# HSC 261: Health, Sexuality, & Family Life

Fall 2026

## 1. Course Basics

Health, Sexuality, & Family Life
HSC 261, Section 800
100% Online, asynchronous Canvas course

## 2. Instructor Information

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Ball State University, Muncie, IN
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Office Hours: By appointment. Email me to set up a Zoom or phone call.

## 3. Course Information

### Course Description

Health aspects of human sexuality and family life with a focus on human reproduction, physiology of the sexual response, sexual disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, promotion of sexual health, and the family's role in sex education.

*Please Note: This course includes detailed content about explicit topics in the form of discussion boards, weekly readings, video clips, humor illustrations, etc. If you are not comfortable learning about these topics in an open-minded scientific way, this may not be the right course for you. Sexuality is an especially sensitive topic, and there will be a wide range of sexual attitudes, preferences, orientations, values, and moral beliefs among your classmates.

### Prerequisites

None

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of human sexuality as a health phenomenon faced by all people and their families.
2. Identify and describe feelings about their own sexuality and the basic concepts related to the expression of their sexuality within the context of society.
3. Address the origins and factors affecting their feelings about their sexuality.
4. Conceptualize empirical research data in relation to human sexuality and its meaning for specific situations.
5. Identify relevant health-related topics and facts as they pertain to self and others.
6. Develop skills for accessing sexuality-related information from reputable sources.

7. Develop the habit of accessing the Internet for legitimate information regarding sexuality and relationships.
8. Recognize and appreciate the importance of sexuality across the lifespan.
9. Develop the skills and attitudes necessary for building respectful, intimate, loving relationships.

### Course Modality/Structure

This course uses a combination of web-based video material and lectures; online student engagement, discussion, and reflection activities; and assigned readings. All supplemental readings are available through the course website. The BSU Canvas site will be the official course management system.

This course is an online-delivered asynchronous distance education course. Asynchronous means that you will interact with the course material online on your own schedule within the allocated timeframe for this coursework. This flexibility requires tremendous self-discipline and awareness of your work habits. Distance education courses can be deceptive about the time required to complete assignments and meet stated deadlines.

Students commonly underestimate the time needed to complete the assigned readings, assignments, and assessments within the posted time frames and deadlines. Part of this underestimation stems from the lack of regular face-to-face contact with your classmates and with me. Without this contact, some students seemingly "forget" they are enrolled in a course. If you have never taken a distance education course, let me know that this is your first online course. I'm here to help, but I can't help without communication from you.

Here are some things that you can do to be successful in this course:

1. Take ownership of your education and learning experience. Online courses are easy to ignore, so stay on top of your readings and assignments. Don't wait until it's too late to submit.
2. Be an active and engaged participant in class discussions and activities. Plan to be online five to seven times each week.
3. Complete readings and watch video lectures before submitting assignments. Doing so will give you a better foundation for making meaningful contributions to course discussions and prepare you for the quizzes and exams.
4. Inform me whenever (a) a problem related to the class arises; (b) you feel the need to clarify questions; (c) you desire to further explore topics of particular interest.

## 4. Course Materials

Our Sexuality, 14th Edition, Crooks and Baur, Wadsworth/Cengage Learning - https://www.cengage.com/c/new-edition/9798214136462/

This course is aligned with this specific edition of the textbook. If you choose to purchase a different edition, you will need to obtain any missing information yourself.

Other readings are assigned within each module and are provided.

# 5. Course Assignments and Assessments

## Course Assignments

**Self-Introduction (10 points)**
Each student will formally introduce themselves to their peers and the course instructor using the Self-Introduction Discussion Forum in Blackboard. Students should post a brief, informative paragraph answering the provided prompts and questions. After posting, each student must respond briefly (3-4 sentences) to at least 2 other students' introductions (e.g., identify a common interest or similar expectations for the course).

**Quizzes (10 points each)**
At the end of each module, you will take a 10-point, multiple-choice quiz to assess your knowledge and understanding of the chapter content. To complete each quiz, you will be given 20 minutes and only one attempt. **If you go over the allotted time, your answers will automatically save and submit.** Should you experience technical issues while taking the quiz, email the instructor immediately; this will serve as a time-stamp notification of the problem. Quizzes are open book and open notes, but you must complete them independently!!

**Reflection papers (15 points each)**
Reflection papers are unique because they will ask you to watch/read/listen to videos, articles, or songs before writing an analysis. You are expected to provide a response that shows evidence of deep thought about the subject matter.

Be sure to save these documents as a Word doc or PDF and upload them into the Canvas assignment. DO NOT copy and paste your analysis into the submission text box. College-level writing is expected throughout your response.

Each of the 5 short papers should be double-spaced, 2 pages, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. The papers are **due by 11:59 p.m. EST on the Sunday** of the given week.

**Discussion Forums (15 points each)**
Students will be prompted to contribute posts to six (6) online class discussion forums throughout the semester. These posts will be related to questions/topics/scenarios posted to the course Discussion Forums in Canvas. Questions/topics/scenarios will be directly related to current course lectures, readings, materials, etc. This is an opportunity for the instructor to gauge student learning and application of the course material. Posts should be thoughtful, not simply a restatement of what you read (use critical thinking skills!). Each of these posts should be a minimum of 250 words or 4-5 minutes in length.

Thoughtfully responding to at least two of your class peers will be required. Each of these posts should be a minimum of 5 sentences or 2-3 minutes. Reactions should be in your own words based on what you have learned and should ask questions or provide solutions to questions raised by other students enrolled in the course.

Through communication, ideas are formed, revised, borrowed, and developed. Through argument, description, explanation, and improvisation within a community, individual learning flourishes. This

course requires full participation (including active reading, listening, responding, and asking questions) to create an online learning environment of open and shared learning. Your discussion will be graded based on quality, quantity, and timeliness.

**Etiquette**: Students are asked to behave in discussions and other class interactions in a professional and civil manner. It's okay to disagree, but be polite and constructive.

**Know copyright laws**: Always use a URL link when posting videos, full articles, etc. In other words, if you embed them on the site, be sure to provide sources and/or permissions. See the AI statement for the course policy on the use of AI-generated content.

**Book Review (70 points)**
This assignment provides you with an opportunity to examine, in depth, a human sexuality topic of interest to you. You will select a topic and book from the provided list. You may choose an alternate book (not on the list) with approval.

Analyze the book topic by writing a review paper. Research the book topic by finding three (3) credible references to further evaluate and critique the topic of the book. You may include arguments for or against, statistics, and other information to explain the book topic.

**Reaction Report (70 points)**
After reviewing an assigned film, you will report back on what you have learned through a reaction report. The film series offers the college learner an overview of historical, cultural, and current theories of human sexuality. College-level writing is expected throughout your report. To earn full points, you need to write a minimum of three (3) pages, double-spaced and include a summary of the film series and your reaction to the information.

**Assignment details, including instructions, relevant readings, due dates, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted and updated on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track.]**

## Course Grading Scale

Your grade for this course will be based on the following:

| Course Requirements | Point Value |
|---|---|
| 1. Self-Introduction discussion | 10 points |
| 2. Reflection Papers (5 @ 15 points each) | 75 points |
| 3. Discussion Forums (6 @ 15 points each) | 90 points |
| 4. Quizzes (6 @ 10 points each) | 60 points |
| 5. Book Review | 70 points |

| | |
|---|---|
| 6. Reaction Report | 70 points |
| | **= 415 Total Points** |

| Letter Grade | Range |
|---|---|
| A | 100% - 94% |
| A- | <94% - 90% |
| B+ | <90% - 87% |
| B | <87% - 84% |
| B- | <84% - 80% |
| C+ | <80% - 77% |
| C | <77% - 74% |
| C- | <74% - 70% |
| D+ | <70% - 67% |
| D | <67% - 64% |
| D- | <64% - 61% |
| F | <61% - 0% |

# 6. University Policies and Statements

## University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

## Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

## Attendance

You need to be aware that online learning can present significant challenges, particularly to individuals who are not self-starters or those who do not possess good time-management skills. The online

classroom is available 24 hours a day. Unlike traditional instructional settings, where each student gets the same class, the online setting means every student participates in the course they choose to take. You should note that this course is not self-paced. You are expected to adhere to the course calendar and timeline.

- Absences will be excused for the following: funeral and bereavement leave, jury duty, late course addition, military absences, observance of religious holidays, pregnancy leave, student-athletes participating in University- or department-approved activities, and university advisories.
- Students may encounter other circumstances (e.g. car accidents, job interviews) that result in course absences. Communication and sufficient documentation should be provided as soon as possible to the instructor.
- Students are expected to notify the instructor once they anticipate being absent for any reason (e.g., funeral) or as soon as possible after the absence begins (e.g., unexpected injury or illness). The student may need to provide documentation (with confidential information redacted when appropriate) to each instructor if requested.

Attendance and engagement will be documented through a weekly discussion board and assignment submissions.

## Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu

**As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment.** This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

**What happens after I report?** The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

## University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.]

## Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and

reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's academic integrity website (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

## Generative AI Statement

**Broader Use of Generative AI Permitted Within Specified Guidelines**
The use of Generative AI tools, including ChatGPT, is encouraged/permitted in this course for students who wish to use them. You may choose to use AI tools to help brainstorm assignments or projects or to revise existing work you have written.

AI tools may not be used as a replacement for their own critical thinking and original work. Unless otherwise specified for a particular assignment, all work submitted must reflect your own ideas, analysis, and voice. If AI tools are used, students are expected to:

- Acknowledge their use (e.g., "I used ChatGPT to help brainstorm ideas for this essay");
- Critically evaluate and revise any AI-generated content to ensure accuracy, originality, and appropriateness;
- Avoid using AI in ways that violate academic integrity. **Do NOT submit AI-written work as entirely your own.**

The instructor reserves the right to clarify when AI use is permitted, restricted, or prohibited for specific assignments. Unauthorized or undisclosed use of AI tools will be treated as an academic integrity violation. However, you must cite any AI-generated material that informed your work. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution constitutes a violation of Ball State University's Student Academic Ethics Policy.]

# 7. Student Support Services

## The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center. Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: BallStateLC.

## The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.
The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

## The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the Basic Needs Hub. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a Basic Needs Assistance Form.

## The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found **here**.

## The Speaking Center

The Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this direct link to sign up for a time**.** Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

# 8. Canvas and Student Privacy

## Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.
**Find more information by visiting the Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT).**

## FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading **Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection.**

## Video Conferencing Recording

In this class, software may be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions may be recorded. These recordings typically will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Students who prefer to listen only must disable their audio capability and visual camera. If you have concerns, please discuss these options with me.

## Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.

## Proctoring

[Check with your department chair/school director to determine if you can use Respondus tools in your course. Suggested: This course will require the Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor for online exams. Watch this short video to get a basic understanding of LockDown Browser and the optional webcam feature (which may be required for some exams.) Instructions for obtaining the software are in our course.]

# 9. Course Expectations and Policies

## Course Participation Expectations

- This course is designed with weekly activities, discussion, and other forms of regular collaboration and communication.
- It is recommended that you log into your Canvas course 3 to 4 times a week and check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for class.
- Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

## Feedback Policy

- I will respond to emails from your official Ball State email address within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday) and within 48 hours on the weekend.
- I will read every discussion post, but I will not always personally comment on posts.
- I will grade your quizzes, assignments, and discussions no later than 5 school days after the due date has passed.
- Contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

## Late Assignment Policy

- All assignments are due by 11:59 pm EST/EDT on the due dates indicated.
- Assignments posted after the indicated due dates will be subject to a decreased letter grade for each day late.
- Internet connectivity and technical issues may occur and impede you from turning in work on time. Turn in work early and often, and set up a backup plan, such as visiting a local library or borrowing a peer's computer.
- You have one (1) permitted late assignment to allow for these issues, to which you can turn in one assignment 24 hours late.
- Canvas will not accept assignments for grading after 11:59 pm EST/EDT on the final day of class.

## Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments should be submitted as Word documents with extensions of .pdf, .doc or .docx unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description.
- Assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted using the assignment link in the module**.**

## Grading Policy

- It is my policy that appropriate evaluation of your academic performance is an integral part of your learning experience.
- In the absence of mistakes, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, I will be the key decision-maker on the assignment of grades.

## Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- **Respect different perspectives.** Share your ideas and let others share theirs.

- **Challenge ideas, not people.** Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- **Listen to understand.** Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- **Assume good intentions.** Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- **Keep it private.** What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others' words or work without permission.
- **Be respectful.** Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

## 10. Course Schedule

To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

| **Module** | **Chapters** | **Assignments** | **Due Date** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Introduction Discussion (10 pts)<br>Choose your book (list of pre-approved books on homepage)<br>Email me if you choose a book not on the pre-approved list | **August 30** |
| Module 1: | | | **September 13** |
| | Chapter 1: Perspectives on Sexuality<br>Chapter 2: Sex Research: Methods and Problems<br>Chapter 5: Gender Issues | Discussion 1 (15 pts)<br>· 2 Replies<br>Module 1 Assignment (15 pts)<br>Module 1 Quiz (10 pts) | |
| Module 2: | | | **September 27** |
| | Chapter 3: Female Sexual Anatomy and Physiology | Discussion 2 (15 pts)<br>· 2 Replies | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | Chapter 4: Male Sexual Anatomy and Physiology<br>Chapter 6 Sexual Arousal and Response | Module 2 Assignment (15 pts)<br>Module 2 Quiz (10 pts) | |
| Module 3: | | | **October 11** |
| | Chapter 7: Love and Communication in Intimate Relationships<br>Chapter 8: Sexual Behaviors<br>Chapter 9: Sexual Orientations | Discussion 3 (15 pts)<br>· 2 Replies<br>Module 3 Assignment (15 pts)<br>Module 3 Quiz (10 pts) | |
| Module 4: | | | **October 25** |
| | Chapter 10: Contraception<br>Chapter 15: Sexually Transmitted Infections<br>Chapter 11: Conceiving Children: Process and Choice | Discussion 4 (15 pts)<br>· 2 Replies<br>Module 4 Assignment (15 pts)<br>Module 4 Quiz (10 pts) | |
| Module 5: | | | **November 8** |
| | Chapter 12: Sexuality During Childhood and Adolescence<br>Chapter 13: Sexuality and the Adult Years<br>Chapter 14: Sexual Difficulties and Solutions | Discussion 5 (15 pts)<br>· 2 Replies<br>Module 5 Assignment (15 pts)<br>Module 5 Quiz (10 pts) | |
| Module 6: | | | **November 22** |
| | Chapter 16: Atypical Sexual Behavior<br>Chapter 17: Sexual Coercion<br>Chapter 18: Sex for Sale | Discussion 6 (15 pts)<br>· 2 Replies<br>Module 6 Quiz (10 pts) | |

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|---|---|---|---|
| | | Book Review (70 pts) | |
| | Final Project | Reaction Report (70 pts) | **December 7** |

## 11. Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.