

# PSYC 2400 The Psychology of Sex Differences

## Syllabus

### Course description

The University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar* describes this course as follows:

[Course explores the relationship between: human behaviour, physiology, and sex roles for males and females in our society. Prerequisite: a grade of "C" or better in one of the following: PSYC 1200 (or 017.120) or PSYC 1201 (or 017.120), or both PSYC 1211 (or 017.121) and PSYC 1221 (or 017.122), or written consent of department head.

This course deals with an issue that has tremendous social and personal importance. The title of the course is "Sex Differences," but it might be more accurate to call it "the psychology of gender roles." We are interested in how males and females are different and how they are similar. Our times are changing so radically that an accurate understanding of the power of gender role training has sweeping implications for the direction of society and for the development of each of us as individuals and in relationships. In this introduction, I want to welcome you and to give you some idea of the formal structure of the course requirements.

### Course goals

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

- explain the power your own gender role training has had in influencing your behavior;
- explain how traditional gender roles needlessly limit the lives of both men and women;
- define the terminology of gender and sex differences;
- relate the concept of androgyny to notions such as the "effective person";
- explain why gender similarities are just as important as gender differences;
- argue both sides of the issue of whether or not gender differences have a biological foundation;
- explain why we must understand gender differences and similarities as the result of an interaction between biological and environmental influences;
- summarize the evidence on gender differences in personality and social behavior;
- critique the methodology of research studies;
- generate alternative explanations for research findings;
- apply knowledge about sexuality to your own gender role and sexual development;
- explain the basic process through which gender roles are established;
- describe the opposite sex's experience of gender and sexuality;
- apply information and evidence on gender roles and relationships to your own interactions with the opposite sex;
- examine the structure of society and its differential impact on men and women;
- make predictions about the future of gender roles, especially for the next generation; and
- describe different scenarios for the future of gender roles.

### Contacting your instructor

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter link in your course website.

# Course materials

## Required

### Bookstore

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

- Primary text  
Lips, H. M. (2008). *Sex & gender: An introduction (6th ed.)*. Toronto: McGraw Hill.
- Supplemental required text  
Zilbergeld, B. (1999). *The new male sexuality (Rev. ed.)* New York: Bantam.
- Audio lecture series  
PSYC 2400 The Psychology of Sex Differences by David G. Martin, Ph.D.

**Note:** The audio lectures are in the course resources. Check to see if you have the appropriate computer hardware, software, and communications to listen to these recordings online.

## Course overview

### Overview

The study of gender roles will require you to learn about a wide variety of topics, from biology to psychotherapy. These topics have been split into four general module areas, roughly following the chapters in your primary text, *Sex & Gender: An Introduction*. We will use the paperback, *The New Male Sexuality*, in some parts of the course.

### Topics

Module 1 of our course focuses on the foundation issues that will help us understand sex and gender. It will give you an overview of gender role issues and introduce the notion of androgyny. It will also deal with the “foundation” issues of how biology affects sex differences, different theoretical perspectives on how gender roles develop, cognitive functioning, and how we acquire valid information from research on sex and gender. This first module is the most demanding module in terms of amount of material covered, so you will start out “at a full run,” but we will ease up a bit in the later modules.

Module 2 looks at the similarities and differences in males’ and females’ experiences. It sometimes bothers me that this course is called “The Psychology of Sex Differences,” because it is just as important that we recognize the fundamental similarities between the sexes as well as the differences. You will see both in this section. We will read part of *The New Male Sexuality* in this section. Although this book is about sexuality, you will quickly see that it also has a great deal to do with how males are trained to be “masculine” and the consequences of that for their relationships with women. We will discuss some of the myths that affect the sexual behavior of both men and women.

Module 3 will discuss sex and gender in social relationships. We will start with childhood, move to the consequences of gender for personal relationships, and then finish with social behavior in the larger social system, including the world of work. We will also read the practical advice about relationships in *The New Male Sexuality*.

Module 4 deals with what we might call some “larger issues.” Our views of gender are changing, and that is inevitably reflected in the structure of society and the justice system. Finally, we will think about the future of gender roles. What does the future hold for us? How can we bring about the changes we want? What does the future hold for our children?

### Learning activities

The general format will be that each unit will begin with a brief written introduction that will state the main objectives of learning for the unit. After you read this introduction, you should read the assigned

reading material through once, lightly. Some of the units are accompanied by audio lectures, and you should listen to the lecture after your quick read through of the assigned text material. The main topics for each segment will be listed in your manual, and you will be responsible for learning the material in the audio lectures. I will try to use them to give you my perspective on the text material, and at times I will talk about studies and other topics that are not in the texts. Then you should read the assigned material in detail. I will have some advice for you later about the most effective way to approach the reading of textbooks, but for now we will just focus on the course structure.

At the end of each unit in this manual there is a self test that will help you to judge the level of your mastery of the material and to prepare for your graded assignments and the final exam. These self tests are not to be handed in. They have the same format as the assignments and the exam; just over half of the points are based on multiple-choice questions, and there are several short answer questions. At the end of this manual, you will find an answer key to the self test questions. The answers to multiple-choice questions from the text will be accompanied by page numbers from the texts, to help you review the information. A brief sample answer will be provided for the short answer questions.

## Evaluation and grading

### Distribution of marks

Assignment	Percentage
Assignment 1	13%
Assignment 2	13%
Assignment 3	14%
Final examination	<u>60%</u>
Total	100%

Final grades will be awarded according to the following standards:

### Grading scale

Letter	Grade
A+	90 - 100
A	85 - 89
B+	80 - 84
B	75 - 79
C+	70 - 74
C	60 - 69
D	50 - 59
F	00 - 49

**Note:** All final grades are subject to departmental review.

Because the assignments are completed with unlimited access to the texts and CDs, students should do very well on them, and this tends to be the case. The average grade on assignments is usually about 93%.

The average grade on the final exam is, of course, considerably lower because it is a closed book exam. The difficulty level of the exam items is similar to that of the assignment items.

### Assignments

You will note that the course is divided into four modules. At the end of your study of each of the first three modules, you are to send in one of the indicated assignments.

These assignments consist of multiple-choice questions and short answer questions, which you are to answer by using your texts and the audio lectures. Submit your assignment by using the designated dropbox for each assignment. We will grade and comment on your answers, to give you some idea of your level of understanding of the material.

The three assignments account for a total of 40% of the final grade.

**Note:** Detailed instructions about the assignments are found in the assignment section in your course website.

### Assignment due dates

Assignment	Sept. - Dec.	Jan. - April	May - August
1	October 2	February 2	June 2
2	October 23	February 23	June 23
3	November 17	March 17	July 14

**Note:** If you are unable to submit an assignment on time, contact your instructor well in advance of the due date, for we cannot guarantee that the instructor will accept late assignments. Review the guidelines on assignment due dates in the *Student Handbook*.

### Examination

The final exam will be written at the University of Manitoba (UM), Fort Garry campus or at an approved off-campus location. **Students needing to write at an off-campus location must declare a location by the specified deadline date** (see off-campus declaration and policy under Student Resources on course homepage). **Students writing at the UM Fort Garry campus do not need to declare an exam location.**

The Registrar's Office is responsible for the [final exam schedules](#) which is available approximately one month after the start of the course.

The final exam will count for 60% of the final grade. It is a closed book exam that will last three hours and will be about three times as long as one of the assignments.

The questions will be drawn about equally from all modules of the course. The exam will be in the same kind of format as the assignments. About two thirds of the exam will be multiple-choice questions, and the longer questions will consist of definitions and short answer questions.

### General guidelines for assignment and exam preparation

A word of caution about the assignments and the final examination

Some students find that they do very well on the assignments, but they do not do nearly as well on the final examination. While your grades on the assignments will give you some idea of how well you are mastering the material, they may not indicate how well you will do on the examination, because the examination is written under very different circumstances. Because the assignments are open book, they do not require the amount of memorization that a closed-book examination requires nor are they limited to a specific time period. Some students have told us that, based on the high marks they received on the assignments, they were overconfident and underestimated the time and effort needed to prepare for the final examination.

Please keep all this in mind as you prepare for the examination. If your course has a sample exam or practice questions, use them to practice for the examination by setting a time limit and not having any books available. Pay careful attention to the description of the type of questions that will be on your final examination. Preparing for multiple choice questions involves a different type of studying than preparing for essay questions. Do not underestimate the stress involved in writing a time-limited examination.

### Study advice

I promised you some advice about how to approach the study of a textbook. Most students simply open the book to the first chapter and start plowing through the words. Then two pages later they find that only about six words have stuck. In general, my most useful hint is to tell you to get an overview of the chapter first. Skim the chapter and use the bold print headings to give yourself some idea of what the chapter says. This general approach is summarized best in the "SQ3R" study system.

Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. SQ3R tells you first to survey the whole chapter, getting as much as you can out of it without actually reading it. As you survey, formulate questions about the headings. In fact, many headings can be reformulated as questions. Then you start your reading,

covering all the material but focusing mainly on the answers to the questions you formulated; pretend you are explaining the material to someone and it will become much clearer to you. I found that I learned more in the first two years teaching than I had in four years of graduate school, because I had to be clear in order to be able to articulate my knowledge. In fact, my most important goal in teaching this course will be to provide you with knowledge that you can use in discussions, in understanding other things you read, and in sharing your knowledge with others. That is why I often ask assignment and exam questions of the sort, "What does recent evidence suggest about the interpretation of women's 'fear of success'?" Then, last, you review the material, by skimming the chapters again, or by reviewing any notes that you may have taken.

Students often wonder how much detailed knowledge will be required of them. The self tests and assignments will give you a good idea of the depth of information expected. A general rule of thumb is that if you understand the meaning of the major headings and concepts that appear in italics and in quotation marks in the text you should do well.

The audio lectures, of course, require a somewhat different approach, for you can't skim them ahead of time. What you can do is to study the list of topics that appear in this manual before you listen to the CD (and, as I mentioned, you should read the textbook chapter over once before listening to the CD). The lectures will follow the general outline of the topics list, so you will be able to organize your note taking around these topics. In the lectures, I will emphasize certain points that you should listen for, and you should also take notes as though you were in class. Your best feedback on whether you are taking notes adequately will be your performance on the self tests, so you should take those tests "honestly" in order to give yourself accurate feedback.

## Resources

If you want to read further on a topic, using some of the books and articles mentioned your text or in the lectures, you may use the Distance Education Library Request Form, included in the Student Handbook, to request reference materials.

If you experience any problems with the course you may use the Request for Help form included in the Student Handbook.

Welcome to the Psychology of Sex Differences course. I hope that you learn some interesting new knowledge and that the material will be of personal use to you.

## Study advice

I promised you some advice about how to approach the study of a textbook. Most students simply open the book to the first chapter and start plowing through the words. Then two pages later they find that only about six words have stuck. In general, my most useful hint is to tell you to get an overview of the chapter first. Skim the chapter and use the bold print headings to give yourself some idea of what the chapter says. This general approach is summarized best in the "SQ3R" study system.

## Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>.

## Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contact Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

# Acknowledgements

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Dr. David Martin is Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Manitoba, where he has been teaching for over thirty years. He is the author of seven books in psychology and has won three teaching awards as a university teacher. In 1995, he was awarded the “Clifford J. Robson Distinguished Psychologist in Manitoba Award.”

Most of his professional work is in the area of counselling and psychotherapy. He counsels clients himself and trains future clinical psychologists in counselling and therapy. Dr. Martin frequently gives workshops for the business and public service communities, in the areas of communication, conflict resolution, and stress management.

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