

Strategy Focus: Consider the social construction of gender and how its assumptions may limit options or presume choices made within the context of health

"Society's discomfort with public expressions of sexuality is a symptom of moral tyranny, and we threaten this tyranny through visibility, performance and political confrontation."

<https://www.goodtroublemag.com/home/sex-militant>

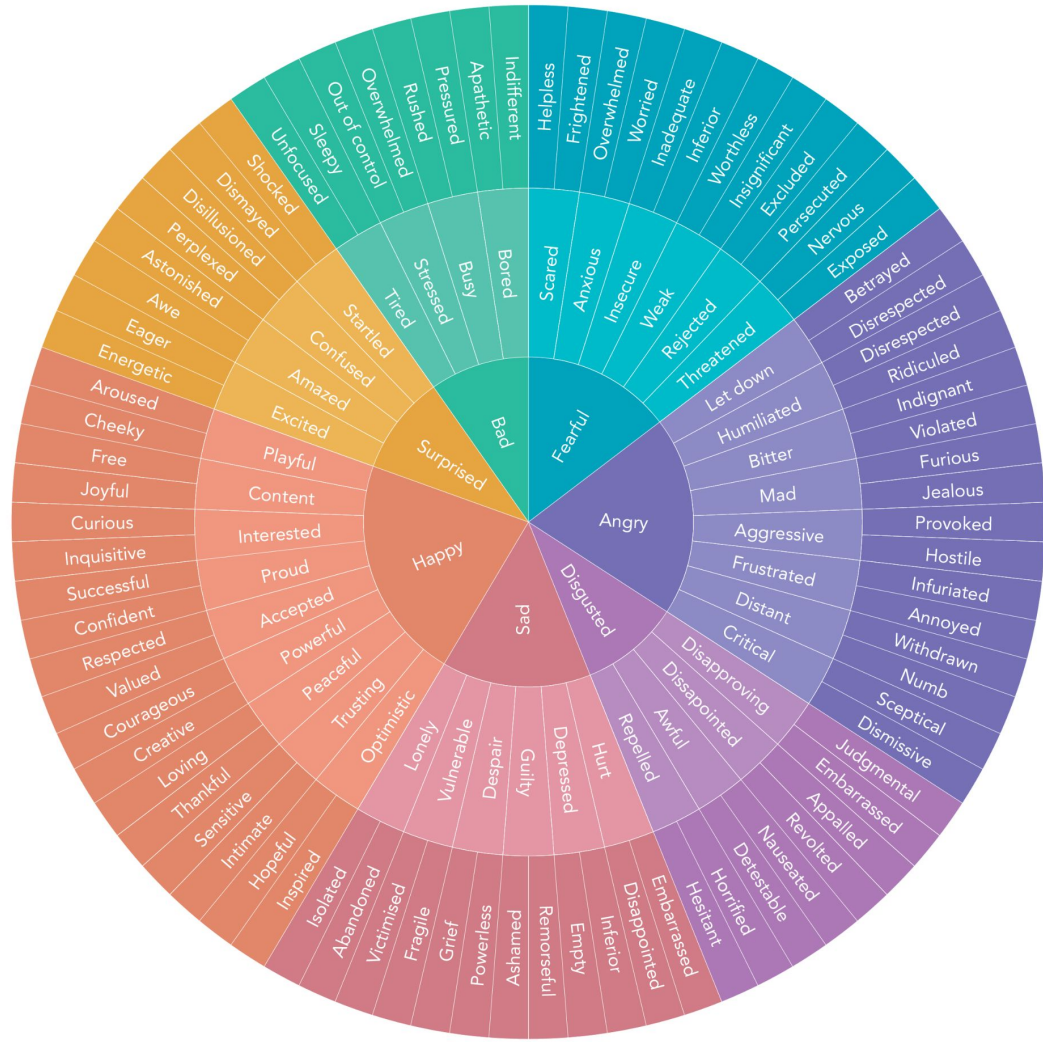


Marsha P Johnson & Sylvia Rivera, 1973



Sexuality

WGS 220 - Week 3



#1. Left out: Looking for what information has been left out or what we don't know and why, as well as what we do know, who knows it, how we know it, and from where/who the information is coming.

#2. Your role: Thinking about your own role or relationship to the issue or topic.

#3. Agency: Identifying women's capacity or ability to control/act in/exert power in a situation in the midst of social constraint(s); women's ability to make their own choices; or, according to bell hooks, "freedom from oppression."

#4. Social Construction: Considering how differences between individuals and groups can be produced (or constructed) by social processes and experiences and how assumptions about these differences may limit or presume choices people make.

#5. Power: Considering how parts of one's identity affect power relationships and how those power relationships influence or control the behavior of others or the course of events.

#6. Social Position: Considering how one's social position (as an individual or as part of a group) and the intersections of different parts of one's identity affect the choices they are able to make and the resources available to them.

#7. Generalizations: Considering the risks and benefits of speaking/thinking in terms of groups ("grouping") versus individuals (i.e., considering heterogeneity versus homogeneity).

Assignment: **Critical Analysis**, due Sept. 26th, 11:59 pm



3 Excerpts, 7 sets of questions (as below):

For each strategy, you must answer the following questions:

(1) In your own words, what does the strategy ask you to do? In other words, what steps do you need to take to use this strategy in an analysis? (2-3 sentences)

(2) Which excerpt is relevant to this strategy? (This can be as simple as saying "2," "excerpt 2," etc.)

(3) Apply the strategy as if you are analyzing the excerpt. What does this strategy help you to see in the excerpt? (2-3 sentences)

Assignment: **Critical Analysis**, *due Sept. 26th, 11:59 pm*

Requirements:

1. Use one of the templates provided here and answer each question for each strategy.
2. Answer all three prompts for each strategy.
3. Discuss each excerpt **at least twice** (meaning you'll use two excerpts twice, and one excerpt three times).

Resources for the Critical Analysis



Canvas page

- Slides from week 2
- (longer) recording of Leanna Papp (former WGS220 GSI) explaining the strategies
- Link to canvas page document with bulleted expectations of what we want you to include in your analyses
- Document with examples of strategy applications

Assignment: **Quiz #1**, *due Sept. 19th, 11:59pm*



BOTH readings and lectures are fair game! (and content from both WILL be on it)

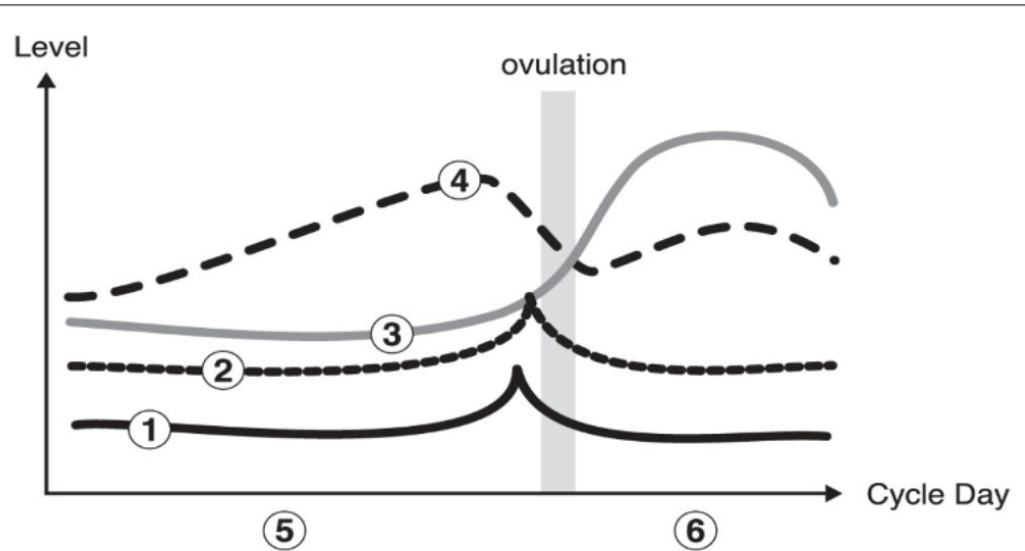
25 questions, 30 mins

SSD accommodations will be given extra time on Canvas. Talk to me if you haven't had your accommodations processed/have concerns about the timing for other reasons.

Agenda

- Practice quiz questions
- Challenging essentialism, biological determinism, power, and privilege
- Misconceptions in sexuality (from Conley et al., 2011)
- Sex education activity

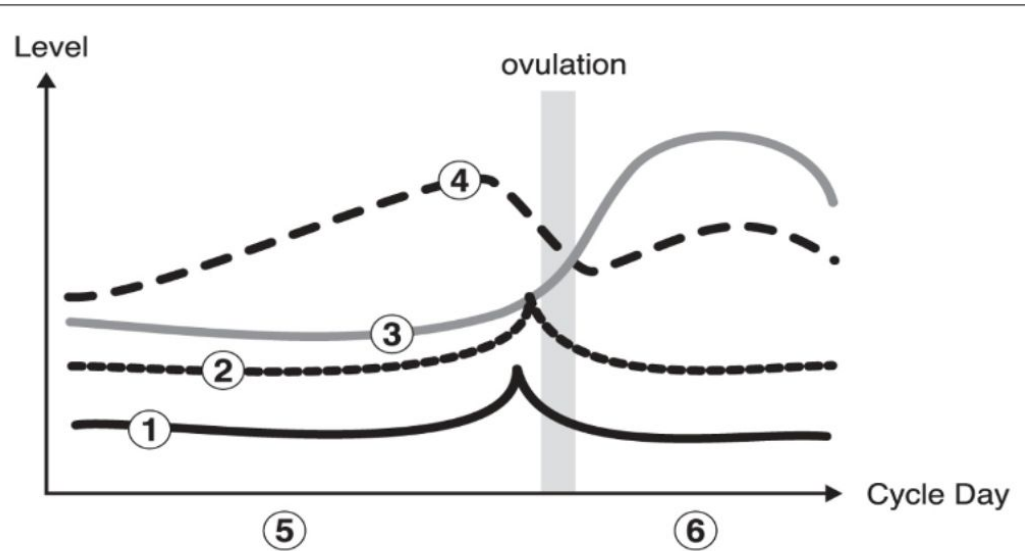
PRACTICE QUIZ QUESTION #1



On this diagram, #3 corresponds to _____ and #4 corresponds to _____.

- (a) LH, Progesterone
- (b) FSH, LH
- (c) Progesterone, Estrogen
- (d) FSH, Progesterone

PRACTICE QUIZ QUESTION #1



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Discussion Sections

[Discussion Section Syllabus](#)

- Practice diagrams
 - [Practice Anatomy](#) ↓
 - [Ovulation](#) ↓
 - [Clitoris](#) ↓

Anna Stabnick- [Section Materials](#)- [Office Hours Appointments](#) ↗

12	Wednesday	7:30-8:30 pm	B124 MLB ↗
6	Thursday	4-5 pm	706 BMT
8	Friday	10-11 am	3463 MH

Office hours: Wednesdays from 2-4 pm ([Make an appointment here](#) ↗ and [join here](#) ↗)

On canvas - practice with the diagrams!

(note: the Ovulation diagram is missing some of the hormones)

PRACTICE QUIZ QUESTION #2

In the reading “Feminism is for Everybody,” by bell hooks, how does she define feminism?

- (a) A movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.
- (b) A movement towards social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.
- (c) A movement that, regardless of a woman's politics, can fit into their existing lifestyle.
- (d) All of the above.

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**Challenging assumptions and
expectations with regards to
sexuality and gender**

Challenging essentialism and biological determinism

Essentialism: “human nature”; view that personality traits, or other qualities (e.g intelligence, femininity) are innate and unchangeable

- ▣ “Women just aren’t good at math”.

Biological determinism: belief that biology does/should dictate (and naturalize) behavior and destiny

- ▣ “Physical and psychological traits are inherited, so we have to control who can procreate” (i.e., eugenics)

Challenging power and privilege

■ Cisnormativity

- **Assumption** that all individuals' gender identity aligns with the genitals/reproductive organs they were born with (and that there are only two “real” categories of genitals/reproductive organs) **examples?**

■ Heteronormativity

- **Assumption** that heterosexuality is the default sexual identity, and non-heterosexuals are thus “abnormal” **examples?**

■ Cissexism/heterosexism

- **Bias** against people who are not cisgender/heterosexual

What about use of the words “homophobia” and “transphobia”?

How are they similar/different from saying something is heterosexist/cissexist?

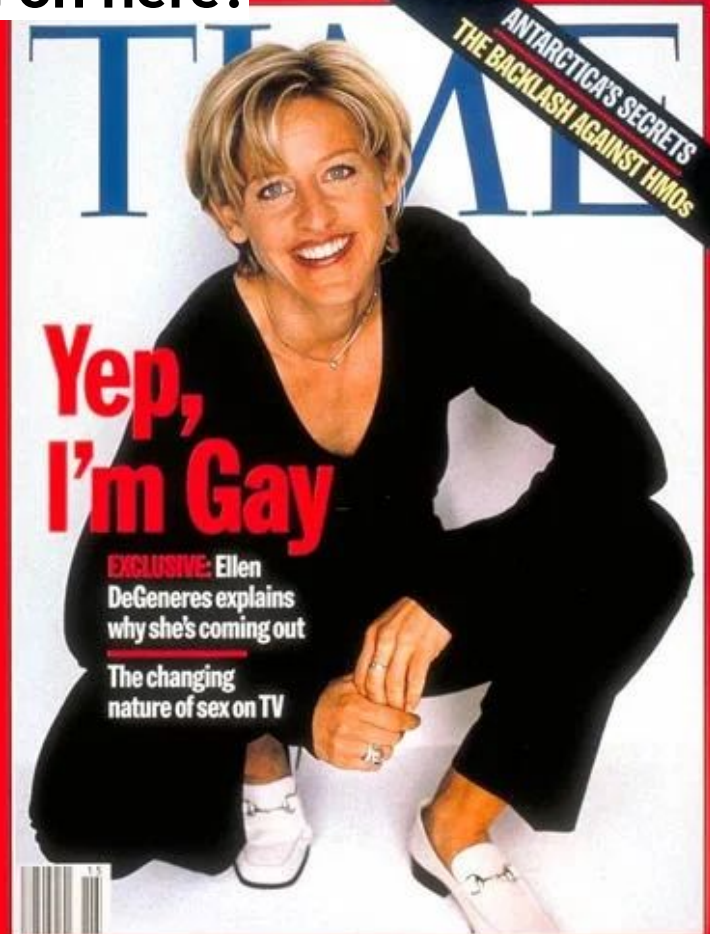
"Although usage of the two words has not been uniform, homophobia has typically been employed to describe individual antigay attitudes and behaviors whereas heterosexism has referred to societal-level ideologies and patterns of institutionalized oppression of non-heterosexual people." LINK: https://lgbpsychology.org/html/prej_defn.html

"homophobia" and "transphobia" refer to *acts* of discrimination or violence, whereas "heterosexism" and "cissexism" are more systemic.

What is going on here?



2019



1997

**What does this
have to do with
women's health?**


Readings review:

How is the meaning of sex adopted and/or altered based on identity?

- According to Alptraum (2018), what is the significance of “virginity”/first-sex?
 - “[Virginity] is just a cultural idiom for speaking to innocence and loss,” nothing intrinsically powerful about the loss of virginity
- How do the narratives around first-sex influence post-transition sex?
 - “No matter what your transition looks like, presenting as a woman can radically alter the way your partners treat you.”
- How do Alptraum and her interviewees try to challenge the narrative around virginity?
 - “...But when it’s an intimate, vulnerable experience of being seen as the person you’ve always felt yourself to be, it can be a truly wonderful and affirming thing.”

True or false?

(from the research by Conley et al, 2011)



People have gender-specific preferences for their partner's qualities (attractiveness and status).



FALSE: In hypothetical situations, yes. But not necessarily in real-world situations.

Women desire and have fewer sexual partners than men.



FALSE: More likely linked to inappropriate data collection methods and social desirability rather than due to desire.

Men think about their physical needs overall more than do women.



TRUE: This invalidates the common belief that men think about sex more than do women - they just have more need-based thoughts.

Women orgasm less frequently than men.



FALSE: Diminishes when considering (1) committed relationships, (2) partner gender, (3) sexual practices

Women don't want to have bad sex or be shamed.



TRUE: Invalidates the common belief that men like casual sex more than do women.

Women are "choosier" than men.



FALSE: May be explained by heterosexual script - women are supposed to be "passive" and "choosy"

How do we learn these misconceptions?

Where do we learn about sex?

Valenti: Sexuality education in the US hinders experiences of sexuality by supporting that:

- Women are sexually passive
- Women are either “good” (chaste) or “bad” (sluts)
- Women’s happiness comes from relationships
- Women should shoulder burdens of sexual consent and communication
- Young women are victims unable to understand complexities of sex
- Youth = purity



What was your
sex education
experience like?

What do you
wish you had
learned?

Creating a Sex Ed curriculum

Scenario: You are all sexual health educators tasked with developing a 6-class sex education course for 7th graders.

What 6 topics will you cover?

Who would teach your class?

What would you call it?

What is “too much” and “too little” information?

Consider: How can we educate for sex-positive futures? From lecture:

- Affirmation of one's gender presentation, sexual orientation, and sexual expression
- Affirmation of one's romantic and sexual relationship choices
- CONSENT is clear, coherent, willing, & ongoing
- Women aren't shamed for their sexuality or sexual choices
- Say YES to sexual pleasure

Spectrum Boutique:

<https://spectrumboutique.com/about>

- Sex-positive, inclusive shop based in Detroit, website includes many toys with review and a blog!



(Informal) Homework this week:

Get an STI test!

Where do I go to get one?

On campus:

UHS Confidential HIV testing - **free** for enrolled students

UHS STI Assessment - **free** for enrolled students

UHS Women's Health Exam - **free** for enrolled students

Off campus:

Unified - HIV testing - can make appt OR **free mailed self-test kits!**

Planned Parenthood - can request an estimate of charges

Corner Health Center (call 734-484-3600)

Washtenaw County Health Department (call 734-544-6840)

Fill out your post-class reflections here:



Reminders:

Quiz 1 due Sept 19th at 11:59pm

Critical Analysis due Sept, 26th at
11:59pm

Reading for next week (all posted on Canvas!)

Video: “When the bough breaks”

Review videos to prepare for finding a research topic!

Crenshaw: the urgency of intersectionality

Jones: Levels of Racism: A theoretical framework and a gardener’s tale

Gamble: Under the shadow of Tuskegee

Wallis: Why racism, not race, is a risk factor for dying of COVID-19