

Las Positas College  
3000 Campus Hill Drive  
Livermore, CA 94551-7650  
(925) 424-1000  
(925) 443-0742 (Fax)

**Course Outline for SOC 7**  
**SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITY**  
**Effective: Spring 2018**

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

SOC 7 — SOCIOLOGY OF SEXUALITY — 3.00 units

This course looks at the social forces that influence, and are influenced by our construction of sexuality. Topics covered include: the social construction of the erotic, the creation of sexual identities, gender and sexuality, religion and sexuality, sexual commerce, and global issues such as birth control and STDs.

3.00 Units Lecture

**Strongly Recommended**

SOC 1 - Principles of Sociology  
with a minimum grade of C

**Grading Methods:**

Letter Grade

**Discipline:**

- Sociology

	<u>MIN</u>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	54.00

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1**

**III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:**

**Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:**

**A. SOC1**

1. Outline multiple social theories
2. Apply social theory to world events
3. Explain how identities such as gender and race are socially constructed.
4. Develop an argumentative research-based term paper
5. Outline the symbiotic relationship between culture and social structure

**IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:**

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

- A. Explain the difference between biological sexual impulses and the socially constructed erotic;
- B. Identify the different components of the erotic;
- C. Explain how modernization influenced the creation of sexual identities;
- D. Outline the history of the current notions of "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality;"
- E. Explain the relationship between gender socialization and gendered sexual responses, gendered courtship patterns and relationship roles (for both heterosexuals and homosexuals);
- F. Analyze the different ways in which religion and science as institutions affect our sexual systems, and how our sexual systems affect the institutions of religion and science;
- G. Compare and contrast various societies' sexual systems in terms of their permissiveness and restrictiveness;
- H. Outline the history of birth control and population control movements, including global eugenics movements;
- I. Explain the concept of "disease ownership" and its impact on global efforts to eradicate sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV);
- J. Identify the relationship between technological innovation and sexual commerce;
- K. Analyze current sexual phenomena such as the effectiveness of aphrodisiacs, the growing interest of Tantric sex in America, the role of orgasm in women's sexual development, and any other "hot topics" of the day;
- L. Make sound personal sexual choices based on the information provided in the class.

**V. CONTENT:**

- A. Introduction to sexual terminology
  1. Medical, jehovanist, and gnostic language
  2. How language affects how we perceive sexuality
- B. The social construction of the erotic
  1. Erotic reality v. everyday reality
  2. Strategies we take to actively de-eroticize everyday reality

3. Importance of time/timing in erotic reality
4. Importance of space
5. Changes in self perception
6. Movements into erotic reality
7. Distinctions between sacred and profane
8. Qualities of sacredness - the erotic as sacred
9. Sacred/ profane/ fuzzy body parts
10. Non-body eroticism – fetishes
11. Non-body eroticism - fantasies and fantasy industry
12. Fantasy subcultures
13. Case studies of the social construction of the erotic: gynecological appointments and nudist resorts
- C. The social construction of sexual identities
  1. Cross cultural variations in sexual categories
  2. Sexual systems in colonial America
  3. Sexual systems in 19th century America
  4. Sexual systems in 20th century America
  5. Impact of capitalism on the development of sexual identities
  6. Emergence of gay neighborhoods
  7. First scientific interpretations of homosexuality
  8. Impact of Freud on our concepts of sexual identities
  9. The emergence of terms "heterosexual" and "homosexual"
  10. 20th century history of "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality"
- D. Individual constructions of sexual identities
  1. Biological explanations/ studies
  2. Psychological explanations/studies
  3. Sociological explanations/ studies
- E. Gender and sexuality
  1. Distinctions between sex and gender
  2. Biological definitions of sex
  3. Contradictions in biological sex
  4. Transsexuals
  5. Gendered patterns of communications and its impact on sexual roles
  6. Effects of gendered socialization on women's sexuality
  7. Effects of gendered socialization on men's sexuality
  8. Gender and courtship behaviors
  9. Gender and dating relationships
  10. Gender and long term relationships
- F. Science and sexuality
  1. How science influences sexual experience
  2. Case study: experiencing menstruation
  3. Case study: boys in puberty
  4. How culture influences science - historical documentation
  5. Case study: how science has attempted to "cure" homosexuality over the past 150 years
  6. Current unease/fears about science and sexuality as presented in film
- G. Religion and sexuality
  1. Current crises in religious institutions re: official "policies" on homosexuality
  2. Case study: Episcopalians
  3. Issues surrounding official policies - areas of dispute
  4. The range of policies from rejecting-punishing to full acceptance
  5. Clashes in Christianity, Judaism and Islam
  6. Role of religious organizations in gay communities or religion as social rebel
  7. How social change affects sexuality, and how sexuality sparks social change
- H. Sexuality in a cross-cultural perspective
  1. Permissive v. restrictive cultures
  2. Variations in marital regulations
  3. Variations in the regulation of pre-marital sex
  4. Variations in the regulation of extramarital sex
  5. Variations in the regulation of incest
  6. Variations in traditions of sexual initiations
  7. Issues regarding sexual education in the US
  8. Problems in pedagogies of sex ed
- I. Cross cultural variations in the acceptance of homosexuality
  1. Sociocultural factors influencing acceptance
  2. Disapproving societies and their shared characteristics
  3. Variations of acceptance
  4. Case study: The United States - a country of contradictions
- J. Technology and reproduction
  1. Ideologies re: conception -- historical examples
  2. History of birth control in the United States
  3. Eugenics and the Nazi regime
  4. Eugenics in US policies
  5. Current global eugenic practices
  6. Birth control v. population control
  7. Birth control options in the US today
  8. Abortive birth control options
  9. Promoting fertility the impact of reproductive technology
- K. Disease ownership, AIDS and STDs
  1. Concept of disease ownership
  2. Case study: prostitutes and syphilis in turn of the century America
  3. Case study: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study
  4. Concept of social darwinism and its impact on research
  5. Case study: Gay men and AIDS
  6. Current global pandemic
  7. Current US epidemic of STDs
  8. Description of various STDs
  9. Why youth is at greater risk
  10. Physical and social consequences of STDs
  11. Methods of protections
- L. Sexual Commerce
  1. Controversies over definitions of pornography/ erotica

2. History of Pornography
  3. Impact of technology on industry
  4. Case study: the introduction of video tape
  5. Pornography use in the US
  6. Research on effects of pornography use
  7. Issues of censorship
  8. The telephone sex industry
  9. The rise of cyber sex
  10. Prostitution in the US
  11. Military prostitution in a global perspective
  12. Sex tourism
  13. Sexual abuse of children in a global perspective
  14. The sex toy industry
- M. Current topics in sexuality (not exhaustive)
1. Teenage sexual myths (blueballs and the like)
  2. Most current research (popular and academic) on sexual positions, practices, etc.
  3. The search for female orgasm
  4. Tantric sex
  5. Kama Sutra
  6. Masturbatory tools
  7. Role of love and sex
  8. Statutory rape laws
  9. Piercing and sex
  10. The effectiveness of aphrodisiacs
  11. Increasing sex drive

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Demonstration** -
- B. **Guest Lecturers** -
- C. **Lecture** -
- D. Film
- E. **Field Trips** -

#### VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Readings
  1. Weekly readings consisting of research articles and relevant sections from the textbook.
- B. Student Presentations
  1. Have different groups of students present on sexual minorities (such as celibates or S & M participants); current sexual trends (such as the resurgence of "swinging" or cyber sex); or artistic representations of sexuality (how it's represented in film, poetry, dance, etc.)
- C. Global research papers
  1. Find out the various ages of consent for both males and females in different countries. Do you see differences in the consent laws based on gender? On sexual orientation? Write up a 4-5 page paper explaining the cultural logic behind the differing laws.

#### VIII. EVALUATION:

- A. **Methods**
  1. Exams/Tests
  2. Papers
- B. **Frequency**
  1. Minimum 2 exams per semester (midterm and the final)
  2. At least one research project resulting in a term paper or class presentation

#### IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Ghaziani, . (2017). *Sex Cultures* (1 ed.). Boston, MA: Polity .
2. Schwartz, . (2015). *50 Great Myths of Human Sexuality* (1 ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
3. Fischer, . (2017). *Introducing the New Sexuality Studies* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge .

#### X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: