



ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY

St. Jerome's University at the University of Waterloo

Department of Sexuality, Marriage & Family Studies

SMF 309 Sex Therapy | Winter 2022

Remote Course with

Synchronous Weekly Meetings via Zoom – Tuesdays 10-11:20am

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Rahim Thawer, MSW, RSW
Office Hours: Virtual, By Appointment
Email: rthawer@uwaterloo.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines therapeutic approaches and clinical issues when working with sexuality related problems. Research and theoretical issues in the field of sex therapy will be discussed and applied to clinical contexts. The applied focus enables students to connect clinical theory and ethical issues to practice.

COURSE STRUCTURE & ATTENDANCE

This course is being offered remotely. As a result, recorded lectures will be posted weekly via LEARN. Students are required keep up with these lectures and the assigned readings. It is HIGHLY encouraged that students attend the weekly zoom meetings in order to gain a deeper understanding of course content. However, those who cannot attend will not be penalized.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. **Deconstruct** societal perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs that limit our understanding of sex, sexual problems, and sexual pleasure
2. **Challenge** societal perceptions of normative sexuality, gender roles, and physical body types
3. **Conceptualize** sex therapists as leaders, clinicians, and educators with a broad, far-reaching, inclusive, and social-justice oriented scope of practice
4. **Develop** a broader understanding of the human sexual experience that balances trauma-informed, systemic, and social constructionist perspectives
5. **Build awareness** of the experiences of people who are erotically marginalized
6. **Build awareness** of the experiences of sexual, gender, and romantic minorities
7. **Explore** multiple modalities and intervention approaches in the context of sex therapy

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Gambescia, N., Weeks, G. R., & Hertlein, K. M. (2021). *A clinician's guide to systemic sex therapy*. Routledge.

This textbook can be purchased from the University bookstore or via Amazon for approximately \$50-60. The additional required readings can be accessed **free of charge** through Course Reserves (via LEARN). A listing of the specific additional-required readings can be found in the course schedule below.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Assignment 1 - Summary Reflection

Overall value: 30% Due: end of Week 5, Friday Feb 11th at 5pm EST

Description: Select one required reading from the course schedule to work with. First, summarize the contents of the reading and then reflect on the material by answering the following questions:

- How did this reading shift or impact my pre-existing attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs about sex and/or sexuality?
- Is there anything about how the topic was presented that felt biased, incomplete, or unhelpful? Or, what did the author(s) do well in their approach to the topic?
- In what specific ways might the information and perspectives in this reading inform your future practice as a sexuality leader?
- If you were facilitating a class around this reading and topic, what are 5 thought-provoking discussion questions you would want the students to engage in?

Format: 4-6 pages, typed, double-spaced. Reading summary should be no more than 1.5-2 pages with more than half of the paper focusing on the reflection pieces. The 5 discussion questions can be listed in single-spaced, bulleted form.

References: Not required. Include the title and author of selected reading in the body of the summary. In-text citations should be in APA format.

Assignment 2 – Sex Therapy Group Design

Overall value: 35% Due: end of Week 9, Friday March 18th at 5pm EST

Description: Sex therapy is usually not a group activity. It's deeply personal and requires vulnerability that can be challenging to do in settings of even just one or two people. However, this assignment assumes that a group of 8 people want to attend group therapy and to fulfill this demand, you will draw on sex therapy techniques and interventions to create a **6-session group curriculum** (estimate 2 hours per session). Here is a guided process for designing your group:

- Identify a specific sex therapy issue and target population that will make up the group attendees (*e.g. sexual desire after pregnancy; sexual self-esteem for people with chronic illness; sexual communication skills for survivors of abuse, etc.*)
- Identify 3-5 objectives for the group participants
- Create a standard structure for each group session: ice-breaker or check-in, psychoeducation, interactive exercises, skills reflection/integration, homework (you may deviate from this slightly)
- Develop psychoeducation content for each session (i.e. teachable content)
- Develop interactive exercises or skills reflection/integration opportunities (i.e. application content)

Format: The final product should be a typed, single-spaced Word/PDF document that reads like a group therapy manual. If your sessions include YouTube videos or bibliotherapy components, embed those links into the group therapy manual in their respective sections. The total document must not exceed 12 pages.

References: Each of the 6 sessions should have a short reference section in APA format. These don't have to be limited to the assigned readings.

Assignment 3 - Critical Case Analysis

Overall value: 35% Due: end of Week 12, Friday April 8th at 5pm EST

Description: You will be provided with 4 case scenarios and you will be required to select one to work with in depth. Analyze the case by drawing on course readings and exploring the following questions:

1. **The Issue:** What is the problem that the client(s) in the scenario want to work on?
2. **The Unspoken:** What are some of the issues (attitudes, perceptions, communication patterns, etc.) that have not been explicitly named that may also need some attention in the therapy?
3. **The Work:** Describe the emotional, interpersonal, physical, and/or cognitive work the clients each need to do (e.g. learn, unlearn, grow, hear, feel, and attune to partners in new ways) in order to improve their overall sex- and sexuality-related concerns.
4. **The System:** Explore some of the systemic and societal challenges (i.e. attitudes, beliefs, gender roles, oppressions, expectations) the clients are working against by trying to resolve the issues they've brought to therapy.
5. **The Interventions:** Discuss 3 treatment interventions you would want to use with these clients and why.

Format: 6-8 pages, typed, double-spaced.

References: A complete reference list is required drawing on several readings used throughout the course – using APA format.

COURSE OVERVIEW

<p>Week 1 Introduction to Sex Therapy</p> <p>Week 2 Defining Problems</p> <p>Week 3 Treatment Approaches, pt 1</p> <p>Week 4 Treatment Approaches, pt 2</p> <p>Week 5 Sensate Focus</p> <p><i>*Assignment # 1 Due on Friday Feb 11 at 5pm EST</i></p> <p>Week 6 Illness and Sex Therapy</p> <p>-READING WEEK-</p>	<p>Week 7 Developing Kink Competence</p> <p>Week 8 Sex and Disabilities</p> <p>Week 9 Destabilizing the 'normal' body</p> <p><i>*Assignment # 2 Due on Friday Mar 18 at 5pm EST</i></p> <p>Week 10 People with Complex Experiences, 1</p> <p>Week 11 People with Complex Experiences, 2</p> <p>Week 12 Relationships & Technology</p> <p><i>*Assignment # 3 Due on Friday April 8 at 5pm EST</i></p>
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COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction to Sex Therapy (Jan 11)

Gambescia, N., Weeks, G. R., & Hertlein, K. M. (2021). Ch 1. The Intersystem Approach to Sex Therapy. In *A clinician's guide to systemic sex therapy* (pp. 1–16). Routledge.

Watter, D. N. (2020). The Sex Therapist as Leader: Existential/Humanistic Reflections from the Therapist's Chair. In J. C. Wadley (Ed.), *Handbook of Sexuality Leadership: Inspiring Community engagement, social empowerment, and transformational influence* (pp. 107–120). Routledge.

Note: the first recorded lecture will be available on LEARN by Jan 6, 2022.

Week 2 – Defining Problems (Jan 18)

Gambescia, N., Weeks, G. R., & Hertlein, K. M. (2021). Ch 2. Diagnosis of Sexual Disorders. In *A clinician's guide to systemic sex therapy* (pp. 17–32). Routledge.

Iasenza, S. (2020). The Sexual History: Identifying Conscious and Unconscious Narratives. In *Transforming sexual narratives: A relational approach to sex therapy* (pp. 47–68). Routledge.

Potter, C. (2020). Love and attachment and why they matter. In *How psychotherapy helps us understand sexual relationships: Insights from the Consulting Room* (pp. 63–88). Routledge.

Week 3 – Treatment Approaches for People with Penises (Jan 25)

Gambescia, N., Weeks, G. R., & Hertlein, K. M. (2021). Ch 6. Treatment Principles, Strategies and Techniques Specific to Men. In *A clinician's guide to systemic sex therapy* (pp. 93–120). Routledge.

Week 4 – Treatment Approaches for People with Vulvas (Feb 1)

Gambescia, N., Weeks, G. R., & Hertlein, K. M. (2021). Ch 7. Treatment Principles, Strategies and Techniques Specific to Women. In *A clinician's guide to systemic sex therapy* (pp. 121–147). Routledge.

Week 5 – Sensate Focus in Sex Therapy (Feb 8)

Weiner, L., & Avery-Clark, C. (2017). Sensate Focus. In *Sensate focus in Sex therapy: The illustrated manual* (pp. 8–14). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Weiner, L., & Avery-Clark, C. (2017). Common Problems and Their Management in Sensate Focus. In *Sensate focus in Sex therapy: The illustrated manual* (pp. 104–109). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Assignment 1 - Summary Reflection Overall value: 30%

Due: end of Week 5, Friday Feb 11th at 5pm EST

Week 6 – Illness and Sex Therapy (Feb 15)

Gambescia, N., Weeks, G. R., & Hertlein, K. M. (2021). 12. Physical/Medical Issues in Sex Therapy. In *A clinician's guide to systemic sex therapy* (pp. 208–235). Routledge.

Katz, A. (2021). “I Don’t Have Much Time Left and I Want to Feel Loved”: Sexuality at the End of Life. In *Woman cancer sex* (pp. 113–122). Routledge.

Persson, A., Hughes, S. D., & Savage, P. (2018). The Science Made Me Do It! A Journey Toward Reimagining Myself as Non- infectious: Serodiscordant Sexuality in the Age of TasP. In *Cross-cultural perspectives on couples with mixed HIV status: Beyond positive/negative* (pp. 15–21). Springer International Publishing.

----- **READING WEEK (Feb 21 – 25th)** -----

Week 7 – Developing Kink Competence (Mar 1)

Goerlich, S. (2021). Clinical Considerations. In *The leather couch: Clinical practice with kinky clients* (pp. 183–203). Routledge.

Shahbaz, C., & Chirinos, P. (2017). There Are More Than Fifty Shades of BDSM. In *Becoming a kink aware therapist* (pp. 5–18). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Week 8 – Sex and Disabilities (Mar 8)

Bahner, J. (2021). Setting the scene: Disabled sexual experiences in context. In *Sexual citizenship and disability: Understanding sexual support in policy, practice and theory* (pp. 1–36). Routledge.

Freckelton, I. (2013). Sexual surrogate partner therapy: Legal and ethical issues. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 20(5), 643–659. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13218719.2013.831725>

Kaufman, M., Silverberg, C., & Odette, F. (2010). Penetration and Positioning. In *The ultimate guide to sex and disability: For all of us who live with disabilities, chronic pain and illness* (pp. 198–217). Accessible Publishing Systems.

Week 9 – Destabilizing the ‘normal’ body (Mar 15)

Hester, H., Gailey, J. A., & Walters, C. (2016). Transforming the Looking-Glass: Fat Women’s Sexual Empowerment through Body Acceptance. In *Fat sex: New directions in theory and activism* (1st ed., pp. 51–66). Routledge.

Hillman, J. (2012). Attitudes toward Sexuality and Aging. In *Sexuality and aging: Clinical perspectives* (pp. 59–81). Springer.

Wise, K., & Pitagora, D. A. (2020). The Evolution of Sexuality During Gender Transition. In G. Jacobson, J. C. Niemira, & K. Violeta (Eds.), *Sex, sexuality and trans identities: Clinical guidance for psychotherapists and counselors* (pp. 37–66). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Assignment 2 – Sex Therapy Group Design Overall value: 35%

Due: end of Week 9, Friday March 18th at 5pm EST

Week 10 Understanding People with Complex Experiences, pt 1 (Mar 22)

Adams, K. M. (2020). Shame Reduction, Affect Regulation and Sexual Boundary Development. In P. J. Carnes & K. M. Adams (Eds.), *Clinical management of sex addiction* (2nd ed., pp. 129–149). Routledge.

Carpenter, K., & McKenzie, M. L. (2017). Trust Erodes Fear: A Psychosocial Perspective on Sexual Risk-Taking Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in Jamaica. In *Interweaving tapestries of culture and sexuality in the Caribbean* (pp. 85–113). Springer International Publishing.

Fabello, M. A. (2021). Sensuality. In *Appetite: Sex, touch, and desire in women with anorexia* (pp. 75–100). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Week 11 Understanding People with Complex Experiences, pt 2 (Mar 29)

Mancuso, E. K., & Postlethwaite, B. E. (2021). Clinical Considerations for Mental Health Professionals Working with Women Who Sell Sex. In *Women who sell sex: A review of psychological research with clinical implications* (pp. 147–165). Springer Nature.

Akerman, G., & Jamieson, S. (2020). Working in Therapy with Men Who Have Committed a Sexual Offence and Have Learning Difficulties. In K. Hocken, R. Lievesley, B. Winder, H. Swaby, N. Blagden, & P. Banyard (Eds.), *Sexual crime and intellectual functioning* (pp. 113–130). Palgrave MacMillan.

Week 12 Relationships & Technology (April 5)

Hertlein, K. M., & Blumer, M.L.C. (2014). Issues E-merging in Couple Life. In *The couple and family technology framework: Intimate relationships in a Digital age* (pp. 49–75). Routledge.

Hertlein, K. M., & Twist, M. L. (2019). Developing Your Personal Technology Integration Plan with the Couple and Family Algorithm. In *The internet family: Technology in couple and family relationships* (pp. 270–288). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Assignment 3 - Critical Case Analysis Overall value: 35%

Due: end of Week 12, Friday April 8th at 5pm EST

POLICY ON LATE WORK, MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKE-UP TESTS

All accommodation requests via AccessAbility Services will be honoured without any late penalties. Beyond these arrangements, please inform your instructor in advance if you require an extension for any of the assignments. As each assignment is due at 5pm EST on a Friday, the first extension offer will be for the following Monday with a 5% penalty. After a full week, the assignment will be accepted with a 10% penalty. Assignments will not be accepted beyond 7 days from the date it is due unless there are extenuating circumstances.

CORRESPONDENCE

Students can contact the course instructor by email at any time. You are also welcome to share information and ask questions on the LEARN discussion board but this should not be the primary mode to get in touch with the instructor.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Students may follow the instructor on public platforms such as LinkedIn. However, any questions related to the course must be asked via e-mail. Sending DMs to the instructor is also not appropriate while the course is in duration. Upon completion of the course, contact may continue to be maintained but professionalism in communication is appreciated.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St.

Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/upload_file/PLCY_AOM_Student-Petitions-and-Grievances_20151211-SJUSCapproved.pdf. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the St. Jerome's Advising Specialist, Student Affairs Office, who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Discipline_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties, check the Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals, www.sju.ca/sites/default/files/PLCY_AOM_Student-Appeals_20131122-SJUSCapproved.pdf.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall (Room 1401) at the University of Waterloo, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term, www.uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.