

Dr. Bernard McGrane  
**HON 416: SPRING 2020**

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## **Hon 416: Sex, Self and Society, Spring '20**

“We are all motivated by an intense **curiosity** about sex but thwarted by our **inability to discuss it.**”  
(Winks and Semans 1997:36)

“Sex is just as taboo as it was 100 years ago.” (Spenser Boring, Student)

### **Course Statement:**

This course explores the social construction of sexual ignorance, the social accomplishment of sexual repression, and addresses our sexual socialization. Simultaneously we will attempt to promote greater realism, greater skillfulness and greater literacy regarding our lives as sexual beings, as gendered beings and as romantic beings. We will inquire into the barriers of sexual communication and promote cross-gender understanding and appreciation. We will explore the distinction between conditioned, habitual and conscious sexuality. We will examine the achievement of intimacy, the labor of romance and relationship, and the spiritual aspects of eroticism.

Sociologically we will address how conventional sex education reinforces sexual ignorance and how, even in this most private and intimate of spheres, the fingers of society are relentlessly present. Is it possible to reduce or eliminate the socially acquired sexual suspicion and mistrust between men and women in contemporary society? Can contemporary western males connect with their “inner female”? Can females connect with their “inner male”? For our culture and for our history, a woman is an object of desires—not a subject with desires. What is the relation between sexuality and power over others? What is “sacred sexuality” and what is the relation between sexuality as pleasure, sexuality as power and sexuality as spiritual practice?

Education is a journey, not a destination; hence students will be highly encouraged to integrate their formal readings with their own personal life experiences and to practice doing sociology rather than merely learning about it. We will also be doing various “experiments” in “de-socialization” wherein we will use ourselves as a laboratory and we will, to some degree, become our own sociological experiments. Our whole overly medieval, academic, educational tradition is that you acquire knowledge through collecting stuff from text books and “knowing” it (especially for “tests”). We will attempt to contest the authority of that tradition and celebrate first hand investigation, thinking, and creating rather than collecting and memorizing.

“Everything in the world is about sex, except sex. Sex is about power.” (Oscar Wilde)

“Throughout history men have been the subject of sex while women have been the object of sex.” (S. Mech, student)

Intimacy is not intercourse. (former student)

### **Major Study Units:**

1. The theory of repression and the relationship of sexuality and society  
(The suppression of female sexual agency and the reinforcement of male agency.)
2. Sex education itself as a medium reinforcing ignorance and suppression
3. Male Sexual Body, Sexual Mind
4. Female Sexual Body, Sexual Mind
5. Interviews on American's sexual fantasy life
6. Sexuality and Spirituality
7. Sexualities: Fear, Ignorance, and Repression
8. Sex is not natural; Heterosexuality is not innate; Society is inside of sex
9. Communication across the Sex Divide
10. Sociological Conceptions of Gender
11. The "R" word: Relationship, Love and Marriage

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

Students who complete this course should be able to:

1. Describe the key methodological paradigms of the social and psychological sciences studying human sexuality.
2. Design, conduct, and evaluate research employing a variety of different methodologies.
3. Evaluate competing "knowledge claims" regarding the foundations and interpretations of human sexuality.
4. Explain and discuss social history, theory, and terminology regarding human sexuality.
5. Explain and discuss how sociological and psychological research and analysis regarding human sexuality are carried out.
6. Explain and discuss the broad range of social institutions and process regarding human sexuality, from a micro-sociological and macro-sociological lens.
7. Be aware of global issues and problems regarding human sexuality.
8. Demonstrate an ability to write effectively using appropriate sociological, psychological and philosophical style and terminology.

### **Chapman University's Academic Integrity Policy:**

Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

### **Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy:**

In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Disability Services Office, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any

accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

### **Equity and Diversity**

Chapman University is committed to ensuring equality and valuing diversity. Students and professors are reminded to show respect at all times as outlined in Chapman's Harassment and Discrimination Policy: <http://tinyurl.com/CUHarassment-Discrimination>. Any violations of this policy should be discussed with the professor, the Dean of Students and/or otherwise reported in accordance with this policy.

## **Course Materials**

The following is a list of required readings for the course. You will need to purchase most of the books for this class. All are 'inexpensive' paperbacks, and many can be found as used copies on internet (highly recommend Amazon!) or as PDF's at <http://bookos.org/>.

### **Books**

1. **THIS SYLLABUS**—Please read it closely!
2. Veronique Mottier, **Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction**
3. Lisa Wade, **American Hookup, The New Culture of Sex on Campus**
4. Cathy Winks & Anne Semans, **The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex**
5. Nancy Friday, [3 separate books]
  - a. **My Secret Garden, An Anthology of Women's Sexual Fantasies**
  - b. **Women on Top**
  - c. **Men in Love**
6. Brett Kahr, **Who's Been Seeping In Your Head: The Secret World of Sexual Fantasies**
7. Justin Lehmiller, **Tell Me What You Want, The Science of Sexual Desire and How it Can Help Improve Your Sex Life**
8. Charlotte Davis Kasl, **If The Buddha Dated**

### **On Blackboard**

9. Inge Bell, **This Book is Not Required, An Emotional Survival Manual for Students**
10. Thich Nhat Hahn, **True Love**
11. Eric Fromm, **The Art of Loving**
12. Sharon Salzberg, **True Love**
13. Arnaud, Margot, **The Art of Sexual Ecstasy**
14. Lori Brotto, **Better Sex Through Mindfulness, How Women Can Cultivate Desire**
15. Bernard McGrane, **The Un-TV and the 10 MPH Car**
16. Louis Gould, "X: A Fabulous Child's Story"
17. "Kinsey" chapter from Paul Robinson, **The Modernization of Sex**
18. Dennis Waskul et al., "**Women and Their Clitoris**"
19. M. Scott Peck, **The Road Less Traveled**
20. John Gottman, **The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work**

21. Christopher Aanstoos, “**Phenomenology of Sexuality**”
22. D.H. Lawrence, “**A Propos of Lady Chatterley’s Lover**”
23. Denis de Rougement, “**Love**”
24. Snell and Gail Putney, “**Love or Marriage**”
25. Justin Sterling, **What Really Works With Men**
26. Michel Foucault, **The History of Sexuality**
27. Sontag, Susan, “**The Pornographic Imagination**”
28. Camille Paglia, **Sexual Personae, Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson**
29. Connor Reed, “**Pornography Addiction: A Cause for Concern**”
30. Planned Parenthood Website: **BetterThanSexED.org**
31. All “**Sample Quality Papers**” from your class that I notify you about.

### **Recommended Books**

Ann Rice, The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty  
Ryan, Christopher & Cacilda, Jetha, Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means for Modern Relationships  
Easton and Liszt, The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities  
Easton, The Topping Book & The Bottoming Book  
Winks and Semans, The Woman’s Guide to Sex on the Web  
Diamond, Jared, Why is Sex Fun?  
Dennis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World  
Nathaniel Brandon, The Psychology of Romantic Love  
Morton Hunt, The Natural History of Love

### **Recommended Films**

*Kinsey; Don Jon; Bliss (Hollywood film); In the Realm of the Senses (Japanese film); What Kids Want to Know About Sex and Growing Up; The Secrets of a Sexual Surrogate; Nina Hartley’s Guides; Passion and Power: The Technology of Orgasm; Still Doing It: The Intimate Lives of Women over 65; Adult Entertainment: A Psychosocial Study of An American Obsession; The Vagina Monologues; “Sticky”-A (Self) Love Film; The Clitoris; Sam Keen on Sex and the Sacred; Secrets of Sacred Sex; Killing Us Softly; Tough Guise; The Masks You Live In; Dreamworlds; Wrestling With Manhood; The Pinks and the Blues; The Perfect Vagina; Porndemic; Sexy Baby; Understanding Hookup Culture; Americans in Bed. Explained. Sex Education.*

### **Exams & Grading**

#### **Instructions**

When turning in exams, 2 copies are required—*paper copy* submitted in class the day it is due, plus an *electronic copy* submitted to Blackboard’s Assignment, Turn-it-in.com. Without these two copies **no credit** will be given. American Sociological Association (ASA) style format is required. You will need in-text citations and a references page. Details and full explanations of all exams, quizzes and presentations will be provided.

For your hard copies, **DO NOT** put your name on the front of your essay but, rather, *on the back of the last page*. You can put your name on front for the electronic copy.

1. Exam #1 (25% of total grade)
  - a. **Take Home Essay:** Integrate the materials of weeks 1 through 4 around a core theme in 2 to 4 pages (i.e. Mottier, Winks & Semans, Wade, other readings, films and discussions).
  - b. Possible in-class essay and/or multiple choice exam.
2. Exam #2 (25% of total grade)
  - a. **Take Home Essay:** Integrate the materials of weeks 4 through 8 around core theme in 2 to 4 pages (i.e. Friday, Kahr, Lehmler, other readings, films, and discussions).
  - b. Possible in-class essay and/or multiple choice exam.
3. Exam #3 (25% of total grade)
  - a. **Final Take Home Exam:** Integrate the materials of the last few weeks around a core theme in 3 to 5 pages (i.e. Kasl, Hahn, Fromm, Brotto, other readings, films and discussions).
4. Team Projects, Exploriments and Presentations (25% of total grade)
  - a. Students will be required to present and/or write reflections regarding experiences/assignments related to the course content.

**Rubric for Exam Essays:** a) power of integrating theme, continuity and comprehensiveness; b) use of materials, range and depth of reference; c) creativity, boldness, and originality; d) writing style, communication skillfulness.

*To work on and improve your reading and writing skills, I recommend you use Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg and How to Read a Book by Mortimer Adler.*

#### **Grade Breakdown:**

Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Team Projects/Experiments	25%
Final	25%

#### **Course Integrity and Discipline**

1. Anyone who disrupts the **integrity** of the class environment – for example through chattering or consistently coming late – will be dropped from the course.
  - a. This course will breakdown and become completely impossible without each student's commitment to fully honor and respect the confidentiality of what gets shared here.
2. Anyone who engages **in plagiarism** – presenting someone else's written work as your own – will be dropped/failed from the course. A letter will go in your university file and it is possible you will be expelled from the university.

## An Optimistic Calendar and Detailed Road Map

You are responsible for EVERYTHING that occurs in class WHETHER YOU ARE PRESENT OR NOT. Please connect with 2 classmates to contact for help if you miss a class. Many assignments are ONLY GIVEN ORALLY in class. Unless you are on some form of medical alert ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES—cell phones, laptops, etc. are to be TURNED OFF during class. This syllabus is a guide for an educational journey, not a legal document. Please relate to it accordingly. Readings with \*asterisks\* below can be found on Lib Reserve and/or Blackboard.

### SEX EDUCATION AND MIS-EDUCATION: SEXUALITY, GENDER AND SOCIETY & EROTIC ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY

“In America sex is an obsession. In other parts of the world it is a fact.” (Marlene Dietrich, Hollywood Actress)

“What you have between your legs is sex (male or female). Gender (masculine or feminine) is between your ears; it is the whole of your life, your emotional and mental makeup, the way you present yourself in society, the way you interact with others, your imagination, the theater of your being.” (Caitriona Reed, *Coming Out Whole*)

Dates	Required Readings & Assignments
2/4, 2/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read over this entire <b>syllabus</b> carefully</li><li>• Bell, <b>This Book is Not Required, An Emotional Survival Manual for Students*</b>: Ch. 2 &amp; 5</li><li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex</b>: Foreword &amp; Ch. 1</li><li>• Mottier, <b>Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction</b>: Intro &amp; Ch. 1</li></ul>
2/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bell, <b>This Book is Not Required, An Emotional Survival Manual for Students*</b>: Ch. 6-7</li><li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex</b>: Ch. 2-3</li><li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture</b>: Intro &amp; Ch. 1</li></ul>
2/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex</b>: Ch. 4-5</li><li>• Mottier, <b>Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction</b>: Ch. 2</li><li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture</b>: Ch. 3</li><li>• <i>Recommended:</i> <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/io_tillett_wright_fifty_shades_of_gay">https://www.ted.com/talks/io_tillett_wright_fifty_shades_of_gay</a></li></ul>
2/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex</b>: Ch. 6-7</li><li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture</b>: Ch. 5</li><li>• Kinsey chapter from Robertson, <b>The Modernization of Sex*</b>: Part 1</li><li>• <i>Recommended:</i> Gottman, <b>Gott Sex? – Myths about Sex*</b></li></ul>
2/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex</b>: Ch. 8-9</li><li>• Mottier, <b>Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction</b>: Ch. 3</li><li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture</b>: Ch. 6</li><li>• Kinsey chapter from Robertson's, <b>The Modernization of Sex*</b>: Part 2</li></ul>
2/25	<p><i>Sex Shop vs Toy Shop exploration write-up due</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex</b>: Ch. 10-13</li><li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture</b>: Ch. 7</li><li>• Anand, Margot, <b>The Art of Sexual Ecstasy*</b>: How to Use This Book</li></ul>

2/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex:</b> Ch. 14-15</li> <li>• Mottier, <b>Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction:</b> Ch. 4</li> <li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture:</b> Ch. 8</li> <li>• Anand, Margot, <b>The Art of Sexual Ecstasy*</b>: Chapter 1</li> </ul>
3/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex:</b> Ch. 16-17</li> <li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture:</b> Ch. 9</li> <li>• Anand, Margot, <b>The Art of Sexual Ecstasy*</b>: Chapter 2</li> </ul>
3/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winks, <b>The New Good Vibrations Guide to Sex:</b> Ch. 18-20</li> <li>• Mottier, <b>Sexuality, A Very Short Introduction:</b> Ch. 5</li> <li>• Wade, <b>Hookup Culture:</b> Conclusion</li> <li>• Recommended, Gould, "X-A Fabulous Child's Story"*, Waskul et al., "<b>Women and Their Clitoris</b>"*</li> </ul>
3/10	<b>Exam #1 (HARD COPY AND ONLINE VERSION DUE)</b>

"If you believe in nothing else believe that sexual repression never sleeps, especially the sexual repression of women."  
 (Nancy Friday, **Women on Top**, p 17)

"Sexuality is not a leisure or part-time activity. It is a way of being." (Alexander Lowen, **Love and Orgasm**)

## **SEXUAL FANTASIES, THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY**

...can we dismiss our fantasies as just harmless private entertainment—assuming that a bit of kink never hurt anyone—or do our fantasies actually govern our lives in other respects?  
 (Brett Kahr, **Who's Been Sleeping in Your Head?** p 270)

So long as women were cut off from masturbation, they were cut off from their inner erotic lives.  
 (Nancy Friday, **Women on Top**, p 29)

I can conclude that approximately 90% of masturbatory fantasies contain elements of obviously traumatic incidents which became eroticized...that trauma functions as a key ingredient in the genesis of adult sexual fantasies.  
 (Kahr, **Who's Been Sleeping in Your Head?** pg 393)

"As accepting as I am of my sexuality in general, *my fantasy scares me.*" (Student, S'16)

Dates	Required Readings & Assignments
3/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, <b>My Secret Garden:</b> Intro &amp; Ch. 1-2</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Women on Top:</b> Parts 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Men in Love:</b> Ch. 1-3</li> <li>• Lehmiller, <b>Tell Me What You Want:</b> Preface, Intro &amp; Ch. 1</li> </ul>
3/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, <b>My Secret Garden:</b> Ch. 3—select 1 room</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Women on Top:</b> Part 3—select 1 fantasy type</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Men in Love:</b> Select 1 chapter</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows:</b> Intro &amp; Ch. 1</li> </ul>
3/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, <b>My Secret Garden:</b> Ch. 3—select 1 room</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Women on Top:</b> Part 3—select 1 fantasy type</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Men in Love:</b> Select 1 chapter</li> <li>• Lehmiller, <b>Tell Me What You Want:</b> Ch. 2</li> </ul>
3/23-27	<b>SPRING BREAK!</b> <i>Recommended: Rice, The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty</i>
3/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, <b>My Secret Garden:</b> Ch. 3—select 1 room &amp; Ch. 6</li> <li>• Friday, <b>Women on Top:</b> Part 3—select 1 fantasy type</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday, <b>Men in Love</b>: Select 1 chapter</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows</b>: Ch. 2</li> <li>• Camille Paglia, <b>Sexual Personae</b>*</li> </ul>
4/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kahr, <b>Who's Been Sleeping In Your Head</b>: A Note on Caution &amp; Confidentiality &amp; Ch. 1-2</li> <li>• Lehmiller, <b>Tell Me What You Want</b>: Ch. 5-6</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows</b>: Ch. 3</li> </ul>
4/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kahr, <b>Who's Been Sleeping In Your Head</b>: Ch. 3</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows</b>: Ch. 4</li> <li>• Aanstoos, <b>Phenomenology of Sexuality</b>*</li> </ul>
4/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kahr, <b>Who's Been Sleeping In Your Head</b>: Ch. 16-18</li> <li>• Lehmiller, <b>Tell Me What You Want</b>: Ch. 7</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows</b>: Ch. 5</li> <li>• Michel Foucault, <b>The History of Sexuality</b>*: up to Ch. 2</li> </ul>
4/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kahr, <b>Who's Been Sleeping In Your Head</b>: Ch. 19-21</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows</b>: Ch. 6</li> <li>• Michel Foucault, <b>The History of Sexuality</b>*: after Ch. 2</li> </ul>
4/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kahr, <b>Who's Been Sleeping In Your Head</b>: Ch. 22-24</li> <li>• Lehmiller, <b>Tell Me What You Want</b>: Ch. 8</li> <li>• Carnes, <b>Out of the Shadows</b>: Ch. 7-8</li> <li>• Susan Sontag, <b>The Pornographic Imagination</b>*</li> </ul>
4/16	<b>Exam #2 (HARD COPY AND ONLINE VERSION DUE)</b>

Being able to give ourselves an orgasm is sexual independence; though it's nice to have a partner, it's important to know that for sex to take place it isn't necessary. Giving ourselves an orgasm is the sexual equivalent of being able to pay our own rent. (Nancy Friday, **Women On Top** pg. 55)

In all of human life no one has more power over another person than a mother over a child... Mother, let your little girl masturbate. (Nancy Friday, **Women On Top** pg. 59)

## **ROMANCE, LOVE, RELATIONSHIPS, MARRIAGE & SPIRITUALITY**

“I did not yet love and I wanted to love so I sought what I might love, in love with loving.”  
(St. Augustine, **Confessions**)

“The beginning of love is to let those we love be perfectly themselves, and not to twist them to fit our own image.  
Otherwise we love only the reflection of ourselves we find in them.”  
(Thomas Merton)

“Falling in love is easy—staying in love is a whole other story.” (Noah Mayer, student)

Dates	Required Readings & Assignments
4/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bell, <b>This Book is Not Required</b>: Ch. 11*</li> <li>• Peck, <b>The Road Less Traveled</b>: Pgs 81-130*</li> <li>• Hanh, <b>True Love</b>: Ch. 1-4*</li> <li>• Salzberg, <b>Real Love</b>: TBA*</li> <li>• Brotto, <b>Better Sex Through Mindfulness</b>: Foreword &amp; Introduction*</li> </ul>
4/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peck, <b>The Road Less Traveled</b>: Pgs 130-182*</li> <li>• Fromm, <b>The Art of Loving</b>: Ch. 1-2.2*</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justin Sterling – <b>What Really Works With Men*</b></li> </ul>
4/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kasl, <b>If The Buddha Dated:</b> Part 1</li> <li>• Hanh, <b>True Love:</b> Ch. 5-8*</li> <li>• Salzberg, <b>Real Love:</b> TBA*</li> <li>• Brotto, <b>Better Sex Through Mindfulness:</b> Ch. 1 &amp; TBA*</li> <li>• Gottman, <b>The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*</b></li> </ul>
5/5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kasl, <b>If The Buddha Dated:</b> Part 2</li> <li>• Fromm, <b>The Art of Loving:</b> Ch. 2.3*</li> <li>• Lawrence, “<b>A Propos of Lady Chatterly’s Lover”*</b></li> </ul>
5/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kasl, <b>If The Buddha Dated:</b> Part 3</li> <li>• Hanh, <b>True Love:</b> Ch. 9-12*</li> <li>• Salzberg, <b>Real Love:</b> TBA*</li> <li>• Brotto, <b>Better Sex Through Mindfulness:</b> Ch. TBA*</li> <li>• Rougement, “<b>Love”*</b></li> </ul>
5/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kasl, <b>If The Buddha Dated:</b> Part 4</li> <li>• Fromm, <b>The Art of Loving:</b> Ch. 3*</li> <li>• Putney, “<b>Love or Marriage”*</b></li> </ul>
5/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kasl, <b>If The Buddha Dated:</b> Part 5 &amp; 6</li> <li>• Hanh, <b>True Love:</b> Ch. 13-16*</li> <li>• Salzberg, <b>Real Love:</b> TBA*</li> <li>• Fromm, <b>The Art of Loving:</b> Ch. 4*</li> <li>• Brotto, <b>Better Sex Through Mindfulness:</b> Ch. TBA*</li> <li>• <i>Recommended: Hendricks, Getting the Love You Want*</i></li> </ul>
5/14	<b>Exam #3 (HARD COPY AND ONLINE VERSION DUE DATE TBA)</b>

“American Marriages are unstable because Americans marry for love.”  
 (Putney, **The Adjusted American**)

“It seems to me that working for love is an expression of love.”  
 (Joe Wheeler, student)

“As much as we may want and need healthy intimate relationships, many of us have never learned the skills necessary to develop them. **Most of us received more training in how to drive a car than in how to select a partner and build a healthy relationship.**”  
 (Terry Gorski, **Getting Love Right**)

## Themes

### Sex & Bliss

The following is a quote from Margot Anand, **The Art of Sexual Ecstasy** (p. 2-3):

My first peak sexual experience took place in Paris, France, my hometown, when I was 18 and set me off on a course of study and teaching that I have pursued ever since. At the time I was very much in love with a young American artist named Robert. He certainly fit the all-American male image: Tall, strong, good looking, and more than capable of sweeping me off my feet. Sex between us was raw, primal, and wild, fulfilling my adolescent dreams of how a “real man” should behave with his woman. I was studying yoga at the time, however, and was beginning to experience some subtle

dimensions of feeling – quiet, meditative, serene moods – and I began to wonder what it would be like to integrate these states into my sex life.

I spoke about my feelings one evening during our lovemaking. We were having sex in the usual energetic way, when I said, “Robert, please slow down; let’s try something new.” We stopped and simply relaxed staying bonded together with Robert still inside me. I was lying on top. I felt excited because I had initiated something new, removing his responsibility for making something happen. There was a subtle switch of roles, and I felt him shift into a more feminine, receptive attitude. We remained like that for many minutes, relaxed while at the same time feeling the excitement of sexual arousal in our bodies. I soon felt a kind of warm, glowing energy beginning to diffuse itself through my whole pelvic area.

We wanted to maintain sexual arousal, so when the excitement began to fade, we returned to our usual style of active lovemaking. Then, just before the peak of orgasmic release, we stopped, relaxed, and became still once more. We repeated this pattern several times, and then something totally unexpected happened. Suddenly we both seemed to be floating in an unbounded space filled with warmth and light. The boundaries between our bodies dissolved and, along with them, the distinctions between man and woman. *We were one*. The experience became timeless, and we seemed to remain like this forever. There was no need to have an orgasm. There was no need even to “make love.” There was nothing to do, nothing to achieve. We were in ecstasy.

After that extraordinary experience I tried many times to recapture the ecstasy in our lovemaking but without success. Robert quickly forgot about it, but I began to feel that ordinary genital orgasm was not the only desirable state to which lovemaking could lead. Like many others, I felt the frustration of loving at 10 percent of my potential. I recognized that the pleasure of routine or recreational sex was not the ultimate pleasure; indeed it was just a beginning. How would it be, I wondered, if during lovemaking one could consistently re-create the conditions that led to bliss? I decided to search for ways to cultivate ecstatic states in conjunction with the sexual experience. For the next 15 years, I explored the great traditions of ecstatic sexuality.

## Love Games

The following is a quote from a '06 student essay, Jim:

If it's still unclear on what I'm saying then I'll try to use an analogy using a video game. (I know what you're saying: "A video game? How the hell are these two things even close?" Just hear me out.) Video games are the most fun the first time you play them. Each level is new with something unknown around every corner. The further you get the more difficult it gets, yet it's easier to maintain a more difficult stage because you have since become accustomed to the character and the controls. Finally you beat it and now the game has little or no interest to you because you've already explored everything there is to explore. *Getting love right is a never ending video game*. Endless amounts of levels with all kinds of ways of beating them. You may think you have conquered the love game because you are bored with your relationship and feel that there is nothing left to explore. This merely means that you have beaten that level and it's time to move onto the next. This doesn't necessarily mean that each new level represents a new relationship, but actually levels vary greatly for each individual and can deal with the same significant

other for a million levels or last for only one. This concept or idea is so far what I believe I've best learned from this course.

### Misogyny

"The convenience of misogyny is that men are spared from hating themselves because they have women to hate instead," (Laura Kipnis)

One answer, sure to please no one in the condemnation business, was suggested by the feminist Dorothy Dinnerstein's *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (1976): the problem for men is that they had mothers. Having once been children, a time where women controlled their bodies in humiliating and disempowering ways, men seek to turn the situation around in adulthood. Mother-dominated child-rearing, thought Dinnerstein, is the reason behind men's loathing of women and everything culturally inscribed as female. Both men and women remain semi-human and monstrous under such arrangements, and this is both our social situation and our personal tragedy: men can't give up ruling the world until women cease to have a monopoly on ruling childhood. To push Dinnerstein's speculations to an even gloomier place: do mothers take out on their sons the abuses they themselves have suffered at the hands of men?

### Observations on Marriage

"Love: a temporary insanity, curable by marriage," (Ambrose Bierce, author and editor)

"In 25 years of marriage I'm proud to say the word 'divorce' has never come up once... 'Murder' Yes, but 'divorce', no," (Interview with a married couple)

"You know what getting married is? It's agreeing to taking this person who right now is at the top of his form, full of hopes and ideas, feeling good, looking good, wildly interested in you because you're the same way, and sticking by him while he slowly disintegrates. And he does the same for you. You're his responsibility now and he's yours. If no one else will take care of him, you will. If everyone else rejects you, he won't. What do you think love is? Going to bed all the time?" (Jane Smiley, novelist, b.1949)

"The evidence of psychoanalysis shows that almost every intimate emotional relation between two people which lasts for some time--marriage, friendship, the relations between parents and children--leaves a sediment of feelings of aversion and hostility, which only escapes perception as a result of repression." (Freud, found in Asa Berger, *Durkheim is Dead, a Sherlock Holmes Detective Story* pgs. 82-83)

## **THERE ARE NO NEW IDEAS. ONLY NEW WAYS OF MAKING THEM FELT**

### **The 4 Noble Truths of Love**

1. Relationships are Uncomfortable
2. Thinking Relationships Should be Comfortable Makes Them Uncomfortable
3. Meeting the Discomfort Together is Love
4. *Learn the 4th Noble Truth of Love*

### **Writing Practice**

Your final assignment of the course is to make a ‘sex bucket list’ and do your best to achieve your dreams!

### **A THOUGHT FOR TODAY:**

Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to continually be part of unanimity. -Christopher Morley, writer (5 May 1890-1957)