Human Evolutionary Biology 1312 : Human Sexuality: Research and Presentation Seminar

An examination of human sexuality from a scientific perspective. Students will read and present primary scientific literature that highlights current research on a variety of topics related to human sexuality possibly including: gender identity, sexual orientation, cross cultural variations in mating systems, promiscuity, sexual attraction, libido, sexual function and dysfunction, sexual communication - including an exploration of the existence of human pheromones. Recent findings, controversies and conflicting findings will be highlighted. Additionally, some activity based exercise and journaling will be done in class to help students connect their personal experience with the content.

There are five main goals of this course:

1) to learn about the field of human sexuality 2) to critically analyze recent scientific research on human sexuality 3) to actively work on developing public speaking skills both during conversations, group discussions and presentations. 4) build a respectful community of learners and 5) create an environment where you can reflect on what this information means to you personally.

I love teaching this class in large part because your peers and I get to learn from your research and hard work. We only meet formally two hours per week. Additionally, you will be required meet with me before your presentation so I can give you feedback and coaching on the draft. Iâ€™m hoping that I can have lunch with all students through the Collegeâ€™s Classroom to Table program.

Readings:

Primary Text: *Human Sexuality* by LeVay and Baldwin (Sinauer). I have purchased copies for all students who are enrolled. Specific chapter selections may change slightly depending on student interest. Additionally, primary research articles and some popular journalism will be assigned and during presentations you will be reading abstracts of your peersâ€™ articles. There will be no costs associated with this course.

Tentative schedule and topics â€“ subject to change depending on student interests and background

- Class 1 1/25 Introduction - shopping discussion of course â€“ if oversubscribed, students will be notified of enrollment by 1/26 at noon.
- Class 2 2/1 Overview of example presentation and paper, finding articles, what makes a good speaker, discussion of a primary research article â€“ hypothesis, method, result, conclusion. Chapters 1 & 2 Perspectives on Sexuality & Sex and Evolution, quiz 1 â€“ presentation sign up
- Class 3 2/8 Womenâ€™s Bodies & Menâ€™s Bodies, Chapter 3 & 4 Ariely & Lowenstein (2006)
- Class 4 2/15 Sex Hormones and the Menstrual Cycle, Chapter 5 Miller et al (2007)
- Class 5 2/22 Sexual Development & Gender Chapters, 6 - presentations start
- Class 6 3/1 Attraction, Arousal and Response & Sexual Behavior, Chapters 8 & 9 Atlantic article
- Class 7 3/8 Sexual Relationships & Fertility, Pregnancy and Childbirth, Chapter 10 & 11
- Class 8 3/22 Gender & Sexual Orientation, Chapters 7 & 14
- Class 9 3/29 Atypical Sexuality & Sexual Disorders, Chapters 15 & 16
- Class 10 4/5 Contraception and Abortion, Chapter 12
- Class 11 4/12 Sexual Assault Harassment and Partner Violence, Chapter 18
- Class 12 4/19 Sex as a Commodity, Chapter 19
- Class 13 4/26 Sexuality across the Life Span, Chapter 13

Grading-

30% weekly quizzes (starting week 2) based on assigned readings (No make-up quizzes! If you miss class or are late, you miss the quiz. This is a firm policy.)

30% weekly - 10 - 1 page response papers that reflect on the prior class and the readings, discussions and/or presentations (3 pts each)

15%- 5-10 page mini review scientific papers of relevant research that accompany presentations, due by the class in which you are presenting. These must be emailed to the instructor by 1 pm on the day you are presenting. Late papers lose 10% for missing deadline and another 10% per day late.

15% % 10 minute presentations on a primary scientific finding

10% presence, quality of participation, discussion and feedback to peers

Each class will begin with a short quiz based on the weekâ€™s assigned reading. There will be 12 quizzes;

the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. After a few weeks of introductory reading and discussion and preparation, presentatons will begin.

Each student will do one formal presentation. At least one week (hopefully earlier) before the presentation, students must find a primary research paper that tests a hypothesis to choose for the content of their presentation. You must have me vet it by sending me a pdf at least a week (probably earlier!) before your presentation date. After approval, you will need to email the abstract of your chosen article to the whole class at least 2 days before class (Tuesday before Thursday). The quality of the article is important. The best articles are related to the chapter(s) for that week (or possibly an earlier week), have an interesting hypothesis, methods and results that you understand and can explain, and data that you can show visually.

Before your presentation you will also engage in a coaching session with me (at least 3 days before your presentation) to make sure that the content of their scientific presentation is clear. What hypothesis was tested? What were the methods? How did the researchers analyze the data? What conclusions can be drawn from the results? Students will be given feedback on their delivery (pace, volume, eye contact, use of Powerpoint/Keynote/Prezi, vocal intonation, enthusiasm...). It is also strongly recommended that students use the peer speaking tutor program for more feedback. In addition, a short written research paper (5-10 pages) is due at the time of the presentation. Itâ€™s difficult to create both a paper and a presentation but the combination helps you become an expert on this topic.

Since it is very challenging to prepare a paper and presentation for the same day, time management is very important. Immediate feedback on the content and delivery of the presentation comes from classmates. The presentations are also videotaped for students to self review and to get feedback from the instructor.

After discussion and feedback of the in class presentations, the remaining portion of class will be devoted to talking about the week's readings and studentsâ€™ reactions to them.

If you miss class or arrive late, you lose the ability to take the quiz. This policy is because attendance is important for this course. You get to drop your lowest quiz, which also means you get to miss one class without it affecting your overall grade. If you know that you will need to miss more than one class, you may not want to enroll in this course.

Each course at Harvard is required to have a collaboration statement. I encourage you to practice your presentations in front of peers and to even get peer feedback on the drafts of your papers. When writing your papers it is important to follow APA format and follow the guidelines in Writing with Sources. We will talk about ways to paraphrase othersâ€™ work, avoid plagiarism and use proper citation before your first papers are due. Please see the tips for writing a good paper for HEB 1312 handout.