

# WS 2163B – Sex, How To

## Winter 2019 – Wednesdays 4:30-7:30

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### Course Description

When we think of the term sex education, we often think this refers to what we learned (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 and implicit messages about sex, gender, sexuality, sexual practices, and sexual/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 many current controversies surrounding sex and sexuality 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 have played, and continue to play, in the construction and production of sexual knowledge and education. This course also considers ways in which you, as a student, might gain new kinds of sexual knowledge with regards to topics you may have otherwise not been informed on – for instance, the stigma surrounding sex work, or the mainstreaming of kink. Other topics we will consider include: moral panics and virginity, the role of shame in young women’s sexual development, gaining informal sexual knowledge in the digital age, masculinity and heterosexuality, LGBT rights in a global context, and sexual health in the context of HIV/AIDS – to name a few.



“BDSM prioritizes consent and communication. It may often be *more* feminist than a lot of traditional vanilla sex that prioritizes male pleasure over female pleasure.”

## **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
- 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 of 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