Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

PHIL 3342.001

Spring 2016

Philosophy of Love and Sex

MW 5:30 – 6:45
IH 157

http://philosophy.tamucc.edu

Professor:

Don Berkich, Ph.D.

Offices: FC-280
Hours: TBD
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Email: don.berkich@tamucc.edu
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A Note to Students

This course is aimed at a broad range of undergraduate students and requires no prior training in philosophy. It is, however, a decidedly philosophical course: Its focus is entirely on the development of the philosophical and analytical skills necessary for thinking clearly, carefully, and effectively about issues which, burdened as they are by long histories of intense fears and desires, all too rarely receive clear-headed attention. The course is not for titillation. Students who expect otherwise will be sorely disappointed. No one under eighteen years of age is permitted in the course.

Course Description:

This course is a study of the philosophical and ethical dimensions of human social and sexual relationships. Since before Socrates, philosophers have had a keen interest in understanding the personal dimension of human relationships, a dimension which is essential to any sense of human flourishing. Following this long tradition of philosophical inquiry, the course will pursue discussions of these and other questions.
• What is love?
• What is lust?
• What kinds of personal relationships ought a person seek?
• What ethical issues enter into personal relationships?
• How does one make wise decisions about personal relationships?
• Does romantic love require sex? Does sex require romantic love?
• Is lust a vice or a virtue?
• What is ‘natural’ and what is ‘perverse’?
• Why are love and sex so often the targets of social control?

Student Learning Outcomes:

As demonstrated by pre and post-test, students will

1. Learn the names of at least three important philosophers who have written on these topics--e.g., Plato, Augustine, and Frankfurt.
2. Learn the names of at least three important philosophical theories on these topics--e.g., Nozick's Welfare View of Love, Firestone's Mutual Vulnerability View of Love, and Blackburn's Hobbesian Conception of Lust.

Topic Schedule:

Week 1  Introduction, Love in Ancient Philosophy
Week 2  Love in Ancient Philosophy
Week 3  Love in Medieval Philosophy
Week 4  Love in Contemporary Philosophy
Week 5  Love in Contemporary Philosophy
Week 6  Love in Contemporary Philosophy
Week 7  Lust
Week 8  Promiscuity, Exclusivity
Week 9  Monogamy, Polygamy, Adultery, Homosexual Marriage
Week 10 Erotic Entertainment
Week 11 Pornography
Week 12 Prostitution, Sexual Perversion
Week 13 Rape
Week 14 Course Summary

* Tentative, pending class pacing and interest.
Texts:


* Useful but not required--selections from these and other sources will be provided as necessary.

Requirements:

Examinations

There will be a midterm examination due Thursday, 10/17, and a final examination due Wednesday, 12/12. Subject to student suggestions, the examinations will be short- and long-essay format. The examinations will be take-home and will include material from lecture, discussion, guest lecturers, and panel discussions. Students may expect approximately two weeks to work on each examination.

Reading Quizzes

Starting on Tuesday, 9/4, every class will begin with a very brief reading quiz. Each reading quiz will consist of a short-essay (no more than one side of one page, usually much less) answer to a question chosen from three published in advance. Only the best scoring twenty quizzes count towards the course grade. Each quiz is worth up to 25 points as per the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Where were you? We missed you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Um, which reading were you on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nice answer, but which question were you answering?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>There are some serious gaps here, but you're heading in the right direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Good! You've got some of the basics covered, but there is a much better way to put it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Outstanding! Clear, concise, and correct!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies:

The professor assumes that students enrolled in this course are sincere student-scholars. That is, the professor shall treat students with the respect due scholars, and students shall do their best to live up to the standards of scholars. To wit,
Preparation:

Scholars carefully read assignments in advance of class, take notes on their reading, explore specific issues in discussion with fellow scholars, and follow-up class by re-reading portions of the required readings and exploring suggested readings.

Participation:

Scholars are eager to respectfully, openly, and critically discuss arguments and issues raised by the readings. Scholars are adept at following a line of reasoning wherever it may lead. Most importantly, scholars welcome the insights and criticisms of their peers: A scholar understands that it is possible to entertain a proposition without believing it, just as it is possible to present an argument without personally endorsing the argument. Scholars enjoy vigorous deliberations and are always careful to treat fellow scholars with patience and good humor.

Assignments:

Scholars fully immerse themselves in assignments and never assume that an assignment is only legitimate if it will be covered on a test. Scholars are naturally curious and see every assignment as an opportunity to explore new issues, see old issues in new light, and hone their growing skills.

Cheating:

Scholars are very careful to give proper credit and maintain the highest standards of scholarly conduct. Thus, subject to university guidelines, any instance of cheating (including plagiarism) will be vigorously prosecuted.

Attendance:

Scholars always attend class barring serious injury, illness, or disaster. Scholars view class-time as rare and valuable for the thought it evokes and the opportunities it presents. Scholars arrive early for class and never leave class early without obtaining prior approval from the professor. That said, it is important to bear in mind that some of our investigations are of such an extremely sensitive nature even the most sophisticated scholars may find it too uncomfortable for their own personal reasons to attend. Thus scholars are encouraged to make their own decisions about whether to attend on a given day. No questions will be asked. Nevertheless, scholars who miss class are responsible for obtaining class-notes, doing the readings, and fully answering any exam questions derived from class discussion. Make-up reading quizzes will be provided upon request, although the question asked may not be the question chosen in class.

Grading Formula:

There are 1000 points possible as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>25 points each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>200 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>300 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Points =

Sum of the best twenty reading quizzes + Midterm Examination + Final Examination

Course Grade is determined by the following scale:
A 900-1000  
B 800-899  
C 700-799  
D 600-699  
F 000-599  

Additional Notes:

Any change in the above will be announced in class. No change will be made which would be detrimental to the student's grade.

This syllabus is not authoritative. That is, the syllabus on the course website supersedes this syllabus wherever they differ. The professor and the students are only responsible for the syllabus as it appears in its entirety on the website, including the schedule of topics and readings.

Any student missing a due date must provide a documented, acceptable reason according to university guidelines. Students with a proper excuse for missing a due date will be given a reasonable extension.

Students without a proper excuse for missing a due date will lose 20 points per day after the due date.

Required University Note to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on Academic Advising: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on the Grade Appeal Process: Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

By accepting this syllabus the student indicates that the syllabus has been read, all requirements are understood, and all policies are acknowledged.