
ANTHRO 2580

Evolution of Human Sexuality



About this course

Sexual reproduction has been shaped by two billion years of evolution. In the human lineage, we carry biological and behavioral remnants of this evolution, but our own reproductive behaviors and decisions are also influenced by the cultural context. Ecology and social life shape variation in mating patterns cross-culturally, including sexual behavior, marriage, attraction, mate choice, jealousy, paternity, disease transmission, contraception, and interpretations of gender. By drawing from evolutionary history, non-human primates, small-scale societies, and industrialized nations, this course will critically evaluate understandings of human sexual behavior and reproduction from an evolutionary perspective.

Class will meet Tue & Thu 12:30AM - 1:45 PM in Townsend 109

Instructor is Dr. Sean Prall. My office is in Swallow Hall 224, and my office hours are Tue & Thur 2-4 PM or by appointment. You may contact me via email at sprall@missouri.edu

Course Objectives

By the end of this course students will be expected to:

- Describe the evolution of sexual reproduction
- Situate human mating patterns within human evolutionary history
- Understand social and ecological drivers of variation in reproductive behavior
- Critically appraise research related to mate choice and human sexual behavior

Emma Tinker-Fortel will be the TA for this course, and her office hours are 9-10 AM Wed and Fri in Swallow 228. You may contact her at tinkerfortele@missouri.edu

Readings

There are no textbooks required for this course. All readings will be uploaded online in PDF format.

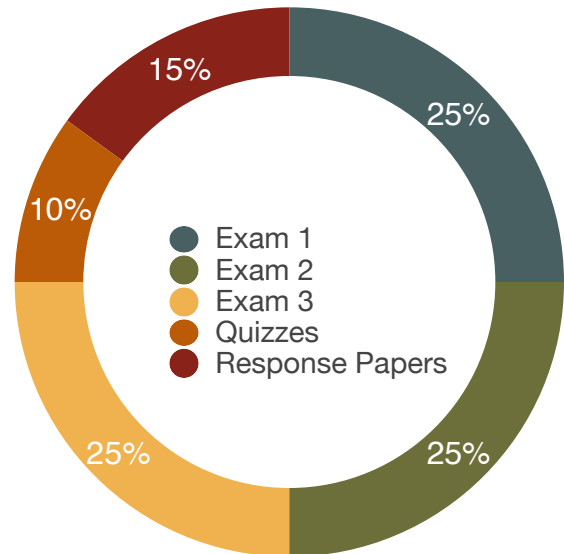
Assignments and grading

Grading for this class will be broken down into the following requirements and assignments as represented in the graph.

Quizzes - At the discretion of the instructor, students will complete a series of short and unannounced quizzes at the beginning of class sessions. Quizzes may be in any format, but will concentrate on assigned reading materials, and subject matter covered since the previous quiz.

Response papers - Students will be required to submit multiple response papers during the course of the semester. Topic and requirements will be announced on Canvas.

Exams - Students will complete three exams during the semester. Exams will be composed of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The last exam will be during finals week, but will not be cumulative. Students should refer to questions from the quizzes for style and content.



Arts and Sciences Diversity Requirement

This course satisfies the DI requirement for students in the College of Arts and Sciences by focusing on diverse perspectives in sex, gender, and reproduction. Using biology and evolutionary theory, as well as anthropological and cross-cultural perspectives from a variety of small-scale populations, this class explores (1) how sex and gender are perceived cross-culturally and the diversity of ways in which gender is enacted, (2) variation in sexual behavior, including issues of sexual identity and mate concurrency, (3) female choice and autonomy in marital practices including polygyny and polyandry, (4) the evolution of gender inequality and the sexual double standard, and (5) how evolutionary and developmental processes challenge binary views of sex and gender. As part of these goals, students will explore cultural diversity, from traditional foragers and pastoralists to industrialized populations. Students will learn about these diverse groups with vastly different norms and patterns of behavior, and expected to think critically about these groups within changing environmental and social contexts. In addition to in-class activities, students will explore these topics through in-class discussion, and in the form of short essays on socio-cultural and socio-ecological interpretations of sex, marriage, gender, and reproduction.

Course Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Topic
Week 1	Tuesday	1/18	A guided tour of sex
	Thursday	1/20	Introduction to evolutionary thinking
Week 2	Tuesday	1/25	Evolution of sexual reproduction
	Thursday	1/27	The Red Queen Game
Week 3	Tuesday	2/1	Sexual development and variation
	Thursday	2/3	Introduction to sexual selection
Week 4	Tuesday	2/8	Sexual selection continued
	Thursday	2/10	The Mating Game
Week 5	Tuesday	2/15	The comparative perspective
	Thursday	2/17	Exam 1
Week 6	Tuesday	2/22	Evolution of the Pair Bond
	Thursday	2/24	Mating and marriage in the cross cultural perspective, !Kung marriage practices
Week 7	Tuesday	3/1	Mating and marriage in the cross cultural perspective, Nyimba marriage practices
	Thursday	3/3	Video: Guardians of the Flutes - exploring Sambia sex, gender, and identity
Week 8	Tuesday	3/8	Paternity, fidelity, and jealousy
	Thursday	3/10	Paternity, fidelity, and jealousy, Nuer Sex and Marriage
Week 9	Tuesday	3/15	Case studies in sex and marriage: Himba sex, gender, and reproductive diversity
	Thursday	3/17	Gender from the cross cultural perspective
Week 10	Tuesday	3/22	Sex and fertility in transition
	Thursday	3/24	Exam 2
Week 11	Tuesday	4/5	Mate Choice - physical cues of fitness, status, wealth
	Thursday	4/7	Sexual Strategies Theory
Week 12	Tuesday	4/12	Sex ratios and mating markets
	Thursday	4/14	Guest lecture: Gender & Sport
Week 13	Tuesday	4/19	Male aggression and violence, Netsilik marriage, male competition, and infanticide
	Thursday	4/21	Cycle Wars
Week 14	Tuesday	4/26	The biology of love and attachment
	Thursday	4/28	Evolutionary perspectives on same-sex sexual behavior
Week 15	Tuesday	5/3	Informal partnerships and transactional sex
	Thursday	5/5	The future of sex Wrap-up and final comments
Finals			Exam 3

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance

Students are expected to be present for class (until otherwise notified). Attendance will not be taken, but students who fail to attend may miss pop quizzes and valuable in-class learning opportunities. Students who have a *legitimate* reason to miss class must alert the instructor BEFORE class (at least 24 hours in advance). Students who miss class without legitimate reasons (ie sick with a doctors note) and advance warning may not make up missed quizzes, exams, or hand in materials late.

Weather Policy

As a university policy change for spring of 2021, severe inclement weather will no longer result in class cancelation. In the event face-to-face classes cannot be held due to weather, class will be held on Zoom unless otherwise notified. Students will receive an email with instructions and a link. Do not assume class will be moving to Zoom until you receive announcement on canvas or hear an official announcement from the university that classes will not be held on campus

Decreasing the Risk of COVID-19 in Classrooms and Labs

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been identified as someone who needs to quarantine, do not attend class in person until the mandated period for isolation or quarantine has passed. Your instructor will work with you on arrangements to access class material while you are in isolation or quarantine. Additionally, if you are experiencing any COVID-related symptoms, or are otherwise feeling unwell, do not attend in-person classes and contact your health care provider and/or student health immediately. COVID symptoms include: fever greater than 100.4 or chills; cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; unexplained muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea. Instructors or students with concerns about how a student is following any University-mandated COVID-19 policies and protocols should report those concerns to the Office of the Dean of Students. Concerns can be documented on a [COVID Safety Measures Reporting Form](#).

Additional Mizzou wide course policies and expectations, including academic integrity, FERPA issues, intellectual pluralism, netiquette, religious holidays and accommodations, nondiscrimination policy, and disability issues can be accessed via [this link](#).



Grading scale

97 - 100%	= A+
93 - 96%	= A
90 - 92%	= A-
87 - 89%	= B+
83 - 86%	= B
80 - 82%	= B-
77 - 79%	= C+
73 - 76%	= C
70 - 72%	= C-
67 - 69%	= D+
63 - 66%	= D
60 - 62%	= D-
Under 60%	= F

Please note that course schedule and any deadlines listed are subject to change. Instructor may change course content, assignments, grading, and reading at his discretion. Students will be notified of updates to this syllabus as they occur.