

University of British Columbia
Department of Psychology

PSYC 350A: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY

WINTER 2026 COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE DETAILS

Professor:	Dr. Kaitlyn Goldsmith (kmgold@mail.ubc.ca)
Teaching Assistant:	Simone Goldberg (simone08@psych.ubc.ca)
Office Hours:	By appointment with the professor or teaching assistant
Class Time:	Tuesday 5pm to 7:30pm
Class Room:	Online & Buchanan A, Room 102
Required Text:	Hyde, J. S., DeLamater, J. D., Byers, E. S., & O'Sullivan, L. (2022). <i>Understanding Human Sexuality</i> (8 th Canadian Edition). McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Whitby. https://www.mheducation.ca/understanding-human-sexuality-9781265112851-can-group

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the historical, cultural, developmental, physical, social, emotional, cognitive, sociological and relational components of human sexual experience across various contexts. Students will become familiar with the major contributions to this area, particularly as they relate to the lives of Canadians. They will also have a chance to examine a wide range of topics through readings, class discussions, guest speaker presentations, and films.

Primary objectives guiding this course are to familiarize students with key content related to the area, as well as to sharpen students' critical thinking skills, and to create an atmosphere in which issues relating to human sexuality can be discussed thoroughly and freely.

The course material will address a variety of topics in sexuality, therefore, be prepared because some topics may challenge your belief systems and may create discomfort, whereas other topics may give you new insights into your experiences and worldview. You are highly encouraged to engage with the course material using critical self-reflection.

If for whatever reason the course material creates emotional distress, you are advised to seek support from appropriate services both on and off campus. A list of resources is provided in the section **student resources** in the course outline. Be prepared: sexually explicit media (SEM) may be shown during the lecture sessions. Students will be informed beforehand, and can choose not to view it without penalty.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

DATES	TOPIC	CHAPTER
January 6	Overview, Sexuality in Perspective	1
January 13	Theoretical Perspectives	2
January 20	Sexual Anatomy	4
January 27	Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, & Menstruation	5
February 3	Midterm Exam 1 (Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5) Sexually Transmitted Infections (Pre-recorded)	
February 10	Conception, Pregnancy & Childbirth	6
February 17	~Reading Break NO CLASS~	
February 24	Childhood & Adolescence	10
March 3	Adulthood	11
March 10	Attraction & Love	12
March 17	Midterm Exam 2 (Ch. 6, 10, 11, 12) *Guest Lecture on Transgender (Pre-recorded) Sexual Orientation & Identity	14
March 24	Variations in Sexual Behaviour *Guest Lecture on BDSM	15
March 31	Sexual Coercion, Sex for Sale *Guest Lecture on Sex Work (Pre-recorded)	16, 17
April 7	Sexual Response, Sexual Disorders & Sex Therapy & Sexuality Education	18
EXAM PERIOD	Final Exam (Ch. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)	

The pace at which we'll move through the course material will depend on the amount of class discussion. Upcoming topics and information about which topics will be covered on the exams. Will be provided in class. Make sure to also check the class website for updates. Classes will largely be in lecture format with occasional multimedia presentations and guest talks. Lectures will reflect the content of the course textbook; however, **information presented in class will often not be covered in the textbook and vice versa**. For this reason, it is essential that you attend class and read the assigned sections of your textbook if you want to receive a good grade. Material covered in lectures, in the PowerPoint slides, and in the textbook is all fair game for exams. **This includes information that is discussed in class, but is not included in the PowerPoint slides or in the textbook.** You are also responsible for any in-class announcements.

EVALUATION AND COURSE FORMAT

COMPONENT	VALUE	DATE
Midterm Exam 1	33%	Tuesday, February 3
Midterm Exam 2	33%	Tuesday, March 17
Final Exam	33%	Final Exam Period
TOTAL	100%	

MIDTERM EXAMINATIONS (EXAMS 1 & 2)

The midterm exams will take place during class time on Tuesday, February 3rd and Tuesday, March 17th. There will be approximately 60 multiple choice questions, approximately 15 fill-in-the-blank items, and 5 short answer questions on the course material to that point. Exams are non-cumulative. More details will be discussed in class before the exams.

FINAL EXAMINATION (EXAM 3)

The final exam will be held during the final exam period (date, time and place to be announced). The final exam format will be multiple choice, short-answer/fill-in-the-blank and non-cumulative. It will include course material covered after the second midterm examination. More specific details will be discussed during the last week of classes.

COURSE CORRESPONDENCE

CANVAS

A course website supports the teaching and learning activities for this course. Information pertaining to the course will be updated regularly on Canvas UBC. Please ensure that you log in throughout the semester to check announcements, obtain copies of course outlines, and instructions for assignments. All grades will be posted on Canvas. Please note, **I do not check messages from students on Canvas** regularly. Please email me rather than sending a message on Canvas.

EMAIL

You can send emails directed to the professor or TA. Emails typically will be answered within 48 hours and only between the hours of 9am-5pm from Monday to Friday. Messages sent on the weekend will only be read on the following Monday.

COURSE POLICIES

CLASS ATTENDANCE

I will not be taking attendance; the responsibility of attendance is up to the student. However, keep in mind that I will be entirely unsympathetic to those students who miss class and then do poorly on exams or miss announcements about important dates, exams that have been re-scheduled, and changes in the topics covered.

All lectures will be delivered live online via Zoom and will be recorded and posted on the course website. My lecture notes are not handed out. Although the online lectures will be recorded, it will not be possible to attend the entire class remotely as exams will be in-person. If you are not able to attend the exams in-person, I encourage you to change to another class or to a dedicated online course.

Our classroom will be available during class time and you are welcome to join the online lectures from the classroom.

If you are sick, it is important that you stay home. Complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms here: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19.en>. In this class, the marking scheme is intended to provide flexibility so that you can prioritize your health and still succeed.

If you are feeling ill and cannot attend class for a midterm or in-class assessment, please email the instructor right away. If you arrive for a test and you are clearly ill, we will make alternate arrangements with you. It is better to email ahead of time and not attend.

If you are feeling ill at the time of a final exam, do not attend the exam. You must apply for deferred standing (an academic concession) through Arts Academic Advising. Students who are granted deferred standing (SD) will write the final exam at a later date.

If I (the instructor) is feeling ill, and must cancel class, I will make every reasonable attempt to communicate plans for class as soon as possible (on Canvas). I may ask you to watch a pre-recorded lecture, do an activity, or read something in place of class time.

EXTENSIONS AND MISSED EXAMS

Extensions on assignments will only be given with my advance permission. Opportunities to write a make-up exam if a student has missed one will also require my advance permission, and will require documented medical or compassionate reasons before consideration. When you find yourself unable to meet course requirements due to illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the professor in writing, and your academic counsellor. If possible, this should be done in advance of the missed work or event, or as soon as possible after the due date, and no longer than one week later.

COVID-19 SAFETY

For our in-person meetings in class, it is important that all of us feel as comfortable as possible engaging in class activities while sharing an indoor space. It is important that all students follow all UBC guidelines with respect to non-medical masks for combating the spread of COVID-19. Please maintain a respectful environment.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (from the UBC Calendar)

Students are responsible for informing themselves of the guidelines of acceptable and non-acceptable conduct for graded assignments established by their instructors for specific courses and of the examples of academic misconduct set out below. Academic misconduct that is subject to disciplinary measures includes, but is not limited to, engaging in, attempting to engage in, or assisting others to engage, in any of the actions described below.

1. Cheating, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - I. falsification of any material subject to academic evaluation, including research data;
 - II. use of or participation in unauthorized collaborative work;
 - III. use or possession in an examination of any materials (including devices) other than those permitted by the examiner;
 - IV. use, possession, or facilitation of unauthorized means to complete an examination (e.g., receiving unauthorized assistance from another person, or providing that assistance); and
 - V. dishonest practices that breach rules governing examinations or submissions for academic evaluation.
2. Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining

and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.

3. Submitting the same, or substantially the same, essay, presentation, or assignment more than once (whether the earlier submission was at this or another institution) unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor(s) to whom the assignment is to be submitted.
4. Impersonating a candidate at an examination or other evaluation, facilitating the impersonation of a candidate, or availing oneself of the results of an impersonation.
5. Submitting false records or information, orally or in writing, or failing to provide relevant information when requested.
6. Falsifying or submitting false documents, transcripts, or other academic credentials.
7. Failing to comply with any disciplinary measure imposed for academic misconduct.

MARKS & SCALING

The Department of Psychology has a policy in place to ensure that class averages and distribution of marks for all courses are within specified ranges. Instructors are required to scale grades if their class averages and/or distribution of marks do not fall within those ranges. The following guidelines are provided by the department:

Class Performance	Mean	SD	% A	% A+B	% Fail
Good	75	13	22	56	6
Average	73	13	18	50	8
Weak	71	13	14	44	11

Students with Special Needs. Students requesting special consideration for any course requirement (due to a disability) should make arrangements with the UBC Centre for Accessibility and the professor before assignment or exam deadlines. Formal documentation regarding this special need is required.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Student Health Service, UBC, (604)-822-7011
Counselling Services, UBC, (604)-822-3811
AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre (604)-827-5180
UBC Centre for Accessibility (604)-822-5844
UBC Campus Security (604)-822-2222

Syllabus model by R. Milhausen, L. O'Sullivan, and E. S. Byers