1. Course Statement

a. Course description
Everyone has a sexuality, and so social workers need to be prepared to support clients and communities across a variety of sexual identities, experiences, and behaviors. This course integrates a basic introduction into the spectrum of human sexuality along with foundational pieces supporting the theory and practice of social work. By viewing many facets of sexuality from a social work perspective, students will be prepared to assume serve individuals, groups, and communities regarding various issues connected to human sexuality. We will focus definitions surrounding sexuality, the ethics of sexuality and social work, ways to integrate sexuality information into different types of social work practice, and conversations on how complex feelings around controversial topics may impact both practitioners and their clients. Much of this class will include a more in-depth view on communities often marginalized around sexuality, including LGBTQIA+ individuals, older adults, people with disabilities/impairments, youth, people of color, those who have experiences sexual abuse, those who participate in kink/BDSM practices, and those who chose to be consensually non-monogamous. No previous sexuality education experience required, but an open mind and willingness to engage in the grey areas outside of binaries is strongly encouraged.

b. Course design
This class will strive to foster a learning environment where each student can reflect critically on their own experiences and messages they have been given from the world, construct a
framework for supporting individuals and communities around sexuality, and examine sources of their beliefs and perspectives, and how they may impact their practice. This course will work to create a climate that supports critical analyses, mutual learning, engaging within and across differences and examining sources of power and knowledge. It involves lectures, discussion, video, and ESPECIALLY participation in experiential activities.

c. Relationship to social work ethics and values
The NASW Code of Ethics will be used to give students direction about ethical issues as they relate to the experience of marginalized groups. The course will focus on social workers’ responsibility as professionals to promote general welfare by working toward the elimination of discrimination, expanding choices for all persons, encouraging respect for diversity, advocating for progressive changes in social policies, and encouraging informed participation by the public. Special attention will be paid to sexuality, gender, and other related identities.

d. Intensive focus on PODS
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of practice, theories and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

There will be readings and handouts from recent social science/medical journals and pertinent news articles and/or social media publications, blogs, and other sources distributed to students via Canvas. This course will also include supplemental videos and social media to enhance and support your learning experience.

To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required readings/watchings.

b. Class schedule

Changes in the course schedule due to weather/illness will be given as far in advance as possible; alerts will come over email and changes will be posted to canvas; etc.
Before Day 1, please:

Read this syllabus

Introduce yourself on the discussion board

READ Introduction Part 2 (p. 11-26) and pay special attention to the glossary (p.xxvii -xxxix):

Day 1

11am – 1pm:

Introductions

Group Agreements

Cross the Line/Raise Hand

Language Game

Break 1pm – 3pm (ish)

WATCH Let's Talk About Sex

3pm – 5pm

Taking Sides Activity

Gender Unicorn/Sexual Orientation/Romantic Orientation/Sex/Gender

Check Out

Homework:


Chapters from Coming Out Like A Porn Star. 1) How to Come Out Like a Porn Star: An Introduction (by Jiz Lee), 2) Coming Out About Porn From Inside Oppression (by Ignacio G. Rivera aka Papi Coxxx) and 3) Reveal All, Fear Nothing: Raising a Feminist (by Madison Young)

WATCH: Sins Invalid documentary

LISTEN: to a Polyamory Weekly Podcast (of your choice)

Day 2 – June 5th

11am – 1pm
Check In

Disability and Sexuality

Break: 1pm – 3pm ish

WATCH: Live Nude Girls United (Movie - 70 min)

3pm – 5pm

Sex Work Discussion

Kink Discussion

Non-Monogamy

Exiting activity

Participation: 25 points
Self Reflection Paper: 50 points
Sexuality Professional Interview Reflection: 20 points

Submission of Assignments

All assignments must be submitted online via Canvas at or before the time it is due as indicated on the syllabus. If you are unable to submit online for any reason, email me your assignment directly. If you do not contact me to explain that Canvas is not working, and do not email the assignment, your assignment will be considered late.

Any late assignment will lose 3 points for each day it is late unless arrangements are made with me for an extension prior to the due date. Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency) which may make it difficult for you to complete the assignment by its designated due date time.

Should this happen, it is YOUR responsibility notify me. At my discretion, your request for an extension of an assignment past its due date may be granted, usually for no longer than one week past the due date. I reserve the right to deduct points for late assignments.

Participation – 25
Due Date: Throughout our class time
Participation is broadly defined. Participation refers showing up to class (in a timely manner), asking questions, applying course concepts to questions about your own experiences, contributing to the learning of others, participating in online discussions, providing accurate and respectful feedback to others, identifying any unique learning needs or problems to the professor, and utilizing office hours/email communication when necessary to ask for clarification or assistance in fulfilling course expectations and assignments. Class contributions should focus on relevant course concepts and professional practice experiences. Monopolizing space or contributing off topic is not considered participation. Participation can and should be done both in the classroom and on the discussion boards online.

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary Performance</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of participation in class</td>
<td>Student initiates contributions more than once in each class session/online discussion, however, quality of comments is weighted over quantity. Student responds actively when invited by the professor to contribute, in person or online. Student does not comment overzealously or to the exclusion of other learners.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of comments</td>
<td>Comments in person and online are always insightful &amp; constructive. Student uses appropriate terminology when referring to individuals, communities, and cultural contexts. Comments are balanced between general impressions, opinions &amp; specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Evidence is used to support arguments when possible. Comments are informative and relevant to the discussion at hand.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening Skills</td>
<td>Student listens attentively when others present materials and perspectives, and contribute comments that build on others’ remarks. Student expresses disagreement in a professional and respectful manner.</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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*Modified from Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence

Self Reflection Paper or Video – 50 points
DUE – June 26th 11:59pm
The purpose of this project is for students to explore their own values, experiences, and biases and to better understand how their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs around sexuality influence who they are, how they see the world, and how they might engage clients as social workers.

Papers must be evident of both thoroughness and thoughtfulness. Students are expected to put time and effort into this assignment. Submissions that are not reflective of considerable time and effort will not receive any credit. It is important that students answer the prompts honestly. I am the only one who will be reading/watching this assignment.

This is an opportunity for students to consider what their answers reveal about who they are and how this shapes them as a person and a future social worker or educator.

Do not read or write the text of the questions in your paper. I know the questions and will have a copy of them when I am reviewing your submission. Instead, use the limited time you have to focus on your answers. I also want to encourage you to focus on salient experiences that cut across multiple questions/aspects of your knowledge, attitudes and beliefs around sexuality, and avoid answering each question one by one. There are simply too many questions and many of them overlap. Try to make this paper more comprehensive.

A strong paper will focus on key experiences in your life that shaped your knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about different aspects of sexuality; both yours and others’. For example, you could first discuss messages you received in your family about sexuality, gender, sexual orientation, etc. and then move to important experiences you had in the community that taught you what behaviors were appropriate and desirable.

You don’t have to do it exactly this way, but it will be more manageable than answering each question individually given the space requirements. What is most important is that you take time to really think about the questions, reflect on your life experiences, and synthesize them together to communicate how you developed your sexuality worldview.

The depth of your effort and self-reflection for this assignment will determine the depth of your learning. Feel free to integrate in discussions, panels, videos, and other portions of our class that may have been relevant for you.

1. Introduce yourself. Write ~1 page about who you are; where you are from, where you grew up, etc. Consider how you might introduce yourself to a new roommate. What are the important things you think they need to know about who you are and the identities you hold?
2. WHAT are the messages you have been given around sexuality? This might include topics of when someone should have sex, who they should have sex with, what gender is (or is not), who people should love, access to sexual health care, access to abortion, kink, non-monogamy, sex work, sexuality as intersecting with other identities (race, disability, religion, etc.), and so on. WHERE did these messages come from (family, friends, peers, teachers, ads, media, etc.)? How did you FEEL about those messages when you got them? How do you FEEL about those messages now?
3. What do you think you KNOW about diverse sexuality related identities, behaviors, and concepts (using above definition of all the things that are under this term)? How do you FEEL about diverse sexuality related identities, behaviors, and concepts (using above definition of all the things that are under this term)? What areas do you BELIEVE you are well situated in? Which areas do you need more knowledge or time to marinate?

4. HOW have your own experiences impacted your own worldview of sexuality. You can share as much (or as little) personal info as you want. For example, exploring your own gender may have impacted how you view gender diverse communities, or choosing to have sex outside of marriage might have changed your thoughts about waiting for marriage. You do not have to detail the experience if you do not want, but please share how your OWN experiences have shifted or solidified your sexuality worldview.

5. WHICH areas of sexuality do you think will be most complicated for you to engage as a social work? WHY? And HOW will you ensure you are doing the best you can for your clients, even when (and especially when) their beliefs, behaviors, identities, choices, or attitudes differ than your own? How will the NASW Code of Ethics help to guide you around this?

6. Read your answers to the questions above. Ask yourself: What have I NOT said? Why not? What things did I not explain because I believed the reader shared my common experience? Or because I felt it was not relevant to my social work practice? Upon reflection, identify steps you may take to integrate social justice, self-determination, and other relevant social work values and ethics into potential sexuality practice as a social worker. Also consider areas where you can work on growth throughout this program and your career, and how you will continue to develop knowledge. This should be discussed at the micro, mezzo, and macro level.

**Expected Length:** Papers should be 6-10 pages (Times New Roman 12, double spaced, 1” margins) and in APA format. No citations are needed – this should be 100% based on reflection of your own identities and experiences in moving through the world. Videos should be 10-15 minutes and include captions.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Paper or video represents the author’s ideas, thoughts, or conclusions accurately, fairly, and eloquently. It is authentic to the author and their own experiences, and not regurgitating thoughts already shared in the class or from others. It shows willingness to be self-reflexive and vulnerable. It moves beyond simply recitation of facts and identities.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and Presentation</td>
<td>Paper consistently uses precise and unambiguous wording. It has clear and lucid sentence structure. It has minimal use of quotations and effectively frames first-person perspective in the text. It is clean, correctly formatted in APA style (12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial, 1” margins), and written in full sentences, reaching minimum page length. There are virtually no spelling or grammatical errors. If a video, is easy to listen to, has captions.</td>
<td>10</td>
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Total: 50

*Modified from Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence*

**Interview with Sexuality Focused Social Worker - 20 points**

**DUE – June 30th, 11:59pm**

For this assignment, I am asking you to interview a current social work (MSW and/or PhD in social work) who has done work in the sexuality field. This includes therapists, political folks, researchers, educators, and others. I have cultivated a list of those willing to talk to you/be interviewed, although you are also welcome to reach out to others if you would prefer. This assignment MUST be completed by its due date, no extensions given, so please do not wait
until the last minute on this. The folks on my list will expect to hear from you during this class, or in the few days following.

Please conduct an interview with your person. It will ideally be done real time (phone, in person, Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, etc.), but can be done by email if needs be. Create a list of questions you will ask them (noting that you should also be practicing your general interviewing skills by asking probing questions based on their answers to your initial more general questions. You can ask them things about how they chose social work, how they ended up where they are, successes, challenges, if they would do it again, advice, etc. Please be respectful of their time and keep the interview portion at 10-15 minutes unless they offer to extend it.

Then, I’d like you to write up your experience, and how it connects to your current and future practice. Start with one paragraph about who you interviewed, why you chose them, and a few sentences about their social work practice. What was surprising? What was as expected? What did you learn? How has this changed your ideas about sexuality and social work (if at all)? Is there anything you can take and add to your practice or your plan about educating yourself?

**Expectations:** The ideal paper will be approximately two (2) pages, Times New Roman or Arial, 12-point font, double spaced, 1” margins, and offer a self-reflexive look at your own practice based on your interview and what your professional said. MAKE SURE TO USE THE CORRECT NAME, PRONOUNS AND TITLE of the person you interviewed.

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<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Accompanying paper represents the author’s ideas, thoughts, or conclusions accurately, fairly, and eloquently. It is authentic to the author and their own experiences, and not regurgitating thoughts already shared in the class or from others. It shows willingness to be self-reflexive and to connect knowledge from the community with their own current and future practice.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity and Presentation</td>
<td>Accompanying consistently uses precise and unambiguous wording. It has clear and lucid sentence structure. It has minimal use of quotations and effectively frames first-person perspective in the text. It is clean, correctly formatted in APA style (12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial, 1” margins), and written in full sentences, reaching minimum page length. There are virtually no spelling or grammatical errors. Interviewees pronouns are correctly used.</td>
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Total 20

*Modified from Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence

**c. Grading**

References; MSW Student Guide policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#).

In the spirit of a professional development experience that encourages you to stretch and grow, grading will be mainly on a credit/no credit basis for each assignment. If you make a strong and timely effort on each assignment, you will do well in this class in terms of grading. I will give feedback on each assignment that focuses on improving your knowledge and skills. If you complete the assignment at an acceptable graduate level, you will get the points allotted for that
assignment. Students can lose points by not doing acceptable work and not participating at an acceptable level. I will give you specific feedback about what needs to be improved to make an assignment acceptable.

- Points for all assignments total to 95. Remaining 5 points reserved for exceptional performance. I will occasionally award a bonus point for assignments that are exceptionally well-done and for exceptional class participation and contributions.
- You will lose 1 point for the 1st assignment that I judge as not meeting expectations. You may then resubmit the assignment in acceptable form for credit. If not resubmitted with revisions, you will get no credit for the assignment. You will lose 2 points for the 2nd unacceptable assignment, and 3 points for the 3rd unacceptable assignment, and so on.
- You will lose 1 point for a late assignment. An additional point reduction will be made when an assignment is more than one week but less than two weeks late. Longer than that, no credit will be earned for the assignment. NOTE: Final assignments will NOT be accepted as late and you will lose points for the entire assignment if late.

I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback that helps you to deepen your awareness of professional social work practice as well as your writing and communication skills. If I write or say something that confuses or upsets you, please make an appointment so we can discuss it! If I help you deepen your understanding of something, that is helpful for me to know too.

[Adapted from Dr. Richard Tolman]

Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g., illness, mental health, personal, or family related) which may make it difficult for you to complete the assignment by its designated due date time. Should this happen, PLEASE notify me. At my discretion (which is almost always yes), your request for an extension that takes place MORE than 24 hours before an assignment is due will likely be granted, usually for no longer than one week past the original due date. PLEASE ask for an extension in lieu of not turning in an assignment. One caveat; due to scheduling around turning in grades, NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments must be submitted online via Canvas at or before the time it is due as indicated on the syllabus. If you are unable to submit online for any reason, email me your assignment directly. If you do not contact me to explain that Canvas is not working, and do not email the assignment, your assignment will be considered late.

Note: I am committed to moving towards universal design for learning (UDL). If you have suggestions for how I can improve our classroom space, activities, and/or assignments to be more accessible now or in the future, please do not hesitate to let me know! This also means
that you are welcome to eat/drink in our class, take breaks/move your body as needed, choose where to sit, etc. I will also be asking everyone to share about their access needs (if your access needs have already been met, you can simply say that) to help normalize this in social work spaces.

**Dependent Care Resources**
For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, feel free to consult the Students with Children website (http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include child care, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/) and the UM Child Care gateway (http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/).

*You are welcome to bring your children to class as needed;* I just ask that you do your best to help keep them settled and from disturbing other students' learning processes. Social justice means including families.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Mental health and well-being
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Writing skills and expectations
- Academic integrity and plagiarism