In this course, we examine the empirical and theoretical body of literature examining sexualities deemed to be ‘social problems.’ More specifically, this course focuses on how claims are made about particular sexualities leading them to become constructed as social problems, and thus, experience significant surveillance and social control. The first section of the course introduces how sociologists have studied social problems, the main theoretical perspectives that have guided this literature, and the role of social institutions in the process of defining social problems. In the second part of the course, we apply those key concepts and theoretical frameworks to analyze different cases of contemporary social problems including youth sexualities, disabled sexualities, racialized sexualities, and non-human animal sexualities.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Possess knowledge of the main theoretical perspectives in the social problems literature
- Critically apply sociological theory to the analysis of social problems
- Develop a multi-level analytic approach to examining social problems
- Consider different sides of debates regarding social problems
- Articulate the role of social institutions in the creation of social problems
- Demonstrate enhanced analytical skills, as well as oral and written communication

Required Readings

All the journal articles assigned for this course can be accessed via McMaster’s library system. This is an opportunity for you to practice your research skills, including the task of locating literature. For more information about locating journal articles, go to: https://library.mcmaster.ca/instruction/social-science-inquiry/finding-articles/story_html5.html. Check out the section entitled, “Using E-journals.”

The book chapters assigned for this course are available on Avenue to Learn.

Seminar Participation

This is a seminar-based course, and thus, an important component of this course is the in-depth discussions that we will have both as a small and a larger group. I highly encourage you to do the assigned readings and take notes as you’re reading them. You may use the 1-page guide for thinking about social problems available on Avenue to Learn. Using that guide will prepare you to grapple with the readings in class and coherently articulate their arguments. I will usually start classes with some lecturing in order to address points of confusion from previous classes, highlight key concepts and insights from the week’s readings, and set the groundwork for the class discussion.
Evaluation

These assignments will provide you with an opportunity to apply the course theories and concepts to understanding social problems. Grades will be calculated based on the following formula:

1. Critical Analysis of News Article: 20% (Due: February 19th, 2019 by 5pm)
2. Seminar Attendance and Participation: 15%
3. Response Memo: 20% (Any time before April 2nd, 2019 by 5pm)
4. Short Research Paper Proposal: 10% (Due: March 12th, 2019 by 5pm)
5. Research Paper: 35% (Due: April 9th, 2019 by 5pm)

More details on each assignment available on Avenue to Learn.

** You should use APA or ASA citation style in all the assignments for this course. **

Additional Information on Assignments

Assignments must be turned in electronically via Dropbox on Avenue to Learn by the deadline on the course schedule. It is your responsibility to check Avenue to Learn prior to each class for updates or changes. To access our Avenue to Learn page, please visit http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/. If you are registered for the course, you should be able to access our Avenue to Learn page. It may take up to 24 hours after you register to gain access to our Avenue to Learn page.

This course will use the originality checking feature in Avenue to Learn to screen all assignments for plagiarism (see below). All pages must be numbered and have 1” to 1.25” margins on all sides. All text should be double-spaced in an easy-to-read 12-point font. You should use APA or ASA citation style in all the assignments. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will be reflected in the mark for the assignment.

Learning Objectives

This course meets four key University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see, http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf). 1) Depth and breadth of knowledge: Students will gain a general knowledge of key concepts, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches as they relate to the examination of social problems; 2) Application of knowledge: Through written assignments and class discussions, students will have opportunities to develop their ability to analyze information, evaluate different sides of social debates, and make critical use of scholarly sources to study social problems; 3) Communication skills: Through class discussions and written assignments, students will develop their ability to communicate their ideas with clarity and coherence, within an academic setting; and 4) Autonomy and professional capacity: The ability to discuss issues in class and develop different forms of writing contributes to students’ professional development.

E-mail Policy:

Please contact me via McMaster email (santina@mcmaster.ca) with questions or concerns. You can expect to receive a reply to your email within 48 hours, excluding weekends. Please note that it is best to raise questions about course content (e.g., “I don’t understand this concept) in class or during office hours. There will be ample time to do this.
It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf](http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf)

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

**Turnitin.com**

In this course, all students' assignments will be checked for plagiarism using the web-based service called Turnitin.com. You can find the Turnitin.com Policy at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

**Review of Marks**

I will be diligent in marking all assignments fairly and accurately. Occasionally, students may disagree with the marks they receive. If this occurs, I will be happy to review the mark of any assignment, if the procedure outlined below is followed: You may request a review of a mark by writing a brief (1-page max) memo that describes in detail the nature of the perceived marking error. Submit this memo to me via email. You may submit requests for review no sooner than 48 hours and no later than 2 weeks after the assignments are returned to the class. Please note that when a mark is reviewed the new mark may be lower than the original.

**Late Assignments and Absences**

The McMaster Student Absence Form ([http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/)) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to
request accommodation for any missed academic work. Please note that this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of one Academic Work Missed request per term. It is your responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a non-medical reason, you must visit the office of the Associate Dean of your Faculty. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. Any disruption this causes to turning in 3 assignments on time, completing exams, and so forth, must be addressed directly with your instructor as soon as possible.

For late assignments without approved excuses, you must make arrangements directly with your instructor to submit the assignment. Assignments will be marked down by five percentage points for each day it is late, including weekends and holidays.

**Accommodations**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly to further discuss any needs for accommodation.

**Scent-Free Environment**

The exposure to scented products, such as personal hygiene products, can trigger serious reactions in people with pre-existing conditions including, for example, asthma and allergies. For the well-being of the whole class, please consider avoiding or reducing the use of fragranced products.

**Land Acknowledgement Statement**

McMaster University recognizes and acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” Wampum agreement.

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1**

**Theoretical Perspectives to Social Problems**

8-Jan

Readings:


**Week 2**

**Claims-Making**

15-Jan
Readings:


**Week 3**

**Claims-Making and Social Institutions**

22-Jan

Readings:


**Week 4**

**‘Bad’ Sexualities**

29-Jan

Readings:


**Week 5**

**Eugenics to Newgenics: Disability and Sexuality**

5-Feb

Readings:


- What is Newgenics? [https://eugenicsnewgenics.com/2014/05/14/what-is-newgenics](https://eugenicsnewgenics.com/2014/05/14/what-is-newgenics/)

**Week 6**

**Non-Human Animal Sexuality**

12-Feb

Readings:


Announcement: Critical Analysis of News Article due February 19th, 2019 by 5pm

Week 7 The Colonial Project and Sexuality
19-Feb

Readings:


Announcement: Mid-term Teaching Feedback – Please fill out the feedback form.

Week 8 Reading Week
26-Feb
No class

Week 9 Sexualities on University Campuses
5-Mar

Readings:


Guest speaker: NicoleAndrejek (McMaster University)

Announcement: Research Paper Proposal due March 12th, 2019 by 5pm

Week 10 Youth and Sexuality
12-Mar

Readings:


Week 11  HIV and Criminalization
19-Mar

Readings:


Guest speaker: Dr. Erica Speakman (McMaster University)

Week 12  Infidelity, Non-Monogamy, and Intimate Relationships
26-Mar

Readings:


Guest speaker: Dr. Alicia Walker (Missouri State University)

Week 13  Social Change
2-Apr

Readings:


Announcement: Final Papers Due April 9th, 2019 by 5pm

Week 14  No Class
9-Apr

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to
comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and
course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Departmental/University Policies:

We will use Avenue to Learn for submitting, returning, and grading student assignments
electronically. Do NOT email assignments.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside
the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental
business (e.g. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial
information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or
tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may
be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students
to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own
McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity
of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the
university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has
come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or
spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the
University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with
the Ontario Human Rights Code. Please review the RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences about how to request accommodation.