

Dr. Irene Hanson Frieze
Professor of Psychology
Office: 3329 Sennott Square (4-4336)
Office hours: T 5-6pm & by appointment

Class Meets: 335 Cathedral
Tuesdays 6pm-8:30pm
E-Mail: FRIEZE@pitt.edu
URL: <http://www.pitt.edu/~frieze/>

Spring 2016 : PSYCHOLOGY 1110 [30829]
PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY:

Course Description.

This course presents a social-psychological research orientation toward the study of human sexual behavior, with a major emphasis on the impact of underlying values and attitudes. A secondary theme is the interaction of social and biological factors in determining sexual behavior in women and men. Topics that will be addressed include sex hormones and sexual arousal, sexual orientation, and meanings of the terms “sex” and “gender.” Other topics include pregnancy and birth, contraception, love and attraction, sexually transmitted diseases and coercive sexual behavior.

Course Objectives. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Be aware of the variety of beliefs people hold about sexual issues and how these beliefs affect their own behaviors and their reactions to the behaviors of others.
- Critically evaluate reported research findings relating to human sexual behavior & attitudes.
- Realize that any conclusions of sexuality research depend upon knowledge of the underlying methodology and sample.

Required Textbook:

Rathus, S. A., Nevid, J.S., & Fichner-Rathus, L. (2014). *Human sexuality in a world of diversity*. (Ninth Edition). Boston: Pearson.

Optional Readings: Optional readings are available from Dr. Frieze. See listing on Courseweb. To access, use <http://courseweb.pitt.edu/> from a Pitt account.

Methods of Evaluation: [1000 possible points]. 900+=A; 800+=B; 700+=C, 600+=D.

- Exams: Two in-class exams (250 points each = 500 points total). Exams will be partially multiple choice and partially essay. A list of possible essay questions will be available before the exam. Previous exams are available on Course Info. Students are encouraged to study together in learning material for the exams.
- Class Participation: Attendance and participation in class discussion. 150 points. There are no excused absences. These points are to encourage class attendance and are about 12 points for each full class attended. Extra credit is given for those who regularly participate in class discussion.
- Research Project: A two-part project (Research proposal and final presentation to the class), is worth 350 total points. [See the end of the syllabus for further information].

Other Grading Policies:

- When judged necessary by the student (for any reason), any exam or other requirement can be done late. However, make-up examinations are entirely essays and are generally believed to be more difficult than the regularly scheduled exam. Late drafts are penalized 20% for each week late. If the presentation is not done on time, a written paper is required instead.

- A list of extra credit topics will be available after the first exam for those who wish to improve upon their exam or paper grades. Other topics are possible, but must be approved in advance.

Lecture/Discussion Topics

January 12-19. Social regulation of sexual behavior. Sexual assumptions implicit in major world religions. History of sexual attitudes in western culture. Influences of Freud, and the 1960's sexual revolution. Evolutionary theory. Feminist theory. Queer theory.

Reading: Chapter 1. (pp. 1-21; 23-27). Ancient Greeks, Hinduism, and Buddhism not covered.

January 19-26. Surveys of sexual behavior in the United States. Current sexual behavior and attitudes in the U.S.

Reading: Chapter 2 (pp. 31-48, 50-51). Chapter 9 (pp 231-253). Specific sexual techniques not covered.

January 26-February 2. Hormones and sexuality. Male and female hormone cycles. *Anatomy not covered*

Reading: Chapter 3 (pp. 77-86). Chapter 4. (pp. 102, 105). Chapter 5 (pp. 125-129, 137-140).

February 2-9. Pregnancy and birth. Infertility.

Reading: Chapter 11 (pp. 291-296, 300-304, 318-324, 326-330). Not tested on health issues during pregnancy, problem pregnancies or prenatal development.

February 9-16. Birth control. Abortion.

Reading: Chapter 12 (pp. 335-366). Chapter 13 (pp. 422-423). Not tested on abortion techniques.

February 16-23. Sexually Transmitted Infections.

Reading: Chapter 16 (p. 469-499). Vaginal Infections and Ectoparasitic Infestations not covered.

February 23. Research proposal due in class. [Earlier submissions welcomed].

March 2. *First exam* [Review of Study Questions on February 23]. Discussion of research project after the exam.

March 15-22. Who is attractive? Who is an ideal marriage partner? Defining love.

Reading: Chapter 7 (pp. 185-205).

March 22-29. Sexual orientation. Homosexuality. Development as female or male

**Reading: Chapter 6 (pp. 153-165, 173-176). Chapter 10 (pp. 259-287).
Chapter 13. (pp. 412-415). Not tested on gender roles, stereotypes or differences.**

March 29, April 5, April 12 or April 19. Research presentation to the class.

March 29-April 19. Atypical and illegal sexual behavior. Coercion and sex. Sex and violence. Rape. Incest. **Not tested on sexual harassment or treatment.**

Reading: Chapter 17 (pp. 505-526). Chapter 18 (pp. 533-559) .

April 19. *All extra credit due.*

April 26. Final exam.

.....
Sexuality Research Project

Overview. To provide the student with direct experience in doing research on a topic relating to the psychological aspects of human sexuality, each student should select a research project for the class that involves collection of some type of data. A written proposal for the project is due Feb 23. The findings will be presented to the class late in the term. For example, any of the following could be done:

1. Interviews. Do one of the following. Be sure to explain how you selected your interviewees and what questions they were asked and why.
 - a. Interview three couples who have recently given birth. Did their experiences resemble those we discussed in class? What types of procedures were done in the hospital? How did others respond to the birth? What was the relative importance of biological and psychological factors in their reactions to the birth and immediately afterwards?
 - b. Interview 5 women and 5 men about why they have selected their preferred method of contraception. Do the factors affecting their choices relate to issues discussed in class? Do they have any misinformation about contraction? Are there gender differences?
 - c. Briefly review three theories of passionate love and describe the characteristics of passionate love as described in these theories. Interview at least four people who have personally experienced feelings of passionate love. Ask about what they experienced. Describe how well their experiences fit the theories of passionate love you have outlined. Which theory seems to best fit their experiences?
 - d. Interview at least three gays or lesbians about their childhood and adolescent experiences. How well do their childhood histories relate to the general patterns discussed in class and in the text?

2. Content Analysis. Do a content analysis of at least 10 personal ads of a group other than young heterosexuals. Explain how these ads were selected and justify your choice. Use course material to develop a set of specific coding categories and analyze each of the images using these codes. Do the images generally have the characteristics discussed in class? Which are most and least common codes you found?
3. Survey project. Design a brief survey to analyze sexual attitudes or some other topic related to the class. Collect data from two groups of students, getting at least 5 surveys per group.

If desired, the project can be done by a group of up to 4 students, but each student should have a particular focus within the larger project. The amount of data collected should relate to the group size. Each student must do an individual proposal and presentation.

Requirements for the Proposal [150 points]:

1. Explain the proposed project, noting the methodology used.
2. Describe the underlying theory from class that relates to your project. This is one of the most important parts of the paper. Course citations to lecture and the book are required. [See me if your topic is not yet covered in lecture].
3. Explain exactly how you are going to obtain your sample and collect data. [The survey, coding plans or list of interview questions should be included as an Appendix].

Requirements for the Presentation [200 points]. Plan on 10 to 15 minutes.

1. Outline your project. Explain how you collected your data.
2. Summarize your findings. Prepare a table showing the responses.
3. Explain whether your data was consistent with theory described in lecture and the book.

General Information about Papers

1. All factual statements should be referenced with the citation of the source of the information. Unreferenced statements are assumed to be personal opinion and generally do not belong in a research paper. APA citation format should be used [this involves the author's name and the date of the reference in the text of the paper and the full citation in the Reference section at the end of the paper]. **In addition, please add page numbers for any citations to the textbook and dates or topics for lecture citations.**
2. Avoid plagiarism! Avoid using more than 10 consecutive words in taking material from the textbook or the empirical article. Rewrite in your own words.
 3. Use Professional Writing. All punctuation and spelling errors should be corrected before the paper is submitted. Paragraphs should focus on a single topic.
4. Grading Criteria:
 - **Accurate discussion of relevant course material from the textbook and lecture. This is an essential requirement of the paper. It is a major aspect of the grade.**
 - Make sure material from BOTH the textbook [with the appropriate pages noted] and from lecture is cited and included.
 - Overall clarity of writing.