

Winter Semester 2016—Course Syllabus

PHL 369U Philosophy of Sex and Love CRN#43255

Class Time: T, Th 6:40-8:20

Class Location: NH059

Instructor Information: Dr. Elizabeth Scarbrough

Office: NH 057

Email: scar4@pdx.edu

Office Hours: T, Th 5:30-6:30 and by appointment.

Campus Phone: 5-3475 (I do not have voice mail, so please e-mail if you can)

Course Description: In this class we will courageously ask questions concerned with conceptual and ethical aspects of sex and love. What are our preconceived notions, reflective thoughts, hopes, expectations, judgments, biases and inhibitions regarding sex and love in our lives? There is much to explore and discuss. Doing so openly and respectfully is essential to the vitality of this course. Procedurally, the first half of this course will be dedicated to the philosophy of romantic love, split between historical and contemporary readings. (with the first quarter focusing on historical readings and the second quarter focusing on contemporary readings). The second half of the course will focus on the philosophy of sex, with particular attention paid to ethical issues surrounding consent and pornography. A note of caution: this class will involve the description and discussion of sexually explicit material as well as non-normative sexual acts, identities, and bodies. If you cannot approach this material with an open mind, or if it offends you, you should not take this class.

Required Texts:

- (1) *The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love* Ed, Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins, University Press of Kansas
- (2) *Lust (from the Seven Deadly Sins Series)*, Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press
- (3) And various PDFs posted to D2L

Learning Objectives:

- to introduce students to various philosophical reflections concerned with the human experiences of Sex and Love
- to establish an environment where the difficult conversations concerning the responsibilities of sexual and loving relationships can take place
- to question the implications of worldviews that affect the lives of others with social norming judgments
- to critically reflect on one's own opinions, beliefs and actions which are influenced by worldviews
- to learn to read, understand, analyze, and judge the efficacy of complex philosophical arguments
- to develop communication skills in both writing and speech
- to exercise the ability to collaborate with other learners through discourse and group activities

Course Requirements:

- To receive credit for this class, students must complete all of the requirements for the course. If a personal situation arises (such as a health issue or a death in the immediate

family) that conflicts with any of the policies outlined in this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to contact me (the professor) as soon as possible to discuss the problem and possible solutions.

- Incompletes will not be given unless exceptionally extenuating circumstances warrant that I revisit this policy.
- Late assignments will only be accepted with prior consent of the instructor (me).
- I retain the right to raise a grade at my discretion based on a student's effort in the class. I will never lower a final grade below that which is warranted based on the graded completion of the following course requirements:

Grading Scale and Standard:

The final weighted percentages will translate to letter grades as follows:

>93%=A

89.5-92.9%=A-

87.5-89.4%=B+

83-87.4%=B,

79.5-82.9=B-

77.5-79.4%=C+

73-77.4%=C

69.5-72.9%=C-

67.5-69.4%=D+

59.5-67.4%=D

<59.5%=F

A—Superior, thoughtful, and intellectually engaging work is submitted consistently throughout the duration of the semester. Student evidences clear, careful writing and thinking in all elements of the course requirements. Student demonstrates thorough preparation and reflection during every class period.

B—Good, thoughtful work is submitted consistently throughout the semester. Student's work and effort evidences careful writing with few mistakes, frequent participation that indicates preparedness, and thoughtful completion of each of the course requirements.

C—Satisfactory work that meets the requirements is submitted throughout the semester. Student participates occasionally and evidences an adequate understanding of the course material. Student's writing exhibits frequent mistakes and occasionally lacks clarity.

D—Marginally satisfactory work is submitted with frequent errors, lack of clarity or understanding. Failure to participate and attend classes regularly leads to the inability to satisfactorily complete course requirements.

F—Poor work throughout the semester, frequent absences, and a failure to meet all of the course requirements results in a failing grade for the course.

Exams 30%: There will be 2 exams (each worth 15% of the final grade for the course) covering the content read and discussed during the semester. Dates of exams are listed on the schedule. The exams will be short answer and essay. You must complete both exams to pass the course.

Reflective Reading papers 40%: You are required to complete 4 short reflection journal entries (1.5 to 2 page in length double spaced) over the 10-week class. To receive credit—you must complete 2 of these before the midterm exam. Each journal entry must be submitted before the start time for the class in which we discuss the reading. Each journal entry must include four things: (1) a brief synopsis of the main argument/ideas of the reading—not a notational “blow by blow”, but a thoughtfully written explanation of the author's main argument that focuses on what the author argues, not how the author argues; (2) a reflective commentary that involves your thoughts that relate to the reading—e.g., you expand on the ideas, criticize the argument, apply

some of the concepts to something else in your life, etc.; and, (3) at least two questions that you might have regarding the passage. To receive an “A” for the journal entry you must complete all components of the assignment and do so in a thoughtful way.

Attendance and Participation 15%: You are required to attend class sessions. Attendance includes being awake, alert, and prepared. If you have more than 3 unexcused absences, your final grade will be penalized. Attendance includes being prepared with questions. To that end please come to class with two questions written down. These *might be* collected as part of your participation grade. Questions may be purely for clarification, or may be intended to criticize the argument presented. Additionally, there *might be* short “pop quizzes” in class designed to test basic reading comprehension. These will be factored into your attendance grade. Excused absences require documentation and are subject to university standards. Participation is vital to your success in this class. You are being graded on the quality of your contribution to the class.

Group Leadership Project 15%: Everyone in the class must sign up for a slot to be the discussion leader for a particular reading (you may choose a recommended but not required reading as well). As a discussion leader you will prepare ten questions about the reading, and may even want to prepare an activity for the class. Get creative!

Academic Conduct: Cheating on exams or plagiarism in any form will result in penalties ranging from an F in the course to expulsion from the university. It is best if you avoid these avenues altogether when meeting the requirements for the course. The Portland State University student code of conduct and academic integrity will be honored in this classroom. Please see the following link if you are unfamiliar with this code: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>

Information Technology Statement:

Students in this course will be submitting all work via the D2L system. All submitted work must be submitted in .doc format. Failure to submit work in this format will count as a failure to complete the assignment. Should assistance be needed in learning this system, please contact the information technology help desk. It is the student’s responsibility to develop the digital literacy required to successfully complete the assignments online. Ignorance will not excuse a failure to submit work.

Disability Services:

Students in this course shall have access to disability services pursuant to the university disability policy found at: <http://www.pdx.edu/drc/> Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Students with accommodations approved through the DRC are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately at 503-725-4150.

Disability Resource Center
Portland State University
116 Smith Memorial Student Union
1825 SW Broadway
Portland, OR 97201

Phone: (503) 725-4150
Fax: (503) 725-4103
TTY or Relay: (503) 725-6504
<http://www.drc.pdx.edu/>
Email: drc@pdx.edu

Intellectual copyright policy: The lectures, classroom exercises, and materials developed by the instructor are copyrighted by Elizabeth Scarbrough. Unauthorized use of these materials is expressly prohibited.

Course Schedule: *Subject to revision.* Readings will be determined and accessibility will be established well in advance of the course. Any changes will be announced in class. Readings in philosophy are notoriously difficult. Comprehension will require more than one reading.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Week 1: Introduction to the Course / Theorizing Love (Historical Accounts: Plato)

1/5 Plato, *Symposium* (we will read together in class). (link to full copy:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1034793.files/Symposium.pdf>)

We will also read in class “Dear White America” to teach us how to read and listen with love: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/12/24/dear-white-america/?_r=0

1/7 Plato, *Symposium* (finish what we didn’t read in class – in your textbook)

Please also read the foreword and introduction to your textbook:

Forward by Arthur C. Danto (4 pages)

Introduction by Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (8 pages)

Take the sex questionnaire in class.

Week 2: Theorizing Love (Historical Accounts: Plato, Augustine, and Heloise and Abelard)

1/12: Reflections on Plato: Martha Nussbaum “The speech of Alcibiades: A Reading of Plato’s *Symposium*” (textbook)

Recommended but not required:

- Jerome Neu “Plato’s Homoerotic *Symposium*” (textbook)

-Simon Blackburn “Two Problems from Plato” from his book *Lust* (PDF)

1/14 Augustine from “The City of God” (textbook), Heloise and Abelard “Letters” (textbook)

Week 3 Theorizing Love (Moving from Historical to Contemporary Accounts: Schopenhauer, de Beauvoir, and Nozick)

1/19 Arthur Schopenhauer from *World as Will and Idea* (textbook), Simone de Beauvoir selections from *The Second Sex* (textbook)

1/21 Robert Nozick “Love’s Bond” (textbook)

Recommended but not required:

-Noel Merino, “The Problem with “We””: Rethinking Joint Identity in Romantic Love” (PDF)

Week 4: Theorizing Love: Contemporary Accounts

1/26 Annette Baier “Unsafe Loves” (textbook)

Recommended but not required:
-Solomon, “The Virtue of Erotic Love” (textbook)

1/28 J. David Velleman “Love as a Moral Emotion” (PDF)

Week 5: Being a good romantic partner and Midterm

2/2 ONora ONeill “Between Consenting Adults” (PDF)

2/4 MIDTERM EXAM

Week 6: Sex, Lust, and Ignorance

2/9 Simon Blackburn, from *Lust*, Chapters 1, 10,11 , Sex and Body Parts (PDF) Please read myths #1,#2,#4,#6

2/11 “Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance” by Nancy Tuana (JSTOR, PDF) (<http://gapjunctionscience.org/wp-content/uploads/Tuana-Coming-to-Understand-orgasm.pdf>)

Recommended but not required:

- Selections from Adrienne Rich “Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (found here: <http://www.weldd.org/sites/default/files/Compulsory%20Heterosexuality.pdf>)

Week 7: Sex and Consent

2/16 SEP on rape: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-rape/> (access online), “Consent and Sexual Relations” Alan Wertheimer (PDF)

-Make Sure you’ve taken PSU’s “Safe Campus” Module (<http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/safe-campus-module> (access online)

2/18 “Copulemus in Pace: *A Meditation on Rape, Affirmative Consent to Sex, and Sexual Autonomy*” Dan Subotnik (PDF)

-Please read PSU’s Consensual Sex Policy: [http://www.pdx.edu/ogc/sites/www.pdx.edu.ogc/files/Consensual%20Relationship%20Policy%20\(final%205.14.14\).pdf](http://www.pdx.edu/ogc/sites/www.pdx.edu.ogc/files/Consensual%20Relationship%20Policy%20(final%205.14.14).pdf) (access online)

Week 8: Sex and Consent (continued)

2/23 Please read this recent New York Times article about an alleged rape perpetrated by a philosophy professor: (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/25/magazine/the-strange-case-of-anna-stubblefield.html?_r=0)

Suggested:
Susan Brison, “Surviving Sexual Violence” (PDF)

2/25 Lois Pineau, "Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis," *Law and Philosophy* 8 (1989), 217-243. (PDF)

We will watch in class Tony Porter's "A Call To Men" (11 minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=td1PbsV6B80>

Suggested:

Angela Davis, "Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist" (found here:
http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/Rape,%20Racism%20%26%20Myth%20of%20Black%20Rapist_A%20Davis.pdf)

Week 9: Pornography

2/29 Nancy Bauer, "Pornutopia," *n+1* 5 (2007), (PDF)

Recommended but not required:

-What's Wrong with the Female Nude?: A Feminist Perspective on Art and Pornography"
AW Eaton (PDF)

3/3 Nicholas Power, "Cheap Thrills: A Call For More Pornography" (PDF)

Recommended but not required:

-"Exclusivism and Evaluation: Art, Erotica and Pornography" Stephanie Patridge (PDF)

Week 10: Friends with Benefits?

3/8 Bisexual Marriage by Kayley Vernallis (PDF)

Recommended but not required:

-James Conlin "Why Lovers Can't Be Friends"
(https://books.google.com/books?id=v3ObyKvTbJQC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=why+lovers+can+be+friends+james+conlon&source=bl&ots=gqnPyMugG4&sig=P6S5tSQ-1TstQbsPoWle7SDLc2c&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj5pIe4vaHLAuu9GMKHWomDdM4ChDoAQgiMAI#v=onepage&q&f=false_)

-"Love is All Around: My Life as a Married Crip" by Thomas Metz (PDF)

3/10 "On Fucking Around" Raja Halwani

Recommended but not required:

-Selections from Ansari's *Modern Romance*

Final 3/15 at 7:30 PM. If you need to take the final earlier, please speak with Elizabeth before 3/8.

Grades Posted 3/23