UNSW Course Outline

PSYC1029 Psychobiology of Sex, Love and Attraction - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : PSYC1029
Year : 2024
Term : Term 3
Teaching Period : T3
Is a multi-term course? : No
Faculty : Faculty of Science
Academic Unit : School of Psychology
Delivery Mode : Online
Delivery Format : Standard
Delivery Location : Kensington
Campus : Sydney
Study Level : Undergraduate
Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

Handbook Class Timetable

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

If your social media feed has been inundated recently with strange ideas about love and sex, you're not alone. Dramatic societal changes in the last few decades have led to a re-examination of social norms, and many people are questioning how these changes are impacting our

romantic relationships and our identities.

In this course, we will use evidence from the fields of evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, sociology, and biology to gain a better understanding of the fundamental forces that shape sex, love, and attraction. Through a series of fascinating (and at times disturbing) lectures, this course will provide the tools you need to engage in frank and informed conversations about some of life's greatest questions. Are humans actually monogamous? Why is society obsessed with female chastity? Is masculinity in crisis? How do scientific discoveries get distorted in popular media? And what's the deal with the female orgasm??

This is a 100% online course using pre-recorded lectures*, online modules, and interactive forums. However, we are making some big content adjustments in 2024 to keep up to date with all the latest (and weirdest) research about sex, relationships, and society. Active participation is strongly encouraged, and you will have plenty of opportunities to engage with your peers and lecturers via discussion forums and optional live chats in the Virtual Classroom.

No prior science or psychology knowledge is assumed; the content in this course is accessible to both science students and those in non-science programs.

*Accessibility Note: English subtitles are now available for all lectures. Transcripts upon request.

Course Aims

This course aims to introduce students to the study of sex, love, and attraction in humans and other animals from a broad-based perspective including comparative, psychobiological, cross-cultural, and evolutionary approaches. Students will also learn self-regulated learning and scientific writing skills, providing them with a strong foundation of academic skills they can employ in their future studies.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Identify psychobiological and evolutionary concepts and principles and use them to explain issues and influences of sex, love, and attraction.
CLO2 : Appraise relevant literature and synthesise research findings to develop understanding of sex, love, attraction, and other theoretical issues.
CLO3 : Apply critical thinking skills and draw on empirical evidence from psychological science to examine physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and social factors involved in sex, love, and attraction.
CLO4 : Apply effective written communication skills to elaborate and advance scientific arguments.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Identify psychobiological and evolutionary concepts and principles and use them to explain issues and influences of sex, love, and attraction.	• Quizzes • Final exam • Essay • Group discussion questions
CLO2 : Appraise relevant literature and synthesise research findings to develop understanding of sex, love, attraction, and other theoretical issues.	• Quizzes • Final exam • Essay
CLO3 : Apply critical thinking skills and draw on empirical evidence from psychological science to examine physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and social factors involved in sex, love, and attraction.	• Group discussion questions • Quizzes • Final exam • Essay
CLO4 : Apply effective written communication skills to elaborate and advance scientific arguments.	• Group discussion questions • Essay

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Zoom

Additional Course Information

Psychology Student Guide: The School of Psychology Student Guide contains School policies and procedures relevant for all students enrolled in undergraduate or Masters psychology courses, such as:

- Attendance requirements
- Assignment submissions and returns
- Assessments
- Special consideration
- Student code of conduct
- Student complaints and grievances
- Equitable Learning Services
- Health and safety

It is expected that students familiarise themselves with the information contained in this guide

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Quizzes Assessment Format: Individual	12%	
Final exam Assessment Format: Individual	50%	
Essay Assessment Format: Individual Short Extension: Yes (2 days)	28%	
Group discussion questions Assessment Format: Individual	10%	

Assessment Details

Quizzes

Assessment Overview

The quizzes will cover all course content that is identified as being assessable content from each week, including lectures and assessable readings/other activities. Each quiz will consist of 12 multiple-choice questions, covering material from three weeks of the course. Quiz 1 will cover material from Weeks 1-3. Quiz 2 will cover material from Weeks 4-7. Quiz 3 covers material from Weeks 8-10. The quizzes are worth a cumulative 12% of the total course mark. The quizzes will be made available to you by 9 AM on the Monday of Week 3, Week 7, and Week 10, and will need to be completed by 11:59 PM on Friday in those weeks.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify psychobiological and evolutionary concepts and principles and use them to explain issues and influences of sex, love, and attraction.
- CLO2 : Appraise relevant literature and synthesise research findings to develop understanding of sex, love, attraction, and other theoretical issues.
- CLO3 : Apply critical thinking skills and draw on empirical evidence from psychological science to examine physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and social factors involved in sex, love, and attraction.

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate

information or answers.
For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

Final exam

Assessment Overview

The final exam will be worth 50% of the total course mark. There will be 60 multiple choice questions drawn randomly from a larger pool. No two students will answer exactly the same questions. The examination will be 1 hour, and will assess lecture and reading material from Weeks 1-10. You will only be able to attempt the final exam once. Further details regarding the exact time and will be released on myUNSW as they become available.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify psychobiological and evolutionary concepts and principles and use them to explain issues and influences of sex, love, and attraction.
- CLO2 : Appraise relevant literature and synthesise research findings to develop understanding of sex, love, attraction, and other theoretical issues.
- CLO3 : Apply critical thinking skills and draw on empirical evidence from psychological science to examine physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and social factors involved in sex, love, and attraction.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.
For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

Essay

Assessment Overview

A written assignment (750-1000 words) in essay format will be required for submission in Week 9. You are required to produce a written piece of work, with appropriate supporting references, that will be submitted online via Turnitin. The full instructions for this assignment will not be released until Week 4, but you will be required to identify and analyse physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and/or social factors relating to a topic/issue/question relevant to the

course material. From this, you will then need to draw on relevant evolutionary/psychological concepts and principles to discuss the significance of the topic/issue and its influences on our lives. The essay will be worth 28% of the total course mark. Brief researching and writing skills resources will be made available to provide further help to you on how to approach this essay.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify psychobiological and evolutionary concepts and principles and use them to explain issues and influences of sex, love, and attraction.
- CLO2 : Appraise relevant literature and synthesise research findings to develop understanding of sex, love, attraction, and other theoretical issues.
- CLO3 : Apply critical thinking skills and draw on empirical evidence from psychological science to examine physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and social factors involved in sex, love, and attraction.
- CLO4 : Apply effective written communication skills to elaborate and advance scientific arguments.

Assessment Length

750-1000 words

Submission notes

One submission per student. Submissions final.

Assessment information

Flexibility in task completion - Short Extension

If you are struggling to meet the deadline for this assessment task, you may apply for a short extension of 2 days.

All short extension applications must be submitted *before* the task's due date.

For details on how to apply, and the conditions on applying, please visit the UNSW Special Consideration website.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Generative AI Permission Level

Simple Editing Assistance

In completing this assessment, you are permitted to use standard editing and referencing functions in the software you use to complete your assessment. These functions are described

below. You must not use any functions that generate or paraphrase passages of text or other media, whether based on your own work or not.
If your Convenor has concerns that your submission contains passages of AI-generated text or media, you may be asked to account for your work. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.
For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

Group discussion questions

Assessment Overview

The group discussion questions will involve a question/topic that you will need to comment on in the group discussion forum. Each student will be allocated to a group of ~10 students for this activity. The question/topic will be released by 9 AM on Monday of Weeks 2, 4, 5, and 8. The comment must be submitted in the forum by 11:59 PM on Friday in Weeks 2, 4, 5 and 8 to avoid late penalties. Each comment will be marked out of 20 possible points and will be worth 2.5% of the total course mark. Full credit will be awarded providing the comment demonstrates that the student has engaged with the material in a thoughtful, meaningful, and original way

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify psychobiological and evolutionary concepts and principles and use them to explain issues and influences of sex, love, and attraction.
- CLO3 : Apply critical thinking skills and draw on empirical evidence from psychological science to examine physiological, behavioural, evolutionary, cognitive, and social factors involved in sex, love, and attraction.
- CLO4 : Apply effective written communication skills to elaborate and advance scientific arguments.

Assessment Length

recommended 180-400 words per post

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see here.

General Assessment Information

Special Consideration: Students who experience circumstances outside of their control that prevent them from completing an assessment task by the assigned due date due can apply for Special Consideration. Special Consideration applications should include a medical certificate or other documentation and be submitted via myUNSW within 3 days of the sitting/due date.

Important note: UNSW has a "fit to sit/submit" rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address and advised of the official outcome. If the special consideration application is approved, you may be given an extended due date, or an alternative assessment/supplementary examination may be set. For more information about special consideration, please visit: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration.

Alternative assessments: will be subject to approval and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Implementation Procedure and Psychology Student Guide.

Supplementary examinations: will be made available for students with approved special consideration application and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy and Psychology Student Guide.

All course assessments have been designed and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy.

The APA (7th edition) referencing style is to be adopted in this course. Students should consult the publication manual itself (rather than third party interpretations of it) in order to properly adhere to APA style conventions. Students do not need to purchase a copy of the manual, it is available in the library or online. This resource is used by assessment markers and should be the only resource used by students to ensure they adopt this style appropriately.

Grading Basis

Standard

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 0 : 2 September - 8 September	Other	Explore Moodle page, course outline, welcome information, and Week 1 material
Week 1 : 9 September - 15 September	Lecture	In the Beginning An introduction to the course and the evolution of sexual behaviours across species.
	Online Activity	Complete Course Information Quiz Watch Videos on mating strategies of kangaroos and praying mantis
	Other	Meet the instructor in an online Zoom session for an intro to the course and a discussion of Week 1 material (time TBA)
Week 2 : 16 September - 22 September	Lecture	It's a Man's World Find out how much penis size really matters, and learn some crazy facts about feisty sperm!
	Online Activity	First Discussion Forum (MARKED) Reading Video on flatworm mating
	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 2 content
Week 3 : 23 September - 29 September	Lecture	It's a Woman's World We talk about the strange misconceptions that have shaped the treatment of women throughout history, take a deep dive into the intensive study of the female orgasm, and hear about how learning impacts sexual behaviour.
	Online Activity	Online Quiz for Weeks 1-3 material (MARKED) Readings Podcast
	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 3 content
Week 4 : 30 September - 6 October	Lecture	Attraction Learn about the hormones, neurotransmitters, and evolutionary drives that shape our sexual desires.
	Online Activity	Second Discussion Forum (MARKED) Readings View Essay instructions, resources, and marking rubric
	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 4 content Essay topic released
Week 5 : 7 October - 13 October	Lecture	Desire for Variety Are men and women truly satisfied with sexual monogamy? Discover the risks and benefits of exploration outside the pair bond.
	Online Activity	Third Discussion Forum (MARKED) Reading
	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 5 content
Week 6 : 14 October - 20 October	Lecture	FREE (Flex Week)
	Online Activity	NOTHING
	Other	SLEEP
Week 7 : 21 October - 27 October	Lecture	Love We explore the evolution and neurochemistry of l ove, and find out what happens to our brains and bodies when our hearts have been broken.
	Online Activity	Online Quiz for Weeks 4-7 material (MARKED) Readings
	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 7 content
Week 8 : 28 October - 3 November	Lecture	The Brain We discuss how our brains process love and sex, and consider some facts and fictions about brain differences between men and women.
	Online Activity	Final Discussion Forum (MARKED) Readings

	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 8 content
Week 9 : 4 November - 10 November	Lecture	Age and Culture How does culture impact our opinions on sex and love? What is the purpose of menopause, and why does it exist in our species?
	Online Activity	Submit Essay by Friday 11:59pm (MARKED) Reading
	Other	Zoom discussion of Week 9 content
Week 10 : 11 November - 17 November	Lecture	Naughty or Nice? We'll explore the science of fantasy and "strange" desires, and contemplate the next steps of our sexual evolution.
	Online Activity	Online Quiz for Weeks 8-10 material (MARKED) Readings
	Other	Final Zoom Discussion (including Q&A about final exam)

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

General Schedule Information

This typically consists of approximately 2 hours of online lecture material and 1-2 hours of online activities each week. In addition, students are expected to take an additional 6-7 hours of study to engage in self-determined study to complete assessments, readings, and exam preparation each week.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
	Kelsey Zimmermann					No	No
	Abigail Marcus					No	Yes
	Madison Brooke					No	No

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Upon your enrolment at UNSW, you share responsibility with us for maintaining a safe, harmonious and tolerant University environment.

You are required to:

- Comply with the University’s conditions of enrolment.

- Act responsibly, ethically, safely and with integrity.
- Observe standards of equity and respect in dealing with every member of the UNSW community.
- Engage in lawful behaviour.
- Use and care for University resources in a responsible and appropriate manner.
- Maintain the University's reputation and good standing.

For more information, visit the UNSW Student Code of Conduct Website.

Academic Honesty and Plagarism

Referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.
Further information about referencing styles can be located at https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing

Academic integrity is fundamental to success at university. Academic integrity can be defined as a commitment to six fundamental values in academic pursuits: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. At UNSW, this means that your work must be your own, and others' ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. If you don't follow these rules, plagiarism may be detected in your work.
Further information about academic integrity, plagiarism and the use of AI in assessments can be located at:

- The Current Students site,
- The ELISE training site, and
- The Use of AI for assessments site.

The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit provides further resources to assist you to understand your conduct obligations as a student: https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Penalty for Late Submissions

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and

- no permitted variation.

Any variations to the above will be explicitly stated in the Course Outline for a given course or assessment task.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as early as possible before the deadline.

Special Consideration

If circumstances prevent you from attending/completing an assessment task, you must officially apply for special consideration, usually within 3 days of the sitting date/due date. You can apply by logging onto myUNSW and following the link in the My Student Profile Tab. Medical documentation or other documentation explaining your absence must be submitted with your application. Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address to be advised of the official outcome and any actions that need to be taken from there. For more information about special consideration, please visit: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Important note: UNSW has a "fit to sit/submit" rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

Faculty-specific Information

Additional support for students

- The Current Students Gateway
- Student Support
- Academic Skills and Support
- Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety
- Equitable Learning Services
- UNSW IT Service Centre
- Science EDI Student Initiatives, Offerings and Guidelines