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?

**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.
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.

*A requirement of the University for accreditation purposes only. A result of the contemptible commodification of education and the corporatization of its institutions. Used as the basis for a pre- and post-test in a facile attempt to demonstrate quality in teaching and learning. Fails to reflect any grasp of the distinction between training and education by presupposing that understanding, discovery, and knowledge can be precisely measured, economized, and thereby controlled. An embarrassing academic fad and an affront to the towering intellects whose investigations we have the privilege of pursuing this semester. As proof, please note the quite deliberate vacuity of the above Student Learning Outcomes.†

† The professor whose course this is has been informed by the administration that the above statement repudiating Student Learning Outcomes is both 'uncivil' and 'sets a poor example for students'. The professor is deeply grateful and takes no small pride in the administration's echoing (albeit unwittingly and however distantly) Meletus' charges against Socrates. Frankly, there can be no greater honor for those who find inspiration in Socrates the gadfly, Socrates the midwife, and, above all, Socrates the self-stinging stingray.

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, 3/21, and a final examination due Wednesday, 5/8. 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 the second week of class, 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 has assumed that students enrolled in this course are sincere student-scholars. That is, the professor shall treat them with the respect due scholars, and, as scholars, they should 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:**

Attendance is mandatory. Scholars are permitted at most two absences during the session for any reason whatsoever without penalty. 30 points will be subtracted from the student’s total points for every unexcused absence over two. Excuses for absences must abide by university policy—specifically, verified medical or family emergency absence. Please note that missing roll call at the beginning of class counts as an absence; plan accordingly.
Screens:

In light of a raft of recent research revealing that screens (watches, phones, tablets, computers, etc.) serve only to distract and obstruct lecture and discussion, no scholar will ever use a screen in class unless directed to do so by the office of student disabilities. Scholars will respectfully excuse themselves from class to attend to emergency calls only. Any student violating this policy will result in that day being taken as an unexcused absence.

Grading Formula:

There are 1000 points possible as follows:

- Reading Quizzes: 25 points each
- Midterm Examination: 200 points
- Final Examination: 300 points

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 as it appears on the course website or as it is distributed in class supersedes this syllabus wherever they differ. The professor and the students are only responsible for the syllabus as it is given in class, 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.

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 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 University Note on Dropping a Class:* I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

*Please note that the professor whose course this is did not write the above note, despite its having been written in the first-person. Whoever it was meant well, no doubt. It is not what this professor would have written.

Required College of Liberal Arts Note on the Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at:

http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

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.

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