SYLLABUS: Sociology of Sexuality

Description: This course examines sexual attitudes, beliefs and behaviors from a sociological perspective. We will consider how the biology of sex gets sociologically constructed. We will go back and forth between basic information about sex in relation to social contexts, and the issue, meaning and enactment of personal choice.


Requirements for your grade: Your grade will be based on the successful completion of two quantitative (multiple choice) exams—a midterm and final based on the readings (30 points each, 60 points total), and two qualitative projects—a short essay exam on the Luker book (20 points) and one research project--oral presentation (group or individual) on a sociological theme (10 points for the oral presentation, 10 points for the one-page summary with a one-page research bibliography—NOTE: each person will turn in his/her individual contribution summary/biblio —20 points total.). Total is 100 possible points for all coursework.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There will be NO make-up exams. If you cannot complete the assignments when they are due, please do not enroll in this course.

Course Outline

January 8: Introductions. What does sociology offer the study of sexuality?
Concepts of personal/sexual choice in society.
Required Reading (RR): Choices, Chapter 1.

January 10: Definitions and conceptual problems: Sex vs. gender
RR: Choices, Chapter 5.

January 15: Martin Luther King Holiday No Class.
Jan 17: Sex Research and Theory
RR: Choices Chapter 2.

RR: Choices, Chapters 3 and 4.

Jan 29-31: Emotional literacy: communication and its problems
RR: Choices, Chapters 6 and 7.

February 5: Behavioral Diversity I
RR: Choices, Chapter 8.

Feb. 7: Behavioral Diversity II
RR: Choices, Chapter 9

Feb. 12: MIDTERM EXAM—in-class, multiple-choice questions


Feb. 28-March 5: Sexual Reproduction
RR: Choices, Chapters 10 and 11.

March 7: Sexuality and the Life Course
RR: Choices Chap. 12.

March 12: Health and Disability Effects
RR: Choices Chap. 13.
March 14: Dysfunction and Therapy
RR: Choice Chap. 14

March 19-25: Spring Break

March 26: Diseases and social impact
RR: Choices Chap. 15

March 28: Sexual deviance
RR: Choices Chap. 16

April 2: Coercion and Rape—male domination effects
RR: Choices Chap. 17

April 4-9: Commercialization—prostitution, porn—domination effects continued
RR: Choices, Chap. 18

April 11: Class Presentations
April 16: Class Presentations
April 18: Class Presentations—Presentation papers due
April 23: FINAL EXAM—in-class, multiple-choice questions