HDFS Offers a Human Sexuality Course? What??! Why???

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The mere thought of taking a Human Sexuality course makes some students blush. Single students sometimes think, “Why is this course required?” and “Ewww, what are we going to learn?” Married students reluctantly think, “what more can I learn?” Despite the initial apprehension, most students, if not all, are very thankful that they were “forced” to spend a whole semester learning information that is rarely discussed well or in-depth enough to be helpful to humans of all ages who are, indeed, sexual beings.

I have the privilege of teaching the Human Sexuality course. It is a wonderful experience for me to watch the student learning process in this class – it’s as if their knowledge base explodes! The enlightenment that the students experience is astounding and sometimes life-changing. Many are pleasantly surprised at how comfortable they become with the information and are excited to share their new knowledge with anyone who will listen. Here are a few of the student comments during and after the course:

“I wish my parents or someone would have given me this information way before now!”

“If I had known more, I would have made better decisions!”

“I finally understand my own body!”

“I love that we learn about communication and healthy relationships!”

“Everyone should have to take this course!”

“Sex is all around us and we never talk about it!”

“I thought I knew everything about sexuality before I took this class. I was wrong!”

“This information is going to help me throughout my life – professionally and personally!”

“This information would have helped me a lot when I got married.”

“I know what to teach my kids now.”

We cover a wide range of topics, and students quickly learn that this class is about sexuality, not just sex; although we study that, as well. Our respectful look at cultural and social issues broadens awareness. The anatomy and physiology lectures answer a lot of questions students have about their own bodies. The historical aspects of sexuality inform students that today’s human struggles are not unique. Students learn about contraception, pregnancy and childbirth, sexually transmitted infections, myths and misconceptions, and, of course, the biopsychosocial development of children, adolescents, and adults. We also wade through the “dark side” of sexuality and stride through the lighter topics of love, flirting, and aphrodisiacs such as green M&Ms and “Love Potion #9” – look it up! All in all, we laugh, cringe, ponder, explore, discuss, and have a great time in class discovering why sexuality is so important to understand.

So why would our USU Human Development and Family Studies department offer a Human Sexuality course? Why wouldn’t we?! Our students become therapists, child advocates, teachers, human development and family specialists, spouses, parents, and citizens. They need in-depth information about human development and relationships, including sexuality, which enables them to do their jobs, recognize issues, make good-decisions, and protect themselves or others. Human sexuality impacts all areas of our lives whether we recognize it or not. It is better to be armed with accurate information and awareness than to naively go through life discounting an obvious part of human experience. Go Aggies!