

SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

TESP 124 *Theology of Marriage*

Spring 2009 Prof. F. J. Parrella

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the course is to explore human relationships, intimacy, commitment, and marriage in the contemporary world from a theological perspective. Three topic areas will be considered: (1) an analysis of our culture in which marriage takes place; (2) a foundational theology of human persons as persons in relation; (3) an understanding of the intimate connection between marriage and the reality of God as the constitutive ground of authentic human intimacy and the source of all of reality as holy and sacramental. The course should enable the student to think critically about relationships and the ultimate commitment to another in marriage from both an academic/critical perspective and a practical/experiential one, that is, as a personal issue that students will confront throughout their lives.

DESIRED LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE COURSE

- (1) Critical Thinking: The ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments.
- (2) Religious Reflection: Questioning and clarifying beliefs through critical inquiry into faith and the religious dimensions of human existence.
- (3) Ethical Reasoning: Drawing on ethical traditions to assess the consequences of individual and institutional decisions.
- (4) Engagement with the World: Perspective Seeking out the experience of different cultures and people, striving to view the world through their eyes.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions (critical thinking, ethical reasoning, engagement with the world).
- Students will be able to evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society (critical thinking, religious reflection).

REQUIRED READINGS

- Pam Houston. "How To Talk To a Hunter." In *The Best Short Stories 1990*, edited by Richard Ford, 99-104. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990. Reprinted from *Quarterly West*; also appears in *Cowboys Are My Weakness*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1992.
- Kieran Scott and Michael Warren, eds. *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, 3rd revised edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007 [1993, 2001].
- Peter Berger. "Marriage and the Construction of Reality." In *Facing Up to Modernity. Excursions Into Society, Religion and Politics*, 5-22. New York: Basic Books, 1977.

- Ernest Becker. "Otto Rank and the Closure of Psychoanalysis on Kierkegaard," in *The Denial of Death*, 159-175. New York: The Free Press, 1973.
- Paul Tillich, "Being and Love," in *Love, Power, and Justice. Ontological Analysis and Ethical Applications*, 18-34. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Rollo May. *Love and Will*, 13-177. New York: W. W. Norton, 1969. Reprint: Delta Books, 1990.
- Martin Buber. *I and Thou*, translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.
- Frederick J. Parrella. "Towards a Spirituality of the Family." *Communio* 9 (1982): 127-141.
- Theodore Mackin. "Marriage as a Sacrament." Unpublished notes, Santa Clara University.
- Gaudium et Spes*. The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. In Walter Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, 249-258, par. 47-52. New York: America/ Guild Press, 1966,
- Paul Tillich. "On Loneliness and Solitude." In *The Eternal Now*, 15-25. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.
- Frederick J. Parrella. *Theology of Marriage: An Introduction*. Unpublished manuscript, Santa Clara University, 2000-2009.
- N. B. Students should bring the course synopsis and the current readings to class every meeting.**

PAPERS

Five (5) papers are required for this course. The primary four papers are to be creative theological essays based on a careful study and analysis of the readings. *In each essay, explicit references to the texts of the readings with footnotes or endnotes in proper form are required. You must reveal to the reader a careful knowledge of the texts in order to receive a good grade.* Put differently, education is about reading comprehension and an intelligent and creative analysis and synthesis of what you have read. Be sure to read the Course Synopsis for some direction with each of the readings.

Frederick J. Parrella's book manuscript, *Theology of Marriage: An Introduction*, may be cited in the papers but the purpose of the manuscript is primarily to explicate the major themes in the course, not serve as a substitute for studying the required texts themselves. *You cannot cite a quoted text from the assigned readings in the Synopsis; instead, you must refer to the original text.* Page number requirements for each paper are minimums, that is, the paper can be longer but not shorter than the assigned length.

Note well: *Be sure to follow the Guidelines for Writing Papers distributed to you.* They will give you advice on writing a well-constructed and grammatically correct essay and instruct you of the proper form for text and footnotes required in *this* course. A student must follow the University of Chicago/ Kate L. Turabian method, **not** the MLA approach as taught in some other Departments.

Since full references are contained in the footnotes or endnotes (either way is acceptable), no bibliography or "works cited" page is necessary. If you are citing the readings from the course packet, the full reference is on the syllabus under the required readings. Be sure to change the form from bibliographical to footnote style (see Writing Guides in your packet.)

• INTRODUCTORY PAPER (NO GRADE, UNLESS NOT SUBMITTED)

A 2 page (maximum) personal reflection paper that answers this question: What am I most afraid of in personal/romantic relationships and why? Papers will be returned to students to be resubmitted with informal reflections at the end of the course. Comment but no grades will appear on the paper.

Due: Tuesday, 7 April, and resubmitted with the final paper on 10 June 2009, with additional comments.

• PAPER ONE

An Essay Exploring Sexual Identity and Gender Stereotyping in Today's Culture

A **four (4) page (minimum)** essay that seeks to answer this question: What does our culture tell us about sexual identity and about behaviors, expectations, and constraints imposed on us by our being male or female? How do these culturally determined views affect your understanding of yourself as a young man or woman and your behavior as such? Do you feel a "tension" between societal, familial, religious expectations inseparable from your gender and your own sense of sexual identity (assuming you can distinguish between the two)? In this essay, you will be expected to write from personal experience as well as to address critically those cultural standards as you see them reflected in your relationships with family and friends, in the media (including television commercials, magazine and Internet ads), popular psychology or self-help books. You will also be expected to draw concluding reflections, however tentative, about sexual identity and gender typing among adolescents and adults, but especially among young adults your age, and the influence your attitude might have on future relationships, marriage, and raising a family.

Sources: Pamela Houston "How To Talk To a Hunter."
From Scott/Warren, *Perspectives on Marriage*; Deborah Tannen, 244-259; Lenore Walker, 276-292; Connell Cowan/Melvyn Kinder, 293-300; Robert Johnson, 222-229; Lawrence Stone, 176-186; Thomas Lickona, 196-206; and any other article from the book you may helpful.

Due: Tuesday, 21 April

• PAPER TWO

An Essay on a Significant Problem of Relationships, Love, Commitment, Sexuality, and/or Marriage in Modern/ Postmodern Culture

A **six (6) page (minimum)** essay that examines one or more of the significant problems of relationships, love, commitment, sexuality, and/or marriage in modern/postmodern culture. Some ideas for topics can be found in the sociological and psychological questions in Part II of the Synopsis. Fashion a topic from your reading and from your experience as well as from your own situation in relationships now. In your paper, be sure to situate the problem you have chosen in the context of contemporary culture. Not all of the following sources have to be used but the wider range of texts used, the stronger and richer the paper.

Sources: Berger, "Marriage and the Construction of Reality."
Becker, "Otto Rank and the Closure of Psychoanalysis..."
May, *Love and Will*, chapters 1-6.
Tillich, "Being and Love."
From Scott/Warren, *Perspectives on Marriage*: Chapters 13 to 19; pages, 161-229.

Due: Tuesday, 12 May

• PAPER THREE

***I and Thou* and Relationships, Commitment, and Marriage**

A **six (6) page (minimum)** essay on Martin Buber's *I and Thou* that interprets relationships and/or marriage in light of Buber's interpersonal philosophy and theology. Your essay should have two parts: first,

the basic approach in the book, that is, an explanation of the meaning of the two basic words of I-Thou and I-It and the nature of the Eternal Thou; second, an application, as practical or theoretical as you would like, of Buber's ideas to both the ideal nature and the concrete reality of relationships and marriage. How would Buber's text help you to choose the "Thou of one's life"? These two parts of the paper need *not* be distinct or separate but it is sometimes easier to structure your essay in this manner. The essential point is to inform the reader that you have mastered the basic insights of Buber's text and have applied them thoughtfully and creatively to relationships and/or marriage. In citing the text of *I and Thou*, be sure you use "Thou," not "You," in your paper.

Sources: *I and Thou*

Any other reading that may assist you, especially *Perspectives*: Margaret Farley, 344-356.

Due: Tuesday, 2 June.

• **PAPER FOUR: CHOICE OF ONE TOPIC:**

(1) A six (6) page (minimum) theological essay on the theological meaning of marriage and the family based on the nature and importance of marriage in a Christian context, its nature as a sacrament of the Catholic Church, and the meaning of the family and a healthy family spirituality. Roman Catholic and Orthodox students are especially encouraged to choose this option.

Sources: Mackin, "Marriage as a Sacrament"

Parrella, "Toward a Spirituality of the Family"

Gaudium et Spes, par. 47-52.

The articles in Scott/Warren, *Perspectives on Marriage: A Reader*, Part I: "Marriage in Historical Perspective," and any articles from the reader you may find helpful.

(2) A six (6) page (minimum) page research essay on any topic you wish to research and discuss concerning relationships, culture, commitment, marriage, parenting, et al. You must choose a book or article from the extensive bibliography in the course packet that is of interest to you or do your own research on the current literature in the field. You may work from any discipline: theology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and history, literature, et al. It may be helpful to connect this paper to your major/minor field of study. Unread chapters of Scott/Warren, *Perspectives*, may also be helpful. One suggestion: if you are not from the Christian tradition or if you are dating someone who is not, develop a paper on multicultural marriage in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, et al. See Scott Warren, *Perspectives*, pp. 429-472.

Note: Please attach a copy of your first un-graded essay with any additional comments you may want to make to your final paper.

Due: Wednesday, 11 June by 5 PM.

NOTE WELL ABOUT PAPERS

On form:

(1) Be sure to number the pages of your paper.

(2) No "works cited" page is required nor is a bibliography necessary. All the information is contained in the footnotes. Learn to do footnotes in the proper manner.

Please read the writing guides.

On deadlines:

(1) The first three papers must be received by the last class of the course for the spring quarter, **Thursday, 4 June 2009**.

Keep in mind: there are deadlines and there are consequences if the student does not submit his/her paper on time. Late papers will be returned with a grade but without comment.

(2) The final paper is due no later than **Wednesday, 10 June 2009, at Noon**.

ATTENDANCE

A student is expected to attend **all** classes and the material covered and announcements are the student's responsibility. There are often reasons a student *cannot* or *does* not attend class. Failure to attend class means that the student will be unfamiliar with the assigned reading material as well as ideas presented and discussed in class for the required papers. This cannot but help have a negative impact upon the student's final grade. Classes are given only once: if you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up to date with the course.

Students who do not attend class on a consistent basis—so that they are known by the professor and other students to be a member of the course in good standing—and who fail to contact the professor with the reason for missing class: if you do not withdraw before the end of the 9th week, you will **not** receive a passing grade or suffer a severe reduction in your grade, whether you submit any work at the end of the term or not.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating can take many forms. Please be aware that if you are caught in a situation of academic dishonesty, you will receive an F in the assignment or the exam. The most common form of cheating is plagiarism. Note carefully: *whenever you use the precise words or even the ideas of another, you must give a complete reference (author, title, city, publisher, date, page number) to your source text either in a footnote or endnote.*

At the same time, it is perfectly legitimate, even desirous, for students to talk over their topics, exchange ideas, and edit each other's papers. This is an important part of the process of learning: sharing your creative ideas with your peers. This presumes that all students collaborating with others both give and receive from such fruitful collaboration.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Please observe the following rules of professional conduct in a class:

- Students should make every effort to arrive at the classroom on time
- Students should be suitably dressed for an academic forum.
- No one is permitted to leave the class without permission of the professor until the class has been dismissed except for a *serious* medical emergency. Restroom facilities are available before and after the class, *not* during the class.
- Please be sure your cell phone is turned off. You would NEVER want your phone to ring in my class.

Thank you.

GRADING POLICY

(1) Grades will be based on two factors: (1) the papers required for the course; (2) class attendance and participation. Papers will be evaluated on the basis of the student's ability: (a) to reveal to the reader

his/her command of the assigned readings in both depth and breadth; (b) to develop a clear and coherent argument of the student's choosing based upon the required readings. *References to the texts—either citations or direct quotations—are essential to a successful grade in all of the papers except the first, personal essay.*

(2) The grade of Incomplete will be given out only under special and unusual circumstances. Any student requesting an "I" must submit a signed copy of the Student Records Office "contract" which contains the reason for the request and the work remaining in the course. For students who receive a grade of *Incomplete*: All work required for the course must be submitted no later than the beginning of the fourth week of the next term. Failure to do so means that the grade will automatically be turned over to an "F" by the Office of Student Records at the beginning of the fifth week. This is your grade for the course. For seniors in the spring term, if you wish to graduate on time, Incompletes must be submitted no more than a few weeks after the end of the course.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Resources located in the Drahnmann Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources before receiving accommodations.

THE PLACE OF THE THIRD COURSE IN THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM

The third course in the Religious Studies curriculum involves the critical engagement of current, open-ended issues in religion

- (1) As the last required course, the third course should model on-going intellectual engagement with difficult questions and issues involving religion as it is currently addressed in the three areas.
- (2) In terms of cognitive development, this course should be organized around problems, issues, or controversies that require students to explore and assess multiple positions and then make intellectually defensible, integrative, and nuanced decisions.
- (3) As the last substantive core curriculum course for most undergraduates, the third course should serve as a "capstone," giving students the opportunity to bring together their core and disciplinary knowledge, their acquired analytic skills, the intellectual challenge of current issues, and the "meta-questions" that will invoke ethical and ontological concerns.

SCHEDULE

This schedule of readings should serve as a guideline for your work. Please follow it as best as you can.
For the week of (Tuesday):

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| 31 March 2009 | Pamela Houston's short story; introductory paper |
| 7 April | From Scott/Warren, <i>Perspectives on Marriage</i> : Deborah Tannen, 244–259; Lenore Walker, 276–292; Connell Cowan/Melvyn Kinder, 293–300; Robert Johnson, 222–229; Lawrence Stone, 176–186; Thomas Lickona, 196–206. |
| 14 April | P. Berger article; E. Becker article |
| 21 April | Becker article; P. Tillich, "Being and Love"; R. May, <i>Love and Will</i> , 13-177. |
| 28 April | P. Tillich, "Being..."; R. May; Scott and Warren selections |
| 5 May | Tillich; May; Scott and Warren selections |
| 12 May | M. Buber, <i>I and Thou</i> |
| 19 May | M. Buber, <i>I and Thou</i> |

26 May Mackin; Parrella; *Gaudium et Spes*; Scott and Warren selections
2 June P. Tillich, "Loneliness..."
9 June Final paper due, Wednesday, 10 June 2009, Noon.

CONSULTATION

My office is in Kenna Hall, Suite 300, Room H. If you wish to consult with me at any time about your papers or any other issue related to the course, please make an appointment after class or by email or phone for a mutually convenient time. You may call me at home on any day of the week with questions you may have. Be sure to leave your telephone number if you reach my voice mail or answering machine. If you leave an email message, expect a brief answer.

Office telephone: 408.554.4714

fparrella@scu.edu

Home telephone: 408.259.8225

A final word: this is a very personal course and you will find it valuable only as far as you apply yourself to the readings, attend class faithfully and participate in the discussion, and submit your papers in a timely manner.

*"When I shall be dead, tell the kingdom of the earth that I
have loved it much more than I have
ever dared to say."*