

# SEX AND HUMAN NATURE (ANTH-104)

FALL 2010

200 College Hall, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 PM to 3:00 PM

## CO-INSTRUCTORS

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introduction to the scientific study of sex in humans. Within an evolutionary framework, the course examines genetic, physiological, ecological, social and behavioral aspects of sex in humans. After providing the basic principles of evolutionary biology, the course will examine the development of sexual anatomy and physiology: How is sex determined? What is the physiology of the sexual response? Are men and women biologically different? What determines sexual orientation?

The role of ecology and social life in shaping human mating patterns will be evaluated through the use of ethnographies and cross-cultural materials. Do men and women differ in their sexual strategies? Why marry? Are there biological bases for love? Why do we experience jealousy? Finally, topics relevant to human sexuality today will be discussed, such as rape, contraception, and sexually transmitted diseases. Examples are drawn primarily from traditional and modern human societies; data from studies of nonhuman primates are also considered.

## DISCUSSION MEETINGS

On four occasions during the semester we will allocate part, or all, of the lecture to a different activity. These “discussion meetings” will be used, for example, for watching a video followed by a debate, listening to a guest speaker, playing an illustrative game, observing human behavior on campus or having a discussion on a topic being addressed in the media at the time.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

Attendance is essential for doing well in the course. The uploaded lectures will NOT be well understood unless you have been to class. All information discussed in class (e.g. questions from students, debate following a lecture) MAY BE included in the exams. Note also that attendance to the discussion meetings is worth 10% of the final grade (attendance will be recorded).

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The work you submit in this class is expected to be your own. If you submit work that has been copied without attribution from any published or unpublished source, that has been prepared by someone other than you, or that in any way misrepresents somebody else's work as your own, it will represent a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity. Please consult the Student Handbook or the appropriate web-page: <http://www.college.upenn.edu/policies/integrity.php>

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance to discussion meetings (10 %, i.e., 2.5 % each of four discussions)

First mid-term exam (25 %)

Second mid-term exam (25%)

Third mid-term exam (25%)

Field trip assignments (15%, i.e. 7.5% each of two of four possible trips)

## **Exams**

There will be 3 non-cumulative midterms based on the lecture material, assigned readings, and discussions. They will consist of a combination of definition/description questions, short answer questions, and one essay question. Makeup examinations will only be given with a documented medical excuse, which will be handled by the College Advisor (215-898-6341). If you have any medical reason for missing an exam, you MUST contact the College Advisor, not the TAs or instructors. The College Advisor will contact us.

There is NO FINAL EXAM for this course.

## **Field trip assignments**

You must do 2 (two) field trips and turn in their corresponding assignments. You will choose the two trips from three possible ones that cover a range of costs and location (campus, local, NYC). The three possible field trips are to: 1) Penn's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2) The Philadelphia Zoo, and 3) New York's Museum of Sex. You will have to turn in a dated receipt to show proof of having been there and a short report (not more than a page) on the experience. Details about this assignment will be posted on BlackBoard.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

Shibley Hyde, Janet and DeLamater, John (2006) *Understanding Human Sexuality*. Boston, McGraw Hill. *Earlier editions (e.g., 2002) are also acceptable.* Call # at Van Pelt HQ12 .H82 2006.

The textbook will be on reserve at Van Pelt and will also be available for purchasing at Penn Bookstore. There will be some additional readings of scientific articles spread through the semester that will be uploaded to Blackboard. These readings are required reading material as well.

## **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

- Low, Bobbi S. (2000) *Why sex matters: A Darwinian Look at Human Behavior*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Judson, Olivia (2002) *Dr. Tatiana's Sex Advice to All Creation: The definitive guide to the evolutionary biology of sex*. Henry Holt & Co, New York.
- Small, Meredith (1995) *What's love got to do with it?* Anchor Books, New York.
- Diamond, Jared (1997) *Why is sex fun? Evolution of Human Sexuality*. New York: BasicBooks.

## CONTENTS (The schedule with dates will be available on the BlackBoard site)

### PART I: Principles of Evolutionary Biology and the Evolution of Sex

- Introduction and Mechanics of the course
- Levels of explanations: mechanisms, development, function, evolution
- Different approaches to the scientific study of human sexuality and sexual behavior
- Fundamentals of evolutionary theory. Darwin and Natural Selection.
- Why sex? Asexual vs sexual reproduction. The evolution of sex.

### PART II: How we get there

- Prenatal Sex determination: Genetic sex determination, chromosomal sex determination, sexing the brain. Sex hormones and sexual differentiation.
- Reproductive organs, reproductive cycles: Male reproductive anatomy and physiology. Female reproductive anatomy and physiology. Female ovarian cycle. Function and evolution of sexual organs. Cross-cultural examples of sexual organs modifications.
- The final act: the physiology of sexual intercourse; male and female orgasm.
- Sexual Orientation: Biological basis and cross-cultural overview.

### PART III: The mating game

- Sex Differences. The evolution of sex differences. Biological basis of sex differences.
- What men want. What women want. Mate choice: what's attractive? Biocultural perspectives on sexual attraction. Sperm competition.
- The sexual contract: why marry? How many partners? Cross-cultural perspectives on the various mating systems (monogamy, polygyny, polyandry, promiscuity).
- Mate guarding: Jealousy, Control of Sexuality (Biocultural perspectives)
- Love and attachment.

### PART IV: Sex in our lives

- Contraception: history, evolutionary perspectives, current methods
- Sexually transmitted diseases: physiology, epidemiology, evolution, and prevention

