Course Description:
This course will provide students an overview of the multiple ways that sexuality impacts contemporary family relationships. While sexuality is often thought of as intensely personal and private in this course we explore how the social context of the family shapes sexual experiences, health and inequalities. In addition to gaining a general familiarity with how sexuality impacts families, this course will provide a more in-depth analysis of three specific instances of sexuality in families: “coming out” as Transgender, Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay (TBLG), conversations about sexuality and sex education, and sexual health. This course identifies best practice strategies for addressing issues of sexuality that arise in a family context, with a focus on how social workers may use these skills in their work with families and family members.

Course Content:
In this course we focus on social work skills on issues of sexuality in the family. To limit the range of topics to those not covered in other social work courses offered by the University of Michigan School of Social Work, this class will focus on three specific instances of sexuality in families: “coming out” as Transgender, Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay (TBLG), conversations about sexuality and sex education, and sexual health. In addition, there will be additional time built into the class to address other issues that are raised as important for student’s own learning goals. Topics will cover a range of issues relevant to the diverse individuals and families social workers will encounter in their practice.

Course Design:
The course design will utilize multiple educational strategies to make the course content as accessible as possible to a range of learning styles. This includes strategies such as lectures, assigned theoretical and practice readings, small and large group discussions, videos, and role-playing as worker and as family member. Similarly, course assignments will also be varied and include in-class writing assignments, in-class presentations, and a take home practice paper.
Objectives:
Upon completion of this course students will:
• Be exposed to multiple aspects of sexuality as they emerge in the context of family relationships.
• Become familiar with empirical research about three particular aspects of sexuality: conversations about sexuality and sexual education in families, “coming out” as TBLG in the family, and sexual health.
• Be able to identify how issues of sexuality occur in families throughout the lifecourse.
• Be able to describe strategies for working with families when sexuality arises.

Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:
• Multiculturalism and Diversity: Class discussions and readings focus on a diverse range of sexual experiences as they impact contemporary families. In particular, this course explores how social identities such as gender, race, class or sexual orientation matter for understandings of sexuality in a family context.
• Social Justice and Social Change: A major focus of this class is building skills for addressing issues of sexuality as they arise in family relationships. This course approaches families as a formative context for understanding sexuality throughout the lifecourse, and thus an important social location for impacting social change on issues of sexuality.
• Promotion and Prevention: As sexuality in the family context is a largely unaddressed topic, in this course students will develop a sense of the risk and protective factors that families can enable regarding issues of sexuality. We will discuss strategies for promoting healthy sexual behaviors, positive and educational discussions about sexuality and affirming “coming out” experiences in a family context.
• Behavioral and Social Science Research: Readings include contemporary and canonical social science research on family dynamics and relationships regarding sexualities.

Relationship to Social Work Values and Ethics:
Social work ethics and values will be addressed in this course using the NASW Code of Ethics. In particular, values and ethics will emerge as students are encouraged to examine their own perceptions of and potential biases toward issues of sexuality in the family.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:
If you need an accommodation for a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. It is possible that aspects of the course can be modified to better facilitate your learning process. If you disclose a disability to me I will treat that information as private and confidential.

Course Requirements:

Grades for this course will be assigned as pass or fail.

1. Participation and Attendance
To pass this class, students must attend the entirety of both classes and actively participate during in-class activities. All electronic devices, including cell phones and computers, should be turned off except by the permission of the instructor. Behaviors such as sleeping, arriving late or leaving early, or doing other coursework are equivalent to non-attendance.

2. **Assignments**
   All three assignments must be completed satisfactorily to pass this course.

1. **In-class writing assignment**: Students will reflect on a personal or professional experience of “sexuality in a family context.” This experience should reflect a situation that the student wishes they knew more about. In particular, an issue that they would wish to know more about how it could be effectively addressed through social work practice strategies. [For example, a student could write about their own (or a client’s) experience in disclosing an unplanned pregnancy to family members, or an experience having a family member disclose their sexual orientation.] The student will also reflect on how they have (or might) encounter this issue in social work practice and describe what information they wished they had to better address this issue. This assignment will be written in-class during the first day of the course.

2. **Article summary**: All students will complete one article review and present during the second day of the course. Students will type a one page outline and summary of the main points of the article to be distributed to classmates and conduct a brief five minute in-class presentation of the main points of the article. Students should pay particular attention to the practice strategies outlined by their article, or if none are articulated, suggest ways that the article’s findings inform social work practice. Students may select from the pre-selected list of supplementary articles or may select an alternative article with permission from the instructor.
   The purpose of this assignment is to give all students a “handbook” of current research and practice strategies on topics they are interested in that they may utilize for the final assignment, as well as for social work practice outside of the classroom. The instructor will print copies of your summary if it is emailed to me by 11am the day before it is due (May 27th 2010).

3. **Practice paper and presentation**: The in-class writing “scenarios” developed on the first day will be compiled into several possible scenarios relating to sexuality in the family context. You will choose one of these scenarios to write about for your final practice paper. The practice paper (5-7 pages) will respond to the questions posed in these initial writing assignments and will use the practice skills developed throughout the course to describe how social workers may usefully respond to these issues in a practice setting. After summarizing the presenting issue, students will briefly provide additional information about the topic. The bulk of the paper will focus on identifying skills that social workers need to address this presenting issue. This assignment will allow students to pursue the topics and issues that they identified as important for their social work career, in addition to demonstrating the students’ mastery of course material.
Weekly Topics and Readings:

WEEK 1: May 21st
INTRODUCTIONS AND “COMING OUT” AS TBLG IN THE FAMILY

Required Readings:

Supplementary Readings:

**WEEK 2: May 28th**

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL EDUCATION IN FAMILIES AND SEXUAL HEALTH IN FAMILIES

**Required Readings:**
SEICUS Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education p. 23-77.

**Supplementary Readings:**