

# Dowling College PHL 2150 Philosophy of Sex and Love

Spring 2013 01/28-05/13 Online

CRN 22294

Professor Christian Perring, Department of Philosophy.

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Texting: message me at 631-256-7167, always starting your message with PHL 1042 and your name.

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Office Hours: Monday 230-500PM, Tuesday 100-330PM, Wednesday 900-1000AM

DRAFT SYLLABUS : SUBJECT TO REVISION

**Course Description:** A study of the contemporary philosophical debates about sex and love. We will examine how to define sex, the distinction between normal from abnormal sex, sexual identity, sexual exploitation and objectification, sexual consent, the relationship between sex and the meaning of life, the nature of marriage, romance, and the nature of true love.

**Learning outcomes:** Students will be able to:

- Understand and explain the main philosophical issues concerning sex and love.
- Develop sensitivity to the diversity of opinions in different religious and social traditions regarding sex and love.
- Articulate central philosophical themes in contemporary debates about sex and love.
- Develop and justify their own points of view on the philosophy of sex and love.

## Required Textbook:

[The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings.](#) Nicholas Power; Raja Halwani and Alan Soble (Editors). Sixth Edition. Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. [It is essential that you have this edition, and not an earlier edition]

Other readings will available via Blackboard in the Course Documents section

## Requirements:

- Online Tests 20%
- Research Project 5%
- Daily discussion board questions and comments on readings and lectures: 40%
- Paper 35%

**Time Commitment.** Students should expect to spend about 6 hours a week on average doing the work on this course.

**Readings and Related Material.** There will be assigned readings every week, as set out on the syllabus. Students need to do these readings, making an effort to understand them. There will also be supplementary material available to understand the readings: links to material on the

internet, PowerPoint presentations, lecture recordings, and the professor's postings on the Discussion Board. The main expectation is that you understand the assigned readings, and the other material should be used as a way to do that.

**Discussion Board.** Every week students will need to write at least 300 words posting on the discussion forum for that week, in order to achieve a C grade for that week. To get a higher grade, you will need to do more writing and engaging with other students. Doing less than this minimum will result in a D or F grade. If you don't contribute anything at all, then you get a 0 for that week. The deadline for each week's work will be 3AM on the Tuesday morning. After that deadline, the forum will be closed to further contributions from students. This work will be the way in which students demonstrate that they are doing the reading and making an effort. Contributions to the week's forum should make an effort to summarize at least one of the assigned readings in detail, or else raise questions about that reading; these contributions should quote the text with page references. Contributions need to be in grammatical English with correct spelling, and should avoid "text speak." Strong contributions that are especially helpful to other students can get bonus points.

**Online Tests:** There will be regular tests through the semester for you to do online. These will test your understanding of the reading.

**Research Project on Romantic Love.** You need to find

EITHER

- a scholarly discussion of romantic and sexual love: it needs to be an article in a peer reviewed journal or a book by an academic. It can be in any discipline: philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, or literature. It must be at least 8 pages long.

OR ELSE

- A great piece of literature or a collection of great poems (at least 20 pages or 4000 words long).

You will explain the following, in a Discussion Forum posting that is at least 500 words long.

- A. Say what the scholarly or literary work is.
- B. Explain what aspects of the work show that it is scholarly or great literature or poetry.
- C. Say how you found the work.
- D. Give the APA citation for the work.
- E. Summarize the main ideas of the work.
- F. Discuss the ideas and their relevance to philosophy.

**Papers.** Your paper is a major part of your grade. You need to be thinking about it from the start of the semester. Paper topics are listed on Blackboard in the Assignments section. You can only create your own paper topic if you get it approved by me first. Your paper needs to be in APA format. You need to use *scholarly* sources -- you can use the materials in the course syllabus. You can and should use the materials we discuss in class. You can get a good grade (B) if you only those materials and you made a strong argument. If you want to get an A, you have to find at least 2 scholarly sources that were not discussed in class, and you have to discuss them at length in your paper. Your paper must be submitted via Turnitin.com. It must use APA format. The minimum acceptable length is 2000 words -- shorter papers will get a D or an F. If you have never written a philosophy paper, I recommend you search the internet for guides to

writing a philosophy paper and read them carefully. I recommend [Jim Pryor's guidelines](#). I will give you comments on a draft if you want.

**Plagiarism detection and prevention:** All papers should be submitted via Turnitin.com in MS Word or RTF. I will give you information about how to use Turnitin.com. Note that I view any form of academic dishonesty very seriously, and if I find that you have engaged in any significant form of plagiarism or cheating I will fail you in this course and report my action to the Dean of Students.

**Emotional concerns.** Discussing controversial issues in the topics of sex and love can bring up powerful emotions, especially for people with difficult or abusive experiences in their past or for people who are questioning their current beliefs or identity. So it is important that the classroom be a safe and supportive space for everyone in it. If at any point during class you do experience overwhelming emotions, then you are quite free to leave and take some time for yourself.

**Academic and Personal Problems.** If you have problems that cause you to be late with work or to miss a number of classes, please stay in communication by phone, email, or by meeting with me in person. I will be willing to work with you and sort out a way for you to still stay in the class and get a fair grade. If you miss a number of classes or fail to hand in work on time but don't give me any explanation then you risk failing the class. Most people experience some sort of crisis during their college career, and you need to find ways to make sure that such problems don't ruin your college career.

**Final Deadline. May 13 2013. No work will be accepted after this day.**

**Course Outline.** (Subject to change).

<b>Week ending date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading (from the textbook unless otherwise specified)</b>
Feb M 4	<b>The Nature of Romantic Love</b>	Plato, 'Aristophanes' speech' from the Symposium' (Bb) <b>Robert Nozick, "Love's Bond"</b> (Bb) <a href="#">Alexander Moseley. "The Philosophy of Love" (IEP)</a>
M 11		<b>Lawrence Blum, Personal Relationships (2007)</b> <b>Noël Merino, "The Problem with "We": Rethinking Joint Identity in Romantic Love," Journal of Social Philosophy 35 (Spring, 2004): 123-132</b> (Bb)
M 18		RESEARCH PROJECT: The philosophy, history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and literature of romantic and sexual love.
M 25	<b>Objectification and Consent – The Theory</b>	<b>Thomas Mappes. Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using Another Person</b> <b>Howard Klepper. Sexual Exploitation and the Value of Persons</b> Alan Soble. Sexual Use

March M 4		<b>Robin West. The Harms of Consensual Sex</b> <b>Alan Wertheimer. Consent and Sexual Relations</b> <a href="#">The Antioch College Sexual Offense Policy.</a>
M 11		<b>Ann J. Cahill, Why "Derivatization" Is Better Than "Objectification"</b> <b>David Benatar, Two Views of Sexual Ethics: Promiscuity, Pedophilia, and Rape</b>
M 28	<b>Objectification and Consent – Applied Topics</b> Prostitution and Casual Sex	<b>Martha C. Nussbaum, "Whether from Reason or Prejudice": Taking Money for Bodily Services</b> <b>Raja Halwani, On Fucking Around</b>
April M 1	Pornography	<b>Joan Mason-Grant, Pornography as Embodied Practice</b> <b>Nicholas Power, Cheap Thrills: A Call for More Pornography</b>
M 8	Rape and Sexual Violence	Chapter 25: Lois Pineau, Date Rape: A Feminist Analysis Chapter 26: H. E. Baber, How Bad Is Rape?—II Chapter 27: Susan J. Brison, Surviving Sexual Violence
M 15	<b>Analysis and Perversion</b>	Greta Christina. Are We Having Sex Now or What? <b>Thomas Nagel, Sexual Perversion</b> <b>Janice Moulton, Sexual Behavior: Another Position</b> <b>Alan Goldman, Plain Sex</b>
M 22		<b>Chapter 6: Alan Soble, On Jacking Off, Yet Again</b> <b>Chapter 7: Seiriol Morgan, Sex in the Head</b> <b>Chapter 8: John Portmann, Chatting is Not Cheating</b>
M 29	<b>Queer Issues</b>	Chapter 9: Stanley Kurtz, Beyond Gay Marriage: The Road to Polyamory Chapter 10: Cheshire Calhoun, In Defense of Same-Sex Marriage
May M 6		Chapter 11: Claudia Card, Gay Divorce: Thoughts on the Legal Regulation of Marriage Chapter 12: William S. Wilkerson, What Is "Sexual Orientation"? Chapter 13: Kayley Vernallis, Bisexual Marriage
M 13	Wrap Up	Popular Culture: Applying Ideas from the Course

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