



Sociology 4452G-001

Social Construction of Sexuality

Winter 2026

Delivery Method	Date/Time	Location
In-person	TBA	TBA

Course Instructor	Contact Information
Dr. Julie McMullin	mcmullin@uwo.ca Department of Sociology

Office Hours: **By appointment.**

This syllabus is subject to change. Please see the course OWL Brightspace site possible updates

Course Description

This course will explore the social construction of various forms of sexuality from sociological, criminological, historical, cultural, raced, classed, gendered and queer frameworks. The course will examine theoretical conceptions of normalcy and move into discussions about both legal and illegal forms of sexuality.

Antirequisite(s): None

Prerequisite(s): Registration in third year or above in any Department of Sociology module, or fourth year in any module.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Weight: 0.50

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand and be able to explain how sexuality and deviant sexuality are socially constructed.
- Understand and be able to explain how social structure, place, and time impact constructions of sexuality and its expressions.
- Creatively engage peers in presentation of course material.
- Critically evaluate and synthesize course material in presentations and writing.
- Further develop critical thinking, research, and writing skills.

TEXTBOOK AND OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS

Required textbook: Ralston, Meredith (2021). *Slut-Shaming, Whorephobia, and the Unfinished Sexual Revolution*. McGill-Queen's Press.

Print and e-book versions of the text are available at the bookstore. [Click here for information about the textbook costs.](#)

Students need to purchase this edition. Older editions will not be sufficient.

Additional required readings will be available through OWL. Additional course material (e.g., videos, readings) will be posted on the OWL Brightspace site.

COMMUNICATION:

Students are responsible for checking the course [OWL Brightspace](#) site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

The best way to reach me is through email (mcmullin@uwo.ca). I will endeavour to reply to messages within 24 hours between Monday and Friday and within 48 hours on Saturday and Sunday.

COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE:

Students should check the course [OWL Brightspace site](#) frequently to access the online lessons, course material, and for key deadlines.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.

What does this mean?

For attendance: 1 absence is allowed.

Students are expected to attend all classes and to come to class prepared to critically discuss the readings and other course material. **Class attendance is mandatory. If you do not attend a minimum of 8 classes, you will not pass the course.**

Weekly Assignments:

For weekly assignments: These are due two days before class, but you will be able to submit answers for an additional week.

This course requires students to complete weekly assignments which involves writing answers to survey questions. Completion of these surveys will count toward your participation grades. These surveys and other course material are available on OWL Brightspace.

Students are expected to submit each assignment by the deadline listed. Should illness or extenuating circumstances arise, students are permitted to submit their assignment up to 72 hours past the deadline without academic penalty. **Should students submit their assessment beyond 72 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade.**

Students will be required to upload all assignments to OWL Brightspace.

Evaluation Component	Brief Description	Due Date	Percentage of Grade
Participation	Attend class; actively participate in class discussions; answer online questions; demonstrate accomplishment of learning objectives.	On-going	30%
Seminar facilitation	Students will lead the class discussions of the weekly course readings. This will require short summaries of the readings, critical evaluations (including developing one question for critical thought) and the development of creative group work projects.	Date to be determined during the first class.	30%
Final Paper	Students will write a research paper of approximately 3500 words. The paper will use primary academic sources (10-15) and will address a specific research question.	April 4	40%

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the

obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays and written assignments should reflect the student's own thoughts and independently written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and allows you to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

Electronic Devices:

The use of electronic devices is permitted in this course.

ACADEMIC POLICIES:

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Copyright: Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as

part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Absence from Course Commitments: Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration](#) – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP)

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html. Students are permitted one academic consideration

request per course per term without supporting documentation.

Note that supporting documentation is *always* required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described in the course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medicalcertificate.pdf> or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup test/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty Academic Counselling Office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

Religious Accommodation: Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious

Holidays

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf. Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning: In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or University approved emergency during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL Brightspace for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Code of Student Conduct: It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf. Sanctions for noncompliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University.

Student Responsibility: Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf and the Registration and Progression policy https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf. Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf.

Support Services:

Office of the Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

[Faculty Academic Advising](#) - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters

https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html.

[USC services](#) offers information about student the health/dental plan, Bus Pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

[Mental health](#) – Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

[Health & Wellness Services](https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html) – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>. Additional on-campus services are also available <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html>.

[Accessible Education](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html) provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

[Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/gethelp.html) – Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/gethelp.html

[Western Libraries](https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html) – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html>. Research support is available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.

[Writing support](https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/) – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>

Bookstore: Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>