

COURSE TITLE: Ethics of Christian Marriage and Sexuality
COURSE NUMBER: THST 398
SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MWF 2:00 – 2:50
INSTRUCTOR: Sheilah M. Jones, Ph.D.

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS

Course Description: This course gives students an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way in the intense American discourse on sexual morality and the nature of sexual relationships, marriage and family. Students will explore Christian teachings using primary texts and discuss their meaningfulness in our current cultural context. They will also learn how to articulate their own personal understanding of the attitudes, conditions and choices necessary for “good” sex as they have been informed by rational reflection upon a broad array of Christian moral values as well as their own individual, familial and cultural experiences. In addition, through this study of Christian sexual teaching, students will gain insight into how Christian theologize in general.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Gain a mature understanding of how to read primary and secondary theological texts;
Demonstrate through conversation and writing a knowledge of the assumptions, principles, and norms relating to sex within Christian moral traditions,
Identify and articulate personal moral assumptions and values regarding the human person, sexuality, relationships, marriage, and family,
Demonstrate the ability to work with others to develop social policy on sex and sexual relationships that is respectful of all participants in our pluralistic society,
Hone skills for using research in support of moral reasoning and argumentation.
Hone critical thinking and reading skills

PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND

None

REQUIRED TEXTS

David Schnarch, *Passionate Marriage: Keeping Love & Intimacy Alive in Committed Relationships*. ISBN 978-393-33427-2.

Required Films:

For the Bible Tells Me So, (on reserve at Hannon Library, Second Floor Media Desk)
The Roots of Roe, (on reserve at Hannon Library, Second Floor Media Desk)
The Pill

These required texts are available on LMUConnect and or ERes

Martin Benjamin, “World View,” *Splitting the Difference: Compromise and Integrity in Ethics and Politics*.
Humanae vitae, Paul VI, *On Human Life*, 1968. (**HV**)

Non-Discrimination Against Homosexual Persons, (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), 1989) (**NAHP**)

Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons (CDF, 2003) **CRP**

Margaret Farley, *An Ethic for Same-Sex Relations* (available on ERes)

COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS: Whether one's goal as a student is the minimalist one of merely getting the units and a passing grade or the more exalted one of developing one's character and intellectual skills, the discussion of ethical systems and moral standards is always *a communal enterprise*.

Therefore, students must come to each class prepared, i.e. with texts, essays and other resources complete and in hand. Be prepared at all times to share in the conversation with thoughtful analysis and/or provocative questions. Courtesy and studiousness dictate that you be on time for every session and that you do not leave class until the professor dismisses it.

GRADING: The purpose of assignments is to prepare students to take active part in class discussions and to develop worthwhile content for essays and policy statements. If the assignments are done thoughtfully and thoroughly and on time, there is no reason why every student should not have something worthwhile to say in class and in written work.

Participation:

Moral discernment is as much communal as it is personal; consequently, this course thrives on intelligent and informed conversation. Therefore your attendance and participation in every class session are vital.

You cannot participate fully if you don't know what's going on; so, be prepared for each class by completing readings and written assignments on time and bringing relevant texts to class.

Gratifying and enlightening conversation requires that everyone in the room feel safe, respected, and essential to the group and the discernment process. I expect you to live up to the Lion Code and speak honestly and civilly to your classmates and to me at all times. I promise, of course, to do the same.

Participation also requires that you pay attention only to what is going on in the classroom; so, please **turn off and put out of sight** all electronic devices (other than a computer, if/when allowed) during class-time. (Please see me privately if/when you would like to use a laptop in class.)

Evaluation: (Subject to change before August 29th.)

Midterm Exam	15%
Extended Essays (2@ 12.5% each)	20%
Research/Presentation	20%

Final Exam	15%
Participation	15%
Reading Responses & Quizzes	15%