

PSYC/WGSS 394: LGBTQ+ Health
Fall 2026, Tuesday/Thursday 1:20-2:50pm, Olin-Rice 270

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Office/drop-in hours: Monday 12-1pm; Tuesday 10-11am; Friday 9-10am; or when free

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is an advanced course on the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexually and gender diverse (LGBTQ+) people. The course is designed to engage students in a critical examination of health and healthcare disparities among LGBTQ+ populations, and evidence-based health models that explain the root causes and drivers of disparities. Students will also learn about and gain experience in behavioral interventions: how these are researched, developed, and implemented to target disparities, and promote the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ populations. Class time will consist of didactic instruction, large and small group discussions, documentary film viewings, application activities, and student presentations. Please let me know if there are course-related topics that you would like to discuss, and I'll do what I can to accommodate your interests.

COURSE GOALS: By the end of the semester, students will be able to critically evaluate and effectively communicate their ideas regarding LGBTQ+ populations in the following areas: common health and healthcare disparities; root causes and drivers of disparities; sources of support and resilience; evidence-based health models and frameworks; culturally tailored behavioral interventions; and the importance of culturally informed research.

GRADED COURSE ACTIVITIES:

Specific instructions, guidelines, and grading rubrics will be posted on Moodle in advance of due dates.

- In-Class Writing and Class Participation (40%)
 - At the start of each class, students will take approximately 10 minutes to summarize in writing the key ideas and questions raised in the assigned readings. This activity is not meant to “quiz” your knowledge. Rather, this is designed for you to demonstrate your engagement with and critical reflection of the supporting material—which will be foundational to our class discussions. Thoughtful and accurate summaries will receive full points, whereas summaries that are superficial, inaccurate, or vague will receive no points. The writing summaries can be completed in advance of each class meeting, should students choose (e.g., if students need more than 10 minutes to reflect on the readings).
- Midterm Discussion (20%)
 - Roughly midway through the semester, students will meet individually with me to discuss published research articles on an LGBTQ+ health topic of their choice. The expectation is that students will demonstrate an ability to critically examine and reflect on the current state of scientific research on LGBTQ+ health. Like a midterm paper, students will be given specific instructions and expectations on how to prepare for the discussion, and they will be provided with a rubric for how the discussion will be graded. For those who choose, I will provide more information on how a supplemental research paper can be turned in to support your midterm discussion grade (e.g., for students who tend to prefer written communication to oral communication).
- Photovoice Presentation (30%)
 - Photovoice is a community-based participatory research methodology, which empowers members of a community to: (1) record and reflect on their strengths and their concerns; (2) raise critical dialogue and discussion through photographs; and (3) advocate for systems-level change to better support and address their health needs. Ultimately, students will partner with an LGBTQ+ person—peer, friend, faculty, staff, family, etc.—to document that person’s holistic (mental/social/physical) health through photos, and the meaning of those photos to the person. Students will then present their Photovoice project to the class, and provide critical perspective on what they learned or applied relevant to the course material. The project will also provide greater visibility into the lives, experiences, and diversity of LGBTQ+ people and their health.
- Application Paper (10%)
 - When teaching a course, I encourage students to frequently ask the question, “So what?” I have high expectations that students will engage critically with the course material, with one another, and with me as the instructor. But to what end? This brief paper is designed to challenge students to consider how/where/why knowledge of LGBTQ+ health research, theory, and practice apply to their lives. Students will consider how they understand the people around them, the healthcare system, their studies as a student, and their career aspirations. Ultimately, the goal is to answer the “So what?” question, which will be unique to each student.

POINT BREAK-DOWN:

In-Class Writing and Participation	40
Midterm Discussion	20
Photovoice Presentation	30
Application Paper	10
TOTAL	100

Date of Class	Topic(s)	Graded Activities
9/8	LGBTQ+ Health: Introduction, Cultural Humility, Culture, Terminology	Intro Meeting
9/10	Documentary: Paris is Burning Contextualizing LGBTQ+ Health: Minority Stress Framework	None
9/15	Contextualizing LGBTQ+ Health: Minority Stress Framework	Writing 1

9/17	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Mental Health	Writing 2
9/22	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Mental Health	Writing 3
9/24	Improving LGBTQ+ Health: Intervention Design, Implementation, Evaluation	Writing 4
9/29	Improving LGBTQ+ Health: Intervention Design, Implementation, Evaluation	Writing 5
10/1	Documentary: The Times of Harvey Milk	None
10/6	Contextualizing LGBTQ+ Health: Social-Ecological Framework	Writing 6
10/8	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Substance Use	Writing 7
10/13	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Substance Use	Writing 8
10/15	Fall Break (NO CLASS)	None
10/20	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Weight + Health	Writing 9
10/22	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Weight + Health	Writing 10
10/27	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Chronic Illness	Writing 11
10/29	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Chronic Illness	Writing 12
11/3	Documentary: Silverlake Life	None
11/5	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: HIV and STIs	Writing 13
11/10	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: HIV and STIs	Writing 14
11/12	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Intimate Partner Violence	Writing 15
11/17	LGBTQ+ Health Outcomes: Intimate Partner Violence	Writing 16
11/19	Documentary: The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson	None
11/24	Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Health/care	Writing 17
11/26	Thanksgiving Break (NO CLASS)	None
12/1	Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Health/care	Writing 18
12/3	Culturally Informed Care and Research	Writing 19
12/8	Photovoice Presentations	Presentation
12/10	Photovoice Presentations	Presentation
12/15	Study Day (NO CLASS)	None
12/16-12/19	Finals Week (NO CLASS)	Application Paper Due

CLASS PARTICIPATION: As a seminar course, a significant portion of your final grade is based on your level of participation—and I have high expectations regarding student engagement. There are many ways in which I will assess and ultimately assign participation points for students. To clarify expectations, please review the following:

To receive full participation points, a student will...

- Schedule an introductory meeting with me (5-10 mins)
- Attend every class meeting
- Complete all in-class writing prompts
- Regularly ask questions
- Regularly offer opinions, perspectives, and/or criticisms
- Fully engage with peers during class and small group discussions

- Fully participate in class activities

A student will lose points for...

- Not attending class
- Arriving late to class (especially if this is a consistent problem)
- Frequently checking or using their phone
- Sleeping or not being engaged during the class time
- Frequently having side conversations with peers
- Being disrespectful to peers and/or the instructor
- Not doing the readings (which will be reflected in the written responses)

I recognize that participation differs between people and can be influenced by several factors—especially ones that might not be known or apparent to me as your instructor. If you have concerns about your ability to participate in class (e.g., asking questions, offering your opinion, engaging with peers) and the impact that it might have on your participation grade, please talk to me, either before or after class, or during office hours. I am more than happy to discuss ways to manage some of your concerns and to best ensure that your style of engagement is reflected optimally in your grade.

It is expected that students might not have time to engage fully with the readings every single week. I totally get it. Because of this, three of the writing responses will not be counted towards your final grade. For example, if you are ill and need to miss class or have competing demands that prevent you from doing the readings for a given class, you may choose to not complete up to three writing responses. Although these three written responses will not impact your grade, not doing the readings will make it more difficult to engage in class discussions and activities.

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes will be given only under extraordinary circumstances such as death of an immediate family member, an illness or injury accompanied by a physician's note, or a natural disaster. Being busy at the end of the term is not an extraordinary circumstance.

SUBMITTING WORK: The Application Paper must be submitted via email. I will not accept printed copies. Although due dates will be assigned, I recognize that students have competing priorities and demands on their time. Late papers will be accepted but may incur point deductions based how late they are submitted. For example, a paper that is submitted several hours or even a day after the deadline is fine by me. Submitting a paper several days after the deadline will incur point deductions, especially if this is not communicated to me ahead of time. Therefore, please communicate with me if you know or anticipate a late submission.

OFFICE/DROP IN HOURS: Office hours are designed as drop-in hours for students to bring questions, receive 1:1 support for any graded course activities, and/or to check-in generally. Office hours are noted at the top of the syllabus. If needed—for example, office hours do not align with your schedule—I can be available to meet with students on a different day and time. Please let me know and we can schedule a meeting that best works with your schedule.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI): It is expected that students will produce original work. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on assignments, and submitting the same or substantially similar work to meet more than one course's requirements without permission from all the instructors involved. These actions will result in the failure of the course and college leadership will be notified. If you have any questions of how this policy applies to this course, please ask me. Additionally, I am a proponent of emerging technology that can help with writing, for example, ChatGPT and other AI programs. If you intend to use such software to support your writing, please let me know and we can talk through ways that you may choose to use it.

STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS: I am eager for all students to thrive, and thus I am committed to providing reasonable accommodations to all students with documented disabilities. If you have not done so already, please contact the Center for Disability Resources as soon as possible to discuss your need for accommodations. They will send me a confidential letter detailing the appropriate accommodations for this course. Please plan to follow-up with me to confirm how we'll apply those accommodations within the course.