

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES
GSWS 1021F: Introduction to Sexuality Studies
Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Cornel Grey

Lecture:

Location:

Office:

Telephone:

Email:

Office Hours:

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an interdisciplinary half-year course that will introduce students to the field of sexuality studies. It will examine this field through several different approaches: theoretical, literary, visual, cultural, and historical. The aim will be to explore questions of identity and representation as they relate to sexuality: how are sexual identities formed? Are they essential or constructed? Who controls representations of sexuality? Why do we think of certain sexualities as normal and others as deviant? Within this context, we will analyze how certain expressions of sexuality are socially excluded and devalued in the name of a sexual norm.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND IMPORTANT DATES:

Delivery Mode	Dates	Time
Lecture	Mondays, (Weekly)	1:30-3:30 PM
Tutorials: in-person	Mondays, (Biweekly starting September 15)	(see times and locations below)

Classes Start	Reading Week	Classes End	Study day(s)	Exam Period
September 4	November 3-7	December 9	December 10	Dec 11-22

*December 1, 2025: Last day to drop a first-term half course without academic penalty.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- Define and distinguish between key concepts in sexuality studies, including sex, gender and sexuality.
- Demonstrated an introductory understanding of sexuality studies as an interdisciplinary field.
- Analyze how social norms shape ideas about bodies, identities, relationships, and family.
- Identify how sexuality intersects with race, class, indigeneity, disability, and age in different contexts.

- Critically assess contemporary debates around reproduction, sex education, and sexual identities.
- Formulate a focused research question related to sexuality studies.
- Locate, evaluate, and use scholarly sources through relevant databases.

Correspondence Statement

The centrally administered **e-mail account** provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner. You can read about the privacy and security of the UWO email accounts [here](#).

Students are encouraged to email the instructor or their tutorial leader if they have questions about the course. Students can expect a response from me within 48 hours during the work week. Students are not guaranteed a response over the weekend, or on holidays. Only emails using your "@uwo.ca" account will be answered.

If you haven't heard from me after 48 hours, please send a follow-up email. I want to hear from you.

COURSE WEBSITE

All course information, including assignments, will be posted on the course website. Go to <https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home>

REQUIRED TEXTS

All other readings will available via the Course Readings webpage: <https://course readings.lib.uwo.ca/ares/>

Hyperlinks to assigned readings are also provided in the syllabus and on OWL Brightspace.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

The instructor acknowledges that students have commitments elsewhere (i.e., other courses, jobs, caregiving, etc.), however, enrolment in this course constitutes a commitment to engage meaningfully with the subject material and participate in class. Students are invited to bring in materials (articles, blog posts, YouTube videos, etc.) that they feel are relevant to the week's topic. Note, however, that this is not a substitute for assigned readings. The assigned texts will serve as the basis for our conversation, and you must connect whatever material you are referencing/presenting to the assigned readings so that your peers may participate effectively.

Instead of "setting ground rules", we will spend some time in our first class developing a vision for the ways we hope to relate to each other. We come into this space from different places and with varying needs. To create a productive and mutually affirming environment for students and the instructor, we will have a brief discussion about individual and collective needs, expectations, and offerings for the classroom.

CLASS CONDUCT

- Students are expected to arrive on time. Showing up to class late disrupts the flow of conversation and is often distracting.
- Please refrain from using electronic devices (i.e., laptops, phones, etc.) unless employed for class purposes. Recordings are not permitted. Electronic devices will not be permitted during in-class tests or exams.

LATE AND OUTSTANDING ASSIGNMENTS

University policy on academic considerations are described [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

Late assignments will receive a 2% deduction per day. Weekends count for two days penalty. An assessment cannot be submitted after it has been returned to the class. An alternative assignment will be assigned under special circumstances.

Students seeking academic consideration must submit a request within 28 days of the assignment deadline.

Extender Policy

Students are granted an automatic 5-day extension (cumulative) that may be applied to written assignments only (specifically, the Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography and the Final Paper). This policy does not apply to the midterm exam or the final exam. The 5 days may be used all at once (e.g., a single 5-day extension on one assignment) or divided between the two assignments (e.g., 2 days on the proposal and 3 days on the final paper). To use an extension, you must email your TA before the assignment deadline, indicating your request in the subject line or body of the message. No explanation is required. Students registered with Accessible Education should also contact the instructor or their TA to discuss extensions related to their formal accommodations (as needed).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and will be treated as such in this class. Students should refrain from presenting someone's work, ideas, opinions and/or writing as their own. Proper citation and referencing are key. Ignorance of plagiarism is not an excuse for representing someone's work as your own. I strongly encourage all students to familiarize themselves with the university's policies on academic misconduct. You have the tools to succeed in this course without engaging in academic misconduct. Connect with the instructor or your TA if you have concerns or are having trouble. We are here to help.

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

TURNITIN

All written assignments must be submitted through Turnitin. Access to Turnitin will be available through the OWL course website. According to university policy: “All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted 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 and Turnitin.com.”

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This course encourages you to approach the world with curiosity and to think about how different tools (including artificial intelligence) can expand the questions you ask and the perspectives you consider. AI may be helpful for light editing (such as grammar and punctuation) or for gathering background information, but it is not a replacement for the close reading, reflection, and critical thinking that are essential to postsecondary study. The work you submit should reflect your intellectual efforts, voice, and engagement with course materials. In some cases, you may be invited to meet with your TA or instructor to discuss a submission—not as a form of punishment or surveillance, but as an opportunity to clarify your ideas and ensure that your work best represents your perspective. You are responsible for verifying the accuracy of any information drawn from AI tools, and you should always use them with a spirit of curiosity, rather than as a shortcut to avoid deeper learning.

Best Practices for Using AI Tools

Do:

- Use AI tools for light editing (grammar, punctuation, clarity).
- Experiment with AI to spark curiosity (e.g., to brainstorm angles on a topic or identify new questions to ask).
- Treat AI outputs as a *starting point* that requires verification and deeper research.
- Reflect on how AI might expand the way you think about sexuality, identity, culture, or society rather than serve as a replacement for your thinking.
- Ensure that your final work reflects your own intellectual effort, voice, and engagement with the course material.

Don't:

- Copy AI-generated text into your assignments as your own.
- Rely on AI tools as a substitute for reading, critical analysis, or discussion.
- Assume AI outputs are accurate.
- Use AI in a way that prevents your work from representing your perspective and growth as a student.

ACCESSIBILITY AND WRITING SUPPORT

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (AE) at (519) 661-2147 or aew@uwo.ca for any specific

question regarding an accommodation or review [The policy on Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Please see me during office hours if you are unable to attend class regularly so that arrangements can be made regarding your participation mark. Special consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis. I ask that you meet with me in advance or contact me via email to discuss anticipated absences/delays in your attendance or assignment submission.

I also encourage all students to make use of the Writing Support Centre. For further details, visit <http://writing.uwo.ca>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be viewed [here](#).

MEDICAL POLICY

I encourage students to read the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness at the following link:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical%2015JUN.pdf

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. ***Please do not submit medical notes to the instructor.*** Contact your academic counsellor and we will work to develop an appropriate solution.

STATEMENT ON GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, here. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

You can find additional resources at the following link:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/help.html

PROFESSIONALISM & PRIVACY

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course: All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared. Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission. Permitted recordings are not to be distributed.

COPYRIGHT AND AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING STATEMENT

Course material produced by faculty is copyrighted and to reproduce this material for any purposes other than your own educational use contravenes Canadian Copyright Laws. You must always ask permission to record another individual and you should never share or distribute recordings.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The following links provide information about support services at Western University.

[Academic Counselling](#)

[Appeal Procedures](#)

[Registrarial Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

GRADING SCHEME

Assignments will be graded according to the scheme provided by Western University. I have copied this table below for reference:

Grade	Percentage
A+	90-100% (One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level)
A	80-89% (Superior work which is clearly above average)
B	70-79% (Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory)
C	60-69% (Competent work, meeting requirements)
D	50-59% (Fair work, minimally acceptable)
F	Below 50% or assigned when course is dropped with academic penalty.

ASSESSMENTS

1. Tutorial Participation (10%), ongoing

Tutorials (held biweekly) are an essential part of the course, providing space for discussion, clarification, and deeper engagement with the readings. Your grade will be based on consistent, thoughtful, and active participation rather than mere attendance. To succeed, you should come prepared, having completed the readings and ready to contribute meaningfully to conversation. Being present also means arriving on time, listening attentively, and engaging respectfully with your peers. Contributions should advance discussion without dominating it, and you are expected to help ensure that the labour of conversation is shared fairly. Missing more than one tutorial without reasonable explanation will result in a grade of zero for participation. Tutorials may be rescheduled in cases of emergency.

2. Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography¹ (15%), October 6

¹ Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of an automatic extension (see Extender policy above), the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility.

For this assignment, you will select a topic related to sexuality studies that will form the basis of your final paper. Submit a short paragraph (approximately 200 words) that introduces your topic, identifies a guiding research question, and explains the direction you hope to take in your essay so that feedback can be provided. Possible areas of focus include current debates such as the representation of trans and non-binary identities in media and sports; the impact of online dating apps on intimacy and relationships; reproductive rights and access to abortion in Canada and beyond; the role of sex education in addressing consent and sexual violence; body image, fat activism, or disability and sexuality; Indigenous perspectives on kinship and family; or the politics of Pride and queer visibility. Along with your proposal, include an annotated bibliography of four scholarly sources (peer-reviewed journal articles or academic book chapters) and one popular source (such as a reputable news article, magazine feature, or documentary). For each entry, provide a short summary of the source's argument (3–4 sentences) and explain how it will support your essay. All citations and bibliographic entries must follow Chicago author–date style. This assignment is designed to help you focus your research early, practice locating credible sources, and connect academic work to contemporary issues you care about.

3. Midterm² (20%), October 27

The in-class midterm will cover material from the first six weeks of the course, drawing on assigned readings, lectures, and tutorial discussions. The exam will include a combination of short-answer questions, which will test your understanding of key concepts and themes, and one longer essay-style question that will allow you to demonstrate your ability to make connections across multiple texts and ideas.

4. Final Paper (20%), November 24

Your final paper (1,500 words) will build directly on the topic you developed for your essay proposal and annotated bibliography. The paper should clearly state your research question and develop an argument in response to it, drawing on both your own research and the concepts you have encountered in this course. You are expected to incorporate at least six scholarly sources (including the four from your bibliography) and one popular source, all cited in proper Chicago author–date style. Strong essays will show evidence of engagement with feedback received on earlier assignments and will connect your argument to key theories, debates, or themes covered in the first twelve weeks of the course (e.g., the social construction of sexuality, femininities and masculinities, reproduction and reproductive justice, sex education, or transnational sexualities). You are encouraged to use ideas from lectures, readings, tutorials, and discussions to support and deepen your analysis. Papers will be graded on the clarity of the research question and thesis, the quality of the argument and evidence, effective use of sources, organization and writing style, and correct use of citation. The goal of this assignment is not only to demonstrate your understanding of sexuality studies as a field but also to apply that knowledge to a focused topic of your choosing in a clear and persuasive way.

5. Final Examination (35%), date to be determined

The final exam will be scheduled during the exam period by the Office of the Registrar. It will focus on material from the second half of the course, while building on the concepts

² Please note that this assessment is central to the learning objectives for this course. Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for this assessment will be required to provide formal supporting documentation. Students who are granted academic consideration for this assessment will be provided with the following opportunity to make up this work: make-up test.

and debates introduced earlier in the term. The exam will consist of a combination of short-answer questions, which will assess your understanding of key terms and themes, and one essay-style question, which will ask you to apply what you've learned in a sustained written argument. Readings and discussions from the first half of the course will provide a useful foundation for your thinking, even though the primary emphasis will be on later material. Further details and review guidance will be provided as the term progresses.

All written assignments are to be submitted online by 11:55 pm EST unless otherwise specified. Assignments will be submitted to Turnitin. After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator. Students should consult with their TA first regarding questions about their grade. To ensure a timely response, reach out within 7 days. If a student has concerns about their grade following a meeting with their TA, they are encouraged to reach out to the instructor.

ASSIGNED READINGS
(available on OWL Course Site)

WEEK 1, SEPTEMBER 8-Introductions

WEEK 2, SEPTEMBER 15-Constructing Sexuality (TUTORIAL THIS WEEK)

WEEK 3, SEPTEMBER 22-Sexual Bodies

WEEK 4, SEPTEMBER 29- Writing Workshop (TUTORIAL THIS WEEK)

WEEK 5, OCTOBER 6-Femininities

WEEK 6, OCTOBER 20-Masculinities (TUTORIAL THIS WEEK)

WEEK 7, OCTOBER 27-Midterm

NOVEMBER 3 (READING WEEK, NO CLASS)

WEEK 8, NOVEMBER 10- Sex and Desire (TUTORIAL THIS WEEK)

WEEK 9, NOVEMBER 17-Reproduction

WEEK 10, NOVEMBER 24-The Family (TUTORIAL THIS WEEK)

WEEK 11, DECEMBER 1-Sex Education

WEEK 12, DECEMBER 8-Transnational Sexualities (TUTORIAL THIS WEEK)
Bain, Beverly. 2017. ‘