sexual scripts are a set of expectations about how we are supposed to act in sexual relationships. You can think about a script in this context the same way you would think about a script for a movie or a play. Just like an actor is expected to read from a script, so too are we as people living in a culture expected to act and behave in certain ways, following the norms established by our society. So in terms of sexual scripts we might think of the expectation in our culture that a man is supposed to want sex all the time and try to initiate sex and that a woman should play hard to get. Of course not everyone follows the script, but we have a sense that this is the expectation and often when people don't follow the script, there is a social sanction. For example, if a young man says he doesn't want to go to a strip club with his friends he might get called a derogatory name. Or, if a woman has multiple sexual partners she might be called a "slut." These sanctions or punishments encourage people to follow the script.

Sexual scripts are "socially constructed" meaning they are created by the society which means that different cultures often have very different scripts. Because these scripts are socially constructed there is no underlying truth to them (they don’t HAVE to be the way they are), but because our culture encourages us to follow these scripts, and rewards us when we do, many/most of us follow “the rules” most of the time. Because sexual scripts are socially constructed they can change over time -- there is no inherent permanence to them.  For example, years ago my grandmother used to tell me that only “loose women” called men, but I don’t think that’s a widely-held belief anymore.

Think about Brad Perry's essay, "Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality: The Lessons Boys Learn (and Don't Learn) About Sexuality and Why a Sex-Positive Rape Prevention Paradigm Can Help Everyone Involved,” Dominique Hill's essay, "(My) Lesbianism Is Not a Fixed Point,” and Eunjung Kim's essay, "How Much Sex is Healthy? The Pleasures of Asexuality.” In what ways did sexual scripts affect each author’s experience of sex, love, and/or romance? Did you identify with anything in their essays? Has your experience of sexuality been influenced by our culture’s sexual scripts? Your essay should be a minimum of 350 words (longer is fine) and discuss at least two of the essays in detail, making specific references to their stories and/or arguments.