

## **PHIL 269: Philosophy of Sex and Love: Course Outline**

1. Title of Course: Philosophy of Sex and Love

2. Catalogue Description:

The course investigates philosophical questions regarding the nature of sex and love, including questions such as: what is sex? What is sexuality? What is love? What kinds of love are possible? What is the proper morality of sexual behavior? Does gender, race, or class influence how we approach these questions? The course will consider these questions from an historical perspective, including philosophical, theological and psychological approaches, and then follow the history of ideas from ancient times into contemporary debates. A focus on the diversity theories and perspectives will be emphasized. Topics to be covered may include marriage, reproduction, casual sex, prostitution, pornography, and homosexuality.

3. Prerequisites: PHIL 110

4. Course Objectives:

The primary course objectives are:

To enable students to use philosophical methods to understand sex and love

To enable students to follow the history of ideas regarding sex and love

To enable students to understand contemporary debates surrounding sex and love in their diversity

To enable students to see the connections between the history of ideas and their contemporary meanings

To enable students to use (abstract, philosophical) theories to analyze contemporary debates

5. Student Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

Define the direct and indirect influence of historical thinkers on contemporary issues

Define and critically discuss major philosophical issues regarding sex and love and their connections to metaphysics, ethics and epistemology

Analyze, explain, and criticize key passages from historical texts regarding the philosophy of sex and love.

Analyze, explain, and criticize key passages from contemporary texts regarding the philosophy of

sex and love.

Define and apply key concepts in the philosophy of sex and love, such as: moral and nonmoral qualities, sexual activity and desire, physical and mental beauty, objectification, respect, monogamy, marriage, adultery, commitment, homosexuality, queer theory, feminist theory, trans-sexuality, conception, consent, prostitution, casual sex, pornography, eros, agape, philia, reciprocity, exclusivity and constancy.

#### 6. Topical Outline of the Course Content:

Week 1. Conceptual framework of philosophy of sex and love, including lectures on ethical theory and applied ethics

Week 2. What is sex? Historical authors: Aristophanes, Augustine, Aquinas, Wollstonecraft

Week 3. What is sex? Contemporary authors: Foucault, Soble, Nussbaum, Mernissi

Week 4. Sexuality-Straight, gay, bi, trans, butch, femme...what does it all mean?

Week 5. Sex with love/Sex without love.

Week 6. What is love? Historical authors: Plato, Freud, James, Wollstonecraft

Week 7. What is love? Contemporary authors: Firestone, Nussbaum,

Week 8. Marriage & Sex

Week 9. Gay marriage

Week 10. Marriage, Love, and Companionship

Week 11. Adultery

Week 12. Sexual Perversion

Week 13. Pornography

Week 14. Sexual harassment and Rape

Week 15. Further issues and Conclusion

#### 7. Guidelines/Suggestions for Teaching Methods and Student Learning Activities:

Teaching methods consist primarily of explanation and discussion of texts. We may watch excerpts from films and documentaries, although the focus of the course is on philosophical analysis. Discussion will consist of explanation of the main ideas of the thinkers, as well as their

relations to other thinkers. Students may be asked to prepare one or two positions regarding a debate on a contemporary issue.

#### 8. Guidelines/Suggestions for Methods of Assessment:

Assessment consists primarily in evaluation of written products. Students may be required to complete regular short writing assignments focused on the week's reading. Students may be required to write perceptive and accurate essays about the views on sexuality and love of some major historical thinkers, contemporary scholars, or a comparison between the two. Students may be required to complete exams in which they accurately define and apply key concepts in the philosophy of sex and love and/or analyze key passages from assigned texts.

#### 9. Suggested Texts:

Ellen K. Feder, Karmen MacKendrick, Sybol S. Cook, *A Passion for Wisdom* (Prentice Hall, 2004).

Alan Soble, *Eros, Agape, and Philia* (Paragon House, 1999).

Alan Soble, *Philosophy of Sex and Love* (Paragon House, 1998)

R. Trevas, A. Zucker, and D. Borchert, *Philosophy of Sex and Love* (Prentice Hall, 1997)

D.P. Verene: *Sexual Love and Western Morality* (Jones and Bartlett, 1995)

#### 10. Bibliography of Supportive Texts and Other Materials

Tullia d' Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*

Augustine, *The City of God*

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*

Wendy Doniger (translator), *Kamasutra*

Andrea Dworkin, *Intercourse*

Michael Eric Dyson, *Open Mike: Reflections on Philosophy, Race, Sex, and Culture*

Friedrich Engels, *On the Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*

Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

Epictetus, "Sex and Self-Denial," *The Discourses and Manual*

Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*

Michel Foucault, *A History of Sexuality*

Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*

Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*

Sarah Hoagland, *Lesbian Ethics*

David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*

Kevin Kamashro, *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality*

Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*

Soren Kierkegaard, *Agape and Eros*

Linda Lemoncheck, *Loose Women, Lecherous Men*  
Fatima Merniss, *Beyond the Veil*  
Stephen Murray, *Islamic Homosexualities*  
Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Philosophical Reflections*  
Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols*  
Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*  
Martha Nussbaum, *Sex, Preference, and Family*  
Ovid, *The Art of Love and Other Poems*  
Christine de Pizan, *City of Ladies*  
Plato, *The Symposium*  
Plato, *The Phaedrus*  
Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*  
Bertrand Russell, *Marriage and Morals*  
Marquis de Sade, *Marquis de Sade*  
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*  
Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love*  
Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai, *Same Sex Love in India*  
Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*