

**CSP 65        SCIENCE, LAW, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION**  
**Spring 2010**  
**M/W/F 1130-1230**  
**Rangeview 232**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to investigate and evaluate current scientific data on the role of biology in determining sexual orientation. We shall investigate and evaluate these data in order to pursue the social and legal implications of their interpretation. While biological findings on sexual orientation will be presented and explained, the level of instruction will be geared for non-biology majors, with special guest lectures by Prof. Kerry Thompson, Department of Biology. Furthermore, no prior familiarity with social policy and law on this topic will be presupposed.

Some questions that will guide our inquiry include: What is the data that supports biological predisposition? Is sexual orientation genetic? Is it epigenetic? Is it immutable or a matter of choice? How should the law treat sexual orientation as a matter of classification? How should the benefits and burdens of the law be distributed according to this classification? What effect do stereotypes of sexual orientation have on science and social policy, for example, in AIDS research?

This course aims to promote an understanding of the biological impact on complex behaviors such as sexual orientation, and to discuss the social and legal implications of that relationship as engaged citizens.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

John Colapinto, *As Nature Made Him: The Boy Who Was Raised as a Girl*  
Simon LeVay, *The Sexual Brain*  
Dean Hamer and Peter Copeland, *The Science of Desire*  
Edward Stein, *The Mismeasure of Desire*  
Articles on electronic reserve

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The course requires *minimally* completing the following. No late assignments are accepted. No email submissions of work done in this course will be accepted. No

unstapled papers will be accepted. No exceptions. If a student needs an extension for a given deadline, ask at least a week ahead of the deadline, not the day before, last minute, or by email.

1. (2) writing assignments (4 pp.)	30 percent	TBD
2. (1) short paper (6 pp.)	30 percent	due 3/5
3. (1) research paper (12 pp.)	40 percent	due 4/28

1. (2) writing assignments are required for this discussion-based seminar. These are designed to facilitate your understanding of the material as well as develop the writing skills critical for successfully finishing your research paper; these assignments should crystallize arguments, issues or themes, and develop objections and criticisms of these arguments. **15 percent each.**

2. (1) short paper is due at midterm. You are free to write on any narrowly addressed topic of your choice. The paper must be turned in by 3/5. **30 percent.**

3. (1) research paper on a thesis topic of your own design, with at least 5 independent, scholarly articles and books on the subject matter. Part of the grade requires a 1 pp. summary of the thesis (not an outline) due by 3/15 for my approval. **40 percent.**

Class attendance and participation is expected. There are five basic rules in this classroom: (1) read all assigned material before class, (2) ask questions if you don't understand, (3) participate in the discussion if you have something to say, (4) respect others by directing comments as arguments relating to the text or issues rather than at other students, and (5) turn off your wireless devices.

It is the policy of Occidental College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you require these accommodations, please see me no later than the second week of class. For information on documentation requirements for these requests, contact the Center for Academic Excellence (x2849).

This syllabus represents a contract. As students you are expected to fulfill your duties in this course, just as the administration, faculty, and students of Occidental College expect me to fulfill my duties as instructor. SIGN, DATE, AND RETURN TO ME.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Plagiarism, which is misrepresenting the work of others as your own, or academic misconduct more generally, will be turned over to the Judicial Examiner. It is standard to receive an "F" for the course, as well as additional punitive measures, for students who commit academic misconduct. There is an Academic Code at Occidental College that can be found at the following link:

<http://departments.oxy.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/academic.policies/academic.ethics.html>

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- Weeks 1-2 Nature vs. Nurture: Natural Kinds or Normative Confusions?**  
Colapinto, *As Nature Made Him*
- Weeks 3-4 Biology and Sexual Development**  
LeVay, *The Sexual Brain*  
Articles TBD (ER)  
Guest lecture by Kerry Thompson, Department of Biology
- Weeks 5-6 The Genetics of Sexual Orientation**  
Hamer and Copeland, *The Science of Desire*
- Week 7 Genetics, Sexual Orientation, and Sexual Identity**  
Zuk, "That's Not Sex, They're Just Glad to See Each Other" (ER)  
Fernbach, "Biology and Gay Identity" (ER)
- 3/5 SHORT PAPER DUE**
- Week 8 SPRING BREAK!**
- Weeks 9-10 Critique of the Scientific Paradigm**  
Stein, *The Mismeasure of Desire*  
Posner, "The Economic Approach to Homosexuality" (ER)
- Week 11 Homophobia, AIDS Research, and Hate Crimes**  
Treichler, "AIDS, Homophobia, and Biomedical Discourse" (ER)  
Jeness and Broad, "'Antigay and Lesbian Violence" (ER)
- Weeks 12-15 Constitutional Law and Same-Sex Marriage**  
*Loving v. Virginia* (ER)  
*Bowers v. Hardwick* (ER)  
*Romer v. Evans* (ER)  
*Lawrence v. Texas* (ER)  
Sunstein, "Homosexuality and the Constitution"  
Schaff, "Equal Protection and Same-Sex Marriage" (ER)  
Mayo and Gunderson, "The Right to Same-Sex Marriage: A Critique of the Leftist Critique" (ER)
- 4/28 RESEARCH PAPER DUE**