



**University of Central Florida  
School of Social Work**

**SOW 6670: The Gay and Lesbian Experience in American Society**

<b>Instructor:</b> Mr. Estelli Ramos, MSW <b>Office:</b> HPA 1 Room 204C <b>Phone:</b> 407-823-6428 <b>Office Hours:</b> By Appointment	<b>Term:</b> Summer 2009 <b>Class Days:</b> Web Based <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:esramos@mail.ucf.edu">esramos@mail.ucf.edu</a>
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Study of: (1) sexual orientation in a cultural context; (2) resources and policies affecting gay and lesbian people; and (3) therapeutic and preventive interventions with gay and lesbian clients. Open to all graduate students.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the term, students should be able to:

1. Discuss and assess sexual values from competing perspectives of diverse cultures and assorted personal preferences.
2. Examine personal and cultural biases related to sexual orientation (homophobia, heterosexism, prejudice, discrimination, hate crimes) as related to the professions model of culturally competent practice.
3. Describe the distinctive demographic, socio-cultural, legal, spiritual, and health realities of gay and lesbian life in the USA.
4. Analyze and challenge myths about homosexuality and gay and lesbian behavior.
5. Demonstrate ethics and professionalism in all matters related to sexual orientation.
6. Assess the bio-psycho-socio-cultural and systemic dynamics of gay and lesbian clients, their strengths and their issues, particularly in life developmental areas such as: coming out, partnering, working, and aging.
7. Identify and describe gay and lesbian service resources.
8. Integrate current theory and research into problem solving with gay and lesbian clients.
9. Describe appropriate micro/macro roles and therapeutic and activism approaches aimed at enhancing quality of life and social justice for gay and lesbian people.
10. Identify and use tools for monitoring societal change and measuring therapeutic progress of gay and lesbian clients.

**TEXT(S):**

1. Van Wormer, Katherine S, Joel Wells, Mary Boes. Social work with lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: a strengths perspective. Boston, MA : Allyn & Bacon, c2000. 184 p. (LC#: 98-41567; HV1499.W67).
2. Web Based Readings
3. Through research, students will compile a list of readings to use in final paper.

**MSW EVALUATION METHODS:**

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Research Paper Proposal       | <b>15 points</b>         |
| 2. Research Paper                | <b>35 points</b>         |
| 3. 10 Web Postings (5 pts. each) | <b>50 points</b>         |
|                                  | <b>TOTAL: 100 points</b> |

**MSW COURSE OUTLINE COURSE:** Please be aware that this class has been changed to meet the 6000 level requirement. That implies that part of this class has been changed to meet the research standard that is required for this outcome. The course is divided into three areas of study: (1) gay and lesbian life in American society; (2)

resources and policies pertinent to gay and lesbian people; and (3) therapeutic and preventive interventions with gay and lesbian clients. Relevant theory and research findings are incorporated into each of the three study areas.

### The following outlines the course projects and requirements:

- 1. Research Proposal: 15 points**  
Students will develop a proposal for research which will attempt to look at issues related to Gay and Lesbian clients. Students will develop a hypothesis for their research and select 10 pieces of research material which will be used in the project. Five sources must be empirically based. Students will be allowed to use journal articles, books, and interviews for their project. It is important to note that your proposal and your project are the same. You will be developing your format and data for this paper. Please keep in mind that this is a big part of your grade. You should begin to start thinking about a topic of interest in the GLBT community. Topics such as aging, gay marriage, adoption, HIV, public policy and Christian values are just some examples. If you have a unique topic, that is also permitted. You design this project. More details will follow through a handout that will be posted on the Web. This proposal is due on June 18<sup>th</sup>.
- 2. Research Paper: 35 points**  
Student will write a 15 - 20 page paper that will attempt to answer the questions they developed in their research proposal. Issues related to policy making and discrimination will be covered. In addition, students will incorporate classroom concepts into the paper and formulated hypothetical thinking into how the political, religious, and social systems impact the lives of clients who are of a gay or lesbian background. This paper is due on July 30<sup>th</sup>.  
More details will follow through a handout.
- 3. Web Based Postings (5pts. each x 10 postings) 50 points**
- 4. Web Based Postings: 50 points**  
After reading each module, student will complete a posting that is worth 5 points. The posting will be graded based on the rubric provided on the web course. Students must have their posting completed by the end of the Thursday of each week. Students have only until 11:59PM. The modules follow a predictable format so that you can easily work through the assignments. Be sure to read all sections of the module before preparing your weekly posting. Also, please read at the end of this section the note regarding attending a lecture in place of the modules.

May 21	Module 1: Introduction: This module has no posting.
May 28	Module 2: Mission and policies for Social Work Practice
June 4 <sup>th</sup>	Module 3 Heterosexist Society
June 11	Module 4: Strengths in the GLBT Community and Lifestyle
June 18	Module 5: Growing Up Gay

#### **Research Proposal Due**

June 25	Module 6: Sexuality and Homosexuality
July 2	Module 7: The Work place and the GLBT Community
July 9	Module 8: Aging and the GLBT Community

- July 16: Module 9: Counseling the GLBT Client
- July 23: Module 10: Health Settings in the GLBT Community
- July 30: **Research Project Due: No posting**
- August 6: Module 11: Working with GLBT Families
- End of Class

**Important Note regarding postings and attending a lecture:**

The content for the modules in the class are also shared with an advance standing undergraduate course this summer. The course is structured as an “M” course and meets every other week on a Thursday night. Students who wish to attend the lectures may do so on a voluntary basis. If you attend the face to face session, you will not have to complete a module for that week and your attendance will be worth the five points. You must sign a sign-in sheet that will be provided for grad students in this course. Please be aware that this is only if you wish to attend and is not required of this class. This is a web based course and you can earn all of your points on line. But the content and issues related to the GLBT community will be discussed and I think you will enjoy the time of coming together and sharing with others. This is only if you wish to attend. Each session you attend will be worth 5 points. The class meets in the Orlando Campus in Room HPA1 246 in the building for the College of Health and Public Affairs. This is the building and floor where the School of Social Work’s main office is at. The class begins at 6:00PM. The following dates are when the class meets:

**May 21          June 4          June 18          July 2          July 16          July 30**

**LIBRARY RESOURCES** (add some wording here about accessing reserve readings)

**Students will be expected to utilize UCF library resources to search library databases for required readings.** The following web sites can help students find information, navigate through databases and learn how to use the library:

1. Library Instruction sessions - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction>
2. Library Research Tutorials - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction/LIToursTutorials.asp>
3. Streaming videos - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>
4. Research Guides - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>
5. Ask a Librarian service - <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>
6. Consult with the librarian familiar with Social Work—Mr. Hal Mendolsohn

The UCF Libraries has a full array of paper and electronic resources available for students and their research needs.

In addition to paper copies of books and journals, UCF students have the ability to access a vast selection of

journals and books in electronic format while on or off campus. The web address to the library's catalog is <http://library.ucf.edu/>. The Ask A Librarian service provides students the ability to contact a library professional either by phone, on-line chat or email, and ask for assistance on "how to" locate, research, and obtain library materials. The web address for Ask A Librarian is <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>. A series of streaming videos, showing students how to search for a book or journal article, has been developed and are available at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>. Research Guides for different majors, that list books, journals, databases, and web sites have been developed and are available in electronic format at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>. Another service to help students conduct library research is called Research Consultation. After a student has conducted his/her research and is in need of additional information, s/he can work with a librarian to locate material with the help of his/her expert searching capabilities. To set-up a Research Consultation, students can either come into the library and sign-up at the Reference Desk or call the library Reference Office at 407-823-5880. Finally, students are always encouraged to visit the library and ask a Reference Librarian how best to conduct one's research. If a student has a simple question on how to locate either a book or journal title, the UCF Reference Libraries are happy to provide this type of service too.

## GRADING SCALE

A	95 - 100	B-	80 - 83	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 - 94	C+	77 - 79	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 89	C	74 - 76	D-	60 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	70 - 73	F	59 or less

## POLICIES

In addition to the information below, the student should become familiar with [School of Work Student Handbook](#) and [The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students](#). All policies included in these handbooks apply to this class.

### Modification of Syllabus

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student's email address is current in eCommunity.

### Written Assignments

Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing. *Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments.* All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered to be a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage will be returned un-graded. When required, references should be included in the APA documentation style. Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached at (407) 823-2197 or <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/>.

The assignments will emphasize the integration of interviewing, verbal, conceptualization and writing skills in practice. All assignments will be evaluated and graded on the following criteria.

1. Appropriate use of APA writing style.
2. Adequate number of references cited.
3. Organization and clarity of ideas presented.

4. Ability to integrate theory and practice appropriately.
5. Ability to use analytical skills throughout the assignment.
6. Creative ways of responding to the instructions beyond the requirements.

### **Late Assignments**

All assignments must be emailed directly through the class web based email. Please do not send any class correspondence to my office email. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each week that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

### **Incomplete Grades**

In exceptional circumstances, an incomplete grade may be given per School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the date set extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

### **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Every student is expected to do his or her own work and all of the work produced will be expected to be completed in its entirety by the student who turns it in. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any acts of plagiarism, *including not acknowledging sources of information appropriately and in accordance with APA guidelines*, may result in a failing grade in the course. School and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized will receive no credit for the exam or assignment, receive a failing grade for the course and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.). Students who observe others violate this policy are expected to report this to the instructor.

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result in an "F" for that assignment, the student may also receive an "F" for the entire course and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.) It is assumed for this course that students will adhere to the academic creed of the University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. The instructor also adheres to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask for your grade to be changed without just cause or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

### **Turnitin.com**

The instructor reserves the option to use turnitin.com; an online system which can determine if work has been copied from another source. The instructor will provide information on submitting assignments through this system at the beginning of the semester. For a more detailed look at this process, please visit <http://www.turnitin.com>

### **Disability Access Statement**

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

## **THE UCF CREED**

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

**Integrity:** I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

**Scholarship:** I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

**Community:** I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

**Creativity:** I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

**Excellence:** I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

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