

SOCI 385: Sociology of Human Sexuality

Fall 2016

Monday and Wednesday

8:35 AM - 9:55 AM.

McIntyre Medical Building, 1034

Prof. Aniruddha (Bobby) Das

E-mail: Please see communication policy below

Office Hours: Thursday 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

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Communication policy

Please use MyCourses for all e-mail communications. E-mails sent to the McGill general e-mail address will not be answered. I will make every attempt to answer e-mail in a timely fashion within 36 hours of receipt. Please see me during office hours for urgent issues.

Overview

This class will introduce students to the growing body of theoretical and especially empirical research suggesting social factors strongly affect one's sexual interest, attitudes, and activity. Recent decades have seen a dramatic growth in population-based sexuality research—on topics including dyadic and life-course patterns, gender- and ethnic variations, social-network influences on sex and on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and (most recently) interactions of biological (hormonal, genetic) and social factors in shaping sexual interest and capacities. The course will expose students to these diverse topics, their social- and policy-implications, as well as emerging theoretical frameworks on human sexuality.

Note on quantitative content

Many of the readings rely on statistical evidence. These may be hard to decipher. However, all readings will be thoroughly discussed in class, and this discussion-content will be on lecture powerpoints posted on MyCourses.

More generally, no knowledge of statistics, whatsoever, is required for this class. When reading on your own, please focus on the substantive arguments and interpretations contained in the Introduction and Discussion sections of an article. Not on Methods and Results, which will be the quantitatively-dense sections.

Participation in class discussions

Talking about sexual things is always a challenge, whatever the social context, because of an individual's fear of self-disclosure and active sense of uncertainty, guilt and embarrassment

about what others may think of or infer about her or him as a sexual actor. This is especially strongly felt when the individuals involved don't know each other very well and thus don't have any shared understandings about what things are supposed to mean and what current or future social interactions may occur. This class is mixed by gender, sexual orientation, and social group—posing even more challenges for cross-talk. This class will, in fact, develop a distinctive rhetorical framework for talking about sex that will emphasize empirical description and interpretation of the social meanings/social constructions of sexual behavior, attitudes and beliefs, and fantasy. While some class members may choose to be self-disclosing about, or even inadvertently self-disclose, their own behavior or personal interpretations in the “interests of candor, frankness, and/or liberation,” there is, by no means, any need or expectation that one does so in order to participate effectively in the class discussions. We will all learn to negotiate the distinction between public and private discourse on sex and gender so that very frank and specific commentary on particular acts, fantasies and orientations can go on in class without inappropriate and/or incorrect inferences being drawn. **No one is expected to do more than she or he is prepared to do in talking about these issues in open forum.** I do stress, however, that the quality of what we learn will in important measure be determined by the willingness of people to come to grips with these issues in dialogue with one another.

Learning outcomes

- Policy, politics, ideology
- Theories and methodological issues:
 - Major conceptual frameworks on human sexuality developed in sociology and associated disciplines.
 - Measurement problems with tapping sexual patterns, and tentative resolutions
- Sociology and biology of sexuality—linkages, divergences:
 - Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology
 - Hormones
 - Gene-environment interactions in sexuality
- Violence and sexual victimization:
 - Sexual harassment
 - Childhood sexual contact and life-course effects
 - Cross-national patterns in victimization—U.S., China
- Religion and the social control of sexuality
- Cross-national patterns in sexual behaviors and attitudes
- Sexual problems and dysfunctions
- STDs, HIV
 - Behavioral factors
 - Social networks / network-epidemiology
- Sexuality and health: beyond STDs

Readings

Assigned readings are hyperlinked in this course outline. If you are on campus, or otherwise connected to the campus VPN, clicking on a link will take you directly to the reading. When off campus, you will be redirected to the library website, where you'd have to log in to access the

article in question. The sole exceptions are recent works by the instructor. These are posted on MyCourses, under Content > Das articles.

Course requirements

It goes without saying that all assigned readings must be completed before class. Apart from assignments and exams, participation in classroom discussions will be monitored, and will count toward the final grade (5%).

There will be two **exams**: a mid-term (with short essays, worth 20% of your grade), and a final (multiple choice, worth 30%). All material for exams will be discussed in class, will be contained in the readings, and will be on powerpoints.

Part of each session will be devoted either to in-class exercises, or to documentaries on sexuality:

Exercises: there are three in-class exercises. Specifics to be discussed in class. Note that these are informal. I.e., this component of your grade will be based on diligence and enthusiasm – not quality of performance or “getting it right.” The point is to move beyond scholarly abstractions and make the social dimensions of sexuality “real.”

1. A group exercise on scripting theory (September 26, 28, after lecture). (10%)
2. A group exercise on McGill’s sexual environment (October 24-31, after lecture). (10%)
3. An in-class self analysis on network influences on sexuality (November 23, after lecture). (10%)

For Exercises 1 and 2, students must sign up on MyCourses for a group of 5 by the end of the add/drop period: [MyCourses > Groups > Groups for class exercises 1 and 2](#). Those without a group by September 21 will be randomly assigned to one.

Documentaries (10%): These will be shown in class, after the lecture component of the day. To encourage physical attendance and class engagement, links will not be posted on MyCourses or otherwise provided to students. Most documentaries will be spread over multiple days. Each student is required to post two comments and two discussion questions on each movie (*not* each session) shown after add/drop (September 20). Reactions should be about 150 words long and self-posted on MyCourses ([Discussions > REACTIONS > Movie](#)). You are encouraged (but not required) to respond to other people’s reactions—such responses will count toward the overall grade for this component.

Finally, there are 3 full-session in-class **conferences**, on September 21, November 2, and November 16. No sign-up for conferences is necessary. You must attend at least two conferences, of your choosing, in order to receive credit (i.e., 5% of your final grade). Should you attend *any less than two* you will receive no credit.

Evaluation

- Participation: in class 5%
- Class exercises 10% x 3 = 30%
- Documentaries 10%
- Conferences 5%

- Mid term 20% October 17
- Final exam 30% During exam period

Please advise the professor two weeks before the midterm if you are unable to attend the exam, so that we may make alternative arrangements.

“Students’ rights and responsibilities”

Attendance and participation in class discussions.

You are responsible for all announcements made in class and on MyCourses, as well as for all course materials given out in class. You should also check for new announcements or material on MyCourses at least weekly.

Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 before you do this.

Remise des travaux en français

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue).

Les étudiants de ce cours peuvent rédiger tous leurs travaux (incluant les examens) en français, mais doivent pour ce faire obtenir la **permission préalable** de la professeure. **Aucune permission rétroactive ne sera accordée.**

Policy for the Accommodation of Religious Holy Days

1. Students will not be penalized if they cannot write examinations or be otherwise evaluated on their religious holy days where such activities conflict with their religious observances.
2. Students who because of religious commitment cannot meet academic obligations, other than final examinations, on certain holy days are **responsible for informing their instructor, with two weeks’ notice of each conflict.**
3. When the requested accommodation concerns a **final examination, students are responsible for advising their faculty office as soon as possible and not later than the deadline for reporting conflicts.** Additional documentation confirming their religious affiliation may be requested.

Statement on academic integrity at McGill

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).”

“L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/integrity).”

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"In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change."

SCHEDULE (Note: readings designated as “optional” are precisely that. They will not be on the exams.)

COURSE OVERVIEW, EXPECTATIONS

September 2

THE MACRO CONTEXT: POLITICS, POLICY, IDEOLOGY

September 7

1. Ellingson, S., Tebbe, N., Van Haitisma, M., Laumann, E.O. Religion and the politics of sexuality (2001) *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 30 (1), pp. 3-55.
2. Michael, R.T., Wadsworth, J., Feinleib, J., Johnson, A.M., Laumann, E.O., Wellings, K. Private sexual behavior, public opinion, and public health policy related to sexually transmitted diseases: A US-British comparison (1998) *American Journal of Public Health*, 88 (5), pp. 749-754.

THEORY 1

September 12-14

1. Das, A., Laumann, E. O., & Waite, L. J. (2012). “Sexual expression over the life course: Results from three landmark surveys.” In J. DeLamater & L. Carpenter (Eds.), *Sexualities Over the Life Course: Emerging Perspectives* (pp. 236-259). New York: NYU Press.
 - **Note:** Available on MyCourses > Content > Other articles
2. Gagnon, J. H. (1991). The implicit and explicit use of the scripting perspective in sex research. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 1, 1-41. (**Note: download takes time**)
https://campus.fsu.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/academic/social_sciences/sociology/Reading%20Lists/Social%20Psych%20Prelim%20Readings/IV.%20Structures%20and%20Inequalities/1990%20Gagnon%20-%20Use%20of%20Scripting%20in%20Sex%20Research.pdf

THEORY 2

September 19

1. Anne Campbell, “Female competition: Causes, constraints, content, and contexts.” *The Journal of Sex Research* 44(1): 16-26. (2004).
2. Candace West and Don Zimmerman, “Doing gender.” *Gender and Society* 1987: 125-151.

September 21

CONFERENCE 1

THEORY 3

September 26

1. Joshua Gamson and Dawne Moon, “The Sociology of Sexualities: Queer and Beyond.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 47-64. (2004).
2. Alan Soble, “A history of erotic philosophy.” *Journal of Sex Research* 46 (March – June): 104-20. (2009).

3. **Optional:** Carol Anderson Darling, J. Kenneth Davidson, and Colleen Conway-Welch, “Female ejaculation: Perceived origins, the Grafenberg spot/area, and sexual responsiveness.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 19: 29-47. (1990)

MEASUREMENT

September 28

1. Das, A., & Laumann, E. O. (2010). “How to get valid answers from survey questions: What we learned from asking about sexual behavior and the measurement of sexuality.” In G. Walford, M. Viswanathan, & E. Tucker (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Measurement* (pp. 9-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
2. Waite, L. J., & Das, A. (2010). Families, social life, and well being at older ages. *Demography*, 47, S87-S109.
3. **Optional:** Joseph A. Catania, D. Gibson, D. Chitwood, and T. Coates, “Methodological problems in AIDS behavioral research: Influences on measurement error and participation biases in studies of sexual behavior.” *Psychological Bulletin* 108: 339-62. (1990).

BIOLOGY

September 28-October 5

EVOLUTION

1. Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual Strategies Theory: An evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological Review*, 100, 204-232.
2. Schmitt, D. P., & Buss, D. M. (2001). Human mate poaching: Tactics and temptations for infiltrating existing mateships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 894-917.
3. **Optional:** Buss, D. M., & Shackelford, T. K. (1997). Susceptibility to infidelity in the first year of marriage. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 31, 193-221.

BEYOND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

4. Bancroft, J. (2002). Biological factors in human sexuality. *Journal of Sex Research*, 39, 15-21
5. Udry, J. R. (1988). Biological predispositions and social control in adolescent sexual behavior. *American Sociological Review*, 53, 709-722.
6. **Optional:** Belsky, J., Steinberg, L., & Draper, P. (1991). Childhood experience, interpersonal development, and reproductive strategy: An evolutionary theory of socialization. *Child Development*, 62, 647-670.

October 12

REVIEW SESSION FOR MID TERM

October 17

MID TERM

BIOLOGY, contd.

October 19-31

HORMONES

1. Das, A. & Nairn, S. (2013). Race differentials in partnering patterns among older men: Influence of androgens or religious participation? *Archives of Sexual Behavior*. Article in Press.
2. Alvergne, A., Faurie, C., & Raymond, M. (2009). Variation in testosterone levels and male reproductive effort: Insight from a polygynous human population. *Hormones and Behavior*, 56, 491-497.
3. **Optional:** Carolyn Tucker Halpern, Benjamin Campbell, Christopher R. Agnew, Vaida Thompson, and J. Richard Udry, “Associations between Stress Reactivity and Sexual and Nonsexual Risk Taking in Young Adult Human Males.” *Hormones and Behavior* 42(4): 387. (2002)

Gene x Environment

4. Guo, Guang, Yuying Tong, and Tianji Cai. 2008. “Gene by Social-Context Interactions for Number of Sexual Partners among White Male Youths: Genetics-informed Sociology.” *American Journal of Sociology* 114 Sppl: S36-S66.
5. Halpern, Carolyn T., Christine E. Kaestle, Guang Guo, and Denise D. Hallfors. 2007. “Gene-Environment Contributions to Young Adult Sexual Partnering.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 36(4):543-554.
6. **Optional:** Guo, Guang and Yuying Tong. 2006. “Age at First Sexual Intercourse, Genes, and Social Context: Evidence from Twins and the Dopamine D4 Receptor Gene.” *Demography* 43(4): 747-769.

November 2

CONFERENCE 2

VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION

November 7

1. Michael P. Johnson, “Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: Two forms of violence against women.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57 (May): 283-294. (1995).
2. Das A. (2009). Sexual harassment at work in the United States. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 38, 909-921.
3. **Optional:** Browning, C., & Laumann, E. O. (1997). Sexual contact between children and adults: A life course perspective. *American Sociological Review*, 62, 540-560.
4. **Optional:** Parish, W. L., Das, A., & Laumann, E. O. (2006). Sexual Harassment of Women in Urban China. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35, 411-425.
5. **Optional:** William L. Parish, Tianfu Wang, Edward O. Laumann, Suiming Pan and Ye Luo, “Intimate Partner Violence in China: National Prevalence, Risk Factors and Associated Health Problems.” *International Family Planning Perspectives* 30(4):174-181. (2004).

INTERNATIONAL

November 9-14

1. Laumann, E.O., Paik, A., Glasser, D.B., Kang, J.-H., Wang, T., Levinson, B., Moreira Jr., E.D., Nicolosi, A., Gingell, C. A cross-national study of subjective sexual well-being among older women and men: Findings from the global study of sexual attitudes and behaviors (2006) *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 35 (2), pp. 145-161.

2. Das A., Parish, W. L., & Laumann, E. O. (2009). Masturbation in urban China. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 38, 108-120.
3. Parish, W.L., Laumann, E.O., Mojola, S.A. Sexual behavior in China: Trends and comparisons (2007) *Population and Development Review*, 33 (4), pp. 729-756.
4. Wang, T., Parish, W.L., Laumann, E.O., Luo, Y. Partner violence and sexual jealousy in China: A population-based survey (2009) *Violence Against Women*, 15 (7), pp. 774-798.
5. **Optional:** Parish, W.L., Luo, Y., Stolzenberg, R., Laumann, E.O., Farrer, G., Pan, S. Sexual practices and sexual satisfaction: A population based study of Chinese urban adults (2007) *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 36 (1), pp. 5-20.
6. **Optional:** Luo, Y., Parish, W.L., Laumann, E.O. A population-based study of childhood sexual contact in China: Prevalence and long-term consequences (2008) *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 32 (7), pp. 721-731.

November 16

CONFERENCE 3

SEXUAL PROBLEMS

November 21

1. Laumann, E., Das, A., & Waite, L. J. (2008). Sexual dysfunction among older adults: Prevalence and risk factors from a nationally representative U.S. probability sample of men and women 57 to 85 years of age. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 5, 2300-2311.
2. Parish, W.L., Laumann, E.O., Pan, S., Hao, Y. Sexual dysfunctions in urban China: A population-based national survey of men and women (2007) *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 4 (6), pp. 1559-1574.
3. **Optional:** Nicolosi, A., Glasser, D.B., Kim, S.C., Marumo, K., Laumann, E.O. Sexual behaviour and dysfunction and help-seeking patterns in adults aged 40-80 years in the urban population of Asian countries (2005) *BJU International*, 95 (4), pp. 609-614.

HIV, STDS: NETWORKS

November 23-28

1. Edward O. Laumann, John H. Gagnon, Stuart Michaels, Robert T. Michael and L. Philip Schumm, “Monitoring AIDS and other rare population events: A network approach.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 34: 7-22. (1993).
2. Youm, Y., Laumann, E.O. Social network effects on the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (2002) *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 29 (11), pp. 689-697.
3. Laumann, E.O., Youm, Y. Racial/ethnic group differences in the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases in the United States: A network explanation (1999) *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*, 26 (5), pp. 250-264.
 - **Note:** For #2 and #3: first log in to Scopus: <https://www-scopus-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca>
 - Then do a title search
4. Schneider, J.A., Saluja, G.S., Oruganti, G., Dass, S., Tolentino, J., Laumann, E.O., Yeldandi, V., Pitrak, D. HIV infection dynamics in rural Andhra Pradesh south India: A sexual-network analysis exploratory study (2007) *AIDS Care - Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of AIDS/HIV*, 19 (9), pp. 1171-1176.

5. Schneider, J.A., Cornwell, B., Ostrow, D., Michaels, S., Schumm, P., Laumann, E.O., Friedman, S. Network mixing and network influences most linked to HIV infection and risk behavior in the HIV epidemic among black men who have sex with men (2013) *American Journal of Public Health, 103 (1)*, pp. e28-e36.
6. **Optional:** William L. Parish, Edward O. Laumann, Myron S. Cohen, Suiming Pan, Heyi Zheng, Irving Hoffman, Tianfu Wang and Kwai Hang Ng, “Population-Based Study of Chlamydial Infection in China: A Hidden Epidemic.” *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association 289(10)*: 1265-1273. (2003).

SEXUALITY AND HEALTH: BEYOND STDS

November 30

1. Cornwell, B., Laumann, E.O. Network position and sexual dysfunction: Implications of partner betweenness for men (2011) *American Journal of Sociology, 117 (1)*, pp. 172-208.
2. Kara Joyner and J. Richard Udry, “You Don’t Bring Me Anything but Down: Adolescent Romance and Depression.” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior 41 (4)*: 369-391. (2000).
3. Carolyn Tucker Halpern, Rosalind Berkowitz King, Selene G. Oslak, and J.Richard Udry, “Body Mass Index, Dieting, Romance, and Sexual Activity in Adolescent Girls: Relationships Over Time.” *Journal of Research on Adolescence 15(4)*: 535-559. (2005).

REVIEW SESSION FOR FINAL

December 5

FINAL EXAM: DURING EXAM PERIOD (TBA).