

PHIL 2570: Good Sex: The Ethics of Human Sexuality Syllabus

Course Information

Zoom option for class meetings

This is an in-person class, and I plan to be physically in the classroom for each session. If able to do so, students should try to attend in person as well. However, if, for any reason, it would be difficult for a student to attend a given session in person, they are welcome to attend via Zoom (with video turned on). In order to do so, they must email Professor at least one hour prior to the start of class. There is no cap to the number of sessions a student can attend via Zoom; just try to attend in person when possible. Students attending via Zoom will have the same participation responsibilities as other students. Alternatively, students are welcome to just listen in (and watch) to a session via Zoom (prior notice still required) with video off, but attendance credit will not be received. I will do my best to make the quality of instruction for Zoom students meet the same standards as those attending in person, but please know there may be technical issues and challenges to teaching simultaneously in both an in-person and virtual environment.

Credit Hours

This is a three-credit-hour course. This course meets the Course Credit Hours Expectation outlined in the Course Catalog. Students should expect three hours of instruction and "in-class work" in addition to an average of six hours of "out-of-class work." In-class work will include lectures, activities, and discussion. Out-of-class work will include reading assigned texts, watching assigned videos, reviewing course content, completing message board and journal activities, and writing analysis papers.

Course Learning Objectives

- to gain familiarity with diverse ethical perspectives on the nature of good sex and to cultivate a generous-minded and critical approach to understanding them
- to develop one's own well-reasoned understanding of the nature of good sex and to bring that view to bear on concrete issues
- to enhance our ability to engage in respectful and thoughtful dialogue over contentious issues with others who do not share our own assumptions and commitments

Course Description (from the Course Catalog)

This course introduces students to a range of ethical perspectives (religious and non-) on what constitutes good sex, morally speaking. It then brings these

perspectives to bear on a number of issues in the realm of sexual ethics including: homosexuality, casual sex, sex for sale, and abortion.

Course Description (specific to Professor's class section)

In Professor's sections of this course, we will focus on the following issues, each of which comprise one unit of the course. 1) intersectionality and objectification: we will look at issues of gender, how sexualization historically and through popular culture has been tied to objectification and dehumanization of women, and how issues of gender intersect with issues of race, class and disability. 2) embodiment, perversion: we will discuss gender embodiment, including transgender identification, intersexuality, and a science fiction thought experiment about alternative gendered possibilities. We will also consider various sexual practices and values, including promiscuity and monogamy, polyamory and asexuality. And we will look at historical and modern day philosophers and religious figures on the topic of promiscuity. 3) sexual assault and ethical issues beyond consent: we will discuss sexual assault with a particular focus on "rape culture" on college campuses, and we will look at a variety of ethical issues regarding sex, beyond consent, such as sexual coercion and power imbalances among partners. In the course capstone during the final week of the course, we will discuss varieties of love and will be joined by Dr. Andrew Fitz-Gibbon, author of our final assigned text. Note: due to time constraints, there will not be an explicit unit covering abortion, but that topic will be discussed within each unit of the course.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Methods

Required Texts and materials

- Students do not need to purchase any texts for this class. All assigned texts are available via Blackboard.
- During weeks Five and Nine, respectively, students will need to acquire access to the films *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) and *Kinsey* (2004). Both of these films are available on DVD for checkout from Rod Library via course reserve. Alternatively, they can be rented via online streaming sources.
- Students should acquire a notebook designated exclusively for our course; this should be used during class, while reading assigned texts and watching assigned videos, and while outlining analysis papers.

Optional Texts and materials

The following texts are assigned for class but can be accessed as E-books using Rod Library. Some students may elect to purchase physical copies. I have pdf versions of each of these as backups:

- [*Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*](#). bell hooks. South End Press, 2000.
- [*Love as a Guide to Morals*](#). Andrew Fitz-Gibbon. Rodopi, 2012.

Excerpts of the following texts have been assigned for the class. The excerpted versions are available via our Blackboard Learns course site; they do not need to be purchased:

- *Missoula: Rape and The Justice System in a College Town*. Jon Krakauer. Doubleday, 2015.
- *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*. Seventh edition. Halwani, Raja, Alan Soble, Sarah Hoffman, and Jacob M. Held edited. Rowman & Littlefield 2017.
- *The Birthday of the World: And Other Stories*. Ursula K. Le Guin. Harper Reprint Edition, 2003. Originally published 1995.
- *My Body Politic: A Memoir*. Simi Linton. University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*. Eighth edition. Mappes, Thomas A., Jane S. Zembaty, and David DeGrazia edited. McGrawHill, 2012.

Student/Instructor Mutual Reading Pledge

Professor pledges to do his best to make sure the assigned readings and other assigned materials are of manageable length. In return, he asks students to pledge to complete all the readings on time, which means taking all necessary steps to ensure they have firm understandings of the content.

Instructional Methods and Evaluation of Performance

The weighted value of each assignment is as follows and adds up to 100 possible points/percent for the course:

- Unit One
 - Attendance/Participation Weeks 1-5 (2pts per week): **10%**
 - Discussion Boards & Journals 1.1-5 (top 4 = 2.5 points each): **10%**
 - Major Assignment #1: **10%**
- Unit Two
 - Attendance/Participation Weeks 6-9 (2pts per week): **8%**
 - Discussion Boards & Journals 2.1-4 (top 3 = 2.5 points each): **7.5%**
 - Major Assignment #2: **10%**
- Unit Three
 - Attendance/Participation Weeks 10-14 (2pts per week): **10%**
 - Discussion Boards & Journals 3.1-5 (top 4 = 2.5 points each): **10%**
 - Major Assignment #3: **10%**
- Capstone week 15 and final exam session
 - Attendance/Participation Week 15 (2pts per week): **2%**
 - Journal 4.1: **2.5%**
 - Major Assignment #4: Dialogue paper: **10%**

The following is a more detailed overview of each of the major assignment types. Each paper has been assigned a due date on the Course Schedule.

- **Major Assignments 1, 2 and 3: 30%**

At the end of each of the three course units, students will develop an analysis paper or take an in-person exam. In each paper or exam students will analyze the majority of the assigned texts and shared content and make comparisons. The minimum length for each of these papers will be 1250 words for out-of-class papers or slightly shorter for in-person exams. Each

paper/exam will count for 10 points (10%) of the overall course grade. Due dates and prompts are listed on the Course Schedule. Further details about this assignment are available via the "Handout for Major Writing Assignments" (available on Blackboard/ Content/ Course Content).

- **Dialogue Paper: 10%**

At the end of the final week (i.e. "capstone"), students will develop a dialogue paper. The expectations for the dialogue paper will be similar to those of the other Major Writing Assignments, but some unique details about this assignment will be provided prior to the start of the capstone unit of the course. The dialogue paper is worth 10%. Due dates and prompts are listed on the Course Schedule. Further details about this assignment are available via the "Handout for the Dialogue Paper" (this will be made available on Blackboard/ Content/ Course Content prior to week 15).

- **Attendance/Participation: 30%**

During each week of the course, students will be assessed in terms of their attendance and in-class participation. The total score for each week of the course, equally divided between attendance and participation, will be 2% of the overall course grade. Additional details on attendance and participation:

- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. An absence from class will result in a deduction of .5/2 for that week. Attendance will also factor in another way as part of the overall course grade: In borderline cases between two final course grades (e.g. 89%), students who miss two or fewer classes and have active participation records in class will have their final class score rounded up by as much as 1% (2% if excellent).
- Participation will be determined subjectively based on Professor's perception of the quality and consistency of engagement with in-class activities and discussions and attentiveness to class speakers. In general, each student is expected to share substantively during discussion at least once per week. Lack of full participation will result in up to a .5/2 deduction for that week.

- **Journals and Discussion Boards: 30%**

During each week of the course, students will be assigned to complete either discussion board or journal activities (see course schedule). The total score for those activities for each week of the course will be 2.5% of the overall course grade, with each student's lowest weekly activity dropped in each of Units 1, 2, and 3; accordingly, late work on discussion boards and journals will not be accepted. Additional details on discussion boards and journals:

- Discussion board activities: for each of these activities, each student will be required to make one post (250 word, minimum) and one reply (150 word, minimum). During each applicable week, each student will need to make a post to the applicable discussion board and can choose to post to the Tuesday or the Thursday thread. Original posts are due 30 minutes prior to the

start of each session (see course schedule), and each student must write a reply to a post from the thread for which they did not write a post, with the replies due by end of day on the Friday of the relevant week. For general expectations for discussion board activities (including expectations for quotes), please review the "Discussion Boards Rubric" at Blackboard/ Content/ CourseContent/ Discussions&Journals.

- Journal activities: each of these activities will involve pre-class and in-class components over both course sessions for the given week as well as end-of-session reflections. There is a rubric for journals linked within each journal assignment located at Blackboard/ Content/ CourseContent/ Discussions&Journals.

Notes regarding late papers:

Late papers, without advance correspondence, are subject to an immediate 10% score deduction. There is a grace period / deadline extension opportunity for all students related to each paper deadline in cases where the student communicates with Professor prior to the deadline and remains in regular communication.

If a paper is not turned in by the start of the following class session, Professor will work with the student to arrange an in-person 60-minute make-up session in which the student will complete the assignment in a closed-book, closed-note format with a deduction of 25%. Any required make-up assignment must be completed within ten days of the original due date. Late work on journals and discussion boards will not be accepted.

Strategies for Formative Assessment

After Unit One, students will be asked to complete a formative assessment in which they reflect upon how the course is going and provide feedback. This will be completed via a quick survey ("What's going well? What's not going well?"). These reflections will be anonymous and are intended to enable the instructor to better guide students through the learning process for the rest of the semester.

Evaluation Methods

Students will receive a weighted score for each analysis paper at least one week prior to the due date for the next analysis paper. Student scores on weekly attendance/participation and discussion board activities will typically be made available within two weeks of completion (if an exception to that expectation should arise, an explanation will be posted on Blackboard announcements). Individual and total category scores will be posted in the "My Grades" tools link on the Blackboard website. Students are expected to monitor their own grades on Blackboard and save all graded work.

Determination of Grades

Final grades will be reported using the following scale:

Grading scale

92-100%	A	80-82%	B-	68-70%	D+
90-92%	A-	78-80%	C+	62-68%	D
88-90%	B+	72-78%	C	60-62%	D-
82-88%	B	70-72%	C-	< 60%	F

Other Important Course Information

Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Diversity is valued very highly in this course. In our class interactions such as in discussion board activities, we will greatly benefit from our different perspectives and ideas as well as from differences with regards to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, religion and disability. This is particularly the case as we will be focusing on philosophical and religious ideas in our course. It is expected that everyone will be included and be treated with respect.

Professional Email Standards

When emailing Professor, I ask that you use a professional email model.

The professional email model includes use of a subject, a greeting line, and a signature. If you are unsure of whether the person you are addressing will know which course you are in without having to look it up, you should provide the course name and section number as well. Also, keep in mind that Professor typically has many students in four or more courses each semester. Before emailing, depending on the issue, try to find the answer yourself or ask a peer. At that point, of course Professor is very happy to help (I really want you to succeed!). But make sure you write a careful email to make it as easy as possible to respond.

If Professor emails you, he expects a response within two business days; Professor holds to the same standard for responding to students.

Also, during any online interactions associated with this class, please remember to present yourself in a professional manner, such as you plan to do at your job after you begin your career following graduation. Visit [this website](#) for Netiquette tips.

Academic Integrity

To ensure academic integrity and to follow [UNI policies on Student Academic Ethics](#) (see: IV. Academic Ethics Violations), students will not plagiarize, misrepresent, fabricate, or cheat. Unless otherwise instructed and approved by the instructor, students will take quizzes and exams individually, without collaboration with other parties and/or using notes or other texts. Similarly, students will submit work (papers, presentations, and other assessments) that is their own work (in regard to violations of these ethics policies, see: V. Academic Ethics Sanctions). (<https://policies.uni.edu/301>).

For other important UNI Policy statements relevant to our course, please open the "Panther Resources" folder included at the bottom of "Content" on our Blackboard Ultra site.