**Reflection Paper Assignment – HED 190 Human Sexuality and Society**

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This assignment focuses explicitly on the intersectional identities of the student, and asks them to consider the various influences these identities have had on their understanding of themselves.  In doing so, they may clarify how they want to build relationships and present themselves to the world.  Assessing the degree to which they have reflected on their aspects of identity will be based on the rubric posted below the assignment description from the syllabus.

Students will write a Reflection Paper in which they will examine how they have learned about sexuality up to this point in their life.  It will address variables like religion, gender, formal education, media/popular culture, and race/ethnicity, and tell how they have influenced their own sexual development, concept of gender roles, and relationships.

**Reflection Paper Rubric**

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| **6.7 points per box** | **6 points** | **5. 5 points** | **4 points** |
| **Depth of reflection:** Paper provides evidence (through the use of description and details of student’s responses to religion, gender, formal education, media/ popular culture, race) that they have examined their own belief systems and related this to their current understanding of their sexuality. | Paper provides evidence (through the use of description and details of the student’s responses to 3 or 4 of the variables in the previous box) that they have examined their own belief systems and related this to their current understanding of their sexuality. | Paper provides evidence (through the use of description and details of the student’s responses to 2 of the variables in the first box) that they have examined their own belief systems and related this to their current understanding of their sexuality. | Paper provides limited evidence (through the use of description and details of the student’s responses to 1 of the variables in the first box) that they have examined their sexual development. |
| **Structure/mechanics:**  Writing is clear, concise, and well organized with excellent sentence/ paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than three spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing. | Writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing. | Writing is unclear and/or disorganized. Thoughts are not expressed in a logical manner. There are more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing. | Writing is unclear and disorganized. Thoughts ramble and make little sense. There are numerous spelling, grammar, or syntax errors throughout the paper. |
| **Format:** Paper is neatly typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins, and 4 full pages in length. | Paper is neatly typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins and 3 full pages in length. | Paper is typed, double-spaced, larger font, one-inch margins and shorter than 3 full pages in length. | Formatting rules ignored, shorter than 2 pages in length. |

Students were assigned this paper just recently, and the result has been very positive so far, but I haven’t graded them all yet. Students were responsive to the directions in the syllabus, and reflected on how they learned about sexuality, gender, and relationships, and appeared to take the assignment seriously. One student came to my office hour two days ago to say he appreciated the assignment, and that it had brought up some painful realizations about his culture (strict Orthodox Judaism). He is away from home now, and recognizes how his family strictly enforced his traditions’ teaching about sexual behavior and gender roles. He is now in therapy, and dealing with his limited experience in the secular world, while rejecting much of what he was taught growing up.

Another student, who was raised in Europe, wrote about her realization that people in the U.S. seem to have a more complicated relationship to sexuality than they do in her country. As a white, cisgender woman, she never considered her racial or ethnic identity as having any influence in how she was treated, but in writing the paper, she realizes that a degree of privilege has been hers.

Another student, from China, reflected on how much influence her mother and sister had in her understanding of gender roles, and she bemoaned the lack of sexuality education in China. She said they separated the boys from the girls and gave the girls the message not to let anyone touch them. The reticence to discuss sexuality was profound, and only when she was older and accidentally came across an erotic video on her phone did she begin to understand a bit about sexual behavior. She was so shocked by it, she turned it off after a minute or so, and felt that she had no one to talk to about it. She wrote that she thought it was the parents’ job to provide sexual education for their children, but it rarely happens, and absolutely did not in her family.

Not learning anything about sexuality in the family was reiterated by an Indian-American male student who said his parents and older brother were no help in learning anything useful. He himself thought that sex was “nasty” until he reached puberty. Discussions with friends at that point turned him to the Internet for information. He saw lots of porn, and wondered how helpful it was when it looked so different from his limited experience. Now, at 20 years old, he feels mature, but recognizes that his information has many gaps. He says he’s glad he’s heterosexual because that makes life easier.



A person holding an object

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