Sex Ed: From Pre-K to 12

Professor: Beth Williams-Breault
Office Hours: by appointment
Email: bwilli23@lesley.edu

Course Description:

Why is sexual health education needed? What are some examples of great programs? What makes this topic so controversial? What does the research say?

This course is an introduction to sexual health education. Emphasis is placed on comprehensive sexuality education, health education vs. sexuality education state standards, age-appropriate curriculum, and teaching techniques. We will analyze sexuality development in childhood and adolescence and how sexuality is shaped by culture. Attention will be given to the relationship between sexuality and gender and various cultural perspectives of sexual health education. Students will draw back on personal experiences and analyze the history of the topic while applying new perspectives to national and global debates.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate current, factual content related to sexual health education.
2. Demonstrate thorough, basic knowledge of the female and male reproductive system.
3. Thoroughly research and present a logical argument regarding a controversial topic related to sexual health education.
4. Describe the difference between abstinence-only and comprehensive sexual health education programs and what research says about each of these types of programs.
5. Identify best practices in comprehensive sexual health education programs.
6. Answer typical questions that children, adolescents, and adults have about the relationship of sexuality development, gender, and cultural perspective.

Required Readings:


Weekly articles will be posted on Blackboard.
Recommended:


**Class Schedule**

**Session 1**
- Introductions
- Syllabus Review
- Choose Groups

**Session 2**
*What does “sex” mean? What are the similarities and differences between traditional and contemporary concepts of human sexuality?*

**Reading Assignment (All):**

- Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
  - Chapter 1: Sexuality, You, and the Learner
  - Chapter 2: Foundations for Sexuality Education

Session 3
What are our experiences with regarding sexual health education and how does that shape our attitudes and cultural perspectives? What are the historical developments regarding sexual health education?

Reading Assignments (All):

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
Chapter 4: Understanding Yourself

Film and Discussion: Sex (Ed): The Movie, 2015

Session 4
Why should there be sexual health education programs in schools? What are the arguments for and against sexual health education? How do we deal with opposition to sexual health education?

Reading Assignment (All):

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
Chapter 3: The Controversy

Article Review Presentations:


Be prepared to discuss Case Studies 1-6 on pages 69-71 in Bruess & Schroeder (2014) in groups.
Session 5
What are the issues regarding medical accuracy, program effectiveness, and ethical concerns in relation to abstinence-only policies for sexual health education? What are the different types of abstinence-based programs?

Film and Discussion: Abstinence Comes to Albuquerque, 2006

Article Review Presentations:


Personal Reflection Paper or Historical Essay due

Session 6
What are psychosexual theories? What is gender-role stereotyping? How is the definition of family evolving? Does sex ed belong in the home or at school, or both?

Reading Assignments (All):
Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
Chapter 6: The Cognitive and Psychological Side of Sexuality
Chapter 7: Family Life and Interpersonal Relationships

Article Review Presentations:


Research Paper Proposal due
Session 7

Are we all sexual beings? What are various lifestyle possibilities? How is sexual health related to the law? How does sexual behavior vary among individuals?

Reading Assignments (All):

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
Chapter 8: The Sociological Side of Sexuality
Chapter 10: Sexual Behaviors

Article Review Presentations:


Be prepared to discuss Case Studies 1-3 on pages 139-140 in Bruess & Schroeder (2014) in groups.

Session 8

What are the ground rules or group norms in sex ed? What communication skills should be taught? What are the various instructional strategies?

Reading Assignments (All):

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
Chapter 11: Sexuality Education: Setting the Learning Climate
Chapter 12: Learning Strategies for Sexuality Education

Article Review Presentations:


**Session 9**

*How do developmental characteristics of learners at different grade levels influence sex ed content and activities? What are the relationships between sexuality and gender and various cultural perspectives in children’s literature?*

**Bring in a children’s picture book or chapter book.** We will be discussing relevant age ranges/development and themes of gender, culture, and sexuality.

Choices include, but are not limited to:

**Ages 2-4**


**Ages 3-6**


**Ages 4-8**


**Ages 10+**


**Ages 14+**


**Reading Assignments (All):**

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)

Chapter 14: What should be Taught at Different Levels and in Different Settings?

**Session 10**

*Group Storybook Due*

*Storybook Presentations/Discussion*

**Article Review Presentations:**


**Session 11**

*What are the similarities and differences between the male and female reproductive systems? What are the current teen pregnancy rates in our country compared to others? How do STIs affect various populations in the United States? What are effective methods of prevention? What are various cultural beliefs of contraception?*

**Reading Assignment (All):**

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
   - Chapter 5: A View from the Inside
   - Chapter 13: Strategies for Learning and Teaching About Sexually Transmitted Infections

CDC Fact Sheets retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/std/healthcomm/fact_sheets.htm

*Guest Speaker from Partners in Sex Education*  
*Discussion*

**Session 12**

*How can broad-based community and institutional support be promoted for sexual health education programs? How do we apply evaluation? How do schools and families create partnerships?*
Reading Assignment (All):

Bruess & Schroeder (2014)
Chapter 16: Implementing a Sexuality Education Program
Chapter 18: Effectiveness of Sexuality Education and the Sexuality Educator

Be prepared to discuss Case Studies 1-5 on pages 265-266 in Bruess & Schroeder (2014) in groups.

Session 13
What are the various cultural perspectives of sexual health education? Can we look to other countries? What are some examples of great curriculum?


Article Review Presentations:


Session 14
*Presentations and Discussion*

Session 15
*Research Paper due*
*Presentations and Discussion*
*Course Evaluations*
Evaluation:

1. **Attendance and Participation**  
   Attendance and participation are an essential component of this course. If a student is ill or has an emergency, a written note must be provided. Students are expected to actively engage in discussions.

2. **Personal Reflection Paper or Historical Essay**  
   Students will submit a paper (3 pages, double spaced) either focusing on their own childhood experiences in regards to learning about sexuality or about the history of sexuality education. For the Personal Reflection Paper, students will describe the pattern of their environment (school or home) and interactions with important figures in their life and its implication on their health, growth and development. Personal Reflection Papers are confidential and will only be read by the professor. For the Historical Essay, students will write about the history of sexuality education in U.S. public schools. The essay will include a strong central thesis and plausible evidence.

3. **Children’s Storybook**  
   Students will be asked to form a work group with other students. This group will work on various projects throughout the semester. Each work group will write a children’s storybook. They will pick any topic of interest having to do with sexuality education that would be meaningful to any grade level PreK-12. Books must be age-appropriate and include themes of sexuality, gender, and culture. Groups will create a storybook- illustrations are optional. Each group will be asked to read the book to the class and have a brief discussion on the content. 3-5 references must be used. The storybook will be assessed with criteria of: focus, organization, support, reasoning and use of resources.

   Each student will write a research paper on any aspect of sexuality education. The paper should be 8-10 pages, double-spaced, in APA style (using 6th ed. APA manual as a guide), and should include 10-12 references. Evaluation of this paper will be based on the following criteria: organization, ideas, interpretation of selected materials, and clarity of presentation. Each student’s topic must be proposed by submitting a one-page proposal. Students are required to present the topic of their research paper and provide a handout to the class.

5. **Article Reviews**  
   Along with weekly readings, each student will be assigned 2 articles to review throughout the semester. The required articles must be read before the class meetings for which they are assigned in preparation for class discussion. A final draft of each article review is due in class for the day it is assigned. Reviews must be no more than 2 pages (double-spaced, 1” margins, APA citations). Each student will present her
article review to the class and provide handouts. Articles will be evaluated based on the following criteria: key point of the article, something newly learned from the article, and how it can be applied to the field of sexuality education.

Course Assessment:

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Reflection Paper</td>
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<td><em>or</em> Historical Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s Storybook</td>
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<td>Research Paper Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article Reviews- 10 points each</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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*For a total of 100 points*

I will use this percentage distribution to finalize letter grades:

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Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Tufts University values the diversity of our students, staff, and faculty, recognizing the important contribution each student makes to our unique community. Students with disabilities are assured that the Student Accessibility Services office will work with each student individually to ensure access to all aspects of student life. Tufts is committed to providing equal access and support to all students through the provision of reasonable accommodations so that each student may access their curricula and achieve their personal and academic potential. If you have a disability that requires reasonable accommodations, please contact the Student Accessibility Services office at 617-627-4539, or through their email at Accessibility@tufts.edu, to make an appointment with the director to determine appropriate accommodations. Please be aware that accommodations cannot be enacted retroactively, making timeliness a critical aspect for their provision.
Bibliography


comprehensive sex education: What are the arguments?. *What is the Evidence*, 1-16.


