



Anth 173  
Evolution of Human  
Sexuality



Syllabus Winter 2007

**THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY**

Anth 173: Tuesday 10:00 to 11:50, Thursday 10:00 to 10:50 pm, COL 150

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**Course syllabus and statement of course policies:**

This course examines the behavior, physiology, and anatomy of human sexuality as traits that have evolved from our primate and mammal ancestors. By first understanding the theory of evolution and then the advantages of sexual reproduction, we can then go on to look at our primate relatives and see how much of our own sexuality has a biological basis and how much (or little) is truly unique to humans.

Although this is a science course, I do not assume that you have a rigorous scientific background: in fact I will be assuming the opposite. My aim is to present the scientific foundations of this course in a way that will give you an intuitive understanding of evolution and sociobiology that will help you look critically at human sexuality from an evolutionary perspective. We will all need, however, a common language and some scientific terminology and definitions will be essential, but it is most important that you understand and see how to apply the concepts. This course is divided into three sections:

- Section 1 runs from the start of the course to first midterm and will examine the theory of evolution, especially how it is applied to behavior. During this time, discussion sections will work on the scientific method and how to generate and test hypotheses.
- Section 2 begins after the first midterm and runs to the second midterm exam. This section will examine the diversity of sexuality in our primate cousins and look for the evolutionary threads that we can use to understand and interpret human sexuality.
- Section 3 starts after the second midterm and goes to the end of the class. During this time we will look at sexual traits often considered unique to humans and see how much we can now understand based on the evolution of these traits in primates or on their evolutionary benefits in a variety of human populations.

Specific goals: My goal here is to teach you to understand and critically evaluate arguments proposed for the evolution of human sexual behavior. As part of this course we will be watching a series of videos by Dr. Desmond Morris that present one view on why humans behave sexually in the ways they do. My hope is that you will not just sit back and enjoy these videos, but instead critically evaluate the presentation of evolutionary theory and its application to the information at hand. Wherever possible, classes based on videos will include a lecture on the hypotheses presented in the video and an examination of whether these hypotheses were addressed. By the end of this class, I think you will look at your own behavior and the behavior of those around you in a very different light.

Required reading materials:

There are assigned readings for both lectures and discussion groups. The assigned readings will be covered in exams. Readings for the lectures are listed on the outline and schedule on the last page of this syllabus. Readings for Discussion groups are listed towards the end of the syllabus.

**There are required texts and readings:**

1. Small, M (1993) What's love got to do with it?: The Evolution of Human Mating. Anchor books
2. Diamond, J. (1997) Why is Sex Fun? Basic Books
3. Evolution of Human Sexuality. A custom printed set of readings available through the bookstore.
4. Additional readings will be posted on the Blackboard site in "Assigned Readings"

**Note again:** There are separate readings for lectures and for discussion sections. Readings are listed in the lecture schedule and the Discussion schedule.

**Grading:** Your grade will be based on: 2 midterm exams, discussion section attendance, discussion section participation (including a worksheet to be handed in during sections), and a final exam. All exams will cover material from both lectures (including the videos) and the discussion sections.

**Exams:** During this class, there will be a total of two in-class midterm examinations and one Final exam. One small classroom will be available for those with difficulties with taking the exam in the large lecture room. These exams are multiple-choice. If you have a learning disability with this type of exam, and you are registered with Disability Services, an alternate format is available. An alternate form is also available for those for whom English is not the first language. Please see Dr. White or your GTF to arrange alternate exams. The two in-class exams will take place during regularly scheduled class times and will be based on assigned readings, lecture material, and discussion section material. The first Midterm will cover evolutionary theory (Section 1) and account for a smaller part of your total grade to allow you the opportunity to learn the style of questions. The second midterm will focus on Section 2 of the class but will include questions that require the understanding you obtained in Section 1. The final will be cumulative but will contain a larger proportion of material covered in the final section of the class (Section 3). Exams scores will not be curved. I will use the following guide in assigning letter grades: A = 90-100%, B = 80 – 89%, C = 70 – 69%, D = 60 – 69%, F < 60%, unless this does not yield reasonable results.

There will be no trick questions on exams but typographic and editing errors do occur and you may ask questions if you do not understand the wording of exam questions. All exams are multiple choice and computer graded.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

1.	Midterm 1	10%
2.	Midterm 2	25%
3.	Discussion attendance	5%
4.	Discussion participation	20%
5.	Final	40%

**FINAL EXAM:** The University regulations do not allow faculty to provide early final examinations.

**Make-up Exams:** Make-up exams are possible and may be approved **ONLY** in the event of a documented serious illness, injury, family emergency, an integral part of your undergraduate education (e.g. a field course or study abroad), or a scheduled university event. **DO NOT ASSUME** that you can take a make-up until it has been approved. If you have one of these valid reasons for missing an exam, you must notify me and/or your GTF prior to or during the scheduled time of the exam. Original notification at the time of the absence may be by e-mail, in writing, by phone or in person, but **MUST** be followed up with an email notification. A valid reason must include documentation such as a signed statement from a physician or equivalent written evidence of an emergency, crisis, or university event. If you have a legitimate reason for missing an exam, you will be approved to take an make-up and assigned an essay question to be completed during the final exam period. If you are absent from campus for a university event during an exam, it may be possible to take the exam away from campus if the correct academic administration is available. Please check with me and/or your GTF if you have questions before the exams. We use multiple different copies of exams to avoid both temptation to cheat and inadvertent copying. Exams are color-coded. You will be responsible for ensuring that your answer sheet includes the correct code for the version of the exam you are answering.

All make-up examinations will consist of essay exams and will be taken either before or during the final exam week.

There will be no extra-credit opportunities to improve grades in this class.

**Attendance:** In order to get the most out of this class, it is vital that you attend lectures and discussion sections. The notes provided on Blackboard are outlines only and much of the material is presented only in lectures. It has been shown many times that class attendance is the most important factor in improving a student's academic performance. Attendance is required (and counts towards your grade) in Discussion sections. If you miss a section, you should contact your GTF and you may be able to make-up a section by attending another section. BUT the class and all discussion sections are full, and only the GTF in charge can give you permission to sit in on another section that is not your own. You will need to obtain permission to attend another section from the GTF before the time of that section.

Attendance will not be recorded for lectures. If you miss a lecture due to illness or other legitimate reasons, you will need to obtain the notes for that class from a classmate. You do not need to inform me if you miss class but I suggest you make an appointment with your GTF to go over missed material during their office hours.

**During lectures:** **PLEASE TURN YOUR CELL PHONES OFF DURING ALL CLASSES!** If you must keep a cell phone on for emergency contact, please use silent rings and sit on the end of a row near the doors. IF you know that you will need to leave a lecture before it ends, I would appreciate you telling me at the start of the class to minimize the disruption.

**Videos and Images:** We will watch a set of videos as an integral part of this class. You will be expected to take notes and retain information from videos as much as from lectures. Exam questions will cover material presented in videos. Where possible, copies of videos will be put on reserve for you to review. Some of you may find some of the content of videos (as well as images in lectures) too explicit or offensive. Most notable here are images of male genitalia, the process of penis erection, and one sequence showing ejaculation. I will try to give a general notice when images that some have found objectionable are coming up. You are not required to watch these images and alternative notes to the videos have been provided.

**GTFs:** This year we are fortunate to have a set of experienced and qualified Graduate Teaching Fellows who are an integral part of this teaching team. Along with the professor, these GTFs will be running the Discussion Sections and will hold office hours. Office hours are an important resource open to you where you can meet with someone who can help you understand material if you are having difficulties. Please make sure you know your GTF's name and contact information as well as your section time and Discussion section CRN number. GTF contact information is listed on the course Blackboard site.

**Discussion Sections:** As an integral part of this class, you will also be required to attend and participate in a Discussion Section. Discussion sections account for a large proportion of your grade. Attendance will be taken at discussion sections. As you will be graded on your discussion section participation, it will be to your advantage to identify yourself to your GTF when you participate in discussions and make sure your name appears on your worksheet. Grading on participation in discussions will be based on the effort you put in. These sections serve several roles (see course schedule):

- In some discussion sections you will cover background material you will need to understand in order to follow evolutionary arguments presented in lectures.
- Several discussion sections provide you with additional material including original research or syntheses to critically evaluate and discuss.
- Answers to both Midterm exams will be reviewed in discussion sections.
- Discussion sections provide you with the opportunity to ask questions and review and clarify material with your GTF and classmates.

You may be assigned reading and need to present information to your section. Make sure you do the readings and prepare before coming to your Discussion section.

**Class Blackboard Site:**

Important information will be posted on the Blackboard site. Please check the site regularly during the term to stay in touch with any changes. To keep the amount of paper we have to use as low as possible, we will avoid giving out handouts and instead post material shown as overheads, etc., on the class Blackboard site for you to review. The site will also include class schedule and syllabus, reading assignments, and whenever possible lecture outlines. It will also include additional resources such as web sites and additional readings for those interested. The results from exams will be posted on the web site as soon as they become available.

**Cheating and Academic Honesty:** Anyone caught cheating or engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will fail this course. As stated in the University of Oregon Policy on Academic Honesty “to present the words, ideas, data or work of another as one’s own, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced”. Please help us in exams by avoiding behaviors that have been associated with cheating, including talking or interacting with friends, wearing hats or concealing clothing, using cell phones, or bringing class materials to exams. We use multiple different copies of exams to avoid both temptation to cheat and inadvertent copying. Exams are color-coded. You will be responsible for ensuring that your answer sheet includes the correct code for the version of the exam you are answering as well as your name and identifying number.

**Discrimination:** We are committed to fostering the University of Oregon’s goals of encouraging a caring and supportive atmosphere on campus and of promoting a campus climate that understands and respects the needs of a culturally, ethnically, physically, and socially diverse student body. Also the University of Oregon is an Affirmative Action / Equal opportunity Institution. There will be no tolerance of discrimination in this class on the basis of any of the categories described in the University’s anti-discrimination policy. Please let me know if you feel discriminated against in any way. Dr. Kenneth Lehrman at the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (346-2971) may also be of assistance.

**Language:** If English is not your primary language and you have difficulties with the multiple-choice format, you may elect to take the alternative essay version of the exams. Documentation from you academic advisor or equivalent is required. Please see Dr. White or your GTF to arrange alternate exams.

**Physical and Learning Disabilities:** Please contact Disability Services if you have a disability that affects your performance in this class so that we can make any reasonable adjustments to improve the learning environment. Exams can be taken using Disability Service resources. Alternate forms of exams are available for those with extra challenges with the multiple-choice format.

**Bloopers and Gaffs:** I feel I must say from the beginning that this is not an easy subject to lecture on. I do try to present the material in a fair and balanced way, but everyone makes mistakes, especially when I am standing up here talking about such a loaded subject as sex for 10 weeks. I also believe in using humor to interest students, provide a break in a long lecture, and provide an additional way for memory to retain information. Although obviously I will try not to say anything too offensive, mistakes do happen and if you are offended anything I say, I apologize, and please work with me to help each year that I teach this course better than the year before. Some of best humor-based learning tools (i.e. cartoons and jokes) have come from students in this class!