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UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

Fifteenth Edition

**Mc
Graw
Hill**

**JANET SHIBLEY HYDE
JOHN D. DELAMATER**



Understanding Human Sexuality

Fifteenth Edition

Janet Shibley Hyde

University of Wisconsin—Madison

**Mc
Graw
Hill**





UNDERSTANDING HUMAN SEXUALITY

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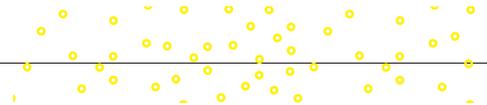
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Author Biography

Janet Shibley Hyde, Professor Emerit of Psychology and Gender & Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, received her education at Oberlin College and the University of California, Berkeley. She has taught a course in human sexuality since 1974, first at Bowling Green State University, then at Denison University, and now at the University of Wisconsin. Her research interests are in gender differences and gender development in adolescence. Author of the textbook *The Psychology of Women and Gender: Half the Human Experience* +, she is a past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association

and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She has received many other honors, including an award for excellence in teaching at Bowling Green State University, the Chancellor's Award for teaching at the University of Wisconsin, and the Kinsey Award from the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality for her contributions to sex research. In 2000–2001 she served as one of the three scientific editors for U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher's report *Promoting Sexual Health and Responsible Sexual Behavior*. In 2019, Dr. Hyde was the inaugural recipient of the Alfred C. Kinsey Award from the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University.



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Guide to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

I have been committed to addressing issues of diversity from the very first edition of this textbook (1979), which featured sections on cross-cultural perspectives, as well as social-class and race differences. Today, my commitment is stronger than ever. The world is a very different place today, and there is much more openness to discussing issues of diversity. Direct conversations about racism are more possible now. Moreover, research on diversity topics has expanded tremendously.

Although many use the term “diversity” as a synonym for racial diversity, diversity has many dimensions, many of which are addressed in this book. These dimensions include race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and gender, as well as cross-cultural perspectives. Moreover, this new edition fosters direct discussions of racism in relation to human sexuality, always supported by scientific research.

Language is important, and I continue to work toward the most up-to-date and inclusive language. For example, trans-inclusive language is used throughout, and phrases that reinforce the gender binary, such as “he or she,” have been banished.

The most recent updates in this textbook come from many journals devoted to diversity topics, such as *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *Gender & Society*, *Sexuality & Culture*, and *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. In addition, major journals in psychology, sociology, and health are carrying more and more articles on topics such as race and gender diversity. These include the *American Journal of Public Health*, *JAMA Pediatrics*, *American Psychologist*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, and, of course, *Journal of Sex Research* and *Archives of Sexual Behavior*.

Finally, research by scholars of color is incorporated throughout.

Chapter 1: Sexuality in Perspective

New DEI Material

- New box examining the psychology of racism in the United States, featuring the work of Roberts and Rizzo (2021)
- Discussion of Asian Americans as the “model minority,” including research by Kim et al. (2021) and Cheng et al. (2021)
- The concept of “historical trauma” experienced by people of color is introduced, based on the work of Gameon and Skewes (2021) and Gone (2009)

Continuing DEI Material

- Gender binary is defined and explained
- Coverage of sexual minorities
- Cross-cultural perspectives
- Social class and sex
- Race and sex

Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality

New DEI Material

- New section on Critical Race Theory includes the concepts of institutional racism and the social construction of race, with an example of anti-miscegenation laws that criminalized interracial sex/marriage. Features *Critical Race Theory: A Primer* by Khiara Bridges (2019)
- Added emphasis on intersectionality, which emanates from both feminist theory and critical race theory, and its implications for sexuality

Continuing DEI Material

- Gender-neutral evolutionary theory
- Examination of multiple critical theories: feminist theory, queer theory, and (new) critical race theory

Chapter 3: Sex Research

New DEI Material

- New box on Diversity Science, which studies issues such as prejudice and uses a sociocultural framework to understand patterns such as race differences. Highlights structural disparities, including race differences in family wealth and the long-term impacts of redlining
- The latest APA guidelines on Race and Ethnicity in Psychology, and the implications for methods in sex research
- New section on Measuring Gender and Sexual Orientation

Continuing DEI Material

- Race/Ethnicity in research

Chapter 4: Sexual Anatomy

New DEI Material

- Extensive editing of language to make it more trans-inclusive

Continuing DEI Material

- Discussion of culture and female genital cutting (FGC), featuring research by international scholars

Chapter 5: Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, and the Menstrual Cycle

New DEI Material

- Editing of language to be more trans-inclusive

Continuing DEI Material

- Coverage of intersex conditions and the debate over their treatment

Chapter 6: Pregnancy and Childbirth

New DEI Material

- Box on Race and Racism in Pregnancy and Infant Mortality, including the latest CDC data on racial disparities in pregnancy-related mortality and infant mortality
- Features Dána-Ain Davis's (2019) arguments for improving healthcare during pregnancy for Black women, at both the individual level and the institutional level

Continuing DEI Material

- Cross-national data on cesarean delivery rates

Chapter 7: Contraception and Abortion

Continuing DEI Material

- Data on contraceptive practices around the world
- Box on Abortion in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Chapter 8: Sexual Arousal

Continuing DEI Material

- Box on Sexuality and Disability, updated
- Illustrations of sexual positions show racial diversity

Chapter 9: Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Childhood and Adolescence

Continuing DEI Material

- Coverage of young children's learning concepts about gender
- Sections on same-gender sexual behavior from childhood through adolescence
- Heteronormativity is learned in childhood
- Data on variations across nations in timing of girls' first intercourse

Chapter 10: Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Adulthood

New DEI Material

- A new box, A Sexually Diverse World: Culture and Conceptualizations of Late Adulthood, examines values outside of Western norms and includes research from Shinobu Kitayama (2020)

Chapter 11: Attraction, Love, and Communication

New DEI Material

- New data on racial homophily as evident in online dating platforms
- New section, "The Far Reach of the Internet and Western Values," examines how mobile devices have globalized Western approaches to sexuality
- Discussion of the movement to include more racially, economically, and sexually diverse samples in relationship studies

- Feature on Shar Dubey, an immigrant from India, who is CEO of The Match Group

Continuing DEI Material

- Data on homophily in U.S. marriages by race, education, and religion

Chapter 12: Gender and Sexuality

New DEI Material

- The last third of the chapter, on transgender issues and experience, has been updated with the latest terms and research
- New box, Measuring Discrimination against Trans People
- Discussion of how Intergroup Contact Theory could be applied to reduce cisgender people's prejudice against trans people
- Coverage of Liu and Zuo's study of a reversal of gender differences in risk-taking in a matrilineal Chinese culture compared with a patriarchal one
- Concept of *gender euphoria* introduced as a counterbalance to gender dysphoria within gender-minority communities
- Trans people are sexually objectified by being fetishized, and research by Flores and colleagues (2016, 2018) shows that trans people of color are doubly fetishized

Continuing DEI Material

- Gender roles and stereotypes
- Variations in gender roles across U.S. racial/ethnic groups, including African Americans, Latinx, Asian Americans, and American Indians
- Transgender experience
- Prejudice against trans people

Chapter 13: Sexual Orientation: Gay Straight, or Bi?

New DEI Material

- New box, A Sexually Diverse World: Race and the Well-being of LGBT People in the United States, includes the issue of sexual racism within the LGBT community

Continuing DEI Material

- Data on attitudes toward gays and lesbians
- Multicultural perspectives on sexual orientation
- The global divide in acceptance of LGBT people

- Analysis of the role media plays in antigay prejudice and how LGB people feel about themselves.
- Negative effects of conversion therapy on mental health of LGBT people

Chapter 14: Variations in Sexual Behavior

New DEI Material

- New section, "Racism and BDSM"

Chapter 15: Sexual Coercion

New DEI Material

- New box, A Sexually Diverse World: Sexual Violence in Native America, as chronicled by legal scholar Sarah Deer (2015)
- Section on trans people as victims of sexual violence
- New data on the role of race and social class in campus sexual assault
- New opening quote from a queer woman of color

Continuing DEI Material

- Section on Race/Ethnicity and Rape

Chapter 16: Sex for Sale

Continuing DEI Material

- The role of race and social class in sex workers' lives

Chapter 17: Sexual Disorders and Sex Therapy

Continuing DEI Material

- Sexual problems due to sociocultural and economic factors, according to the New View of Women's Sexual Problems

Chapter 18: Sexually Transmitted Infections

Continuing DEI Material

- The race issue with the HPV vaccine
- Section on Women, Children, People of Color, and AIDS
- Sexually Diverse World box, AIDS in Thailand

Chapter 19: Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality

New DEI Material

- Ancient Jewish law goes beyond gender binary with terms for intersex and gender fluid people

Continuing DEI Material

- Sexuality across major religions (worldwide, including Islam)
- The concept that the United States is a pluralistic society
- Variation across U.S. religious groups in attitudes toward abortion
- Diversity in religious views on same-gender sexuality

Chapter 20: Sex and the Law

New DEI Material

- Discussion of 2020 U.S. Supreme Court decision that firing an employee based on being gay or transgender violates Title VII

- Description of the social inequality approach to developing legal policies for sex workers
- Discussion of how abortion bans have a disproportionate impact on women of color

Continuing DEI Material

- Legalization of same-sex marriage
- Section on race, social class, and sex laws
- Discussion of anti-miscegenation laws and their overturning in *Loving v. Virginia*
- Sexually Diverse World box, Universal Sexual Rights
- Sexually Diverse World box, Legal Issues for Transgender Persons

Epilogue: Looking to the Future: Sexuality Education

New DEI Material

- Sexual health interventions tailored to adolescents of color

Continuing DEI Material

- Section on Race and Sexuality Education

Preface

Hyde—Continuing a Research-Based Tradition in Sexuality

Since its conception, *Understanding Human Sexuality* has achieved distinction and success by following the science of human sexuality. The first of the modern sexuality textbooks, *Understanding Human Sexuality* introduced this topic to students through the science that has uncovered what we know about the field. Groundbreaking when it first appeared, this research-based tradition continues to result in a contemporary, balanced introduction to human sexuality in an integrated system that engages students in learning the content of the course, about others, and about themselves.

A Personalized Experience that Leads to Improved Learning

 **SMARTBOOK™** How many students think they know everything about human sexuality but struggle on the first exam? Students study more effectively with Connect and SmartBook.

SmartBook helps students study more efficiently by highlighting what to focus on in the chapter, asking review questions, and directing them to resources until they understand. Connect's assignments help students contextualize what they've learned through application, so they can better understand the material and think critically.

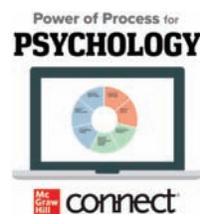
SmartBook is optimized for mobile and tablet and is accessible for students with disabilities. Content-wise, it has been enhanced with improved learning objectives that are measurable and observable to improve student outcomes. SmartBook personalizes learning to individual student needs, continually adapting to pinpoint knowledge gaps and focus learning on topics that need the most attention. Study time is more productive and, as a result, students are better prepared for class and coursework. For instructors, SmartBook tracks student progress and provides insights that can help guide teaching strategies.

Powerful Reporting

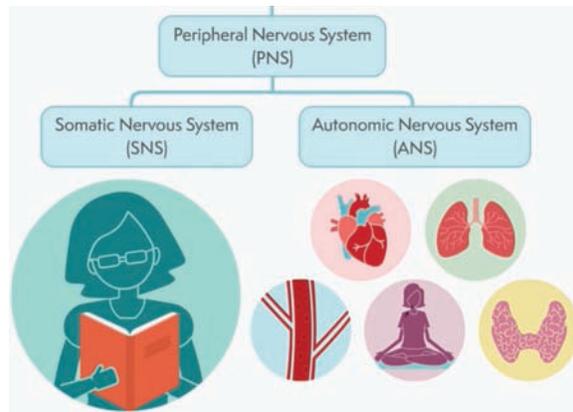
Whether a class is face-to-face, hybrid, or entirely online, McGraw Hill Connect provides the tools needed to reduce the amount of time and energy instructors spend administering their courses. Easy-to-use course management tools allow instructors to spend less time administering and more time teaching, while reports allow students to monitor their progress and optimize their study time.

- The **At-Risk Student Report** provides instructors with one-click access to a dashboard that identifies students who are at risk of dropping out of the course due to low engagement levels.
- The **Category Analysis Report** details student performance relative to specific learning objectives and goals, including APA learning goals and outcomes and levels of Bloom's taxonomy.
- The **SmartBook Reports** allow instructors and students to easily monitor progress and pinpoint areas of weakness, giving each student a personalized study plan to achieve success.

Preparing Students for Higher-Level Thinking



Power of Process, available in McGraw Hill Connect™, guides students through the process of critical reading, analysis, and writing. Faculty can select or upload their own content, such as journal articles, and assign analysis strategies to gain insight into students' application of the scientific method. For students, Power of Process offers a guided visual approach to exercising critical thinking strategies to apply before, during, and after reading published research. Additionally, utilizing the relevant and engaging research articles built into Power of Process, students are supported in becoming critical consumers of research.



Concept Clips help students comprehend some of the most difficult ideas in human sexuality. Colorful graphics and stimulating animations describe core concepts in a step-by-step manner, engaging students and aiding in retention. Concept Clips can be used as a presentation tool in the classroom or for student assessment.

New to the Fifteenth Edition, Concept Clips feature a more modern visual style, updated scripts and assessment items, and enhanced accessibility.

Interactivities, assignable through Connect, engage students with content through experiential activities. Topics include first impressions and attraction.

Through the connection of human sexuality to students' own lives, concepts become more relevant and understandable. **Newsflash** exercises tie current news stories to key principles and learning objectives. After interacting with a contemporary news story, students are assessed on their ability to make the link between real life and research findings.

Writing Assignment

New to this edition and found in Connect, Writing Assignments offer faculty the ability to assign a full range of writing assignments to students with just-in-time feedback.

You may set up manually scored assignments in a way that students can:

- automatically receive grammar and high-level feedback to improve their writing before they submit a project to you;
- run originality checks and receive feedback on “exact matches” and “possibly altered text” that includes guidance about how to properly paraphrase, quote, and

cite sources to improve the academic integrity of their writing before they submit their work to you.

Following the Science to Understand Human Sexuality

Understanding Human Sexuality is grounded in science and the research that informs science. This foundation is based on an interdisciplinary approach that includes psychology, sociology, biology, public health, and medicine.

The quality of sex research is highly variable, to put it mildly. Some journalists think they are sex researchers if they have interviewed 10 people and written a book about it! Too often in textbooks we see equal weight given to an article from the local newspaper and a refereed journal article from the *New England Journal of Medicine* or the *Journal of Sex Research*—and those few readers who are motivated enough have to do a lot of detective work to find the real source for a statement. It is the responsibility of authors to sift through available studies and present only those of the best quality and the greatest relevance to this course. It is a thrill to observe that the quality of sex research improves every decade.

Following the Science to Understand Oneself and Others

Studying human sexuality requires more than simply progressing through the material. To genuinely learn the concepts, students must look at their own sexual health, relationships, and consider how sex impacts their lives. For that reason, it is important that everyone who reads *Understanding Human Sexuality* feels connected to the content and finds it useful. The author has used a research-proven approach to ensure this book is diverse and practical. Here are some of the major themes found throughout:

- A multi-ethnic and multi-cultural perspective has always been featured in this textbook, and in this edition there is major new coverage of race and racism as related to human sexuality, across multiple chapters (see the Guide to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion).
- Chapters are as “trans-friendly” as possible, both in language used and content covered.

- The Supreme Court handed down a major ruling on abortion in June 2022, just as this edition was going to press. The decision was incorporated into the chapter Sex and the Law.
- Inclusion of practical information such as finding sexual satisfaction, how cohabitation can impact relationships, and the benefits of mindfulness-based sex therapy.
- Appreciation of the diversity of human sexuality along many dimensions including age, sexual orientation, disability, and gender identity.

Understanding Human Sexuality aims to help students feel confident in what they are learning and show them how to apply it.

Milestones in Sex Research
Endocrine Disruptors

Male Florida panthers have low sperm counts. Frogs are born hermaphroditic, with mixed male and female organs. Male turtles display reduced courtship and nesting behaviors. A preschool girl begins growing pubic hair. These cases and dozens of others have appeared in the news in the last decade. Are they unrelated bizarre occurrences, or is there a common link?

Scientists believe that underlying all these troubling cases is the phenomenon of **endocrine disruptors** (sometimes called endocrine-disrupting chemicals or EDCs), which are chemicals found in the environment that affect the endocrine system and cause adverse effects on animals, including humans. Evidence of the effects of endocrine disruptors comes both from studies of animals in the wild and from carefully controlled laboratory experiments.

What chemicals are the culprits? Some are pesticides such as atrazine and DDT, used by farmers and others to kill unwanted insects and weeds. Bisphenol A (BPA) is used in making plastics such as baby bottles. More BPA is produced every year than any other chemical—15 billion pounds in 2013 (Gore et al., 2015). PCBs, which were banned from production in the United States in 1976, were used in making products such as paints, plastics, and printing ink. Some have a half-life of over 1,000 years and thus are still abundant in the environment despite being banned.

Fracking (hydraulic fracturing to extract oil from the earth) involves the use of fracking chemicals, 35 percent of which are endocrine disruptors (Alicid & Miller, 2014). These chemicals have been linked to infertility, miscarriage, birth defects, and cancers of the reproductive organs.

How do these chemicals exert their effects on sexual biology and behavior? All of them affect the endocrine system and, specifically, the sex hormone system. Many have multiple effects. Atrazine, for example, affects both estrogen and testosterone and inhibits their binding to estrogen receptors and androgen receptors. It also depresses the LH surge that causes ovulation, described later in this chapter in the discussion of the menstrual cycle. The insecticide DDT affects estrogen, progester-

their offspring. These chemicals are in the food we eat and the water and milk that we drink.

Why should we care about a few hermaphroditic frogs or preschoolers with pubic hair? Scientists see these cases as examples of the proverbial canary in the mine shaft—that is, they are small signs that something terribly dangerous is happening. The European Union is taking steps to regulate these chemicals, but we have seen little action on the issue in the United States.

Meanwhile, a carefully controlled study shows that pregnant women with high exposure to phthalates (found in plastics) are more likely to give birth to baby boys with undescended testes, hydroceles, and hypospadias, a condition in which the urethral opening is not at the tip of the penis, but somewhere else along it (see Figure 5) (Sathyanarayana et al., 2016). Studies in both the United States and Denmark show that breast development in girls is occurring one year earlier now than it did a few decades ago (Aksglaede et al., 2009). The pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables have been linked to lower sperm counts in men (Chiu et al., 2015). DDT, atrazine, BPA, and PFAS have all been linked to breast cancer (Wan et al., 2021). And according to an official statement by the Endocrine Society, “The [research] identifies EDCs as contributing to outcomes related to impaired reproduction, neurodevelopment, thyroid function, and metabolism and increased propensity for hormone-sensitive cancers” (Gore et al., 2015).

Endocrine disruptors: Chemicals in the environment that affect the endocrine system and cause adverse effects on animals, including humans.

Can chemicals in our environment affect sexual development?

Appreciating the Course You Want to Teach

Supporting Instructors with Technology

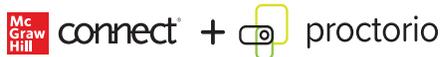
With McGraw Hill Education, you can develop and tailor the course you want to teach.



McGraw Hill’s Content Collections Powered by Create® is a self-service website that enables instructors to create custom course materials by drawing upon McGraw Hill’s comprehensive, cross-disciplinary content. Choose from our high-quality textbooks, articles, and cases; combine it with your own content; and tap into other rights-secured, third-party content such as readings, cases, and articles. Choose the best arrangement and format—color print, black-and-white print, or eBook—for your course. The eBook can be included in your Connect course and is available on the free ReadAnywhere app for smartphone or tablet access as well. When you are finished customizing, you will receive a free digital copy to review in just minutes! Visit McGraw Hill Create®: <https://create.mheducation.com/>



Tegrity in Connect is a tool that makes class time available 24/7 by automatically capturing every lecture. With a simple one-click start-and-stop process, you capture all computer screens and corresponding audio in a format that is easy to search, frame by frame. Students can efficiently search and find what they need, when they need it, across an entire semester of class recordings and then replay any part of any class with easy-touse, browser-based viewing on a PC, Mac, or mobile device. Help turn your students’ study time into learning moments immediately supported by your lecture. With Tegrity, you increase intent listening and class participation by easing students’ concerns about note-taking.



REMOTE PROCTORING AND BROWSER-LOCKING CAPABILITIES Remote proctoring and browser-locking capabilities, hosted by Proctorio within Connect, provide control of the assessment environment by enabling security options and verifying the identity of the student. Seamlessly integrated within Connect, these services allow instructors to control students’ assessment experience by restricting browser activity, recording students’ activity, and verifying students are doing their own work. Instant and detailed reporting gives instructors an at-a-glance view of potential academic integrity concerns, thereby avoiding personal bias and supporting evidence-based claims.

OLC-ALIGNED COURSES: IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY ONLINE INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT THROUGH PRECONFIGURED COURSEWARE

In consultation with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) and our certified Faculty Consultants, McGraw Hill has created preconfigured courseware using OLC's quality scorecard to align with best practices in online course delivery. This turnkey courseware contains a combination of formative assessments, summative assessments, homework, and application activities, and can easily be customized to meet an individual's needs and course outcomes. For more information, visit <https://www.mheducation.com/highered/olc>.

Trusted Service and Support

McGraw Hill Connect offers comprehensive service, support, and training throughout every phase of your implementation. If you're looking for some guidance on how to use Connect or want to learn tips and tricks from super users, you can find tutorials as you work. Our Digital Faculty Consultants and Student Ambassadors offer insight into how to achieve the results you want with Connect.

Integration with Your Learning Management System

McGraw Hill integrates your digital products from McGraw Hill Education with your school LMS for quick and easy access to best-in-class content and learning tools. Build an effective digital course, enroll students with ease, and discover how powerful digital teaching can be.

Available with Connect, integration is a pairing between an institution's learning management system (LMS) and Connect at the assignment level. It shares assignment information, grades, and calendar items from Connect into the LMS automatically, creating an easy-to-manage course for instructors and simple navigation for students.

Instructor Supplements

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL The Instructor's Manual provides a wide variety of tools and resources for presenting the course, including learning objectives, ideas for lectures and discussions, and handouts.

TEST BUILDER IN CONNECT Available within Connect, Test Builder is a cloud-based tool that enables instructors to format tests that can be printed,

administered within a learning management system, or exported as a Word document of the test bank. Test Builder offers a modern, streamlined interface for easy content configuration that matches course needs, without requiring a download. Test Builder enables instructors to

- access all test bank content from a particular title.
- easily pinpoint the most relevant content through robust filtering options.
- manipulate the order of questions or scramble questions and/or answers.
- pin questions to a specific location within a test.
- choose the layout and spacing.
- add instructions and configure default settings.

Test Builder provides a secure interface for better protection of content and allows for just-in-time updates to flow directly into assessments.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS The PowerPoint Presentations, available in dynamic, lecture-ready, and accessible WCAG-compliant versions, highlight the key points of the chapter and include supporting visuals. All of the slides can be modified to meet individual needs.

IMAGE GALLERY The Image Gallery features the complete set of downloadable figures and tables from the text. These can be easily embedded by instructors into their own PowerPoint slides.

Chapter Changes in the Fifteenth Edition

Human sexuality is one of the most exciting courses to take or teach. Part of the reason is that things are constantly changing across science, social attitudes, and even the law. Sex impacts all of our lives in countless ways and that's why watching the field progress is enlightening and encouraging. Each year there are advances in contraception and a better understanding about how outside variables, such as drugs, impact those options. We are still learning how the adolescent brain manages sex, especially while negotiating social networking. Each year, advances are made in the prevention and treatment of AIDS. There is even a deeper understanding of love and attraction.

A major goal of the previous edition was to make the book “trans friendly.” This revision has taken an even bigger step towards ensuring a book that is comfortable for transgender individuals to read and study. It includes a strong section in the chapter “Gender and Sexuality” on the transgender experience, those who have a nonbinary identity, and those who seek gender reassignment.

Overall

For many editions, *Understanding Human Sexuality* has featured material on sexuality and race/ethnicity, beginning in the first chapter. In light of the heightened need for students to learn about race and racism, that coverage has been expanded considerably, beginning with a box on the Psychology of Racism in the United States in Chapter 1. Another overall revision is that statistics were updated throughout using information from the 2020 U.S. Census.

Chapter 1. Sexuality in Perspective

- New box: The Psychology of Racism in the United States
- Population statistics updated thoroughly with data from the 2020 U.S. Census
- New research on Asian Americans as the model minority or the marginalized minority
- The concept of *historical trauma* is introduced.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality

- Study of sugar dating introduced to illustrate social exchange theory
- New coverage of critical race theory
- New Critical Thinking Skill: Applying Well-Validated Scientific Theories to Real Life

Chapter 3. Sex Research

- New box, Milestones in Sex Research: Diversity Science
- New section on the measurement of gender and sexual orientation

Chapter 4. Sexual Anatomy

- New research on female genital cutting

- Section on treatments for breast cancer updated, including immunotherapy
- Cancer statistics and screening recommendations thoroughly updated

Chapter 5. Sex Hormones, Sexual Differentiation, and the Menstrual Cycle

- New coverage of GnIH (gonadotropin-inhibiting hormone), the complement to GnRH
- New research on the role of oxytocin in couples’ discussions of sex
- Updated coverage of intersex conditions and the debate over treatments
- The latest research on biological and environmental contributions to the timing of puberty

Chapter 6. Pregnancy and Childbirth

- New Box: Race and Racism in Pregnancy and Infant Mortality in the United States
- Updated information on assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs)
- Chapter shortened and streamlined throughout

Chapter 7. Contraception and Abortion

- Statistics updated throughout
- Coverage of the new Caya diaphragm

Chapter 8. Sexual Arousal

- New research on the emotions of sexual shame and sexual pride
- The possibility of exercise-induced orgasm is introduced
- Updated research on androgens and women’s sexual desire, including new clinical guidelines
- New material on sexuality and disability

Chapter 9. Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Childhood and Adolescence

- Box on The Impact of the Media on Adolescent Sexuality, completely rewritten with new research
- Statistics updated throughout
- Box, Teen Pregnancy and Parenthood, completely rewritten to reflect the major declines in teen child-bearing in the United States

Chapter 10. Sexuality and the Life Cycle: Adulthood

- New coverage of the attachment theory of singlehood
- New section on incels (involuntary celibates)
- New research on users of AshleyMadison.com as a way to study nonmonogamy
- Material on swinging thoroughly updated
- New Box, A Sexually Diverse World: Culture and Conceptualizations of Late Adulthood

Chapter 11. Attraction, Love, and Communication

- Updates on online meeting and dating throughout the chapter
- New research on communication and relationships, and relationship education
- Updates on the attachment theory of love
- New fMRI research on the Love Brain Network

Chapter 12. Gender and Sexuality

- Additional material on race and gender stereotypes
- New research on slutpages
- Current research supporting Zilbergeld's analysis of male sexuality
- The recent explosion of research with trans individuals is incorporated into the chapter
- New box, Measuring Discrimination against Trans People
- Updated to *DSM-5-TR*

Chapter 13. Sexual Orientation: Gay, Straight, or Bi?

- Statistics are updated throughout and indicate an increase in the proportion of people having at least some same-gender sexual contact
- New Box: Race and the Well-Being of LGBT people in the United States
- Coverage of LGB-oriented media
- New report on the human and economic costs of conversion therapy

Chapter 14. Variations in Sexual Behavior

- Updates from the World Health Organization's ICD-11 classification of diagnoses

- New section on race and racism in the BDSM community
- New Critical Thinking box, focusing on the example of exhibitionism
- Updated to *DSM-5-TR*

Chapter 15. Sexual Coercion

- New box, A Sexually Diverse World: Sexual Violence in Native America
- Prevalence statistics updated throughout
- New section on trans people as victims of sexual assault
- Updates on research on fraternity gang rape

Chapter 16. Sex for Sale

- New research on sex workers
- Chapter streamlined throughout
- New study of women who are sex tourists

Chapter 17. Sexual Disorders and Sex Therapy

- New research on the effects of marijuana on sexual functioning
- New section on acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT)
- Updated to *DSM-5-TR*

Chapter 18. Sexually Transmitted Infections

- Statistics updated throughout
- The new life for HIV patients in the era of ART and viral suppression

Chapter 19. Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality

- Coverage of the concept of six genders in Jewish law
- Section on dissent over sexual ethics in the Roman Catholic Church thoroughly updated

Chapter 20. Sex and the Law

- New material on legal approaches to prostitution
- Section on abortion regulations thoroughly updated and rewritten, including the 2022 Supreme Court decision in the *Dobbs* case

- Section on assisted reproductive technologies completely rewritten and updated

Epilogue: Looking to the Future: Sexuality Education

- New material on interventions with parents to help them become better sex educators for their adolescents
- Sampling from a Comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum updated to the new 2020 standards
- Teacher Preparation Standards updated

APA Style

Many instructors teach the human sexuality course through a psychology department and would like to see APA style for the references. I use what I call “modified APA style” for the following reasons. First, this course is taught in many departments besides psychology, including health education, sociology, and family studies. Those other departments may not prefer APA style. Second, my main modification to APA style is to spell out the first names of authors in the Bibliography. I do this to highlight female scientists, and also to humanize scientists so that students might actually see themselves in that role some day. Other than that, APA style is followed.

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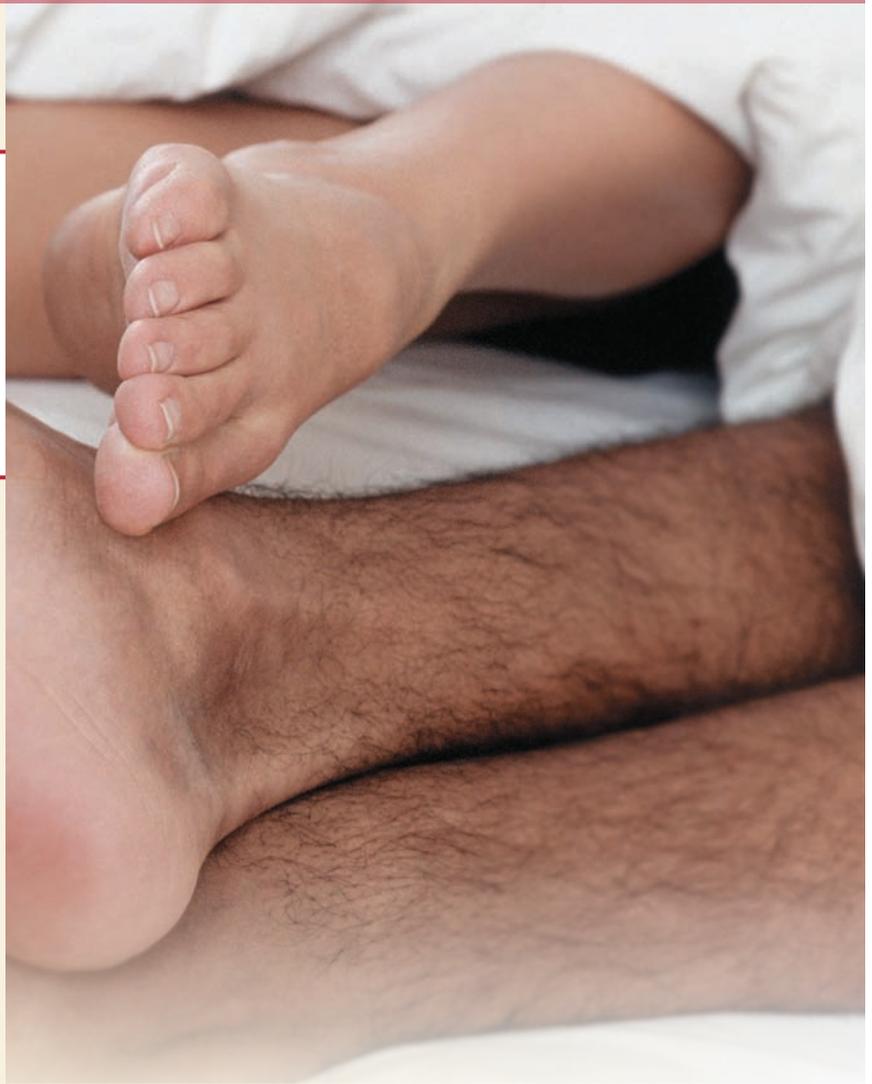
Jovana Vukovic, *Broward Community College*

Amy Yeates, *Illinois Wesleyan University*

Are **YOU** Curious?

1. Do they have sex in other cultures the same way we do in the United States?
2. Is sexual behavior similar in all social classes in the United States?
3. Is male-male sex found in other species?

Read this chapter to find out.



Corbis/VCG/Getty Images

CHAPTER 1

Sexuality in Perspective

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

Sex and Gender

The History of Understanding Sexuality: Religion and Science

Religion
Science

The Media

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Sexuality

Variations in Sexual Techniques
Masturbation
Premarital and Extramarital Sex
Sex with Same-Gender Partners

Standards of Attractiveness

Social-Class and Ethnic-Group Variations in the
United States
The Significance of Cross-Cultural Studies

Cross-Species Perspectives on Sexuality

Masturbation
Same-Gender Sexual Behavior
Sexual Signaling
Human Uniqueness
The Nonsexual Uses of Sexual Behavior

The Sexual Health Perspective



You're so beautiful," he whispered. "I want a picture of you like this with your face flushed and your lips wet and shiny." . . . He tore open a foil packet he'd retrieved from his pocket. Mesmerized, she watched him sheath himself, amazed at how hard he was. She reached out to touch him, but he moved back, made sure she was ready, and then slid neatly inside her, so deeply she gasped. She contracted her muscles around him, and he closed his eyes and groaned, the sound so primal, it made her skin tingle.*

Human sexual behavior is a diverse phenomenon. It occurs in different physical locations and social contexts, consists of a wide range of specific activities, and is perceived differently by different people. An individual engages in sexual activity on the basis of a complex set of motivations and organizes that activity on the basis of numerous external factors and influences. Thus, it is unlikely that the tools and concepts from any single scientific discipline will suffice to answer all or even most of the questions one might ask about sexual behavior.†

*Debbi Rawlins. (2003). *Anything goes*. New York: Harlequin Blaze. Used by permission.

†Laumann et al. (1994).

Strikingly different though they may seem, both of the above quotations are talking about the same thing—sex. The first quotation is from a romance novel. It is intended to stimulate the reader's fantasies and arousal. The second is from a scholarly book about sex. It aims to stimulate the brain but not the genitals. From reading these two brief excerpts we can quickly see that the topic of sexuality is diverse, complex, and fascinating.

Why study sex? Most people are curious about sex, particularly because exchanging sexual information is somewhat taboo in our culture, so curiosity motivates us to study sex. Sex is an important force in many people's lives, so there are practical reasons for wanting to learn about it. Finally, most of us at various times experience problems with our sexual functioning or wish that we could function better, and we hope that learning more about sex will help us. This book is designed to address all of these needs. So let's consider various perspectives on sexuality—the effects of religion, science, and culture on our understanding of sexuality, as well as the sexual health perspective. These perspectives will give you a glimpse of the forest before you study the trees: sexual anatomy and physiology (the "plumbing" part) and sexual behavior (the "people" part), which are discussed in later chapters. But first we must draw an important distinction between sex and gender.

Sex and Gender

Gender: Being male, female, or some other gender such as trans.

Gender binary: Conceptualizing gender as having only two categories, male and female.

Sometimes the word *sex* is used ambiguously. In some cases it refers to being male or female, and sometimes it refers to sexual behavior or reproduction. In most

cases, of course, the meaning is clear from the context. If you are filling out a job application form and one item says, "Sex,," you don't write, "I like it" or "As often as possible." It is clear that your prospective employer wants to know whether you are a male or a female. In other cases, though, the meaning may be ambiguous. For example, when a book has the title *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, what is it about? Is it about the sexual practices of primitive people and whether having sex frequently gives them pleasant temperaments? Or is it about the kinds of personalities that males and females are expected to have in those societies? Not only does this use of *sex* create ambiguities, but it also clouds our thinking about some important issues.

To remove—or at least reduce—this ambiguity, the term *sex* will be used in this book in contexts referring to sexual anatomy and sexual behavior, and the term **gender** will be used to refer to being male or female or some other gender such as trans.

Almost all the research that we discuss in this book has been based on scientists' assuming the **gender binary**, the idea that there are only two genders, male and female. In the chapter "Gender and Sexuality," we consider some of the contemporary research on people who are outside the gender binary.

This is a book about sex, not gender; it is about sexual behavior and the biological, psychological, and societal forces that influence it. Of course, although I am arguing that sex and gender are conceptually different, I am would not try to argue that they are totally independent of each other. Certainly gender roles—the ways in which males and females are expected to behave—exert a powerful influence on the way people behave sexually, and one chapter is devoted to gender and its connections to sexuality.

How should we define *sex*, aside from saying that it is different from *gender*? Many Americans count only penis-in-vagina intercourse as sex (Sewell & Strassberg, 2015). Nearly everyone agrees that penis-in-vagina intercourse counts as sex, but there is less agreement about whether oral-genital sex counts as “having sex.” Some people think it does and others think it doesn’t (Horowitz & Spicer, 2013). Our definition in this textbook includes much more than that, though.

A biologist might define sexual behavior as “any behavior that increases the likelihood of gametic union [union of sperm and egg]” (Bermant & Davidson, 1974). This definition emphasizes the reproductive function of sex. However, medical advances such as the birth control pill allow us to separate reproduction from sex. Most Americans now use sex not only for procreation but also for recreation.¹

These definitions assume that sex is heterosexual. What about same-gender sexuality? A study of sexual minority people indicated that, for men, anal intercourse was the behavior most likely to count as “sex” (Sewell et al., 2017). For women, it was oral-genital sex.

The noted sex researcher Alfred Kinsey defined *sex* as behavior that leads to orgasm. Although this definition has some merits (it does not imply that sex must be associated with reproduction), it also presents some problems. If a woman has intercourse with a man but does not have an orgasm, was that not sexual behavior for her?

To try to avoid some of these problems, **sexual behavior** will be defined in this book as *behavior that produces arousal and increases the chance of orgasm*.²

the existence of the two in a myth in which the original humans were double creatures with twice the normal number of limbs and organs; some were double males, some were double females, and some were half male and half female (LeVay, 1996). The gods, fearing the power of these creatures, split them in half, and forever after each one continued to search for its missing half. Heterosexuals were thought to have resulted from the splitting of the half male, half female; male homosexuals, from the splitting of the double male; and female homosexuals, from the splitting of the double female. It was through this mythology that the ancient Greeks understood sexual orientation and sexual desire.

Fifteenth-century Christians believed that “wet dreams” (nocturnal emissions) resulted from intercourse with tiny spiritual creatures called *incubi* and *succubi*, a notion put forth in a papal bull of 1484 and a companion book, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (“witch’s hammer”); the person who had wet dreams was considered guilty of sodomy (see the chapter “Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality”) as well as witchcraft.

Over the centuries, Muslims have believed that sexual intercourse is one of the finest pleasures of life, reflecting the teachings of the great prophet Muhammad. However, the way that the laws of the Koran are carried out varies greatly from country to country (Boonstra, 2001; Ilkharacan, 2001).

People of different religions hold different understandings of human sexuality, and these religious views often have a profound impact. A detailed discussion of religion and sexuality is provided in the chapter “Ethics, Religion, and Sexuality.”

The History of Understanding Sexuality: Religion and Science

Religion

Throughout most of recorded history, at least until about 100 years ago, religion (and rumor) provided most of the information that people had about sexuality. The ancient Greeks openly acknowledged both heterosexuality and homosexuality in their society and explained

¹Actually, even in former times sex was not always associated with reproduction. For example, a man in 1850 might have fathered 10 children; using a very conservative estimate that he engaged in sexual intercourse 1,500 times during his adult life (once a week for the 30 years from age 20 to age 50), one concludes that only 10 in 1,500 of those acts, or less than 1 percent, resulted in reproduction.

²This definition, though an improvement over some, still has its problems. For example, consider a woman who feels no arousal at all during intercourse. According to the definition, intercourse would not be sexual behavior for her. However, intercourse would generally be something we would want to classify as sexual behavior. It should be clear that defining *sexual behavior* is difficult.

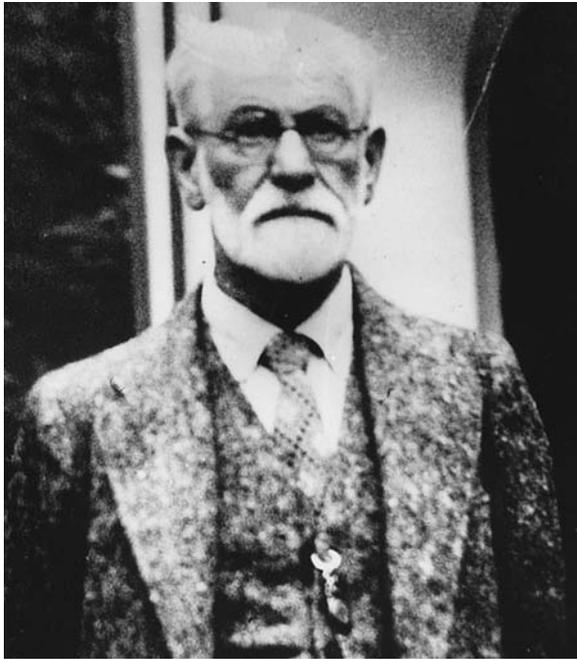
Science

It was against this background of religious understandings of sexuality that the scientific study of sex began in the 19th century, although, of course, religious notions continue to influence our ideas about sexuality. In addition, the groundwork for an understanding of the biological aspects of sexuality had already been laid by the research of physicians and biologists. The Dutch microscopist Anton van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723) had discovered sperm swimming in human semen. In 1875 Oskar Hertwig (1849–1922) first observed the actual fertilization of the egg by the sperm in sea urchins, although the ovum in humans was not directly observed until the 20th century.

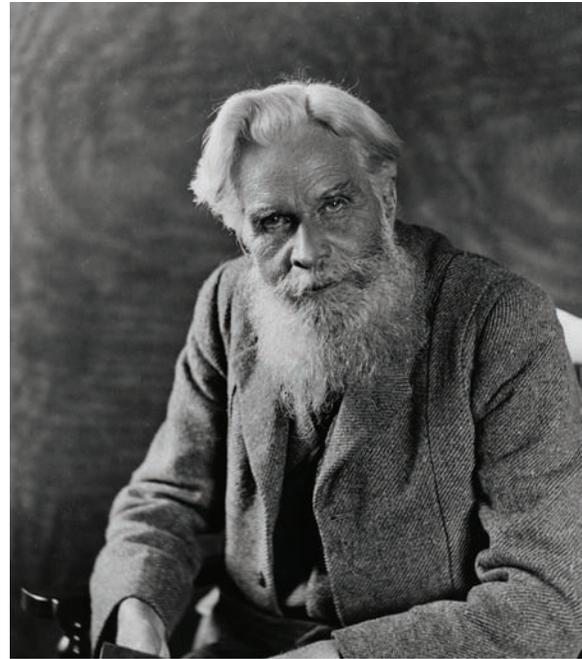
A major advance in the scientific understanding of the psychological aspects of human sexuality came with the work of the Viennese physician Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), founder of psychiatry and psychoanalysis (Figure 1a). His ideas are discussed in detail in the chapter “Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality.”

It is important to recognize the cultural context in which Freud and the other early sex researchers

Sexual behavior: Behavior that produces arousal and increases the chance of orgasm.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1 Two important early sex researchers. (a) Sigmund Freud. (b) Henry Havelock Ellis.

(a) ASSOCIATED PRESS; (b) Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images

crafted their research and writing. They began their work in the Victorian era, the late 1800s, both in the United States and in Europe. Norms about sexuality were extraordinarily rigid and oppressive (Figure 2). Historian Peter Gay characterized this repressive aspect of Victorian cultural norms as

a devious and insincere world in which middle-class husbands slaked their lust by keeping mistresses, frequenting prostitutes, or molesting children, while their wives, timid, dutiful, obedient, were sexually anesthetic and poured all their capacity for love into their housekeeping and their child-rearing. (Gay, 1984, p. 6)

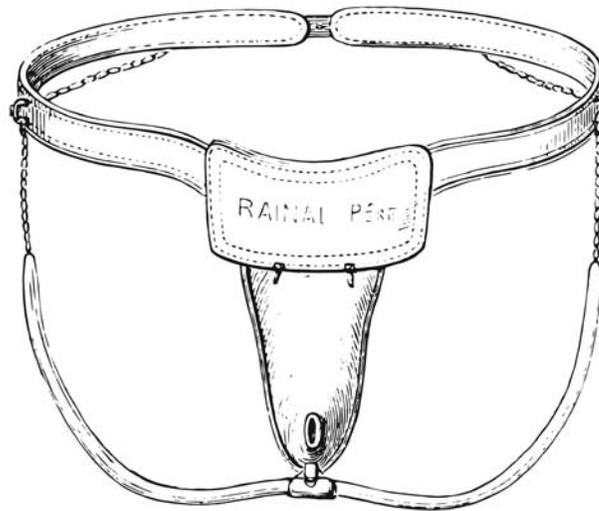
Certainly traces of these Victorian attitudes remain with us today. Yet, at the same time, the actual sexual behavior of Victorians sometimes violated societal norms. In his history of sexuality in the Victorian era, Gay documented the story of Mabel Loomis Todd, who, though married, carried on a lengthy affair with Austin Dickinson, a community leader in Amherst, Massachusetts. Many people actually knew about the “secret” affair, yet Mrs. Loomis did not become an outcast (Gay, 1984). Doubtless, this wide discrepancy between Victorian sexual norms and actual behavior created a great deal of personal tension. That tension probably propelled a good many people into Dr. Freud’s office, providing data for his theory, which emphasizes sexual tensions and conflict.

An equally great—though not so well known—early contributor to the scientific study of sex was Henry Havelock

Ellis (1859–1939; Figure 1b). A physician in Victorian England, he compiled a vast collection of information on sexuality—including medical and anthropological findings, as well as case histories—which was published in a series of volumes titled *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* beginning in 1896. Havelock Ellis was a remarkably objective and tolerant scholar, particularly for his era. He believed that women, like men, are sexual creatures. A sexual reformer, he believed that sexual deviations from the norm are often harmless, and he urged society to accept them. In his desire to collect information about human sexuality rather than to make judgments about it, he can be considered the forerunner of modern sex research.

Another important figure in 19th-century sex research was the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902). His special interest was “pathological” sexuality. He managed to collect more than 200 case histories of pathological individuals, which appeared in his book titled *Psychopathia Sexualis*. His work tended to be neither objective nor tolerant. Nonetheless, it has had a lasting impact. He coined the concepts of sadism, masochism, and pedophilia, and the terms *heterosexuality* and *homosexuality* entered the English language in the 1892 translation of his book (Oosterhuis, 2000). One of his case histories is presented in the chapter “Variations in Sexual Behavior.”

One other early contributor to the scientific understanding of sexuality deserves mention, the German Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935). He founded the first sex research institute and administered the first large-scale sex



(a)



(b)

Figure 2 Devices designed to prevent masturbation. (a) The Victorian era, from which Freud and Ellis emerged, was characterized by extreme sexual repression. Here is an apparatus that was sold to prevent onanism (masturbation). (b) Are things so different today? Here are current devices for sale on the Internet for the same purpose.

(a) Morphart Creation/Shutterstock; (b) Courtesy of A.L. Enterprises

survey, obtaining data from 10,000 people on a 130-item questionnaire. (Unfortunately, most of the information he amassed was destroyed by the Nazis.) Hirschfeld also established the first journal devoted to the study of sex, established a marriage counseling service, worked for legal reforms, and gave advice on contraception and sex problems. His special interest, however, was homosexuality. Doubtless some of his avant-garde approaches resulted from the fact that he was himself both a sexual

minority person and a transvestite and, in fact, he introduced the term *transvestite*. His contributions as a pioneer sex researcher cannot be denied (Bullough, 1994).

In the 20th century, major breakthroughs in the scientific understanding of sex came with the massive surveys of human sexual behavior in the United States conducted by Alfred Kinsey and his colleagues in the 1940s and with Masters and Johnson's investigations of sexual disorders and the physiology of sexual response. At about the same

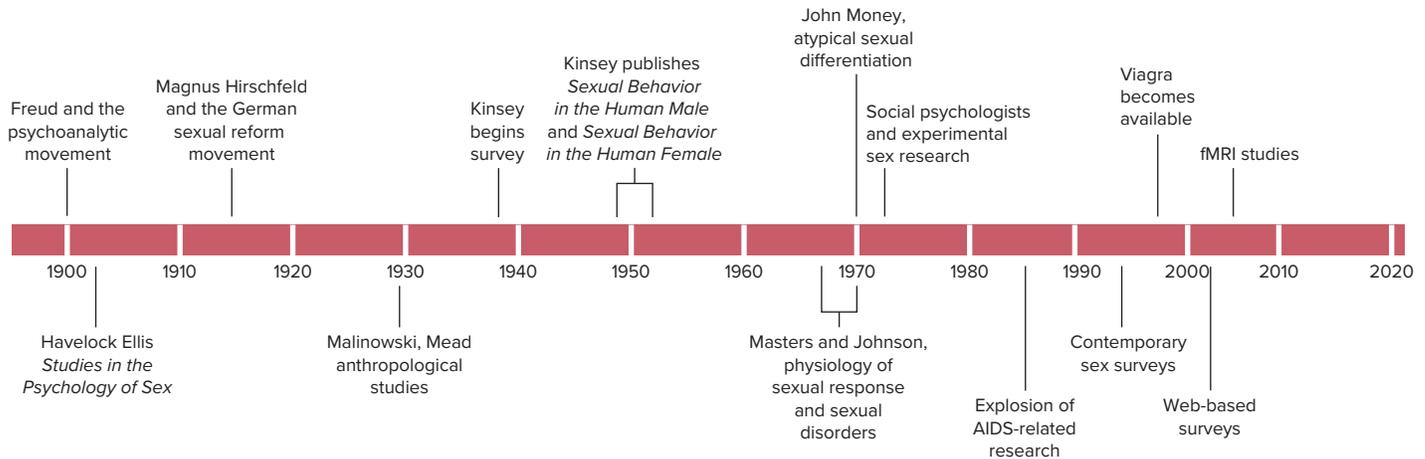


Figure 3 Milestones in the history of scientific research on sex.

time that the Kinsey research was being conducted, some anthropologists—most notably Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski—were beginning to collect data on sexual behavior in other cultures (Figure 3). Other, smaller investigations also provided important information. By the 1990s we had a rich array of sex research, including major national surveys (e.g., Laumann et al., 1994), detailed investigations of sexual disorders and sexual orientation, and studies of the biological processes underlying sexual response.

The scientific study of sex has not emerged as a separate, unified academic discipline like biology or psychology or sociology. Rather, it is highly interdisciplinary—a joint effort by biologists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and physicians. This approach to understanding sexuality gives us a better view of humans in all their sexual complexity.

The Media

In terms of potency of influence, the mass media in America today may play the same role that religion did in previous centuries. In U.S. homes with children, 99 percent have a television and 86 percent have a computer (Lauricella et al., 2015). American 9- to 10-year-olds spend an

average of 4 hours per day in front of a screen, with television predominating (1.3 hours), followed by videos (e.g., YouTube, 1 hour) and video games (1 hour) (Nagata et al., 2021). According to the American Time Use Survey, television viewing occupies the most time of all leisure activities, at an average of 2.75 hours per day for those aged 15 and older (Krantz-Kent, 2018).

Cultivation theory: In communications theory, the view that exposure to the mass media makes people think that what they see there represents the mainstream of what really occurs.

Framing theory: The theory that the media draw attention to certain topics and not to others, suggesting how we should think about or frame the issues.

Social cognitive theory: In communications theory, the idea that the media provide role models whom we imitate.

An analysis of 2,600 scenes from the 30 most-viewed television programs by 18- to 25-year-olds indicated that sexual talk and/or sexual behavior occurred in 20 percent of scenes (Carpentier et al., 2017). Twenty-five percent of scenes contained jokes about sexual organs. Only 7 percent of scenes mentioned any health consequences of sex, and most of those were about emotional heartache; only 1 of the 2,600 scenes mentioned sexually transmitted infections. And only 12 scenes (less than 1 percent) mentioned condoms or contraceptives. In short, the average American's views about sexuality are likely to be much more influenced by the mass media than by scientific findings. Communications theorists have formulated several theories about how the media can influence us (Valkenburg et al., 2016).

Cultivation theory focuses on the notion that people begin to think that what they see on television and in other media really represents the mainstream of what happens in real life in our culture (Gerbner et al., 2002). For example, an analysis of *Jersey Shore* indicated that on average one sexual instance occurred every minute; college students' reports of how often they viewed the show were positively correlated with permissive sexual attitudes, exactly as cultivation theory would predict (Bond & Drogos, 2014). In addition, the students' permissive sexual attitudes were correlated with their own sexual activity.

According to **framing theory**, the media draw attention to certain topics and not to others, suggesting how we should think about or frame the issues (Scheufele, 1999). For example, in 1998 the media chose to highlight the sexual dalliances of President Bill Clinton, suggesting to the public that these matters were important. In contrast, the illicit sexual activities of President John F. Kennedy were not revealed during his presidency. The media tell us what is important and what is not.

Social cognitive theory is a broad theory in psychology, and it is discussed in detail in the chapter "Theoretical Perspectives on Sexuality." Social cognitive theory applied

to the media analyzes how the media influence our behavior, thoughts, and affect (emotions) through processes such as modeling, imitation, and identification (Bandura, 2009). The example of *Jersey Shore* and how frequency of viewing correlated with permissive sexual attitudes is also consistent with social cognitive theory, which might say that viewers imitated the attitudes and behaviors they saw in the show.

Another important process in media theories is **selectivity**, which refers to the principle that people select and pay attention only to certain media and their messages, and not to others (Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015). Nick gets all of his TV news from Fox News and Olivia gets all of hers from CBS News. They get different information. Brandon watches Internet porn, and Lorewell does not. People can be affected only by media to which they are exposed. Moreover, people do not select media randomly. Generally, we select media content according to our own needs, and we seek information that is consistent with our own views.

According to **reinforcing spiral theory**, one's social identities and ideologies predict one's media use (consistent with selectivity) and, in turn, media use affects our identity and beliefs (Slater, 2015). It therefore recognizes the dynamic interplay, the back and forth, between individuals and the media they consume. For example, if I am Black and that identity is important to me, I will be likelier to watch a television network such as BET, which will in turn reinforce my Black identity and beliefs, which will keep me watching BET, and so the spiral goes.

According to the **differential susceptibility model**, not everyone reacts the same to the same media exposure (Valkenburg et al., 2016). For example, people high on the trait of aggressiveness are more susceptible to—more influenced by—violent media than are other people.

The Internet is a powerful mass media influence. Computer and Internet use is spreading more rapidly than any previous technology, and today 89 percent of U.S. adults use the Internet (98 percent for those between 18 and 29 years of age; Pew Research Center, 2018), while 72 percent of U.S. adults use social media (Pew Research Center, 2021). Exposure to sex on the Internet is also growing rapidly. In one study, 28 percent of male adolescents reported looking at pictures of people having sex at least once a week, compared with 3 percent for female adolescents (Peter & Valkenburg, 2008). As we discuss in later chapters, the Internet has the potential for both positive and negative effects on sexual health. A number of sites, such as that for the American Sexual Health Association (www.iwannaknow.org), provide excellent information about sexuality and promote sexual health. At the same time, a repeated, well-sampled study of youth between the ages of 10 and 17 indicated that, in 2000, 19 percent had been sexually solicited on the Internet, but by 2010 the number had fallen to only 9 percent (Mitchell et al., 2013a). Most youth who received a solicitation responded by removing themselves from the situation (blocking the

solicitor, leaving the site) or by telling the solicitor to stop. Experts believe that there is greater online safety for youth today than in the past, for a number of reasons. One is that they receive more talks about online safety from teachers and police (Mitchell et al., 2013a).

In the chapters that follow, we examine the content of the media on numerous sexual issues, and we consider what the effects of exposure to this media content might have on viewers.

Let us now consider the perspectives on sexuality that are provided by scientific observations of humans in a wide variety of societies.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Sexuality

Humans are a cultural species (Heine & Norenzayan, 2006). Although some other species are capable of learning from others, humans are unique in the way that cultural learning accumulates over time. Cultural psychologists define **culture** as the part of the environment created by humans, including the set of meanings that a group adopts; these meanings facilitate social coordination, clarify where boundaries between groups lie, and make life seem predictable (Oyserman, 2017).

Cultural psychologists have documented that cultures tend to have one of three main themes: individualism, collectivism, or honor (Oyserman, 2017). **Individualistic cultures** stress independence and autonomy and the individual rights of people. **Collectivistic cultures** emphasize interdependence and connections among people. In these cultures, the group is more important than the individual. The United States and Canada are highly individualistic cultures, which was powerfully illustrated in the 2020–2021 Covid pandemic, during which some Americans maintained that it was their own individual decision whether to get vaccinated, ignoring the implications of their decision for other people, including their family. In contrast, east Asian cultures such as Japan tend to be collectivistic. **Honor cultures** stress “face,” that is, individuals’ reputation and

Do they have sex in other cultures the same way we do in the United States?

Selectivity: In media theories, the principle that people select and pay attention only to certain media and ignore others.

Reinforcing spiral theory: A theory that one's social identities and ideologies predict one's media use and, in turn, media use affects our identity and beliefs.

Differential susceptibility model: A theory that some people are more susceptible than others to certain types of media (e.g., violent media).

Culture: The part of the environment created by humans, including the set of meanings that a group adopts; these meanings facilitate social coordination and clarify where boundaries between groups lie.

Individualistic cultures: Cultures that stress independence and autonomy and the individual rights of people.

Collectivistic cultures: Cultures that emphasize interdependence and connections among people; the group is more important than the individual.

Honor cultures: Cultures that stress “face”—that is, individuals’ reputation and the respect or honor that people show toward others.



Figure 4 Margaret Mead, an anthropologist who contributed much to the early cross-cultural study of sexuality.

Associated press

the respect or honor that people show toward others. In an honor culture, for example, it might seem reasonable to stone to death a woman who committed adultery, because of her profound violation of the honor valued in that culture. Honor cultures tend to be found in the Middle East, but also in the southern part of the United States.

Ethnocentrism can influence our understanding of human sexual behavior. Most of us have had experience with sexuality in only one culture—the United States, for example—and we tend to view our sexual behavior as the only pattern in existence, and certainly as the only “natural” pattern. But anthropologists have discovered that there are wide variations in sexual behavior and attitudes from one culture to the next (Figure 4). Considering these variations should help us to put our own sexual behavior in perspective.

The major generalization that emerges from cross-cultural studies is that all societies regulate sexual behavior

in some way, though the exact regulations vary greatly from one culture to the next (DeLamater, 1987). Apparently no society has seen fit to leave sexuality totally unregulated, perhaps fearful that social disruption would result. As an example, **incest taboos** are nearly universal: Sex is regulated in that intercourse between blood

Ethnocentrism: The tendency to regard one’s own ethnic group and culture as superior to others and to believe that its customs and way of life are the standards by which other cultures should be judged.

Incest taboo: A societal regulation prohibiting sexual interaction between blood relatives, such as brother and sister or father and daughter.

relatives is prohibited (Gregersen, 1996). Most societies also condemn forced sexual relations such as rape.

Beyond this generalization, though, regulations vary greatly from one society to the next, and sexual behavior and attitudes vary correspondingly (see *A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies*). Let’s look at the ways in which various societies treat some key areas of human sexual behavior.

Variations in Sexual Techniques

Romantic sexual kissing might seem to be the most basic of sexual behaviors, but it is not found in all societies. Researchers surveyed anthropologists’ records from 168 cultures around the world and discovered that the romantic sexual kiss was *not* present in 54 percent of them (Jankowiak et al., 2015). Romantic sexual kissing was absent in 87 percent of African cultures, but it was present in 100 percent of Middle Eastern cultures. When the Thonga of Africa first saw Europeans kissing, they laughed and said, “Look at them; they eat each other’s saliva and dirt.” There is also some variation in techniques of kissing. For example, among the Kwakiutl of Canada and the Trobriand Islanders, kissing consists of sucking the lips and tongue of the partner, permitting saliva to flow from one mouth to the other. Many Americans might find such a practice somewhat repulsive, but other peoples find it sexually arousing.

Cunnilingus (mouth stimulation of the female genitals) is fairly common in our society, and it occurs in a few other societies as well, especially in the South Pacific. A particularly interesting variation is reported on the island of Ponape; the man places a fish in the woman’s vulva and then gradually licks it out prior to coitus.

Inflicting pain on the partner is also a part of the sexual technique in some societies. The Apinaye woman of the Brazilian highlands may bite off bits of her partner’s eyebrows, noisily spitting them aside. Ponapean men usually tug at the woman’s eyebrows, occasionally yanking out tufts of hair. People of various societies bite their partners to the point of drawing blood and leaving scars; most commonly, men and women mutually inflict pain on each other (Frayser, 1985).

The frequency of intercourse for married couples varies considerably from one culture to the next. The lowest frequency seems to be among the Irish natives of Inis Beag (discussed in *A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies*), who engage in intercourse perhaps only once or twice a month; however, the anthropologists who studied them were unable to determine exactly how often couples did have sex because so much secrecy surrounds the act. At the opposite extreme, the Mangaian (also described in *A Sexually Diverse World: Sexuality in Two Societies*) have intercourse several times a night, at least among the young. The Santals of southern Asia copulate as often as five times per day every day early in marriage

A Sexually Diverse World



Sexuality in Two Societies

Inis Beag

Inis Beag is a small island off the coast of Ireland. It is probably one of the most naive and sexually repressive societies in the world.

The people of Inis Beag seem to have no knowledge of a number of sexual activities such as French kissing, mouth stimulation of the breast, or hand stimulation of the partner's penis, much less oral sex or homosexuality. Sex education is virtually nonexistent; parents do not seem to be able to bring themselves to discuss such embarrassing matters with their children, and they simply trust that, after marriage, nature will take its course.

Menstruation and menopause are sources of fear for the island women because they have no idea of their physiological significance. It is commonly believed that menopause can produce insanity; in order to ward off this condition, some women have retired from life in their mid-forties, and a few have confined themselves to bed until death years later.

The men believe that intercourse is hard on one's health. They will desist from sex the night before they are to do a job that takes great energy. They do not approach women sexually during menstruation or for months after childbirth; a woman is considered dangerous to the man at these times.

The islanders abhor nudity. Only babies are allowed to bathe while nude. Adults wash only the parts of their bodies that extend beyond their clothing—face, neck, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. The fear of nudity has even cost lives. Sailors who never learned to swim because it involved wearing scanty clothing drowned when their ships sank.

Premarital sex is essentially unknown. In marital sex, foreplay is generally limited to kissing and rough fondling of the buttocks. The husband invariably initiates the activity. The male-on-top is the only position used, and both partners keep their underwear on during the activity. The man has an orgasm quickly and falls asleep immediately. Female orgasm either is believed not to exist or is considered deviant.

Mangaia

In distinct contrast to Inis Beag is Mangaia, an island in the South Pacific. For the Mangaians, sex—for pleasure and for procreation—is a principal interest.

The Mangaian boy first hears of masturbation when he is about 7, and he may begin to masturbate at age 8 or 9. At around age 13 he undergoes the superincision ritual (in which a slit is made on the top of the penis, along its entire length). This ritual initiates him into manhood; more important, however, the expert who performs the superincision gives him sexual instruction. He shows the boy how to perform oral sex, how to kiss and suck breasts, and how to bring his partner to orgasm several times before he has his own. About two weeks after the operation, the boy has intercourse with an experienced woman, which removes the superincision's scab. She provides him with practice in various acts and positions and trains him to hold back until he can have simultaneous orgasms with his partner.

After this, the Mangaian boy actively seeks out girls, or they seek him out; soon he has coitus every night. The girl, who has received sexual instruction from an older woman, expects demonstration of the boy's virility as proof of his desire for her. What is valued is the ability of the male to continue vigorously the in-and-out action of coitus over long periods of time while the female moves her hips "like a washing machine." Nothing is despised more than a "dead" partner who does not move. A good man is expected to continue his actions for 15 to 30 minutes or more.

The average "nice" girl will have three or four successive boyfriends between the ages of 13 and 20; the average boy may have 10 or more girlfriends. Mangaian parents encourage their daughters to have sexual experiences with several men. They want them to find marriage partners who are congenial.

At around age 18, the Mangaians typically have sex most nights of the week, with about three orgasms per night. By about age 48, they have sex two or three times per week, with one orgasm each time.

All women in Mangaia apparently learn to have orgasms. Bringing his partner to orgasm is one of the man's chief sources of sexual pleasure.

Sources: Marshall (1971); Messenger (1993).