

WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

MASTER SYLLABUS

SW 6560 – Social Work and Sexual Orientation

I. Course Domain and Boundaries

This course will address working with clients who identify as Gay and Lesbian (GL). The purpose of this course is for helping professionals to identify what special issues a GL person presents and how to appropriately address them.

Professional social workers need to have basic knowledge of GL issues.

- A. **ISSUES** which identify the developmental stages of the client's GL history and life, and how these integrate into the client's broader personal and social areas of development for satisfaction and success as a youth and adult.
- B. **BEHAVIORAL DATA** for identification of relevant GL issues, whether primary to the presenting problem or secondary, but still necessary to be addressed for a quality life.

II. Specific Knowledge and Skill Objectives

Students will learn:

- 1. **Knowledge** of relevant human behavior theories (past and present) which relate to GL development; opportunities and social institutions available for the healthy expression of a GL person; as well as complications in working with this specific population.
- 2. **Feelings** of the social worker, colleagues and the client which are elicited during delivery of service and possibly in daily interactions with GL colleagues and clients—your countertransference. Without an awareness of the feelings of the involved individuals, transference and countertransference issues (compounded by various levels of homophobia) will dilute or prevent effective social work interventions and professional/social relationships.

III. Performance Criteria Linked to II

Students will become acquainted with the above listed details and demonstrate, through the two required class papers and classroom attendance and discussion, a basic understanding of GL individuals, and the impact of their romantic and sexual orientation on themselves, their family, friends and coworkers.

IV. Required Texts and Readings

10 Smart Things Gay Men Can Do To Improve Their Lives, Kort, Joe, New York, NY: Alyson Books, 2003

Permanent Partners: Building Gay and Lesbian Relationships That Last, Berzon, Betty, Ph.D. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1988

Handouts provided in class and articles on www.joekort.com

V. Organization of the Course

The course will consist of instructor delivered materials and discussion and questions by students. The first half of the semester will examine Gay and Lesbian identity development as individuals. The second half of the semester will deal with Gay and Lesbian Relationships and issues relevant to their experience. Students will have read assigned readings and will be able to use this as well as classroom information to formulate each assigned paper.

VI. Student Attendance, participation, timeliness and related matters.

Students in the School of Social Work are responsible for informing themselves of all rules, regulations and requirements, complying with all official procedures, and fulfilling all course and degree requirements in proper sequence with satisfactory scholarship. In case of doubt regarding any matter the student should consult the Academic Services Officer. The primary responsibility rests with the student. See University Statement of Obligation of Students and Faculty Members of the teaching-learning process.

Students are **expected** to attend all sessions of this course for which they are registered and to notify the instructor or the instructor's secretary prior to the class session, if possible, when the student may be absent due to illness or similar emergency.

The student is **responsible** to get the handouts and notes he/she missed from the previous class. Instructor will provide handouts but not the notes from the missed class.

Students are **permitted** one absence from class before losing points from their grade. For ever subsequent absence, students will **lose one point** from their grade.

Students are **permitted** two late class arrivals before losing attendance points. For ever subsequent late arrival, students will **lose one point** from their grade.

VII. Brief Course Outline

- September 7 **INTRODUCTION**
Review of Syllabus
Requirements of Course
Definition of Gay Affirmative GLBT terms
Covert Sexual Abuse of Gay Culture causing PTSD
- September 14 **NO CLASS**
- September 21 **HOMOPHOBIA/HETEROSEXISM**
Homophobia Defined
Heterosexism Defined
Internalized Homophobia
Overt vs. covert homophobia
- September 28 **COMING OUT**
Stages of Coming Out
Gay age vs. chronological age
Three phases to Coming Out
Gay Adolescence
Dust Bunnies in closet
- October 5 **FAMILY & FRIENDS**
Being a minority in one's own family
Typical Family Reactions
Ways in which GL relate to family both in or out of closet
- October 12 **SEX AND SEXUALITY**
Gay male promiscuity
Healthy sexuality among GL
Sexual terminology among GL
Lesbian Bed Death
- October 19 **SEXUAL ADDICTION/MALE RAPE**
Sexual Addiction/Compulsion/Anorexia
Sexual Abuse/Rape in childhood and/or adulthood
Signs & Levels of Sexual Addiction
The Addictive Cycle of sexual addiction
Review for papers due October 26, 2005
beginning of next class
- October 26 **GAY & LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS**
Straight vs. GL relationship issues
Monogamy vs. non-monogamy

	Gender-role Patterns What to call significant other?
November 2	PARTNER SELECTION Homophobia and Internalized Homophobia Differences between being GL single and partnered Where do GL individuals meet? Role of childhood IMAGO Relationship Therapy Papers due on Gay/Lesbian identity development *beginning* of class
November 9	GAY AND LESBIAN COUPLES IMAGO Relationship Therapy for GL couples Communication Romantic love/Power struggle/Real Love Special issues to Lesbian couples vs. Gay male couples Monogamy vs. non-monogamy: Responsible non-monogamy
November 16	GAY & LESBIAN MARRIAGE Responses from people (family, friends, etc) Commitment Ceremonies Why go through with it? Video on Gay Marriage Review for paper due November 30, 2005 *beginning* of class
November 23	NO CLASS. This day is considered Friday for WSU
November 30	GAY PARENTING Papers due on Gay and Lesbian Relationships *beginning* of class
December 7	TRIANGLE FOUNDATION Hate Crimes Violence toward Gays and Lesbian Legalities
December 14	LAST CLASS

VIII. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

First paper due <i>October 26, 2005</i>	45 points
Second paper due <i>November 30, 2005</i>	45 points

Class attendance	5 points
Class participation	<u>5 points</u>
	100 points

Extra Credit (optional) 5 points

Grade:	95-100 A
	89-94 A-
	83-88 B+
	76-82 B
	70-75 C+
	64-69 C
	<63 F

Late Policy:

Student graded assignments are due on the date specified in class. An assignment is considered late immediately following the ***beginning*** of class on the date the paper is due. Thereafter, every 1-2 day thereafter will receive an additional 10% point penalty. (i.e. if there are 45 possible points for the assignment, the normal grade would be reduced by 4.5 points). Those 3-5 days late will incur an additional 10% penalty. **Papers that are late after 5 days will not be accepted except under unusual circumstances acceptable to instructor.** Personal circumstances will be considered. This policy has been established to insure fairness to those who turn their assignments in on time. Incomplete (I) grades are given only under very specific and severe circumstances.

This syllabus, its content and dates may be subject to change as agreed upon by the instructor and students as a whole.

IX. PAPERS

Both papers are to be at least 10 pages of double spaced typed material. The first paper will reflect both classroom teaching and assigned reading material information. It will be an overview of what was learned in the first half of the semester on Gay and Lesbian identity development as individuals. *The student may add any of his or her own insights into the paper as well.* The second paper will be 10 pages of double spaced typed material as well. It, too, will reflect the classroom teaching and assigned reading material. It will be an overview of the second half of the semester on Gay and Lesbian relationships. The student may add his or her own insights here as well. Handouts will be given in class specifying important areas to cover for papers.

X. MEETING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

The instructor will be available to meet with any classroom student upon the request of the student. Requests may be made during class or by telephoning the instructor at 248-

399-7317 (voice mail available when instructor is unavailable). Students are urged to discuss any/all concerns they have concerning this course.

I am looking forward to our working together this semester so that this class and course material may be a rewarding and enriching experience for us all. Please let me know of anything I may do which will assist you.