

# **PHIL 219: Sex & Values [AHD1]**

Fall 2020

3 credit hours

Distance Ed

**Instructor:** Heather Stewart (she/they)

**Office Hours:** Via Zoom, by appointment

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## **Course Description**

Critical studies of the treatment of sex in various moral philosophies, including a survey of classical viewpoints, but emphasizing contemporary writings.

This course satisfies two general education requirements for undergraduate degrees: Arts & Humanities (AH) and U.S. Diversity (D1).

## **Required Texts:**

The following text is required for the course: Raja Halwani et al., *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield).

The textbook is on order from the University bookstore, however, you might be able to find used editions online.

There will be additional reading materials in the form of academic articles, popular media pieces, Op-Eds, podcasts, and/or videos. I will make any supplementary materials (whether required or optional) available to you via the course Blackboard site.

At times, I will post lecture videos to accompany the material. Other times I will post handouts. These will also be made available via the Blackboard site.

Note: On the schedule below, readings taken from the course textbook will be indicated with [PS]. Materials to be found on Blackboard will be indicated with [BB].

## **Course Goals:**

This class is structured so as to give you an introduction to the tools and methods of philosophy, through the lens of a particular topic, namely, sex and values. First and foremost, my aim for the course is to help you cultivate a skillset, which, while helpful in doing philosophy, is transferrable *beyond* philosophy. Such skills include, but are not limited to, careful analysis of arguments, close reading, charitable engagement with different points of view, demonstration of respect for diverse experiences, and written communication.

These philosophical tools are being developed within the context of specific content, namely, an examination of how we, as a particular society, understand sex and sexuality.

As a result of my commitment to including diverse identities, experiences, and perspectives in the course, we will be reading and discussing texts from women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ folks, and people with disabilities as much as possible.

In addition to these more general goals, as a “Cardinal Core” course, Phil 219 will satisfy aims of two CC requirements, Arts and Humanities (AH) and US Diversity (D1).

As an **Arts & Humanities Cardinal Core** requirement, this course is concerned with understanding texts of philosophy. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

- a. Critically evaluate and synthesize texts and other forms of expression in the arts and humanities using primary and/or secondary materials.
- b. Demonstrate an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between (1) social and cultural factors in their historical context and (2) intellectual inquiry and creative expression within Philosophy.
- c. Represent and critically respond to multiple points of view on cultural issues in different historical, social, and/or cultural contexts.
- d. Communicate effectively in speech and writing, paying particular attention to the use of evidence in interpretive arguments, through citation appropriate to the discipline.

**Assessment of these aims:** our readings will include both contemporary sources, as well as contemporary secondary sources that engage with works from the ancient and early modern European traditions. We will discuss conflicting arguments on the moral assessment of various sexual practices. A variety of assignments, including short quizzes, forum discussions, and writing assignments will test each of these skills. Grades will depend on careful reading with high comprehension and critical writing about complex concepts and moral theses.

As a **D1 Cardinal Core** requirement, this course will broaden students' understanding of how the experiences and opportunities of individuals and/or groups in the United States are shaped by the various historical, cultural and social structures and processes of stratification locally or globally. This course centers on the interactions of gender, sex, and sexuality, and the interactions of these categories with other social demographics. Students who satisfy this requirement will demonstrate that they are able to do all of the following:

- e. Identify how historical, social, and cultural structures and processes shape understandings of race, class, and gender and/or their interaction with other social demographics in the US.
- f. Demonstrate understanding of how these structures and processes affect the life experiences and opportunities of individuals and/or groups in the US.
- g. Identify, interpret, and evaluate evidence from different social locations and from multiple points of view.

**Assessment of these aims:** the content of the course involves discussion and written work requiring students to understand the way that sexuality is socially constructed, and how sex and love intersect with dynamics of race, class, gender, and other identity elements that impinge upon us whether we want them to or not. Students will be required to consider the moral aspects of behavior rather than merely revert to stereotypes or assumptions. Course readings and assignments emphasize the contingency of particular social forms including various experiences and expressions of sexuality, sexual identity, and sexual practices, and demand that students assess these practices in light of moral considerations rather than in light of their prevalence here or anywhere.

**Evaluation:** The course will require the following assignments. You will receive particular details about the assignments (e.g., the writing assignments) closer to the assignment dates.

- **Quizzes: 25% (5 at 5% each)**
  - These will be short quizzes (~5-7 questions) covering information from the assigned readings and lecture materials. They will contain questions you should be able to answer

if you have stayed up with the reading. The quizzes are intended to help you remain accountable to the course and on top of the reading schedule.

- **Forum Discussions: 15%**

- Because we are not meeting in person, or otherwise face-to-face, I want to ensure that you have an opportunity to discuss the course content with each other and with me, and to be an active participant in the class. Bearing that in mind, I require regular engagement in forum discussions. This amounts to your “participation” in the course. There will be forums each week for discussion of the readings for that week. It is expected that you engage in the forums by the Friday of each week (the materials for the week are posted on Mondays – this gives you five days to read, think about, and engage with these materials in the forum). Meaningful forum engagement can take many forms – you can post your own questions, critiques, or ideas about a reading, or you might respond to questions or ideas raised by your peers. The hope is that we can maintain as organic of a discussion as possible.

- **Op-Ed: 20%**

- This assignment will require that you write a short piece (600-800 words), intended for a popular audience, about one of the themes, concepts, or controversies discussed in the course. This assignment is designed to allow you to be creative in thinking about the course material. It allows you to think about how you would present or explain the content we are covering in the course to a general audience. It also allows you to take and defend a position, and requires that you present and defend that position with a limited amount of words!

- **Response Papers: 40% (2 at 20% each)**

- You will be required to write two response papers throughout the semester. These are expected to be between 1000 and 1200 words. The response papers have two aims: 1) to demonstrate that you understand the course content, and 2) to allow you to take and defend a position of your own. You can, for example, write a response paper in which you set out a position from one of the papers we've read in the course, and then show why you agree (or disagree) with the author's argument. You might also choose to present two contrasting views we have covered and take a position on which you think is stronger. These assignments are intended to require close reading of courses texts, as well as to enhance your skills in argument analysis and written communication.

You will note that there is no cumulative final exam in this class. It is more interesting and important to me that you remain engaged throughout the course – as opposed to trying to cram for a cumulative exam at the end. I want you to put in your best effort to stay up with the material regularly throughout the semester. The assignment schedule is designed to help you do that.

Note: There will not be an extra credit offered in this course. The expectation is that all students do the same work and meet the same evaluative standards to pass the course.

**Grading:**

A+: 97-100 (4.0)	B+: 87-89 (3.3)	C+: 77-79 (2.3)	D+: 69-67 (1.3)	F: 59 or below (0.0)
A: 93-96 (3.7)	B: 83-86 (3.0)	C: 76-74 (2.0)	D: 66-64 (1.0)	
A-: 90-92 (3.5)	B-: 80-82 (2.7)	C-: 73-70 (1.7)	D-: 63-60 (0.7)	

**Course Expectations:**

- **Sensitivity and Respect:** The content of this course engages with topics that can be deeply personal, or might otherwise be sensitive to yourself or other classmates. It is imperative that you engage all topics in the course with sensitivity and respect. It is not required, nor is it expected, that you will agree with all of the positions represented in the class. That said, you

are required and expected to engage with all positions presented in the course charitably and respectfully.

- **Forum Etiquette:** Throughout the course, you will be expected to engage in discussion with your peers via forum posts. While forum posts are not held to the standard of essay writing, you should still engage professionally. Keep in mind that this is not social media – make sure you are writing in complete sentences and in ways that are accessible to your peers. Moreover, keep in mind that when we are not engaging face to face, some of the context and/or the tone of our comments can be lost in translation. Bearing that in mind, I ask that you try to frame your forum comments in ways that are not likely to be misinterpreted, or otherwise read as, something disrespectful. While I want everyone to feel comfortable raising questions, I also ask that you use judgement about what is appropriate to ask in the forum. If you are unsure about something, do not hesitate to ask me.
- **Email Etiquette:** Conduct all email correspondence with me in a professional manner. Just like the forum, remember that this is not social media – use complete sentences and refrain from using slang. Also, when sending email, be sure to include the course number (PHIL 219) in the email subject line, include an appropriate greeting (e.g., “Dear Prof. Stewart), and sign your name at the end (e.g., so I know who is emailing me!)
- **Engagement:** Though this course is being delivered entirely online, you are expected to engage with the course content, with me, and with your peers on a regular basis. You are expected to keep up with the material, to complete the readings, and to finish and submit assignments by the stated deadline. You will get the most out of this course by staying on top of things and not allowing yourself to fall behind.

### **How to Succeed in this Course:**

I want you to be successful in this course, meaning that I want you to grasp the course content and also master the philosophical skills mentioned above (e.g., argumentation, critical analysis, close reading, written communication). In order for you to be successful in the course, you must remain engaged with the course content. This means watching lecture videos, reviewing outlines, reading all assigned material, and thoughtfully engaging with assignments.

I strongly encourage you to complete the assigned readings *at least twice*: once before reviewing the lecture and/or outlines and again after having done so. I also encourage you to engage in close reading (e.g., annotate the text, make notes, and jot down questions that arise for you while reading). When completing a reading, think critically about the author’s position – do you agree? Do you disagree? Why? Begin thinking through your own position on the given topic, and how you might argue for that position. Actively reading and thinking through the arguments as you go will help you get the most out of the readings.

It is very likely that you will find some of the readings in this course difficult. Again, I encourage you to read them more than once, supplementing with course lectures and outlines to help dissect the material.

Additionally, some of the content of this course might challenge your previously held views, or ask you to consider things outside of your own lived experience. At times, stepping outside of your comfort zone can make you feel defensive, resistant, angry, or even fearful. I ask that you acknowledge these feelings when they arise, and understand that they are part of the process of growing and learning. Changing your mind on something can be uncomfortable, but can be the responsible thing to do in light of new evidence. If anything in the course ever inspires discomfort or dysphoria that goes beyond

this, please do seek out resources with psychological services, or bring this to my attention so I can assist in pointing you toward the appropriate services.

Finally, use me as a resource! I am available to you to discuss the readings, to answer questions, or to explore additional philosophical topics of interest to you. Do not hesitate to ask questions, or to ask for help, whether it be about the course or otherwise. Where I am unable to help directly, I will help point you in the direction of additional resources available to you.

### **University Resources:**

- **Basic Needs Security:** Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students at 852-5787 to learn about available resources and assistance funds, including the [Cardinal Cupboard](#) and the [Bornwasser Student Emergency Fund](#). Furthermore, if you are comfortable notifying me please do so and I will do my best to connect you with whatever resources I can.
- **Writing Center:** The Writing Center (<http://coldfusion.louisville.edu/webs/as/writingcenter/>) has a staff dedicated to assisting you in becoming a better writer. Everyone can benefit from having an additional set of eyes on their writing, and I strongly encourage you to make use of this resource for improving your organization, style, and grammar. Do note that the staff at the writing center are not likely to be experts in the subject matter. In other words, they are not to help you with the content of your essay, though they can be of great assistance in improving your writing about the content.
- **REACH (Resources for Academic Achievement):** REACH and the Learning Resource Center (<http://www.reach.louisville.edu>) provide a variety of academic support programs, including individual and small group tutors, to help you achieve your academic goals. This is an invaluable resource that I strongly encourage you to take advantage of.

### **Other Helpful Resources:**

There are a lot of resources online, but they vary greatly in terms of their quality. If you are looking for supplementary resources on any of our topics, or want to explore topics in philosophy more generally, there are some reliable sites you should look to first:

- **SEP (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy):** <http://plato.stanford.edu/>
- **IEP (The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy):** <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>
- **The UnMute Podcast**
- **Philosophy Bites Podcast**

If there is a particular topic in philosophy you are interested in learning more about, and you would like recommended resources, please feel free to ask! I would be happy to point you in the direction of good source materials.

### **Accessibility and Accommodation:**

The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate and complete requirements for this class, notify me immediately and contact the Disability Resource Center 119 Stevenson Hall, (502) 852-6938, for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations. For more information: <http://louisville.edu/disability/>.

If you need accommodations for this course, please let me know (or, have the Disability Resource Center let me know) about what your needs for the course are *in advance*. It is imperative to do this at the outset. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

**Title IX/Clergy Act Notification:**

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain confidential support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide (<http://louisville.edu/hr/employeerelations/sexual-misconduct-brochure>).

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in this course.

**Diversity:**

The University of Louisville strives to foster and sustain an environment of inclusiveness that empowers us all to achieve our highest potential without fear of prejudice or bias. We commit ourselves to building an exemplary educational community that offers a nurturing and challenging intellectual climate, a respect for the spectrum of human diversity, and a genuine understanding of the many differences – including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, national origin, or military status – that enrich a vibrant metropolitan research university. We expect every member of our academic family to embrace the underlying values of this vision and to demonstrate a strong commitment to attracting, retaining and supporting students, faculty and staff who reflect the diversity of our larger society.” For more information: <http://louisville.edu/diversity/>.

This course aims to reflect a diversity of sexual orientations, identities, and experiences. We will demonstrate maximal respect for sexual diversity in this course, and we will learn from each other’s unique experiences.

**Academic Integrity:**

“Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution and its students and faculty.” For more information: <http://louisville.edu/dos/students/studentrightsandresponsibilities>.

It ought to go without saying that anything you submit for this course (whether formal assignments, forum posts, etc.) needs to be your own work. Anything that you include that are not your original thoughts or your own words needs to be properly cited. If you have any questions about whether something requires citation, it is better to ask me *in advance*. There are serious consequences for plagiarism, and the Dean of Academic Affairs will be notified of any violations of this policy.

## **Course Reading and Assignment Schedule:**

**Note:** This syllabus is intended to serve as our guide through the semester. While I don't anticipate that it will change much, it may be necessary to make changes as we go along. I reserve the right to make such changes as necessary, and I appreciate your flexibility. Should any changes be necessary, I will notify you via Blackboard and circulate a revised syllabus.

<b>Class Number, Topic, + Guiding Questions:</b>	<b>Date Materials Posted By + Other Important Dates:</b>	<b>Readings + Assignment Schedule:</b>
One: What is Philosophy, Anyway? Basic Philosophical Skills	August 17, 2020	Introduction (BB) Syllabus Overview (BB) Some basics on Philosophy – what, why, and how? (BB)
Two: Introduction to the Course: Topics, Aims, & Content Warnings	August 19, 2020	"Introduction: The Analytic Categories of the Philosophy of Sex" (PS)  <b>Optional:</b> SEP Entry, "Sex and Sexuality" (BB)
Three: What is Love (Baby Don't Hurt Me)? What is the Relation Between Love and Sex?	August 24, 2020	Plato, <i>Symposium</i> (BB)  Jeremy Reid, "Plato on Love and Sex" (BB)  Simone de Beauvoir, <i>The Second Sex</i> , excerpts (BB)  Kate Kilpatrick, "Love is a Joint Project" (BB)  <b>Optional:</b> SEP Entry, "Love"  The UnMute Podcast, "Carrie Jenkins On Love and Happiness" (BB)
Four: Love, Romantic and Other	August 31, 2020	Noel Merino, "The Problem with "We": Rethinking Joint Identity in Romantic Love"  Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic, the Erotic as Power" (BB)  Myisha Cherry, "Love, Anger, and Racial Injustice" (BB)  Barrett Emerick, "Love and Resistance"  <b>Quiz 1 due September 2</b>
Five: Relationships, Romantic and Sexual, Part I: Queer Identities, Sexualities, and Relationships	September 7, 2020	Robin Dembroff, "What is Sexual Orientation?" (PS)

		<p>Robin Dembroff and Cat Saint-Croix, “Yep, I’m Gay: Understanding Agential Identity” (BB)</p> <p>Kayley Vernallis, “Bisexuality and Bisexual Marriage” (PS)</p> <p><b>Optional:</b> The UnMute Podcast, “John Corvino on Homosexuality” (BB)</p> <p>Kristen Cochrane, “Why Heteronormativity is a Bad Thing” (BB)</p> <p>Heather Stewart, “This International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, Let’s Come Together to Resist Bi-Erasure” (BB)</p>
Six: Relationships, Romantic and Sexual Part II: Ethical Polyamory & Non-Monogamy	September 14, 2020	<p>Elizabeth Brake, “Is Loving More Better” The Values of Polyamory” (PS)</p> <p>Carrie Jenkins and Jonathan Jenkins Ichikawa, “On Being the Only Ones” (BB)</p> <p><b>Optional:</b> Sean Illing, “A Philosopher Makes the Case for Polyamory” (BB)</p> <p><b>Quiz 2 due September 16</b></p>
Seven: Playing with Power Ethically: Fetishes, Kink, and BDSM	September 21, 2020	<p>Shaun Miller, “BDSM”</p> <p>Sofia Gray, “Kink, Sex and Disability: What You Need to Know” (BB)</p> <p>Mark Hay, “The Pleasure and Pain of Being Disabled in the BDSM Community” (BB)</p> <p>Robin Zheng, “Why Yellow Fever Isn’t Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetishes” (BB)</p> <p><b>Optional:</b> Gigi Engle, “Consent and BDSM: What You Should Know” (BB)</p>
Eight: Flirting and Dating	September 28, 2020	<p>Carrie Jenkins, “The Philosophy of Flirting” (BB)</p> <p>John Portmann, “Chatting is Not Cheating” (PS)</p> <p>Stuart Jeffries, “Is Online Dating Destroying Love?” (BB)</p>

		<p>Cheryl Abbate, “It’s Not Just a Personal Preference: Racialized Discrimination in the Tinder Context” (BB)</p> <p><b>Quiz 3 due September 30</b></p>
	October 5, 2020 <b>Mid-Term Break</b>	<p>Catch up on anything you might have missed, and relax!</p> <p><b>Response paper 1 due October 9 at 11:59 PM</b></p>

Nine: To Wed or Not to Wed, That is the Question: Marriage Debates	October 12, 2020  *Note: October 16, 2020 is the <b>deadline to withdraw</b>	Cheshire Calhoun, “Constructing Lesbians and Gay Men as Family’s Outlaws” (BB)  John Corvino, “Is Gay Marriage a Threat to Traditional Marriage?” Video (BB)  Elizabeth Brake, “Minimal Marriage: What Political Liberalism Implies for Marriage Law” (BB)  Samantha Brennan and Bill Cameron, “Is Marriage Bad for Children?: Rethinking the Connection Between Having Children, Romantic Love, and Marriage.”
Ten: Sex & Sex Acts	October 19, 2020	Greta Christina, “Are We Having Sex Now or What?” (PS)  Alan Goldman, “Plain Sex” (PS)
Eleven: Sexual Pleasure and Desire	October 26, 2020	Nancy Tuana, “Coming to Understand: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance” (BB)  Hildur Kalman, “Faking Orgasms and the Idea of Successful Sexuality” (BB)  Raja Halwani “Racial Sexual Desires” (PS)  Optional: Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion, “WAP,” Video (BB)  Brittney McNamara, “WAP Reaction Shows How Threatened Men Are By Female Sexuality” (BB)  Nathalie Baptiste, “Why Did “WAP” Make Them So Mad?” (BB)

Twelve: Sex Talk and Sexual Negotiation	November 2, 2020  Note: November 3, 2020 is <b>Election Day</b> – don't forget to vote!	Quill (Rebecca) Kukla, "Sex Talks" (BB)  Kristen Roupenian "Cat Person" (BB)
Thirteen: Consent	November 9, 2020	Alan Wertheimer, "Consent and Sexual Relations" (PS)  Adriel Trott, "The Limits of Consent in Sexual Ethics"  Quill (Rebecca) Kukla, "A Nonideal Theory of Sexual Consent" (BB)  <b>Quiz 5 due November 11</b>
Fourteen: Objectification & Harassment	November 16, 2020	Sandra Bartky, <i>Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression</i> , excerpts (BB)  Lina Papadaki, "Sexual Objectification" (PS)  Jennifer Saul, "On Treating Things as People: Objectification, Pornography, and the History of the Vibrator" (BB)  Bonnie Mann, "Creepers, Flirts, Heroes, and Allies: Four Theses on Men and Sexual Harrassment" (BB)  <b>Optional:</b> SEP Entry, "Feminist Perspectives on Objectification"  <b>Op-Ed due November 18 at 11:59 PM</b>
Fifteen: Sexual Violence	November 23  Note: <b>Thanksgiving Break</b> is November 25-29, 2020	Kelly Oliver, <i>Hunting Girls</i> , excerpts (BB)  Heather Stewart, "Why Didn't She Say Something Sooner? Doubt, Denial, Silencing, and the Epistemic Harms of the #MeToo Movement" (BB)  Susan Brison, "Why I Spoke Out About One Rape but Stayed Silent About Another" (BB)  Ann Cahill, <i>Rethinking Rape</i> , excerpts (BB)  Linda Alcoff, <i>Rape and Resistance</i> , excerpts (BB)

Sixteen: Moral Harm, Moral Repair	November 30, 2020  Note: Dec 1, 2020 is the <b>last day of classes.</b>	Quill (Rebecca) Kukla and Cassie Herbert, “Moral Ecologies and the Harms of Sexual Violation” (BB)  Quill Rebecca Kukla and Cassie Herbert, “Sexual Violation and the Language of Repair” (BB)  <b>Response paper 2 due December 4, 11:59 PM.</b>
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**Assignment Deadlines:** Below is a reminder of key deadlines for your various assignments.

September 2: Quiz 1  
 September 16: Quiz 2  
 September 30: Quiz 3  
 October 9: Response paper 1  
 October 21: Quiz 4  
 November 11: Quiz 5  
 November 18: Op-Ed Due  
 December 4: Response paper 2

And remember, you are expected to be engaging in the forums regularly, at least once per week! I will be checking the forums on Fridays.