition to sexual inequalities; contemporary debates about social issues, such as reproductive justice and the commercialization of sex; and sexuality as mediated through major social institutions, such as the legal system, the economy, politics, the family, and religion. Students will critically analyze their own and others' attitudes toward sexuality with particular attention to the formation of sexual identities and ideologies within a societal and cross-cultural context.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

- A. Explain the diversity of human sexual expression and values of various cultures, including a discussion of the distinctive features of discrimination against sexual and gender minorities.

B. Locate systematic studies of human sexuality, including those that identify practices, efficacy, and consequences of sexuality education efforts; examine the ethics and reliability of social science research methods used both in the past and in the present to investigate human sexuality.

C. Explain changing gender roles, gender expressions, and gender identities in contemporary society; explain the impact of these changes on intimate relationship configurations, fertility, labor force participation, education, family formation, reproductive justice, and population trends.

D. Evaluate how media forms influence, reflect, and distort human sexuality.

E. Identify relevant features of human anatomy and physiology in the reproductive processes; examine sociocultural differences in the modification and symbolic meaning of such anatomy and processes; examine social relationships to bodies within the context of emotional experiences, such as shame, pride, disgust, attraction, and stigma.

F. Identify factors contributing to relationship satisfaction over time, including the impacts of childbirth, child-rearing, interpersonal communication, relationship configuration, and job satisfaction.

G. Identify ways that sexual partners (when relevant) can share responsibility for contraception and mitigation of sexually transmitted infections, including method efficacy and social acceptability, access to various methods in the context of larger social institutions and inequality, and specific issues relating to negotiation for the use of such methods within individual relationships and within society as a whole.

H. Examine sociological factors contributing to sexual dysfunctions; identify treatment alternatives available for people who experience sexual difficulties with particular attention to the ways that social identities, such as race, class, gender expression, religion, and sexual orientation, determine how the difficulty is perceived and to what extent an individual can access relevant resources.

I. Examine the interplay of social stigmatization and politics affecting reproductive justice, including: the prevention, research, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections; differential social and health outcomes that arise from historical inequalities such as the Tuskegee Experiment; current political policies that limit access to preventative reproductive health care; and racial and class differences in the mortality and morbidity rates of birth parents and neonates.

J. Analyze sociological theories of sexual assault and harassment, including feminist theory, statistical prevalence within various populations, the particularities of acquaintance assaults, and the sociological impact of larger cultural conversations in the post-#metoo era; examine practical strategies for communicating consent and absence of consent; analyze the role of gender socialization as it relates to the communication and interpretation of consent.

K. Advance a sociological understanding of sex work and erotic labor; clarify various types of sex work, including involuntary sex trafficking/sexual slavery, voluntary sex work, sex therapy and sexual surrogacy, pornography, internet-based sex work, low vs. high-contact sex work, harm reduction in sex work, the effects of gender, class, and race inequalities on sex workers, and the implications of social mores and political machinations on the health and safety of sex workers.

L. Examine in historical context those social movements of past and present that have made impacts on the physical safety, social acceptance, sexual and reproductive health, and life outcomes of sexual minorities and racial, class, and religious minorities.

M. Using the sociological imagination, propose practical strategies for decreasing societal inequalities relating to sexuality, reproduction, gender roles, and gender expression that students feel empowered to use in their daily lives on an on-going basis.

N. Examine socio-sexual health and safety in the context of the internet and social media.

O. Examine the role of large social institutions, such as politics, religion, the economy, and the family, on sexual mores, ideals, and self-concept.

Course Content

- A. Global/cross-cultural/comparative sociological analysis of human sexuality.
- B. Social and other factors contributing to the efficacy or ineffectiveness of sexuality education, with particular attention to sexuality education in secondary school and the effects of ubiquitous, accessible pornography on popular conceptions of sexuality and beauty ideals among young people.
- C. Social and other factors affecting the relationship between sexuality and the law.
- D. Social stigmatization, prejudice, and discrimination against sexual and gender minorities.
- E. Terms describing sex, sexuality, and gender; the social effect of language changes on society's treatment people who identify with such terms.
- F. U.S. perspectives on sexuality; cultural and social values (including family and intergenerational value conflicts and emerging trends).
- G. Sex research, including strengths and weaknesses of older survey and laboratory data, modern improvements, and advances in qualitative research methods.
- H. Ethics of sex research using human subjects (e.g., for testing of contraceptives, etc.) including basic concepts such as informed consent, cost-benefit analysis, the justice principle, etc.
- I. Gender issues and roles, with implications for fertility, population trends, labor force participation, social equality within households and relationships.
- J. The emerging visibility of transgender and non-binary individuals; the meaning and use of newer conventions of naming, pronouns, etc.
- K. The sociological model of both gender and biological sex as spectrums rather than binaries.
- L. Female-spectrum sexual anatomy and physiology, including cultural understandings of the sexual and reproductive body.
- M. Male-spectrum sexual anatomy and physiology, including cultural understandings of the sexual and reproductive body.
- N. Sexual and reproductive body modification, including FGM (female genital mutilation), penile circumcision, and genital/breast cosmetic surgery designed to enhance sexual attractiveness, fertility, etc.; the social effects of beauty ideals on individual conceptions of attractiveness.
- O. Sexuality and disability, with particular attention to the sexual invisibility of disabled people and the concepts of sexual citizenship and reproductive justice as they relate to disabled individuals.
- P. Individual relationship to one's own sexual and reproductive body; how such relationships are formed; its implications on social/physical health and satisfaction within and outside of relationships with others.
- Q. Transformations in the social and medical interpretation and treatment of intersex individuals.
- R. Social factors influencing sexual arousal, response, and sexual attraction.
- S. Social factors influencing engagement with common sexual scripts (media, internet, etc.).
- T. Sexual orientation, including definitions of queer/non-queer sexualities and emerging sexualities (pansexuality, the asexual spectrum, paraphilias, non-traditional relationship configurations, etc.); cultural differences in identification and models for measurement.
- U. Sexuality throughout the lifespan/social life course, with emphasis on cross-cultural differences and the social construction of life course stages in various cultures and historical periods.

V. Love, attraction, relationships, and sexual communication, including cultural differences and universals, and evolutionary factors.

W. Social and other factors relating to contraception, conception, childbirth, and abortion, including accessibility as it relates to social identities such as gender, race, and class.

X. Intersections of sexuality and technology with relation to fertility (advanced reproductive technology, the social implications of surrogacy, selective abortion, etc.).

Y. Sexual behaviors with an assessment of risk and safety, with special attention to emerging legal and safety considerations of the internet age.

Z. Sexually transmitted infections, including safe sex practices, decreasing stigma, and historical abuses, such as the Tuskegee Experiment, eugenics and forced sterilization, etc.

AA. Nature and origins of sexual difficulties and sex therapy, including the medicalization of sexuality and pharmacological treatments.

BB. The history of social movements aimed at decreasing inequalities for sexual, gender, and social minorities; history of the movement for recognition of HIV/AIDS, visibility of queer and genderqueer people, etc.

CC. The history of religious, legal, and political interventions in the realm of sexuality; survey of relevant Supreme Court rulings and legislation (e.g., Lawrence v. Kansas, Obergefell v. Hodges, TRAPP laws, etc.); the effect of politics on the accessibility of reproductive health care and education.

DD. Sexual coercion and assault, including power/conflict/feminist perspectives and strategies for prevention relevant to contemporary post-#metoo conversations about assault, harassment, and consent.

EE. Sex work: voluntary and non-voluntary, harm reduction, legal strategies across cultures, health/safety, etc.

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

A. When offered via distance learning, access to campus LMS system and associated resources/facilities.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Students will demonstrate proficiency in the subject matter through the following means:

- A. Critical analysis of course concepts through written assignments, such as research papers, reflections, ethnographic interviews, and educational presentations.
- B. Summative exams/quizzes.
- C. Memory retrieval exercises incorporating techniques of interleaving designed to measure and reinforce mastery of concepts.
- D. Contributions to classroom and online discussions with instructor and classmates.
- E. Oral presentations.

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Lecture presentation; large and small classroom discussion
- B. When delivered electronically, written and video lectures
- C. Group activities and presentations

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Fitzgerald, Kathleen, and Kandice Grossman. Sociology of Sexualities. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2018.

Ferber, Abby, Kimberly Holcomb, and Tre Wentling. Sex, Gender, and Sexualities. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

When taught via Foothill Global Access, supplemental lectures, handouts, tests and assignments delivered electronically via written or video formatting; feedback on tests and assignments delivered electronically; class discussion may be delivered via discussion rooms.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

A. Weekly reading assignments in textbook and supplementary readings (approximately 60-80 pages/week).

B. Group presentation involving creation of an educational blog, vlog, visual presentation, or film focused on an aspect of sexuality that is of interest to group members. Presentation functions as a springboard to incorporate the material students learn throughout the semester with their observations about sexuality and society outside the classroom. Intended audience must be clearly defined in the project, and presentation caters to specified audience. Students are encouraged to think beyond simple slide presentations, engaging their individual creativity with critical thinking and pedagogy.

C. Students incorporate knowledge of sexuality and sociology gained in the course by completing an ethnographic interview of another person in which they produce a detailed and methodical description of their interviewee's perspectives on sexuality as mediated through the subject's history, experiences, and interpretations. The assignment provides students with the opportunity to engage a classic sociological research method by using open-ended questions to learn how their subject perceives self and sexuality within their social milieu. Students are instructed in ethical research methods and practices to ensure confidentiality; assignment serves to further students' ability to structure empathetic conversations with others while experimenting with core sociological research skills relevant to the major.

D. Students participate in regular online discussions (in both traditional and distance-learning models of the course) in which they are asked to reflect and respond to one another on topics of relevance to each week's subject matter.

Discipline(s)

Sociology