Overview

This course is intended as an overview of issues related to sexual orientation across the life course from the standpoint of the social sciences. The first part of the class is designed to highlight recent and historical dimensions of controversies about approaches to conceptualization of sexual identity, origins and development of sexual orientation, and issues related to identity formation and disclosure in adolescence and early adulthood. The course then moves on to consider concerns related to sexual orientation during adulthood, such as relationships within couples, employment and careers, lesbian and gay parenthood, and gay/lesbian aging. Requirements include two exams, oral participation in one structured in-class debate, a short paper summarizing an in-class debate, and active participation in class discussion. The course is intended for advanced undergraduate students in the social sciences; others may enroll with permission of the instructor.

Instructor

Dr. Charlotte J. Patterson
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Readings

The books listed below are available in various formats. They have been ordered at the UVA bookstore, but are also available from other venues, as will be discussed in class. Other readings will be made available free of charge on the course website.


Course Requirements, Structure and Grading

The class will meet once per week. Most weeks, the first half of class will be devoted to lecture/discussion. After a break, the second half of class will generally be given over to other activities --- e.g., viewing of relevant video materials, structured debates, and/or presentations by visiting speakers. Students will be expected to read assignments for each week before coming to class, and to participate actively in discussion each week.

Course requirements and grading will be as follows. Working in groups, each student will take part in one structured class debate. Oral presentation in each debate will count for 20% of the course grade; a written paper summarizing the debate will count for another 20% of the course grade. There will be two exams for the course. Exam #1 will count for 30%, and Exam #2 will also count for 30% of the course grade.

To facilitate active discussion, students are expected to attend every class meeting. One unexcused absence per student will be allowed without penalty. Any further unexcused absences will, however, result in a penalty being applied to the students' final grade for the course. With two unexcused absences, the student's grade will be lowered once (e.g., from a B to a B-). With three such absences, the student's grade will be lowered twice (e.g., from a B to a C+), and so forth.

Abbreviated Course Calendar and Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Organization and introduction to the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Psychology &amp; politics of sexual identities</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>Theoretical perspectives on origins of sexual orientation, I</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Theoretical perspectives on origins of sexual orientation, II</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Heterosexism, homophobia, harassment and hate crimes</td>
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<td>February 19</td>
<td>Lesbian/gay/bisexual adolescence, I</td>
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<td>February 26</td>
<td>Lesbian/gay/bisexual adolescence, II - take-home Exam #1 handed out in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>No class today - use time for take-home exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>UVA Spring Break - No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Lesbian/gay adulthood: Health and mental health concerns - Exam #1 due in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Extra class meeting: <em>Edie &amp; Thea - A Very Long Engagement</em>, Minor 227 at 4:00PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Gay/lesbian adulthood: Sexual and romantic relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Gay/lesbian adulthood: Employment and career issues</td>
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<td>April 9</td>
<td>Gay/lesbian adulthood: Parenting and children, I</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Gay/lesbian adulthood: Parenting and children, II</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Gay/lesbian aging: Myths and realities</td>
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<td>April 30</td>
<td>Exam #2 given in class</td>
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DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE, TOPICS, AND WEEKLY READINGS

Jan. 15  Introduction and Overview

Jan. 22  Psychology and Politics of Sexual Identities

Students choose topics for debates.

Viewing and discussion of video, Out in the Silence (2009), documentary by Joe Wilson and Dean Hamer about gay issues in rural America (56 minutes).

READING:

Gates (2011). How many people are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender? Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.


Jan. 29  Theoretical Perspectives on Sexual Identity: Biology vs. Social Construction

Viewing and discussion of video, Outrage (2009), documentary by Kirby Dick about the hidden lives of some contemporary political figures, and about the controversial practice of outing them (89 minutes).

READING:

IOM (2011), The health of LGBT people: Building a foundation for better understanding. (Hereafter called the IOM Report), chapters 1 and 2.

Hill, Dawood & Puts, "Biological Perspectives on Sexual Orientation" in P & D’A.

Feb. 5  **Theoretical Perspectives: Psychological Viewpoints**

Debate: Should people who are not heterosexual call themselves ‘queer’?

READING:


Feb. 12  **Heterosexism, Homophobia, Harassment, and Hate Crimes**

Visit from UVA LGBTRC Speakers Bureau Panel ----- tentative

READING:


5 news stories: Attacks on Evan Kittredge in Charlottesville VA.


Feb. 19  **Lesbian/Gay Adolescence, I**

Debate: Are separate schools for LGBT youth a good idea?

READING:


Feb. 26  Lesbian/Gay Adolescence, II

Hand out Exam #1 in class; will be due at beginning of class on March 19

Viewing and discussion of Bullied, a 2010 documentary about a student, a school and a case that made history, from the Southern Poverty Law Center (38 minutes)

READING:

IOM Report, Chapter 4.

Toomey et al. (2010). Gender nonconforming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: School victimization and young adult psychosocial adjustment. Developmental Psychology, 1 - 10.


Mar. 5  No Class Today

Mar. 12  Spring Break - No Class Today

Mar. 19  Gay/Lesbian Adulthood: Health and Mental Health Concerns

Exam #1 due at the beginning of class

Viewing and discussion of video, Tying the knot (2005), a documentary film about issues surrounding marriages of same-sex couples by Jim de Seve (83 minutes).

READING:

IOM Report, Chapter 5 (Early/Middle Adulthood).

Simoni et al. (2013). Sexual orientation and lesbian and bisexual women’s health. In P & D’A.


**Extra Class Meeting: Film Viewing in Honor of LGBT Supreme Court Cases**

Viewing and discussion of film: *Edie & Thea - A Very Long Engagement* (2010), a documentary about Edie Windsor & Thea Speier, a lesbian couple who were together 42 years, ultimately marrying in Canada. After Thea’s death, Edie was forced to pay substantial taxes on Thea’s estate because their marriage was not legally recognized in the United States. Her case challenging DOMA will be heard by the US Supreme Court on March 27, 2013.

*Please note alternative location/time/date:*
*Wed., March 20 - 4:00-6:00PM*
*Minor Hall Room 227*

**Gay/Lesbian Adulthood: Sexual and Romantic Relationships**

Debate: Should legalization of same-sex marriage be the top priority for gay advocacy?

**READING:**


Fingerhut & Peplau (2013). Sex, romance, and relationships among lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals, in *P & D’A.*


**Gay/Lesbian Adulthood: Employment and Career Issues**

Debate: Should the Employment Nondiscrimination Act (ENDA) be passed by the Congress of the United States?

**READING:**


Sears & Mallory (2011). *Documented evidence of employment discrimination and its effects on LGBT people.* Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law.
Apr. 9  Gay/Lesbian Adulthood: Parenting and Children, I

Viewing & discussion of video, Making Grace (2004), a documentary by Catherine Gund about a lesbian couple becoming parents (86 minutes).

READING:


Mabry (2012). The gift of being gay and a dad. NY Times.


Apr. 16  Gay/Lesbian Adulthood: Parenting and Children, II


READING:


Apr. 23  Lesbian/Gay Aging: Myths and realities

Viewing and discussion of *Out Late* (2008), a documentary by Beatrice Alda and Jennifer Brooke about people who come out as lesbian or gay late in life (62 minutes).

READING:

Span (2010). Gray, gay ... and worried. *NY Times*.

IOM Report, chapter 6.


Apr. 30  Exam #2, to be given in class