





# Women and Gender Studies (WGST) 322

## Sexuality in Society (Revision 1)

**Status:** Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

**Delivery mode:** Individualized study online 

**Credits:** 3

**Areas of study:** Arts or Social Science

**Prerequisites:** None

**Precluded:** None

**Challenge:** WGST 322 has a challenge for credit option.

**Faculty:** [Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

## Overview

In Western societies (Canada and the United States), sex and sexuality are powerful forces. Sex is everywhere: it is regularly portrayed in movies and TV shows, video games, songs, art, and literature. Sex is used in advertisements to get you to buy everything from cars to beer to hair products. We communicate about sex online and on our phones. The sex lives of celebrities and politicians are the material for titillation and scandal, career advancement and termination, and public adulation and shaming. Yet talking openly and frankly about sex remains taboo, often making people feel uncomfortable, perhaps ashamed and even dirty. People who are deemed to be sexually “abnormal” have faced discrimination, violence, and punishment. Public perceptions of sex and sexuality are shifting, however, in part because of the work of feminist and LGBTQ2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit) activists. People are increasingly accepting sexual diversity and are challenging discriminatory attitudes and rules about sex and sexuality. WGST 322 helps students understand and analyze issues through the new field of sexual studies.

This course presents the historical and theoretical underpinnings of Western colonial sexualities in Canada and the United States. Students examine the power of sex and sexuality and the regulation of sexualities into categories of normal and abnormal. Students consider how sex and sexualities are normatively defined through discourses produced by various institutions, including colonial governments, popular media, corporations, and educational, scientific, and medical bodies. Students engage with feminist, queer, Indigenous, and racial theories that trouble and deconstruct these social interpretations of normative sexuality. Students will study a textbook as well as academic articles, poems, songs, podcasts, videos, blog posts, and news articles and will critically analyze contemporary debates pertaining to sex and sexuality, including virginity pacts, the HIV/AIDS crisis and queer activism, sex work, pornography, eugenics and forced sterilization, interracial marriage and the Indian Act, public sex, LGBTQ2S communities and culture, same-sex marriage, and LGBTQ2S refugees.

## Outline

### **Unit 1: The Power and Meanings of Sex and Sexualities**

- Section 1: The Power of Sex and Sexuality
- Section 2: Indigenous Kinship, Genders, and Sexualities
- Section 3: Western Sexualities

### **Unit 2: Sex Wars Redux: Theories of Sexuality**

- Section 1: Feminist Theories of Sex and Sexuality
- Section 2: Queer Theory
- Section 3: On Race and Sexualities

### **Unit 3: Governing Sex and Sexuality, and the LGBTQ2S Social Movement**



- Section 1: Sex, Reproduction, and Race
- Section 2: Public Sex and Queer Publics
- Section 3: Sexual Identities and Human Rights

## **Learning outcomes**


Upon the completion of WGST 322: Sexuality in Society, you should be able to

- identify the power of sex and sexuality in Western society;
- explain how different government institutions, popular media, medical bodies, and academic disciplines have constructed knowledge and discourses of normal and abnormal sexualities;
- discuss how people have been regulated, punished, and discriminated against through Western colonial discourses of normative sexualities;
- apply feminist, queer, Indigenous, and racial theories and concepts to analyze contemporary debates pertaining to sex and sexuality; and
- debate the importance and limitations of sexuality-based identities, communities, and social movements.


## **Evaluation**

To **receive credit**  for WGST 322, you must complete four assignments and achieve a minimum grade of **D (50 percent)**  or better on each assignment. The weighting for each assignment is as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Assignment 1: Personal Reflection	20%
Assignment 2: Oral Review on Unit 2	30%
Assignment 3: Question and Answer on Unit 3	30%
Assignment 4: Creative Awareness Project	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#) .

## Materials

Fischer, N. L., & Seidman, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Introducing the new sexuality studies*. Taylor and Francis.  (Print)

All other materials are available on the course website.

## Challenge for credit


### Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about [challenge for credit](#)  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

### Evaluation





The Challenge for Credit has one component: an exam that consists of nine short-essay questions. To **receive credit**  you must complete the exam and

achieve a grade of **D (50 percent)**  or higher. Credit will be awarded as either a pass or a fail.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Online Examination	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

 **Challenge for credit course registration form**

## Important links

- > [Academic advising](#) 
- > [Program planning](#) 
- > [Request assistance](#) 
- > [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

*Opened in Revision 1, April 16, 2020*

*Updated May 22, 2024*

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