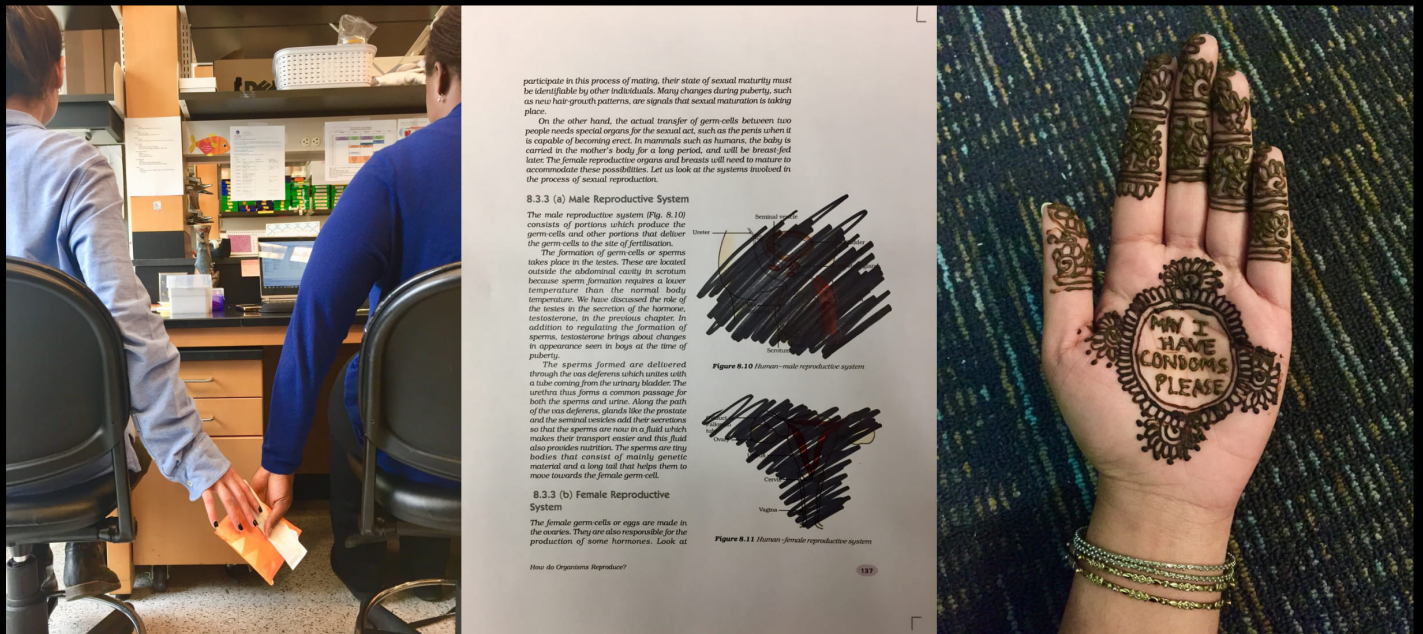


## REPR SCI 406 – SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATION FOR THE PUBLIC

### The Disparity and Consequences of Sex and Reproductive Education in South Asian Countries

For my lay presentation, I want to focus on the gap in sex knowledge and education that is faced by the South Asian population. My project is a photo series intended for social media, highlighting some of the major events that individuals experience as a result of the taboo surrounding sex, menstruation and reproductive health. The accompanying caption is a poem describing growing up with these experiences.



*I was eight years old when the word "period"  
Meant more than just a length of time  
It meant a process, something I should dread  
But I should keep silent  
For talking about it was totally out of line*

*I was ten years old when sex existed as a concept  
Storks don't deliver babies, obviously  
So, when I tried to talk to my mother she said*

*It is when two people in a marriage make love  
But we don't need to be having conversations inappropriately.*

*I was twelve years old when my science textbook  
Included chapter 10, human reproduction  
I flipped the pages in excitement, eager to take a look  
But even anatomical pictures were marred in black ink  
As if that wasn't necessary to my course of instruction.*

*I was sixteen years old, when my grandmother first slapped me  
Her eyes blazing, looking at me like I was no good  
For how I dare I try to wash out my stained panties  
In broad daylight, where any man might see  
The "dirty blood" that signified my tabooed womanhood*

*I am now twenty-three years old  
And I walk into the store and I ask, "may I have a box of condoms please"?  
The look I get is angry, judgmental, cold  
And so, I make my hands visible, adorned in mehendi  
Its patterns of flowers and leaves  
Screaming silently that I am a married woman of this society*

*And that look is replaced by one of ease  
And I am told as I turn to walk away  
"You should really start thinking about babies"  
By a stranger who thinks they mean well  
Discussing my reproductive rights like it is a Friday night soiree.*

*This need only be my past, but for many  
It is what they live through regularly.  
So, go out there and teach however many  
Because learning about reproduction isn't and shouldn't be  
Any less important than Math, English or History.*