

## PSYCH 768 Sex & Well Being

15 points

**Tuesdays 11-1pm**

**Room 302-240**

(or when teaching online over Zoom at <https://auckland.zoom.us/j/93257552975>)

Dr. Jessica Maxwell

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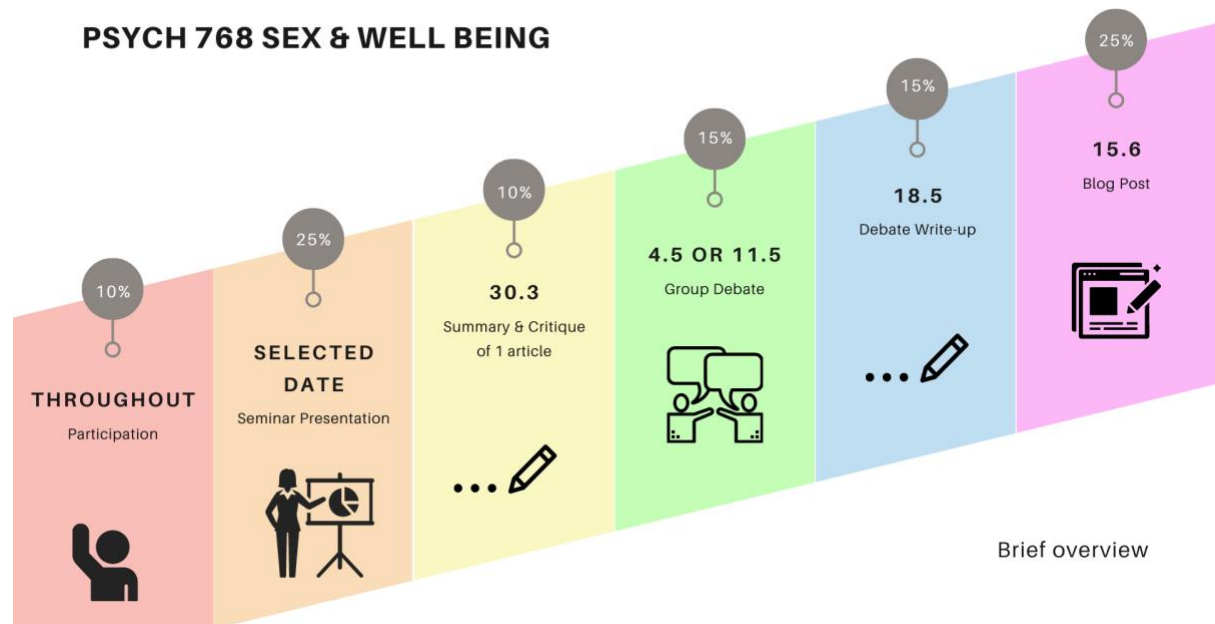
*Office hours directly after class, or by appointment—I am here to help!*

This seminar- based course explores how individual and contextual factors affect our sex lives, drawing predominantly on quantitative research and social psychological theories. The over-arching aim of the course is to demonstrate 1) how our sex lives affect our well-being, and 2) how we can maintain fulfilling sexual relationships, particularly in the context of long-term romantic relationships.

Throughout the term we will answer the questions of:

*“When and for whom does sex boost happiness?*

*How can we have fulfilling sexual relationships?*



## Course Schedule

	Topic	Reading	Students	Assignment due
Mar-02	Introduction Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lehmiller Chapter 1</li> <li>Maxwell &amp; McNulty, 2019</li> </ul>	--	
Mar-09	Introduction Week 2: Methods & Theories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lehmiller Chapter 2</li> <li>Metz &amp; McCarthy, 2007</li> <li>Writing Workshop Chapter 4</li> </ul>	--	
Mar-16	Sexual Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diamond &amp; Blair, 2018</li> <li>Blair et al., 2018</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		
Mar-23	Sex & Mood/ Life satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schmiedeberg et al., 2017</li> <li>Maxwell &amp; Meltzer, 2020</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		
Mar-30	(Keeping the) Sexual Passion: Contextual Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Busby et al., 2020</li> <li>Frederick et al., 2017</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		<b>Article Summary &amp; Critique due</b>
Apr-06	Mid -semester break			
Apr-13				
Apr-20	(Keeping the) Sexual Passion: Individual Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>French et al., 2019</li> <li>Muise et al., 2015</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		
Apr-27	Sexual Perceptions & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kim et al., 2020</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		
May-04	Gender Differences Debate	--		Group Debate 1
May-11	Pornography Debate	--		Group Debate 2
May-18	Sexual Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lehmiller Chapter 13</li> <li>Debrot et al., 2017</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		<b>Debate Write-up due</b>
May-25	Sex & Singlehood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nunez Segovial et al., 2019</li> <li>Wongsomboon et al., 2020</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		
Jun-01	Sex & Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oswald et al., 2020</li> <li>Dube et al., 2020</li> <li><i>Students' choice</i></li> </ul>		
June 15				<b>Blog Post due</b>

## Assessments

For all assessments please consult the assignment section of Canvas for complete rubrics and expectations. Each assignment will be discussed in class in greater depth closer to the deadline.

### Participation (10%)

- **Purpose:** The participation grades are to reward those who are engaged in the course content and prepared for the weekly in-class discussions. In calculating your participation grade, I will take into account your performance throughout the semester across several factors including:
- **Attendance:** Please note you can miss one class—no questions asked—without penalty. If you need to be excused from class for a valid reason (e.g., medical), please email me ahead of time to let me know (so you don't receive a penalty).
- **In-class engagement:** You will receive marks for your engagement with the course content. This includes the quality of the points you make during in-class discussions (not necessarily the quantity!), your preparedness for class (i.e., doing the readings), being respectful of others during class, remaining focused during class (not on Facebook), etc.
- **Peer assessor (5%):** On the week you have signed up to be a peer assessor you are responsible for doing three things:
  - By *Sunday 11:59pm* (before the week's class) you must:
    - 1) Post two discussion questions to the "discussion q" folder on Piazza. See the seminar presentation section for guidance on creating questions.
    - 2) Submit a readings reflection to the assignment section on Canvas. This reflection should be no more than **400 words** (excluding references). In this assignment you should reflect on something that stood out to you in the readings of the week (e.g., what surprised you, how the readings fit together, what questions arose from the readings, etc.). There is no one right way to do the reflection—I just want to see evidence that you have critically thought about the readings in depth.
    - **Purpose:** The purpose of 1) and 2) are to help promote fruitful in class discussion, so that other students besides the presenters have deeply reflected on the readings.
  - By *Friday 11:59pm* (after the week's class) you must:
    - 3) Submit your "peer commentary". This should be no more than **300 words**. You should (*very briefly*) indicate a) What aspect of the presentation you found most effective and why? b) What parts of the presentation were unclear or could be improved? Provide a concrete solution for how the presenters might improve upon this going forward. This peer assessment will be shared with the presenters afterward.
    - **Purpose:** The purpose of 3) is to give you experience evaluating others' oral communication, which often helps you improve your own! The commentary ensures the presenters receive feedback additional to my own, that may help them in subsequent assignments in this class (e.g., debate) and beyond (e.g., honours thesis presentations).

### Seminar Presentation (25%--individual mark)

#### 30 min presentation + 60 min leading class discussion

- On Thursday March 4<sup>th</sup> at 9am you will be able to sign up for a seminar topic (first come first serve).
- **Purpose:** The seminars are your chance to become an expert on a specific area, and communicate what you have learned to the class.
- **Before your seminar:** The week prior to your seminar you must post [an additional resource](#) for the class on Piazza (to the “readings” folder) to read before class. This should be ONE resource total for your group. This resource can either be an article to read (does not need to be a peer reviewed article, please keep on the shorter side and no more than 12 journal pages, or about [30 minutes](#) reading time), or a video to watch such as a ted talk (please keep to < 30 minutes).
- You will generate [6-8 discussion questions](#) for the class. These should be open-ended questions that will spark discussion and debate amongst students. Your questions can ask students to integrate readings and content from the week, as well as integrate across weeks of the semester. In week 2 we will discuss forming good questions, and Jess will model questions for you. Some topics for discussion questions may include critiquing studies’ limitations and generalizability, discussing future directions, presenting alternative explanations to the authors’ interpretations, etc. One member of your group should please submit your discussion questions on Canvas the morning of your seminar.
- **During the seminar:** Your group will prepare a [presentation with slides](#) (e.g., Powerpoint) to teach the class about the week’s topic. Your presentation should briefly recap the readings, but should not spend too much time on merely recapping (as you can assume the students will have read the articles). You should also cover content from *at least* 2 additional sources that were not assigned to the other students. The presentation should teach us something new about the week’s topic, and help set the stage for the class discussion (including helping students see similarities and differences across readings, etc.).
- Presentations are encouraged to be creative and interactive such as re-enacting a study’s paradigm, discussing a real-world or pop culture example, watching a video clip, etc.
- Following your presentation your group will then [facilitate the class discussion](#) on your topic. The discussion questions should predominately focus on the assigned readings (the ones Jess assigned + the resource you shared with students ahead of time), but a few questions can come out of your presentation. You should also integrate the peer assessors’ questions. Your group does not need to follow the pre-set questions, but can go with the natural flow of the conversation.

### Article Summary & Critique (10%; 30 March)

#### 750 words (excluding references)

- **Purpose:** This assignment is designed to be a low stakes way for you to get feedback early in the term regarding your writing and critical thinking—two important skills for the rest of the assessments.
- You are to pick an empirical article (i.e., one with data) from the first five weeks of the readings. For this assignment you will summarize the article, critique its scientific merit, and propose future research directions to build off the article.

### Group Debate (15%; 4 or 11 May—group mark)

#### Group mark based on in-class performance

- On Thursday March 18<sup>th</sup> at 9am you will be able to sign up for a debate topic and position (first come first serve).
- Purpose: Remember **YOUR POSITION IN THE DEBATE DOES NOT REFLECT YOUR OWN PERSONAL OPINION**. Rather, this is an academic thought exercise to give you experience constructing and arguing points using empirical research. I've designed these questions and positions to reflect real positions scholars hold, and all positions can be argued effectively. You are marked as a group on the quality of the arguments you present.
- Gender Differences debate (May 4th):
  - Pro gender differences: Yes, there are large/meaningful gender differences in sexual behaviour and sexual relationships.
  - No gender differences: There are little to no meaningful gender differences in sexual behaviour and sexual relationships.
- Pornography debate (May 11<sup>th</sup>):
  - Against pornography: Pornography has a detrimental effect on sexual, relational and overall well-being.
  - For pornography: Pornography has a neutral or positive effect on sexual, relational and overall well-being.

### Debate Write-up (15%; 18 May)

#### 1,000 words (excluding references)

- Purpose: This assignment allows you to synthesize and communicate in written form what you have learned through preparing for your debate.
- You should write about the topic you debated (either gender differences or pornography) but *may argue for either side* regardless of the position you argued during the debate.
- You will first present a coherent, persuasive argument for your position. Then, you will propose how the field can move forward to help resolve the debate.

### Final Blog Post (25%, 15 June)

#### 2,000 words (excluding references)

- Purpose: This assignment is to allow you to integrate what you have learned throughout the course, and share this new knowledge with a lay audience.
- You will write a blog post on a topic relevant to the course content. Your blog cannot *exclusively* discuss the content of your seminar week or your group's debate topic (although it can include some of it). You are encouraged to be creative and to integrate and synthesize material from different weeks of the semester.
- See Canvas for sample blog structures and examples.

## The fine print

**\*\*Please consult the general 700-level course syllabus for further information on extensions, word count, late policies, academic integrity etc.\*\***

### Learning Outcomes

#### **Graduate Profile:** Master of Science

Capabilities Developed in this Course:

Capability 1: Disciplinary Knowledge and Practice

Capability 2: Critical Thinking

Capability 3: Solution Seeking

Capability 4: Communication and Engagement

Capability 5: Independence and Integrity

Capability 6: Social and Environmental Responsibilities

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

1. Review and synthesize sexuality theories and research (Capability 1 and 2)
2. Critically evaluate research methodology and the strength of knowledge on a specific area of interest (Capability 1, 2 and 3)
3. Discuss theory and research critically and analytically including developing arguments grounded in scientific theory (Capability 2, 3 and 4)
4. Communicate knowledge in a concise, informative, and interesting manner, whilst demonstrating appropriate sensitivity (e.g., to diversity and other social issues). (Capability 4 and 6)
5. Apply research and theory in psychology to understand how to improve sexual and relational well-being (Capability 2, 3 and 6)
6. Actively participate in their own learning and the learning of others (Capability 5)

### Expected Workload

For 15-point courses, you are expected to spend ~10 hours studying for the course per week (150 throughout the semester). Thus for each week you can expect to spend 2 hours in class, approximately 2 hours conducting the weekly reading, and the remainder 6+ hours on self-study (reflecting on content, working on assignments, etc.)



### Piazza

All queries should be posted to Piazza (as opposed to email) so that all students have access to the student discussions as well as my responses to these questions. You can choose to be anonymous to fellow students, but won't be anonymous to me. As with in-class communication, I expect Piazza communications to be respectful of other students, and follow the student charter guidelines.

Please note I will only check Piazza ~3 times per week and during normal working hours.

If you are struggling with a concept, reading, etc. I encourage you to post! Students are then encouraged to answer each other's queries. Peer feedback and discussions are a great way

of learning how to articulate your understanding and discuss central topics that form the basis of your assignments and learning. Don't be shy about suggesting an answer you think may not be correct. The discussion that follows (and any input by me) offers a great opportunity for learning, and may often demonstrate that there are different ways that questions can be answered depending on the theory or research you apply.

#### **Piazza tips:**

- Hash-tag your posts so classmates can easily filter/search questions of the same topic. You do this by typing the hash character (#), and then a list of hashtags currently in use will appear. If applicable, use one/multiple of the existing tags. If not, create a new tag, but please ensure it is broad enough #casualsex is better than #Maxwellpapercasualsex)
- Use the filters to manage your feed (unread, updated, following etc.).
- Each post has a unique ID. You can link to specific posts by using the "@" sign, followed by the post ID (e.g. @27)
- There is an App you can download for your phone (iOS or Android) which you can use to participate in Piazza on the go.
- You can archive old posts to hide them from your feed and keep it less cluttered!
- Set your Piazza email notification settings so your inbox doesn't get cluttered with every post. Click on the little cog icon next to your name to find the "Account/Email Settings" option. Click on "Edit Email Notifications" and choose your preference.

#### **Writing & Academic Integrity reminders**

All written material should follow the latest APA Publication Manual (APA 7) guidelines for student papers (see general 700 level course outline). I have posted several APA 7 resources on Canvas. *[Note your blog assignment doesn't have to be "full on" APA 7, but the in-text citations should be].*

Please see the general 700-level course outline for information regarding academic integrity and plagiarism. All work that is not your own ideas must be referenced, and unless quoting, all of your work must be written in your own words. All written work will be submitted electrically via CANVAS. Submission of your work is taken as a declaration that the essay/report is all your own work and not plagiarised. **Your work will also be automatically submitted to Turnitin – plagiarism detection software used within the university.** Please remember submitting the same content to multiple courses counts as plagiarism.

If you require further information on APA reference styles and guidance regarding quotations and citations, visit the UOA Student Learning Centre website <http://www.cite.auckland.ac.nz/> which has been designed to assist students with all aspects of referencing. Finally, if you remain unsure about any of these issues please contact the Student Learning Centre [www.slc.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.slc.auckland.ac.nz).

You should also retain an electronic copy of all coursework – this may be requested at any time until the end of the exam period.

## **Learning Resources**

Course readings will be posted through Talis and include a mix of empirical articles and some book chapters. Students are NOT required to purchase a text/course book.

## **Student Feedback**

During the course Class Representatives in each class can take feedback to the staff responsible for the course and staff-student consultative committees.

At the end of the course students will be invited to give feedback on the course and teaching through SET or Qualtrics. I will consider all feedback for the future. Your feedback helps to improve the course and its delivery for all students.

If you would like to provide anonymous feedback to Jess before then, you can do so [here](#).

## **Digital Resources**

Course materials are made available in a learning and collaboration tool called Canvas which also includes reading lists and lecture recordings (where available).

Please remember that the recording of any class on a personal device requires the permission of the instructor.

## **Copyright**

The content and delivery of content in this course are protected by copyright. Material belonging to others may have been used in this course and copied by and solely for the educational purposes of the University under license.

You may copy the course content for the purposes of private study or research, but you may not upload onto any third party site, make a further copy or sell, alter or further reproduce or distribute any part of the course content to another person.

## **Inclusive Learning**

All students are asked to discuss any impairment related requirements privately, face to face and/or in written form with the instructor.

Student Disability Services also provides support for students with a wide range of impairments, both visible and invisible, to succeed and excel at the University. For more information and contact details, please visit the [Student Disability Services' website](#)

## **Special Circumstances**

If your ability to complete assessed coursework is affected by illness or other personal circumstances outside of your control, contact the instructor as soon as possible before the assessment is due.



If your personal circumstances significantly affect your performance, or preparation, for an exam or eligible written test, refer to the University's [aegrotat or compassionate consideration page](#).

This should be done as soon as possible and no later than seven days after the affected test or exam date.

### **Learning Continuity**

In the event of an unexpected disruption we undertake to maintain the continuity and standard of teaching and learning in all your courses throughout the year. If there are unexpected disruptions the University has contingency plans to ensure that access to your course continues and your assessment is fair, and not compromised. Some adjustments may need to be made in emergencies. You will be kept fully informed by your course co-ordinator, and if disruption occurs you should refer to the University Website for information about how to proceed.

Under the government's Covid-19 Alert Levels, we anticipate using the following delivery modes. Note this is subject to change depending on the specific circumstances.

Level 1: Delivered normally as specified in delivery mode

Level 2: You will not be required to attend in person. All teaching and assessment will have a remote option.

Level 3 / 4: All teaching activities and assessments are delivered remotely

### **Student Charter and Responsibilities**

The Student Charter assumes and acknowledges that students are active participants in the learning process and that they have responsibilities to the institution and the international community of scholars. **The University expects that students will act at all times in a way that demonstrates respect for the rights of other students and staff so that the learning environment is both safe and productive.** For further information visit [Student Charter](#).

### **Disclaimer**

Elements of this outline may be subject to change. The latest information about the course will be available for students in Canvas.

In this course you may be asked to submit your coursework assessments digitally. The University reserves the right to conduct scheduled tests and examinations for this course online or through the use of computers or other electronic devices. Where tests or examinations are conducted online remote invigilation arrangements may be used. The final decision on the completion mode for a test or examination, and remote invigilation arrangements where applicable, will be advised to students at least 10 days prior to the scheduled date of the assessment, or in the case of an examination when the examination timetable is published.