

# Sex and Gender: Studyguide and Review Notes#5

NOTE: This studyguide concludes the entire second (evolutionary) part of the course, with the exception of the topic of parenting strategies and the Hrdy readings. I will get an additional studyguide to cover that topic next week.

## Female Strategies and Tactics (ch. 6)

- How can females get an honest assessment of genetic quality in a mate? Give some examples.
- What sort of behavioral qualities would indicate a good social partner? Give some examples.
- How can females benefit from extra-pair copulations (EPCs)? Various things relevant here, including confusing paternity (chimps), getting investment from other males (Dunnocks; see below on “mating systems”), and getting better genes from another (non-investing) male
- We speak of male-male competition, but females compete too. What do they compete for, and how do they do it?

## Mating Systems (ch. 7)

- Why is polygyny the most common mating system?
- Lots of examples of polygyny, especially harem polygyny, involve direct male-male competition. But what is in it for females? Can the choice of an already-mated male be to a female’s advantage? (Review the polygyny threshold argument).
- Mealey argues that sexual selection should lead to different traits in in “harem polygyny” and “scramble competition polygyny”. What is the difference?
- What is Fisher’s “sexy son” theory for sexually-selected traits?
- What is Zahavi’s handicap principle, and why is it important? (Because it provides an honest signal of good condition, it can explain costly traits that would seem to be maladaptive). Give an example.
- What evidence is there that preferred traits actually indicate good genes? Be able to give an example (red-breasted house finches, long-tailed peacocks as seen in the film, etc.).
- Why is symmetry (low “fluctuation asymmetry”, in the jargon) attractive?
- Monogamous primates engage in the most intensive paternal investment. Investment by males in multi-male groups might be better classified as mating investment (being nice to the kids to get on Mom’s good side). Review classnotes.
- Mating systems in non-human species are variable, just as they are with humans. Review the Dunnock example (text and lecture).

## Women's Mating Strategies and Tactics

[note: we will cover women's parenting strategies in a later studyguide]

- What tactics do women use to attract mates, and why?
- Why is WHR (waist-hip ratio) considered to be an "honest signal" of good condition? Why don't all women have low WHR? (review classnotes regarding possible trade-offs for androgen and estrogen-dependent traits).
- How do women's sexual signalling and sexual behavior vary throughout the menstrual cycle? (p. 222-3).
- What traits (physical and behavioral) do women find attractive in men? How do women's preferences for facial masculinity vary according to whether they are looking for a short-term or long-term mate? (this was shown in the film, which described Victor Johnson's studies with computerized faces). See also p. 267
- Older females are very attractive in most other species, including primate species. Why are humans an exception?
- Why does the most attractive female face have the features of an 11-year old girl?!!
- Why do women sometimes have EPCs? (see arguments given for non-human species above).
- Rape and prostitution might be considered to be "ethical pathologies" (in Mealey's terms). They might also reflect evolved adaptations. Explain.
- What mechanism prevents inbreeding among sibs, and how do we know? see p. 244.
- When young women fight with each other, one of the major precipitating causes is a woman's defense of her reputation against accusations of promiscuity. Why are these fighting words?

## Men's Mating Strategies and Tactics

- Be able to explain figure 10.1. Where do humans fit?
- What tactics do men use to attract mates, and why?
- What traits (physical and behavioral) do men find attractive in women? Do men's preferences differ for short-term mates and long-term partners?
- Mealey discusses two explanations for why men tend to marry younger women (what are they?) Why does she prefer the evolutionary argument? (p. 273-5).
- Which age-sex category commits the most homicides? Which is the most likely to be the victims of homicide? (Take another look at figure 10.10 too.). Review the evidence on male-male aggression and sex difference in risk-proneness.
- We discussed many consequences of the fact that confidence in paternity is lower than confidence in maternity (ie., mom always knows the kids are hers but dad can't be quite so sure). Some issues to review: How does paternal confidence affect the likelihood that a man (and his kin) will invest in his kids? Is a sexual double standard found cross-culturally, and what is the evidence? (adultery laws, etc.), What is the leading cause of spousal homicide?
- Both men and women get jealous, but they are most jealous about different things. Explain. (p. 298).
- Explain the data in figure 10.12 and the arguments given to explain it.

## Courtship, mating, marriage, parenting

Note: The first questions refer to Daly and Wilson (D/W) ch. 9, the remainder to Mealey. Ignore the pen marks on D/W, it is a library book)

- How are human marriages similar to animal pair bonds? How are they different? (according to Daly and Wilson)
- Review exchange of marriage payments (DW); bridewealth is considered by people who pay it to be compensation. But compensation for what?
- What do adultery laws suggest about the ubiquity of sexual double-standards (D/W)? How common are such laws? Who is punished (straying husband, straying wife, extra-pair partner) and why? And why is it called “adultery”?
- When men and women kill their spouses, why do they do it (D/W)? Is this a universal pattern? Is such murder adaptive for the killer (in a Darwinian sense)? See D/W discussion of this, beginning p. 205, also 215.
- Do step-children increase discord among spouses? Why? [D/W]
- Does familicide and murder/suicide make evolutionary sense, according to D/W?
- About what fraction of human societies (not individuals) permit polygyny? Practice polyandry?
- Mealey argues that harem-defense polygyny is based on male physical competition. What is some of the evidence for this type of polygyny in humans? Think about the aspects of sexual dimorphism that are consistent with this, as well as ethnographic evidence.
- In what types of societies are we most likely to see this type of polygyny? [note: real harems in humans exist only in highly stratified despotic societies—based on military rather than muscular strength]
- What is the evidence for resource defense/female-choice polygyny in humans? Review classnotes on Borgerhoff-Mulder’s study of the Kipsigis as well as Mealey’s discussion (B-M found that the best predictor of which man a Kipsigis woman chose was his wealth after division among wives, rather than his total wealth).
- What economic circumstances would favor resource defense/female-choice polygyny, and why? (think about unequal distribution of resources, etc.)
- Note the similarity between human courtship and commitment displays and those of other species.
- What is the advantage of marrying someone like ourselves? different from ourselves? Is there an “optimal” degree of outbreeding?
- Is there a sex difference in reported infidelity in humans? How does the sex difference differ with respect to (a) ever been unfaithful, and (b) been unfaithful with 20 or more partners? In what direction might we expect reports of infidelity to be biased, and why?
- What evidence, other than actual infidelity, indicates greater interest by males in sexual variety? (sexual fantasies etc)
- Is the distribution of sexual orientation in males (fig 11.4) bimodal, and what does this mean, in English? (this is review)
- How does homosexuality in women differ from homosexuality in men (other than the object of desire)? See also pp. 343–344.in ch. 12; this is also review).