Syllabus: Philosophy of Love and Sex (spring/2012)

PHIL 170/CRN 36584 (College Scholars)  
Dr. Bonnie Mann  
MW 10:00-10:50am  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-1:30  
371 PLC  
hmann@uoregon.edu

Course Description
Love and sex are so central to human life that many would argue that our intimate relationships are the key to self-esteem, fulfillment, even happiness itself; in fact, our intimate relationships are probably more important to our sense of well-being than our careers. Yet we spend remarkably little time thinking about love and sex, even as we spend years preparing ourselves for the world of work. In this course you will be ask to reflect on the most intimate sphere of human existence. We will draw on historical, sociological, religious, feminist and philosophical work to shed critical light on a variety of questions, including: What is love exactly? Why do we continually associate love and sex with happiness and pleasure when they often make us so utterly miserable? Is there, or should there be, an ethics of love and sex? What is moral, what is normal, and who gets to decide? What happens to sex when it is associated with “scoring” (the conquest model of sex)? How are our understandings of masculinity and femininity tied in with what we believe about love and sex?

You should come away from this class with a more considered understanding of your own beliefs and values about love and sex, and with habits of thinking that are helpful in real life situations in which either love, or sex, or both, become difficult, delightful, overwhelming, painful, or ethically challenging.

Our readings for the course are drawn from a variety of sources: the commonly recognized texts/thinkers of the western philosophical tradition, Christian thinkers of various time periods, contemporary empirical work, and feminist theorists. If you feel that you cannot benefit by engaging or learn from each of these perspectives, whether or not you agree with them, this is probably not the class for you. We address issues of sexism and sexuality along with questions about the meaning of our erotic existence and the nature of love.

A Special Note
This class requires students to engage with themes that can be highly charged and deeply personal. While no one is required to disclose personal information (except on surveys which are anonymous), many students often do. I expect all participants in the class to handle such disclosures in a respectful and sensitive manner, to refrain from inappropriate humor (though appropriate humor is encouraged), and to work hard to maintain an attitude of openness to experiences or points of view that you do not share.

Course Format/ Pedagogy
We will do some tough philosophical reading, but use that reading to think about our own lives and how we live them. Most class sections will include a lecture and discussion (both small group and whole class). Most lectures will be accompanied by a power point presentation. On Fridays the 2nd hour will be entirely student-led. Unless you have a documented disability that requires such accommodation, please do not ask for lecture notes or power point slides to be made available to you outside of lecture.
A study guide for each unit of the course will be posted on the Blackboard by the Friday before that unit begins. The study guides are designed to help you read carefully and closely and prepare for exams.

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, please let me know right away.

**REQUIREMENTS**

No extra credit will be offered for the course. Please don’t ask.

**Academic Honesty**

It is my practice to assign a grade of F for the course to students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty. For a full description of forms of academic dishonesty, please see “Statement on Academic Honesty” on the Blackboard site for the course.

**Reading**

All readings will be available through the blackboard site for the course. Go to the blackboard site when it is up and look under “readings” Students are expected to print out the readings and bring them to lecture and discussion section each week, having read them closely and carefully.

**Electronics (NOT!)**

Unless you have a documented disability that necessitates the use of electronic devices, please refrain from using laptops, cell phones, blackberries, ipods, ipads, headphones, and any other electronic devices I don’t know the name of yet in class. If you do have a documented disability that makes it important for you to have the technology at hand, just let me know in person.

**Surveys**

At the beginning of each of the four units of the course, you will be asked to complete a survey on Blackboard. Surveys will be available immediately after the class period previous to when the survey is to be completed. Surveys must be completed on the assigned date by midnight to receive credit, with the exception of the first survey, which will be open longer for those who join the class late. The survey results will be presented to you in class. **The surveys can only be accessed through the blackboard site for lecture.**

**Papers**

You will write two papers for this class. I will suggest one or two topics for each paper, but also accept your proposed topics provided they are well-considered and you provide me with a one paragraph description of the topic, why you wish to write on it, and how you think you will proceed to construct a paper on the topic the Friday before the paper is due.

**Attendance/Participation**

Attendance and active participation are required, both in lecture and discussion section. See “grading” below.
GRADING

Surveys 10% of Final Grade
- All surveys completed. Grade A
- 3 surveys completed Grade C
- Fewer than 3 surveys completed Grade F

Papers See Paper Guidelines 20% of Final Grade
- First Paper 20% of Final Grade
- Final Paper 30% of Final Grade

Presentation/Discussion Leadership See Presentation Guidelines 20% of Final Grade

Participation/Attendance 20% of Final Grade
- A - Exceptional: To achieve an A the expectations are that student has near perfect attendance, he/she is recognized as a leader in discussions, is consistently well-prepared and has read carefully beforehand, both contributes to and brings the conversation to a deeper level, without dominating the discussion to such an extent that it inhibits participation by other students.
- B - Very Good. To achieve a B expectations are that the student will have very good attendance (missing no more than two classes without medical or other legitimate excuses). Takes a very active role in discussion and remarks are consistently helpful and on topic, and demonstrate strong preparation.
- C - Good. To achieve a C expectations are that the student will miss have good attendance. Participates in discussions regularly.
- D - Poor. To achieve a D expectations are that the student will attend most classes and participate in discussions sporadically.
- F - Failing. Student misses a lot of classes and has poor discussion participation that shows little evidence of preparation.

*To calculate grades for “participation” I will weigh all of these factors in a holistic manner at the end of the term.*
## Course Calendar

*Philosophy of Love and Sex*  
PHIL 170/CRN 36584 (College Scholars)  
Spring, 2012

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit 1</th>
<th>Love and Sex in the History of Philosophy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td><em>Love and Philosophy</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>M 4/2</td>
<td>Opening Class</td>
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<td>T 4/3</td>
<td>Unit 1 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 4/4</td>
<td>Plato “Symposium” (47 pages) <strong>Guest Lecture by Dr. Peter Warnek</strong></td>
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<td>F 4/6</td>
<td>Plato “Symposium” (continued)</td>
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**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Body and Soul/Man and Woman</th>
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<tr>
<td>M 4/9</td>
<td>Augustine “Confessions” (6 pages) Heloise and Abelard “Letters”(15 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 4/11</td>
<td>Kant “On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime” (20 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 4/13</td>
<td>Wollstonecraft “Introduction” (5 pages) “The Prevailing Opinion” (22 pages)</td>
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**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Love and “The Second Sex”</th>
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<tr>
<td>M 4/16</td>
<td>Beauvoir, “Introduction,” to <em>The Second Sex</em> (15 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 4/18</td>
<td>Merleau-Ponty, “The Body as Object and Mechanistic Physiology” (16 pages)</td>
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**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

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<th>Unit 2</th>
<th>Sex, Conquest and Communication</th>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td><em>Conquest: Sex, Use and Violence</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 4/22</td>
<td>Unit 2 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>M 4/23</td>
<td>Wojtyla (Pope John Paul), “Analysis of the Verb ‘To Use’” (23 pages)</td>
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<td>W 4/25</td>
<td>Katz, excerpts from “The Macho Paradox” (21 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 4/27</td>
<td>Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 33-52 (19 pages)</td>
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**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Communication: Talking through the Paradoxes of Femininity/Masculinity</th>
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<tr>
<td>M 4/30</td>
<td>Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 53-78 (25 pages)</td>
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<td>W 5/2</td>
<td>Bordo, “Gentleman or Beast” (19 pages)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F 5/4</td>
<td>Mann, “Creepers, Flirts, Heroes and Allies: Four Theses on Men and Sexual Harassment”</td>
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**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**
Unit 3  Nature, Normality and Morality

Week 6  Nature, God, Normality and Morality
Sunday  5/6  Unit 3 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.
M 5/7  Aquinas, Thomas “The Purpose of Sex” (5 pages)
   Vatican, “Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics” (10 pages)
   **Paper #1 is due in class today.**
W 5/9  Levin, “Why Homosexuality is Abnormal” (12 pages)
F 5/11  Corvino, “Why Shouldn’t Tommy and Jimmy Have Sex” (14 pages)
   Bradshaw, “Reply to Corvino” (14 pages)

**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

Week 7  Coming Out in a World of Insult
M 5/14  Eribon, “The Shock of Insult” (3 pages)  “To Tell or Not to Tell” (9 pages)
W 5/16  Eribon, “Heterosexual Interpellation” (7 pages)  “Existence Precedes Essence” (6 pages)
F 5/18  Merleau-Ponty, “The Body as Expression, and Speech”

**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

Unit 4  What is the Nature of Love?
Week 8  What is the Nature of Love?
Sunday  5/20  Unit 4 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.
M 5/21  Kollontai, “Make Way for Winged Eros” (16 pages)
W 5/23  Dines, “From the Back Street to Wall Street:  The Big Business of Porn” (12 pages); Dines, “Leaky Images:  How Porn Seeps into Men’s Lives” (20 pages)
F 5/25  Solomon, “The Self in Love” (26 pages)

**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

Week 9  Love, Philosophy and Literature
M 5/28  Memorial Day:  No Class
F 5/27  Marion, “The Silence of Love,” (10 pages)

**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

Week 10  Love, Philosophy and Literature
M 5/30  Marion, “What’s the Use?” (4pages)  “The Erotic Reduction” (7 pages)
W 6/1  Knowledge/Emotion  Nussbaum, “Love’s Knowledge” pp. 261-274 (13 pages)
   Proust (fragment)  “Remembrance of Things Past” (10 pages)
   Beattie, “Learning to Fall” (11 pages)

**Presenters/Discussion Leaders**

Final paper is due finals week, Wednesday, by 5pm, in the Philosophy Department Office.