

We recognize and acknowledge that McMaster University meets and learns on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the "[Dish With One Spoon](#)" wampum, an agreement amongst all allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

LIFESCI 4X03 – The BioPsychology of Sex 2020 Fall Term

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Teaching Assistant: N/A | **E-mail:** N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys major topics in the **scientific study of human sexuality** from an evolutionary and biopsychological perspective. Students become well-informed inhabitants of their reproductive system and also gain vast knowledge about the workings of others.

As part of a knowledge translation exercise, students participate in a community-engaged initiative called **MacEngaged** with the project theme of **Research for Impact: Sexual & Reproductive Health**. Teams make the decision to collaborate on a unique project to create a community health resource for use at a [1] University Student Health and Education Centre, [2] a Community Health Clinic in the Hamilton Region, or [3] an alternative reproductive health initiative of your choosing (with instructor approval).

COURSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students think, discuss, reflect and learn about a variety of relevant questions, including:

1. Why is it important to appreciate other people's pronouns?
2. What is the physiological basis of the human arousal response?
3. What are the anatomically correct words to describe what most people call "down there"?
4. Why is there so much stigma around sexually transmitted infections? How do societal differences influence the spread of them?
5. What does cis-gendered mean? And, are cis-gendered males more likely to buy fancy cars than cis-gendered females?
6. What is the difference between HIV and AIDS? And, how is it possible to remain HIV+ without the diagnosis of AIDS?

By the end of the term, students develop a better understanding of human sexuality from an anatomical, physiological, evolutionary, and cultural perspective, practice collaborating with their peers to produce a product that disseminates information about sexual health to a target audience, and gain an awareness for how course concepts are applicable in a 'real world' context through discussions about current and global events.

Class Activities

Seminar: Wednesdays, 3:30 – 5:30PM on MS Teams **Tutorial:** Fridays, 9:30 – 10:20AM on MS Teams

All class meetings (seminar and tutorial) will meet over Microsoft Teams (MS Teams). Additional information regarding the use of MS Teams will be posted in the Avenue to Learn course shell.

Office Hours: Please visit Avenue to Learn for the office hour schedule. Office hours will be held on MS Teams.



MATERIALS & FEES

REQUIRED MATERIALS/ RESOURCES

Learning in this course will occur without the use of a single textbook. Students will have access to 'open educational resources' that do not require payment and thus decrease the financial barriers that some face to an accessible education. In other instances, students are asked to access scientific articles by using their student accounts with the university library.

Students are expected to read all materials available on Avenue in order to prepare for seminar discussions and the term tests.

VIRTUAL COURSE DELIVERY

To follow and participate in virtual classes it is expected that you have reliable access to the following:

- A computer that meets performance requirements [found here](#).
- An internet connection that is fast enough to stream video.
- Computer accessories that enable class participation, such as a microphone, speakers and webcam when needed.

If you think that you will not be able to meet these requirements, please contact uts@mcmaster.ca as soon as you can. Please visit the [Technology Resources for Students page](#) for detailed requirements. If you use assistive technology or believe that our platforms might be a barrier to participating, please contact [Student Accessibility Services](#), sas@mcmaster.ca, for support

COURSE OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

COURSE OVERVIEW/ TOPICS

SEMINAR ASSESSMENTS Global Citizen Roundtable Discussions

- Based on guidelines provided by OXFAM (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief), we will engage in an ongoing class exercise where students participate in discussions around their role as global citizens in relation to course topics.
- A global citizen is a person who is aware of wider world issues, values diversity, is committed to social justices, participates in the community, and takes responsibility for their actions.
- Either an empirical paper or a popular press article will be available on Avenue (some weeks multiple articles). To prepare, students should 1) read the article on Avenue, then 2) search for a related article either published in the empirical literature or in the media, but related to the original post, and have it available to them either in electronic format or hard copy during seminars, and 3) be prepared for class discussion.
- Each global citizen discussion will begin with the assumption that all students have completed the readings for that week's class.
- Our global citizen discussions, [1] involve asking relevant questions and applying our learning to real-world issues and contexts; not telling others what to do or how to think or behave, [2] explore the complexity of global issues and engage in multiple perspectives as presented through the media and empirical research, and [3] encourage us to learn from each other.

Seminar Engagement

- In a seminar course with a small number of students, it becomes particularly important to create an environment where all students are active participants in discussions.
- The aim here is to move students away from behaving as passive receptacles of information to knowledge seekers who are engaged learners and active contributors to their learning.
- Assessing engagement is not possible if students do not have a clear understanding of what qualifies as excellent versus average engagement.
- During our initial meetings, we will create an engagement rubric for our class that will distinguish between four categories of engagement: Fully Engaged, Typically Engaged, Somewhat Disengaged, and Completely Disengaged.
- While creating the rubric, we will also have a discussion about what the Professor can do to create a learning environment so that members of our class feel comfortable to interact with one another and to share their ideas with the entire class.
- We will further discuss how to overcome the challenge of disproportionately rewarding those who always speak up in class.
- We will also think about what each class member can do to make the class culture comfortable and conducive to learning.

Term Tests

- There is no final exam in this course. Students must complete all term tests as scheduled.
- There will be three 50-minute tests held throughout the term. **Each test will be written during the tutorial timeslot.** Each test will contain a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
- Tests are not cumulative. Questions are obtained from content after each previous test.
- Each test includes questions from seminar notes and readings, information presented in any posted videos and by guest speakers and the Global Citizen readings on Avenue.
- If you miss a term test, please submit a MSAF to Lucas at grevillj@mcmaster.ca
- You are expected to complete a make-up test on the designated date. This test will be scheduled at the end of term.

TUTORIAL ASSESSMENTS MacEngaged: Knowledge for Public Benefit

- Students participate in a community-engaged initiative called *MacEngaged*. Our first “community partner” is a **University Health Education Centre**. Think of this as a student run organization involved in the promotion and referral of health related information and provides confidential services such as peer support, pregnancy testing, and information pamphlets (similar to SHEC at McMaster). It also offers products related to sexual health and practices such as the free distribution of condoms and lubricants. Our second “community partner” is a **Community Health Clinic in Hamilton Region**, which includes a group of medical doctors that run a clinic and also provide information to community members about reproductive health. Alternatively, students may choose a different organization that focuses on reproductive health. Previous organizations have included **Bleed Free McMaster**, a student organization whose mission includes making feminine hygiene products accessible to marginalized groups in the Hamilton community.
- Student teams choose to collaborate with *one* of the three “community partners” listed above.

MacEngaged Statement of Work Document

- As part of the project deliverable, each team is expected to generate a Statement of Work (SOW) document. A SOW is a formal document that defines the *purpose, scope, work activities, responsibilities, and timeline* of a project.
- Creating a SOW is also an excellent opportunity to showcase to a future employer, professor, and graduate school supervisor your ability to generate, implement, and execute a project within a specified period.
- Detailed guidelines on how to create a team SOW are available on Avenue and guidance is provided during weekly tutorials.

Final Team Deliverable

- Team deliverables are selected based on the selected “community partner”, your group, and the instructor. You are challenged to think outside the box of a standard brochure.
- The rubric related to the marking of the final team deliverable is to be developed in consultation with students at the start of the semester.

MacEngaged Exit Interview

- At the end of the term, each team will complete a private exit interview, roughly 20-30 minutes in duration with the Professor.
- The purpose of this exercise is to assess the contribution of each team member to the completion of the MacEngaged project, and to also assess how knowledgeable each team member is in relation to the various components of the project.
- In the interview, individual team members are asked to answer questions about the project and its associated deliverables. There is no need to ‘study’ for this interview. However, teams are advised to review the empirical literature used to complete their unique projects since they will not be able to use notes to answer questions.
- All team exit interview questions will be available on Avenue in the weeks prior to the final interview so that students may prepare to answer them.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

At certain points in the course it may make good sense to change the schedule and deadlines in the course outline. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly (in class and through announcements on Avenue). All seminars and tutorials will be live on Microsoft Teams. Readings and content for both seminars and tutorials will be posted on Avenue. Students are expected to attend both seminars and tutorials. Class content may be recorded and posted to Avenue as a study resource.

Week	Lecture Topics	Assignments/Tests
1 - (Sept 8-11)	Introduction to LifeSci 4X03: The BioPsychology of Sex Introduction to Community Engaged Education	
2 - (Sept 14-18)	Perspectives on Human Sexuality Ideas Around Effective Global Citizenship	
3 - (Sept 21-25)	Female Sexual Anatomy, Function, & Physiology	Sept 25th : Submit Group Code of Ethics to Avenue by 11:30pm
4 - (Sept 28-Oct 2)	Male Sexual Anatomy, Function, & Physiology	Oct 2nd : Submit Title Page & Statement of Work to Avenue by 11:30pm

Submit Individual Assessment
Form to Avenue by 11:30pm

5 - (Oct 5-9)	Evolutionary Theory & Sexual Behaviour	Oct 9th : Test 1
Oct - 12 18 Midterm Recess		
6 - (Oct 19-23)	Theories of Sexual Orientation Attraction, Arousal, & Response	
7 - (Oct 26-30)	Hormones, Sex, & Gender in Sports	Oct 30th : Resubmit Title Page, Revised and Additional Sections of SOW to Avenue by 11:30pm.
8 - (Nov 2-6)	Sexually Transmitted Infections	Nov 6th : Test 2
9 - (Nov 9-13)	Evolution, Menopause, & Grandmothering	
10 - (Nov 16-20)	Conversations in Contraceptives – Types, Progression, and Future	
11 - (Nov 23-27)	What Do We Now Know About the BioPsychology of Sex?	Nov 27th : MacEngaged Show & Tell: Each team delivers a short presentation about their project using one slide in 3-5 mins. Submit all sections of SOW before 11:30pm to relevant dropbox folder on Avenue Please provide a digital PDF to Lucas by 8am for distribution to peers prior to tutorial.
12 - (Nov 30-Dec 4)	MacEngaged Exit Interview [In Class – Sign up via Avenue]*	Dec 2nd : MacEngaged Exit Interviews Begin Final team assessments due at time of interview.
13 - (Dec 7-9)	MacEngaged Exit Interview [In Class – Sign up via Avenue]	Dec 4th : Test 3

EVALUATION

ASSESSMENTS	POINTS
Three Term Tests	300
Global Citizen Roundtable Discussions & Seminar Engagement	100
MacEngaged: Community-Engagement Project	
Show & Tell: End of Term Team Presentation about MacEngaged Project	50
Team Document: Statement of Work (SOW) Team Assessment Form 1: Each student will complete an evaluation form assessing the contributions of other team members. This form is to be submitted to the relevant dropbox folder on Avenue. If a team evaluation form is not submitted, then a mark of zero will be assigned for the SOW grade to the relevant student. The evaluation by each team member on individual contribution to the SOW counts towards 15% of the SOW mark.	200
Final Team Deliverable	150
Team Exit Interview Team Assessment Form 2: Apart from participating in the exit interview, each student will complete an evaluation form assessing the contributions of each team member throughout the duration of the project. This form is to be submitted at the start of the exit interview via avenue dropbox. If a team evaluation form is not submitted, then a mark of zero will be assigned as the exit interview grade to the relevant student. The evaluation made by each team member on individual contributions to the project count towards 15% of the team exit interview mark.	200
TOTAL POINTS	1000

Tutorial Attendance is Mandatory

- If you miss a tutorial, please use the MSAF to document your absence. Otherwise, a 2% penalty will occur from your individual project grade for missing each tutorial.
- It is possible that a student might not be able to attend tutorials on a regular basis due to a legitimate reason and therefore cannot participate in the community engagement portion of this course. Please contact Lucas immediately to discuss the possibility of an alternate assignment.

3-Day Grace Period For MacEngaged Project Deliverables

- You may submit an assignment at a later date without needing to submit an MSAF. That is, an accommodation that allows relief from academic work due to medical or other personal issues is automatically given to all students in this course.
- Students who submit the assignment on time will receive both feedback and a grade. However, you may submit your assignment up to 3 days late (including weekends) with no late mark applied. You will still receive a grade, but there *might* be minimal feedback.
- This 3-day ‘grace period’ is in place to deal with any issues that may occur prior to the due date that prevented you from submitting on time (e.g. computer crashed, forgot to submit, personal situations etc.). If you wait to

submit your assignment at the end of the grace period and you encounter an issue that prevents you from submitting within the 3 days (including weekends), there will be no additional accommodations.

Assignments submitted after the 3-day grace period will receive a deduction of 5% per day penalty from the actual due date (before the grace period). No additional accommodations will be provided beyond the 3-day grace period.

- Please do note that all brochures must be submitted on the deadline stated on Avenue.
- **For group submissions, please negotiate all deadlines with team members.**

CHECKING YOUR GRADES

Special consultation hours are arranged following the release of each test and assignment grades.

Students should check their grades on Avenue as we will use these marks to calculate the final course grade.

Discrepancies must be reported to the Professor within a week of receiving the grade.

Grades obtained in LIFESCI4X03 are converted according to the scheme generally used at McMaster University which can be viewed here: <http://registrar.mcmaster.ca/exams/grades/>

When the final marks are obtained, ALL borderline cases will be reviewed and, where warranted, adjustments will be made in the final mark.

E-mails regarding requests to increase final course grades are not answered.

RE-MARK POLICY

The re-mark policy in this course is slightly modified and reprinted with permission from Dr. Deborah Mowshowitz from the Department of Biological Sciences at Columbia University (New York, USA).

Source: BiologyC2006/F2402-Spring2016-Regrade Requests. (2016, January 8). Retrieved from http://www.columbia.edu/cu/biology/courses/c2006/regrade_requests.html

The re-grade procedure is meant to correct serious errors in grading. It is not intended as an opportunity to argue about each judgment call made by the grader. Although it is true that we sometimes take off 1- 2 points too many here and there, but we also give you 1-2 points too many just as often.

The re-grade policy is not intended to discourage students whose tests/assignments are graded incorrectly; rather it is an attempt to avoid frivolous requests.

Deadline: Within 1 week (unless a different date is announced in class and on Avenue), from the time that a test or assignment grade is published on Avenue.

Addition Errors: If there is an arithmetic error in adding up points, let the Professor know immediately. This doesn't constitute a re-mark request.

How to Request a Re-mark?

Term tests: All tests are viewed during special review sessions. The date & location of the review sessions will be posted on Avenue. Please include the course code, your name, student number, and a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) as to why you feel your evaluation was not fairly marked.

Written assignments: Please complete the form available on Avenue and send it to Lucas via grevillj@mcmaster.ca. There is no need to attach a copy of the relevant assignment as it already available in the assignment DROPBOX folder on Avenue.

What Doesn't Merit a Re-grade? "Most of what I wrote is correct, so I think I deserve more partial credit."

Partial credit is given equally for all students who write a particular answer, so it would not be fair to give you more points for this without adding points to all students who wrote the same answer.

"I wrote so much, and the grader didn't notice that the correct answer is buried somewhere within this long paragraph."

You will lose points if the correct answer is accompanied by incorrect information or by so much irrelevant information that it gives the impression that you were just writing down everything you could think of on this topic. To get full credit you must demonstrate the ability to pull out the relevant info and to exclude irrelevant info.

"I'm just 1 point away from an A, so I thought it was worth asking to find an extra point somewhere."
It's not.

The Bottom Line on Re-grades

I apologize for being so hardnosed about re-grades, but in my considerable experience, they consume an inordinate amount of effort, both yours and mine, for very little benefit. If you have a legitimate complaint, do not hesitate to submit a re-grade request. However, if you are thinking that your grade is not as good as you would like, and it would be nice to have a few more points, please do not send a request. Read the paragraph below instead.

Looking to improve your marks?

If you are working hard in this course, but feel that your grades don't reflect your work, please meet with Lucas on a regular basis. If you can't make Lucas' office hours, or they seem too busy, arrange an appointment for another time via email at grevillj@mcmaster.ca.

You may be spending a lot of time on the wrong things, and redirecting your efforts may really pay off.

Communication between Students and Faculty

The University's official method of correspondence with students is through a valid McMaster University e-mail account. It is the student's responsibility to keep the @mcmaster.ca account active and check it on a regular basis. All emails from students must include a full name, student #, and course code (LIFESCI 4X03).

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

Course Specific MSAF Information

- *Students are responsible for contacting Lucas to arrange for accommodations.*
- *Missed tests will be written at the end of term at date tbd*
- *Please note final deliverables for the course (ie. MacEngaged project components) are not eligible for MSAF*

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn and Microsoft Teams. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.



CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities \(the “Code”\)](#). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Student Responsibilities

To get the most out of the course, students must be prepared to:

- complete all readings and course requirements and attend all class meetings;
- create a realistic study schedule;
- visit the Instructor and/or TAs during office hours for additional help. If struggling with course material, ask for help early;
- plan and manage their own time;
- check the course Avenue site, and the McMaster e-mail account daily for updates; and,
- follow all university policies and guidelines, and in all ways be a responsible university member.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

RESEARCH ETHICS

- *Not applicable to LifeSci 4X03: The BioPsychology of Sex*

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.