

CO5630 HUMAN SEXUALITY
Reformed Theological Seminary – Jackson
 Winter 2026
 3 Credit Hours

Instructors:

Rachael Garner, LPC, CST
 Email: rachlgarner@gmail.com
Natalie Lassiter, LPC, CST
 Email: natalie@natalielassiter.com

Class meeting time:

January 12-16, 8-5 pm*
 *break for lunch 12-1 pm

***Office hours for all instructors: by appointment**

Course Description

CD1. To create an in-depth understanding of sexual biology, psychology and values, as desensitization takes place so that each student is at ease talking and counseling in the sexual area of personality and relationships.

CD2. Assist students in understanding human sexuality issues (gender, sexual functioning, and sexual orientation) and their impact on family and couple functioning.

CD3. Utilizing the DEC-R model (Dialogue, Educate, Coach & Refer) to impart an understanding of common sexual questions, myths, and problems, as basic therapeutic answers and interventions are developed with the ability to diagnose, educate and strategically refer when needed.

CD4. To encourage and assist each student in understanding and becoming comfortable with their own sexuality, as they integrate a Biblical values system into their lives and counseling practice.

Course Objectives (Knowledge and Skill Outcomes)

After successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate comprehension of the following:

- CO1.** Theories and Models of Counseling.
- CO2.** Ethical Strategies - Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for establishing and maintaining in-person and technology-assisted therapeutic relationships.
- CO3.** Methods used in the scientific study of human sexuality to better understand and evaluate treatment approaches.
- CO4.** Human anatomy and physiology of sexual function including genetics, human development, sexual response, and sexual function to become comfortable with the topics of human sexuality in order to assist clients in creating a comfortable sexual dialogue and providing helpful education to benefit the therapeutic process.
- CO5.** Unique categories for adolescents, single adults, disabilities, and aging.
- CO6.** The effect of sexual abuse and trauma on human sexuality.
- CO7.** Sexual dysfunction and categories for treatment with training in making effective referrals.
- CO8.** Biblical and theological perspectives on human sexuality.

- CO9.** Categories to talk to children and adolescents and help parents talk to their children about sex.
- CO10.** Understanding and compassion for the various topics related to sexual behaviors including sexual addiction, infidelity, same-sex attraction, gender identity.
- CO11.** Appreciation of self as a sexual being and an individual sexual ethic, in light of cultural, religious, historical, and physiological perspectives
- CO12.** An understanding and caring for the person of the therapist dealing with sexual issues in the therapy setting—employing careful boundaries, dealing with transference and counter-transference, exercising healthy self-care.

Methods of Instruction

There will be a variety of instructional and evaluative activities utilized, including: lecture, handouts, readings, role-plays, experiential exercises, interactions with the internet, guest speakers, and others. Any experiential exercises are designed to help illustrate the educational process and contribute to your professional development. Educational exercises are not designed to be intrusive and there will be no pressure to disclose personal information beyond your comfort level. All students are expected to treat this environment with mutual respect and confidentiality.

Content Advisory: Due to the subject nature of the course, students may encounter potentially sensitive or disturbing content (including but not limited to: images of human anatomy, descriptions of sexual behaviors, and discussions of sexual assault). While the instructors will make every attempt to approach topics with care and discretion, students are advised to practice self-care during the week of class and to seek additional support as needed.

Assignments (Student Performance Evaluation Criteria)

A1. Class Attendance and Participation (15% of final grade)

- a) Attendance and participation in all components of the class is crucial not simply for obtaining content, but to get the value of different viewpoints from instructors, guests, and fellow classmates.
- b) Students will lose 3% of their *final grade* for every hour of class missed for any reason. Exceptions to this must be approved by Dr. Michael Hillerman before class and must be communicated to both instructors.
- c) If serious illness or an emergency prevents a student from attending any class, please notify both instructors before the class begins if possible. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any materials handed out or presented during the missed class time from a classmate.
- d) During lecture portions of the class, brief questions and comments that promote clarity and further understanding are welcome and encouraged; however, to keep class moving smoothly, substantive questions and comments may be reserved for the end of each lecture block and should be submitted anonymously via Canvas.
- e) Students are not permitted to use technology devices (laptops, phone, tablets, watches, etc.) for

purposes unrelated to the course. Students are not to engage in group chats or messaging during class time. All discussions happening in class need to be accessible to all classroom participants (including the instructors).

A2. Reading/Listening Assignments (combined 15% of final grade)

- a) **A2.1 Required Reading/Listening (10% of final grade):** Due to the intensive format, it is essential that students have prepared ahead of time and reserve evenings of class days for rest and self-care. Therefore, *students are expected to have completed all required reading/listening by the first class day (January 12)*.

A Reading/Listening Report indicating the percentage read will be completed via quiz on Canvas and is due by the end of the first class day on January 12. This report should reflect an estimate of completed reading *prior to the start of class, not the amount you plan to read later*.

- b) **A2.2 Elective Reading (5% of final grade):** Students will choose one additional elective reading, to be completed by the last day of winter term (January 24). A Reading Report indicating the percentage read will be completed via quiz on Canvas and is due on January 24.

A3. Final Exam (30% of final grade): Students will complete an online exam in Canvas covering the course material. Exam is objective questions (multiple choice and True/False) and will be taken from the required reading and lectures. Exam is not timed but is closed book and notes. It will be available on Canvas on January 21 and must be taken by January 24.

A4. Sexual Autobiography and Integration Paper (30% of final grade)

- a) Two-part paper which will encourage personal growth and integration of values. The autobiography portion will not be submitted; instead, students will submit a Report of Completion in which they are asked to reflect on the experience of writing their autobiography (see Sexual Autobiography and Integration Paper Rubric at the end of the syllabus for further details).
- b) Although the autobiography portion will not be submitted, students should nonetheless use discernment in the amount of detail given in their autobiography. Students with a history of sexual trauma or difficulty may wish to seek additional support when completing this portion of the assignment and are given the option of an alternate assignment.
- c) Paper will be submitted via Canvas and is due by January 24.

A5. Course Evaluation Completion: Course evaluations are crucial for assessing and improving the MAC program. Therefore, each MAC course includes an assignment to complete an anonymous online course evaluation. You will verify whether you have completed the evaluation through a Canvas quiz. This will not count toward your grade but is necessary for successful completion of the course.

Due Dates

Assignment	Due
A2.1 Required Reading/Listening	1/12/26 11:59 pm
A2.2 Elective Reading	1/24/26 11:59 pm
A3 Final Exam	Available: 1/21/26 12:01 am Due: 1/24/26 11:59 pm
A4 Autobiography & Integration Paper	1/24/26 11:59 am

Required Course Materials (Textbooks & Articles)

Note: Course materials do not necessarily represent the positions of the instructors or Reformed Theological Seminary but are reflective of theories and perspectives on this subject in the field. Time will be spent in class discussing the reading and critiquing it from a biblical Christian perspective that is in line with the stated theology of RTS.

A2.1 Required Reading/Listening (see selected chapters/pages for M1 & M2 in Course Schedule)

M1: Yarber, W. and Sayad, B. (2018). Human Sexuality: Diversity in Contemporary Society. 10th Edition. McGraw-Hill Education, ISBN-13: 978-1260397123 (selected chapters)

M2: Rosenau, D. (2002). *A Celebration of Sex* (Rev. and updated. ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson. ISBN: 978-0785264675 (selected chapters)

M3: Treweek, D. (2025). *Single Ever After*. The Good Book Company. ISBN: 978-1802543261 (all)

M4: Stringer, J. (2018). *Unwanted: How Sexual Brokenness Reveals Our Way to Healing*. NavPress. ISBN: 978-1-63146-672-4 (all)

Podcast episodes:

M4: Young, A. (Host.) Talking To Your Children About Sex: The Practical Stuff (No. 102). In *The Place We Find Ourselves*. <https://adamyounccounseling.com/talking-to-your-children-about-sex-the-practical-stuff/>

M5: Young, A. (Host.) Exploring Your Sexual Story with Curiosity and Kindness (No. 161). In *The Place We Find Ourselves*. <https://adamyounccounseling.com/exploring-your-sexual-story-with-curiosity-and-kindness/>

M6: Young, A. (Host.) Triangulation: What It Is and Why It Matters (No. 162). In *The Place We Find Ourselves*. <https://adamyounccounseling.com/triangulation-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/>

A2.2 Elective Reading (students will choose one of the following):

M6: Gregoire, S., Lindenbach, R., and Sawatsky, J. (2021). *The Great Sex Rescue*. Baker Books.

M7: Welcher, R.J., Sauls, S. (2020). *Talking Back to Purity Culture: Rediscovering Faithful Christian Sexuality*. IVP.

M8: Bauman, A. (2020). *The Sexually Healthy Man*. Independent.

Optional Materials:

M9: Cutrer, W. R., Glahn, S., & Sytsma, M. (2020). *Sexual Intimacy in Marriage*, 4th ed: Kregel Publications.

M10: Feldhahn, S, Sytsma, M. (2023). *Secrets of Sex and Marriage*, Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House.

M11: Jones, S., & Jones, B. (2019). *How and When to Tell Your Kids about Sex: A Lifelong Approach to Shaping Your Child's Sexual Character*: NAV Press.

M12: Laaser, D. (2008). *Shattered vows : hope and healing for women who have been sexually betrayed*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan.

M13: McCluskey, C., & McCluskey, R. (2004). *When two become one: achieving sexual intimacy in marriage*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: F.H. Revell. (pp. 16-132)

M14: Penner, C. L., & Penner, J. J. (2017). *The Married Guy's Guide to Great Sex*: Focus on the Family Publishing.

M15: Penner, J. J., & Penner, C. L. (2017). *Enjoy: The Gift of Sexual Pleasure for Women*: Focus on the Family Publishing.

Course Schedule

2026 Lecture ID	Day	Topic	Corresponding Reading	2026 Course Objective
L1	Monday	Introduction and overview of the course		
L2	Monday	Sex in History & Culture	Yarber ch. 1, pgs. 13-23	C02, C08
L3	Monday	A Biblical-Theological Approach to Sexuality	Celebration of Sex (CoS) ch. 1	C08, C011
L4	Tuesday	Single Sexuality	<i>Single Ever After, Unwanted</i>	C05, C08, C011
L5	Tuesday	Personal development of the Sex Counselor	<i>Unwanted; The Place We Find Ourselves</i> ep. 161	C012
L6	Tuesday	DEC-R model for counseling couples		CO1; CO2; CO3; CO7; CO11; CO12
L7	Tuesday	Facilitating Sexual Communication	CoS ch. 8	CO4; CO12
L8	Wednesday	Sexual History Taking		CO1
L9	Wednesday	Intro to Anatomy & Physiology	Yarber chs. 3, 4	CO4

L10	Wednesday	Sexual Development in Childhood & Adolescence with elements of STI lecture	Yarber ch. 6; The Place We Find Ourselves ep. 102	CO4; CO5; CO7; CO9
L11	Thursday	Sexual Development in Adulthood Part 1: Models of Sexual Response & Treating Desire Issues	Yarber chs. 3, 4; CoS ch. 18	CO3; CO4; CO7
L12	Thursday	Sexual Development in Adulthood Part 2: Toward a Biblical View of Contraception, Sex in Childbearing Years Sex & Aging	Yarber ch. 7, pgs 180-190; ch. 11, pgs 289-312; ch. 12, pgs. 338-341; CoS chs. 19, 20	CO4; CO5; CO8
L13	Thursday	Intro to Sexual Dysfunctions & Psychopharmacology	Yarber ch. 14	CO4; CO5; CO7
L14	Friday	Introduction to Sexual Trauma	Yarber ch. 17; CoS ch. 24; <i>Unwanted</i> ; The Place We Find Ourselves ep. 162	CO6
L15	Friday	Intro to Counseling Sexual Addiction (<i>w/ Dr. Branden Henry</i>)	<i>Unwanted</i>	CO10
L16	Friday	Gender and Sexual Identity	Yarber ch. 5, pgs. 123-139	CO10
L17	Friday	Atypical Sexuality	Yarber ch. 10, pgs. 264-271	CO10

Policies and Important Information

Accommodation of Students with Special Learning Needs: If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructors prior to the start of this course. You must provide a letter from the Dean of Students that verifies your disabled status. The instructors and student will discuss the available accommodations for the course. If the student with a disability does not disclose that they have a disability, then the student is agreeing to take full responsibility for any related consequences that may occur.

Access to Research Database. RTS provides MAC students with access to the Ebscohost Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection of full text journal articles. You can access this collection from computers in the library, or from your home computer by following the link below and logging in with a username and password to be provided in class. <http://search.ebscohost.com/>

Use of Artificial Intelligence. You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. You may use AI programs (e.g. ChatGPT) to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, be aware that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise

problematic. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). Any plagiarism or other form of cheating will be dealt with severely under relevant RTS policies. Of course, there are many cases where I may not be able to tell if you cheated or not. Note however that, for any reason, including doubts about whether the paper was written with external help, any student can be required to come in for an oral examination on their paper. In such a case, a grade for the oral examination will replace that for the paper.

Submission of work. All assignments are to be submitted to Canvas by the posted date due. Keep a digital copy of your work.

Written Work Format. All written work must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style. If a student does not have a copy of the APA manual, one should be purchased, or students may use one of the many APA style websites available online (e.g.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Assessment will include how well students represent their thoughts on paper, craftsmanship in writing, and organization of all written work.

Late work. All assignments are due as scheduled regardless of attendance, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructors. Assignments turned in late will have points deducted for each day late.

Grading Scale:

A (97-100)	B- (86-87)	D+ (75-77)
A- (94-96)	C+ (83-85)	D (72-74)
B+ (91-93)	C (80-82)	D- (70-71)
B (88-90)	C- (78-79)	F (Below 70)

Sexual Autobiography Report and Integration Paper Rubric

Part A) Sexual Autobiography (not submitted) and Reflection Report:

Option A: Write out your sexual story to date in as little or as much detail as your “window of tolerance” will allow. You may wish to consider formative people, events, ideas, or resources that have shaped your own views of sex and sexuality both broadly and personally (i.e. how do I think about sexuality in general? As I consider my own self? What shaped these beliefs and attitudes?).

Option B: While we believe that it is good and necessary for counselors to have considered their own sexual stories as they prepare to walk alongside clients, we are mindful that this is a developmental process for students of counseling. Students who anticipate that this exercise will push them beyond their window of tolerance may choose to 1) spend a therapy session with an established counselor seeking focused support in this area or 2) write out a plan of action for how you might continue to seek

support and healing in this area, and how you as a counselor might navigate if a client brings up such topics in the meantime.

Reflection Report (both options): with either option, students will submit a 1-2 page Reflection Report along with their Integration Paper, following the rubric listed below. This report should be **submitted without identification and will be graded in Canvas anonymously**.

Part B) Integration Paper:

Briefly begin to develop your own theology of sex. Develop this theology however you wish, but it should somewhere address the topics listed under “Criteria” below. Sometimes it is helpful to imagine teaching a Bible class (couples, singles, teens, etc.) where the topic given to you is “What is God’s intention and design for human sexuality?”

While this paper will include your thoughts and opinions and does not need to be primarily exegetical, it should still thoughtfully and honestly engage with Scriptural concepts and direct Scriptural references where appropriate. It is okay to wrestle with certain Scriptural concepts, disagree with concepts presented in class, or list areas that remain in tension for you.

The paper does not need to be heavily researched, but it is still an academic assignment; therefore, your ideas should still be presented in a clear and organized manner and should conform to APA standards. **This paper should be submitted without identification and will be graded in Canvas anonymously** to allow for objectivity.

Criteria	Points Possible (out of 100 total)
<p>Part A) Autobiography Reflection Report (1-2 pages). The autobiography will not be submitted. Instead, you will submit a 1-2 page anonymous (name withheld on paper) reflection report that addresses the following 3 questions:</p> <p>1) Please describe your experience in completing this assignment; 2) What is your “take away” from this experience? What did you learn and what will you do with it? 3) How might completing this assignment add to your understanding of your own self as a counselor?</p>	30
<p>Part B) Integration Paper (6-8 pages)</p>	
<p>Scriptural Concepts. What Scriptural concepts would you select to teach someone about God’s design for sex and sexual intimacy from your perspective?</p>	20
<p>Biblical Sexual Boundaries. What are God’s boundaries for sex? Why would He draw these boundaries? Why have you decided these things are unacceptable? Are they black/white (everyone must hold this value) or gray (might be ok for some Christians)? What boundaries need to be in place in order to protect from these sins?</p>	20
<p>Sexual Wholeness. What constitutes a sexually whole person?</p>	10
<p>References. Scriptural support when appropriate is important,</p>	10

Format. The Integration Paper must use APA format and must be 6-8 pages in length. It should be submitted anonymously without your name or identifying information.	10
---	----

Student Learning Outcome Table

The table below shows how the objectives of this course will be met, and how they relate to CACREP Standards. Details about specific course objectives, assignments, and evaluation methods can be found in later sections of this syllabus.

CACREP Standard(s)	Course Objective	Material(s)	Lecture	Assignment(s)
	CO1. Theories and Models of Counseling	M1, M2	L5, L7	A2. Readings A3. Final Exam
	CO2 Ethical Strategies	M1	L2, L6	A4 Papers
	CO3. Methods	M1, M2	L6, L11	A2. Readings A3. Final Exam
	CO4 Anatomy	M1	L7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13	A2 Readings A3 Exam
	CO 5 Developmental	M1, M3, M5	L4, L10, L12, L13	A2 Readings
	CO 6 Trauma	M1, M2, M4, M5-7	L15	A2 Readings
	CO7 Dysfunction	M1, M2	L6, L10, L11	A2 Readings
	CO8 Theological Perspectives	M2, M3, M4, M5-7	L2, L3, L4	A4 Papers
	CO9 Family Sex Ed	M1, M5	L10	A2 Readings
	CO10 Understand & Compassion	M1, M4, M6-7	L17, L24, L25	A4 Papers
	CO11 Person of Therapist	M4, M5-7	L3, L4, L6	A4 Papers
	CO12 Therapy Setting	M1	L5, L7	A4 Papers



Course Objectives Related to MAC* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO5630 Human Sexuality

Professor: Garner, Lassiter

Campus: Jackson

Date: Winter Term 2026

<u>MAC* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MAC curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MAC outcomes.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong ● Moderate ● Minimal ● None 	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	Understands and applies the basic knowledge needed to be an effective counselor including: the history and philosophy of counseling, ethical standards of practice, personal career development, advocacy for clients, consultation & collaboration, and a Reformed, biblical and theological framework for counseling.	Strong	Theoretical orientation and “self of the therapist” (especially the ethics of working with sexual issues) are discussed in length.
Social & Cultural Diversity	Understands and demonstrates how living in a cultural/global society affects clients who are seeking counseling and clinical mental health services, as well as the effects of sin such as racism, discrimination, sexism, and oppression on one’s own life and career and those of the client.	Moderate	When the data is available, cultural and social impact to sexuality is discussed.
Human Growth & Development	Understands and applies knowledge of various theories of individual and family development, and factors affecting human development. To include biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and environmental factors, addiction, and effects of crisis, disasters, and traumas.	Strong	Specific to sexual development across the lifespan.
Career Development	Understands and applies theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making.	None	

Counseling & Helping Relationships	Understands and applies theories and models of counseling, strategies for understanding and practicing consultation, and developing relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans.	Moderate	Specific to ethical assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of sexual issues.
Group Counseling & Group Work	Understands and applies theories and models of group counseling and group work, dynamics of the group process and development, and therapeutic factors that contribute to group effectiveness.	None	
Assessment & Testing	Understands and applies clinical knowledge effectively, including various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses. To include diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments, and is sensitive to the complications of diagnosis and interpretation of formal and informal evaluation.	Minimal	Testing and assessment for sexual issues is discussed, but covered more thoroughly in an intermediate course.
Research & Program Evaluation	Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate research through a biblical worldview and integrate it into counseling practice. Understands the process of program evaluation and its integration into the practice of counseling and clinical mental health counseling.	Minimal	Research presented is evaluated critically but program evaluation is not discussed.
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling.	Minimal	This course is specific to counseling for sexual issues only.
Integration (Biblical/Theological)	Knowledge of and integration of Reformed, biblical and theological concepts with counseling practices.	Strong	Each subject is discussed from an integrated prospective.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the triune God.	Strong	Is the core to the primary theology presented in the course.