

WS 2163B – Sex, How To: Sex Education, Its History and Controversies

Winter 2018: Thursdays 4:30-7:30

Instructor: Dr. Nichole Edwards

When we think of the term sex education, we often think this refers to what we learnt (or did not learn!) as young people, in school or at home. While this course considers both of these more formal settings, the overall objective is to more deeply explore the underlying, implicit messages about sex, gender, sexuality, sexual practices, and sexual and romantic relationships that permeate through various social, cultural, political, and religious discourses – from both a western and global context. In other words, this course examines the history of sex education, formal and informal ways of gaining sexual knowledge, as well as the current controversies surrounding sex education as a whole. Taught from an intersectional perspective, students will develop a more nuanced understanding of the role that race, class, age, religion, and economics (to name a few) have played, and continue to play, in the construction and production of sexual knowledge and education. Some topics we consider include: moral panics and youth sexuality; gaining informal sexual knowledge in the digital age; masculinity and heterosexuality; and, queer pedagogy in global sex education.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Offer critical reflections of both formal and informal settings where sex education is typically (thought to have been) taught
- Identify the often gendered messages that shape the knowledge produced around the umbrella term, sex education
- Discuss the history of sexual education, and the specific knowledge that was disseminated in a given time – for instance, the Victorian Era, the sexual revolution of the 1960s, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s
- Identify how intersections like race, class, economics, religion, geography, and age, impact the messages that are relayed about sex, gender, sexuality, and sexual relationships
- Recognize the importance of changing technologies and how this has impacted understandings of sex, and the representations of it
- Develop a coherent sense of how to respectfully and intelligently engage in discussions/debates with peers, via online discussion posts and in-class discussions

Assessments and Weighting (subject to change)

Online Discussion Posts – 20%

Creative Assignment – 20%

Midterm – 30%

Final Exam – 30%

