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## FINAL PAPER: Sexual Autobiography Guidelines

Human Sexuality SCI2220

### **OBJECTIVE**

For your final paper, you will write a Sexual Autobiography. The autobiography is an analysis of the development of your “sexual self.” It should attempt to answer the question, “How did I become the sexual person I am today?” by considering your own development as it relates to the issues discussed in class, and by reflecting on what has influenced your beliefs, attitudes, values and behavior in the area of sexuality and intimate relationships (i.e. parents, religion, culture, media, peers, experiences). It is not the case that one needs to have had intercourse or be sexually active in order to write this paper. It is also not necessary to disclose any personal information beyond what is comfortable for you in order to write a thoughtful paper. **You may disclose as little or as much as you are comfortable with.**

Please be sure that your **confidentiality will be respected**, and your professor will be the **only person** reading the paper. However, if you are more comfortable, feel free to use a **fake name**, your initials, or a student I.D. number on the actual paper itself. Just be sure to let the professor know verbally or by email that the paper belongs to you. A **hard copy** of the **final paper** is due in **Week 14** (you will NOT upload onto Blackboard for confidentiality purposes).

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

The final paper should be **6-8 pages** in total. **You are expected to include two complete reference citations of outside reading you in your Final Paper** (The textbook is acceptable as a reference, but you must include the chapter title you are referring to in your reference. Web citations must include the date you saw it. At least 1 reference must be other than a web citation or a textbook citation). These may include books, journals, articles on psychological development, biographies and autobiographies which are meaningful to your own sexuality, poems, plays or films of significance in your evolution as a sexual being. Your Final Paper **MUST INCLUDE** a **WORKS CITED** page (which does NOT count as one of the 6-8 pages).

*\* The reason you must include citations in your Final Paper is so that it is clear you have made broad connections and thought about outside sources or sources used in the course to inform your personal reflections on your life.*

### **POSSIBLE TOPICS**

Although you are free to employ whatever topics or issues you like, here are some

suggestions of areas you may wish to address. **Be sure to choose a few subjects from each of these areas, but you do NOT have to respond to every question in each area.**

#### **A. Infancy and Childhood**

1. Describe your family situation at birth, during childhood and at other times in your life. Were you planned or an “accident”? Was a girl or boy preferred? Was there extended family involved? In what kind of family were you raised (structure, religion, etc.), and what was its impact on your sexuality?
2. Describe childhood memories of how you learned about gender identity (examples of learning about being a boy or girl), the expression of affection and the values or attitudes about sexual matters. What toys did you play with and what games did you learn? Consider your childhood experiences in terms of stages or tasks of psychosexual development.
3. What were your experiences in your neighborhood and while you attended school? Describe your relationships to the same and other genders. What were your frustrations and successes with school and community?
4. Recall your early learning about masturbation and the birds and the bees. How did you learn about sexual matters? Romance? Where babies came from? What did your parents teach you? What did you learn from your friends and at school? What words did you learn to use to describe your genitals? What did you learn by watching and listening to your brothers and sisters?
5. Remember your reactions to your body as you were going through childhood and approaching adolescence. Describe what this felt like.

#### **B. Puberty and Adolescence**

6. Recall your early experiences with puberty and your body, as well as any identity changes that occurred at this phase. How was your self-esteem at this time in your life?
7. What do you remember learning about sexual matters such as kissing, intimacy, autoeroticism (masturbation, fantasies, etc.) and orgasm as a teenager? Who or what were your information resources?
8. What role did reading sexually explicit magazines or books have in your learning? Viewing explicit movies or videos?
9. Discuss your early experiences with dating and the decisions you made about being sexual with another person, or not.
10. What was your experience of your first menstruation?
11. What was your experience of your first ejaculation?

#### **C. Young Adult to Present**

12. Describe your important romantic relationships, past and present.
13. Describe your first sexual experience or sexual intercourse. Was it pleasurable, disappointing? What you expected?
14. What impact have sexually transmitted infections had on your life? What is your

personal understanding and practice about being screened for STIs and HIV?

15. What does safe sex mean to you? Would/do you practice it? Why? Why not?  
Under which conditions?
16. How would you describe your sexual identity, sexual self-esteem and perception about your body now?
17. What ideas do you have about your plans and needs in your future intimate relationships? How do you feel about romantic love? What kinds of partners do you feel you're attracted to and why?
18. Describe experiences where you may have exchanged sex for gifts/food/money.
19. Which of your ideas on sexuality have changed? How do you see yourself differently now than the way you were a few years ago?
20. What are your goals in relationships, love or marriage? How important are these things for you? Are you more or less 'traditional' in your expectations?
21. Summarize your reflections from writing this autobiography of your development as a unique sexual person. Has this course made any difference in your own view of your sexuality? If so, how?

#### **GRADING RUBRIC**

**A HARD COPY** of the Final Paper is **due in Week 14 at the START OF CLASS TIME.**

**LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Your autobiography, as a Final Paper, should reflect a semester's worth of thinking, research and writing.

Your work will be graded on the following criteria:

1. The amount of time and effort you've spent: 50%
2. Your organization and clarity of expression: 25%
3. The creativity and originality used in communicating your story: 10%
4. The integration of issues discussed in class and background research (so as to build a foundation for your writing and provide it with context; you *must cite a minimum of two outside sources via in-text citations throughout the text*): 5%
5. Works Cited page: 5%
6. Meeting required 6-8 page length: 5% (does NOT include Works Cited page)



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