

Santa Clara University • Summer, 2016
Syllabus
Theology, Sex, and Relationships
TESP 119
100 % ONLINE

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Venue: Please note that Theology, Sex and Relationships is a fully online course.

Who Can Take This Course?

Students can take this course if they have taken a level 3 Religious Studies course. Students must have at least 88 units in order to take a level 3 course.

Students may take this course out of sequence as long as they understand that they are taking it as an elective.

Course Description

The course, Theology, Sex and Relationships, begins by setting up a dialogue between key features of the received wisdom from the Christian Tradition on sexual matters and some aspects of contemporary sexual culture such as uncommitted sex, same-sex relationships, and gender. We will explore the theology, ethics and spirituality of friendship, dating and intimate relationships. Students are invited to raise other related issues of interest.

Tools from the social sciences, especially sociology and psychology are used as analytic lenses. The students are introduced to an aesthetic theology of the beautiful as a means to explore self-identity and discernment in making choices, especially around intimate relationships. The final project is a team creation of an aesthetic theology of sexuality. The theology of sexuality will include sexual ethics and spirituality. The final project is expressed through some artistic medium and its rationale explained in a paper. This project is intended to create interplay between the various course themes. It is intended to express the students' own goals for meaningful, healthy and holy (whole) relationships that reflect our best insights about our deepest human and religious identity.

Course Organization

The course is organized around four main aspects of theology, sex and relationships:

1. Contemporary Culture: an assessment of some current sexual arrangements
2. History: an overview of scriptural sexual ethics
3. Visions of Good and Holy Sex as portrayed in theory and experience
4. An Aesthetic Theology of Sexuality (includes sexual ethics and spirituality) as a guide for our relationships.

Course Methods: The course is interactive and uses readings, discussion forums, short essays, instructor and peer responses, and online resources such as images, articles, websites, etc.

No experience with online courses is needed. If you can send an email, you can quickly learn to navigate the course. Also, technical help with the course is always available.

Logging into the Class

A few days before the class begins, you will be sent via email a "Welcome" letter explaining how to log in to CAMINO, Santa Clara University's online class system. Technical help with the class is available by Michael Gilkison, at: mgilkison@scu.edu 554-6087.

Goals and Objectives for Core Curriculum RTC 3

- Goals: Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Religious Reflection, Perspective
- Objectives -- Students will:
Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions (LO 3.1 Critical Thinking; Ethical Reasoning; Perspective).

Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society (LO 3.2 Critical Thinking; Religious Reflection).

Goals and Objectives for Religious Studies Dept. (Adapted from RS “Description of the Three Levels”)

1. Students engage intellectually with difficult questions and issues involving religion.
2. Students explore and assess multiple positions and make intellectually defensible, integrative, and nuanced decisions about problems, issues, or controversies.
3. Students 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.

(The Departmental goals are embedded in the course goals, given below).

**Goals and Objectives for this course, Theology, Sex and Relationships
Contemporary Culture**

- Realize a limited snapshot of SCU sexual culture through an anonymous online questionnaire of class and non-class students
- Analyze the similarities and differences between the SCU culture and Freitas’ data (Freitas)

History

- Identify and evaluate the primary ethical methods and important methodological shifts in contemporary thinking in the Roman Catholic tradition on sexual matters. (Salzman and Lawler)
 - Identify and evaluate some primary ethical methods in scripture and important shifts in contemporary thinking on sexual matters (Countryman; Bergant)
- (The goals for History support all RTC goals, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Religious Reflection, Perspective; and RTC LO 3.1, Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions).

Visions of Good and Holy (Whole) Sex

- Gain insight into the role of eros in human thriving (Whiteheads)
- Grasp the relational conditions that promote just love and just sex (Farley)
- Explore the possible ways of holiness (wholeness) in sexual intimacy (Ponder Soto)
- Identify the heart of a spirituality in the context of intimacy and relationships
- Critique contemporary sexual arrangements and relationships for those that contribute the most and the least to the ways that we imagine visions of good and holy (whole) sex

(The goals for Visions of Good and Holy (Whole) Sex support all RTC Goals, Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Religious Reflection, Perspective; and RTC LO 3.1, Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions).

An Aesthetic Theology of Sexual Ethics and Spirituality

- Identify the qualities of the “beautiful” in God, oneself, and self-selected art objects (Ingham on Duns Scotus)
- Relate other ethical approaches from class to that of the “beautiful”
- Reflect upon and evaluate student decisions concerning relationships
- Discover modes of discernment for relationships in the theological aesthetics
- Use the qualities of the beautiful for the creation of a sexual ethic and spirituality

(The goals for Visions of Good and Holy Sex support RTC LO 3.2, Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society. (Critical Thinking; Religious Reflection).

Required Texts

Donna Freitas, *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused About Intimacy*. Basic Books, 2013.

James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Holy Eros: Pathways to a Passionate God*. Orbis Books, 2009

Book chapters and articles for required reading will be posted on Camino. Selections that appear on Camino are taken from the Recommended Texts given below, as well as articles from various sources.

Recommended Texts

L. William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today*. Revised Edition, Fortress Press, 2007.

Margaret A. Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*. Continuum, 2006.

Dona Freitas, *Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Mary Beth Ingham, *Scotus for Dunces: An Introduction to the Subtle Doctor*. The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 2003.

Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, *The Sexual Person: Toward A Renewed Catholic Anthropology*. Georgetown University Press, 2008.

Course Requirements

Expectations for Class Membership:

The class is designed to encourage collaboration, dialogue and the exchange of ideas. In order to foster this class environment, please observe the following basic rules of good class behavior:

- Read assigned texts. We cannot have intelligent dialogue if there is no knowledge of the material. Your opinion alone is not sufficient!
- Read all of the posted class discussions. Through our discussion we learn to articulate our own positions and dialogue about sensitive and contentious matters in a positive and helpful way for all parties.
- Be a good team player and do your fair share of the assignment. Report to me if a team member is not doing his or her fair share of work.
- Hand in all required work in a timely manner, including (when requested) each student's contribution to her or his team's work.

Online Netiquette

Through participation in our online course activities we can create a community of learners. An overarching task for the class is to engage with the teacher and with one's classmates as a means of enriching the total learning experience. Our learning will be magnified as we share our own perspectives and cooperate with each other to become more knowledgeable, skilled, compassionate, and integrated persons. The following rules guide our online behavior:

- Be courteous in your online correspondence.
- Disagree or offer a different perspective in a respectful manner. Refrain from all offensive language.
- Honor your classmates' time (and your own!) by posting thoughtful remarks related to the class material.
- Chat on your own time.

Not honoring these rules can result in a lower grade and even dismissal from the class.

Role of the Professor

A student can expect me to:

Clearly explain assignments and my expectations for completion.

Have a grading policy that is clear and fair.

Return submitted work in a timely manner.

Give you written comments on work submitted.

Monitor all online correspondence, but limit my participation in discussion posts to an occasional comment or direction.

Be available for consultation in various online modes within 24 hours, usually sooner.

I encourage you to ask questions and make comments and suggestions!

Important: I reserve the right to change course content and requirements in order to serve the educational needs of the class. Any changes will be made with ample notice and no penalties.

Contacting the Professor

You may e-mail me at any time jpsoto@scu.edu and expect a response within 24 hours, usually sooner.

A phone call or Skype session can also be arranged, usually within 24 hours or sooner, by sending me an email with your contact information and availability.

“CAMINO” and “Canvas”

Canvas is the brand name of our online platform; Camino is the SCU name for this system. Camino is used to communicate instructions and assignments, present some class material, and for students to post assignments and have discussions.

Check to see if your browser is supported at:

<http://guides.instructure.com/m/4214/1/41056-which-browsers-does-canvas-support>

Teams

- Students are grouped by the teacher into teams of 4 or 5 and named for a color or an animal.
- The Team -work assignments are for the Discussion Forum Posts, and the final project, the presentation and paper of “An Aesthetic Theology of Sexuality.
- Teamwork promotes the ability to work with others toward a common goal. It fosters collaboration. In this course the team project has the additional goal of learning how to discuss “hot topics” on which there is often disagreement in an open, thoughtful and respectful way.

For the Team final project team members are required to individually post her or his contributions to the teams work in the Camino space for that purpose.

Please notify me if any team member is not contributing her or his fair share.

Note well: Each student is expected to be a good team player by contributing her or his share of work, by participating in your team’s discussions, and by generally helping your team to do well.

Online Course Structure

Our 5-week class is divided into 5 main topic areas or sessions:

- Week 1--Contemporary Culture and Sex
- Week 2--History and Sex
- Week 3--Visions of Good and Holy Sex
- Week 4--An Aesthetic Theology of Sex
- Week 5--Art to Artful Living – Team Presentations of a “Aesthetic Theology of Sexuality”

Each one- week session is further divided into 2 reading, activity and assignment periods:

- A. Monday --Wednesday, ending at 11:30 pm
- B. Thursday -Saturday ending at 11:30 pm

Opening of Weekly Session

On Sunday the week's session is opened, or revealed to the student on CAMINO.

Please do your best to keep up with the deadlines so that you can move with the flow of the material and class dynamics.

If something prevents you from completing an assignment by the deadline, let me know. I would rather you do the work than get a zero, but late work may be penalized. I leave previous sessions and periods open so that with permission you can back-post if needed.

Overall Course Assignments

The directions, assignments, and activities, for all course assignments are found in the Course Syllabus and further, on CAMINO under the appropriate module. Because of the structure and process of the class, you cannot work ahead, except to read the class texts --which is highly recommended and even necessary!

General class assignments are given below.

Online Written Assignments

People find reading online material more fatiguing than reading hard copy. Thus, online written material is best absorbed when it is kept short and to the point.

Spare writing has the advantage of being a good intellectual discipline: the central insights must be discovered and expressed clearly. This discipline does not preclude elegance of style. Keep your written work short and to the point!

Each Week's assignments generally fall into these types:

- Texts to be read--required reading from class texts, articles, presentations, online articles
- Videos--Links or embedded videos
- Two Discussion Forums:
The first Discussion Forum, "From My Perspective," is a personal reflection, You are invited to use any kind of an image for the personal reflection. If you use an image, please explain how it expresses your thoughts. In order to encourage free expression, the personal reflections are given one point if completed. However, 1 point will be deducted if there is no response.
The second Discussion Forum is a team response to questions posed from class material. Each student is asked to respond twice to the other teams posts.
- One short essay--written in response to questions posed. "Short" is to be taken literally. In general and in the essay assignments in particular, the responses to questions should lean toward precision and an economy of words.
- Note: No Team Discussion Forum or Essay for Week 5 to allow time for the completion of the Team Final Project.

General Module Structure and Due Dates--Additional Assignments may be added

A. Mon-Wed.

Start Date: Mon. am
Post My Perspective Discussion Tues. by 11:30 pm
Post Team Discussion Wed. by 11:30 pm

B. Thurs.-Sat.

Post Individual Responses to Discussion Thurs. by 11:30 pm
Post Essay Sat. by 11:30 pm

The Final Project-- An Aesthetic Theology of Sexuality. The theology expressed in the final project should contain elements of sexual ethics (see/use Countryman, Farley, Frietas), and sexual spirituality (see/use Bergant, C21, Whiteheads, Ponder-Soto) as well as the student's own insights. The final project is an integration of sexual ethics and spirituality that is expressed in the team's art- work and paper.

Guidelines for the Art Work in the Final Project

Due on Week 5 by Friday, 8:pm. Please post no later than 8:pm. The projects will remain open for viewing and comments by the class all day Saturday, till 11:30 pm.

Create or find a work of art in any medium that can be uploaded online. Your creation should be an expression of your Team's vision of good and holy sexuality.

In the Final Project's Short Paper--

- explain your choices of the art and the elements of your vision,
- give 5 references to class material that inspired you,
- show how they relate to your work.
- Peer Review--complete the Final Project by reviewing at least 4 of the other teams' paper and presentation. The Peer Review is your final exam.

In your Final Project's paper the references you cite are the main themes, categories, or insights from our class material. This can include 2 references from student discussions and will count as one reference (cite as such, give class date if possible). Main themes are key or core understandings, or paradigmatic to the subject matter. Citations should include author, title, and page number. Points are deducted if citations are incomplete.

Special Assignment. Ask someone you are interested in for a date and go out with him or her. The date rules will be given to you in Session 2. Obviously this assignment is on the honor system, but I will post a Discussion Forum where you can summarize your experience and post a photo of the date. You must get your date's permission to post his or her photo. Students already in relationships may go out on a date with their boy friend or girl friend. More directions will be given later in Session 2. This is not an optional assignment; you must complete it to pass the course! Email me with your questions and concerns about this assignment.

Rubric for Grading

In addition to points, a letter grade is given at the end of the course. Students also receive written comments on work submitted.

The students' work, with the one exception of individual student responses, will be graded under three aspects--Content, Expression, and Participation.

Points for Content, Expression and Participation are averaged out to yield a total per assignment such as:

5 points as the highest for the Discussion Forums, 4 points as next highest, etc.

10 points as the highest for the Short Essays, 9 points as next highest, etc.

Content: this includes the content of all graded work, meaning the discussions, essays, and Final Project. The work is graded according to the following scale:

Number of Points for Discussion Forums or Essays

Content Skills

DF or Essay

5 or 10	Demonstrates excellence in grasping key concepts; critiques* the work of others; provides ample evidence of support for opinions; readily offers new interpretations of discussion material.
4 or 9	Shows evidence of understanding most of the major concepts; is able to agree or disagree when prompted; is skilled in basic level of support for opinions; offers an occasional divergent viewpoint.
3 or 8	Has mostly shallow grasp of the material; rarely takes a stand on issues; offers inadequate levels of support.
0	Shows no significant understanding of material.

*To "critique" does not necessarily mean, "to criticize." It means to offer a reasoned analysis that could affirm as well as negate.

Number of Points Expression Skills

5 or 10	Student uses complex, grammatically correct sentences on a regular basis; expresses ideas clearly, concisely, cogently, in logical fashion; uses words that demonstrate a high level of vocabulary; has rare misspellings.
4 or 9	Sentences are generally grammatically correct; ideas are readily understood but show signs of disorganization; some transitions between concepts are missing; there are occasional misspellings, especially with homonyms not detected with spelling checks.
3 or 8	Poor use of the language, garbles much of the message; only an occasional idea surfaces clearly; language is disjointed; there is overuse of the simple sentence and repetition of words; paragraphs are often unrelated to each other.
0	Writing is largely unintelligible.

Number of Points Participation Skills

5 or 10	Contributions are prompt, timely, relevant, self-initiated; remarks are posted freely on all assignments throughout the course; there is no attempt to dominate conversation.
4 or 9	Student generally keeps up with the discussion; needs an occasional prompting to contribute; might participate in some discussions more than others.
3 or 8	Participation is spotty; picks and chooses topics to get involved in; offers short, perfunctory postings when prompted; takes limited initiative.
0	Student rarely participates freely; makes short, irrelevant remarks.

Adapted from John F. Bauer, Rebecca S. Anderson, Evaluating Students' Written Performance in the Online Classroom

Please e-mail me with your questions or comments! jpsoto@scu.edu

Grading Policy

The 4 Week Session assignments are worth 85 points

The Final Project is worth a total of 15 points, for a total of 100 points for the 5 Week Course.

The Sessions are graded accordingly:

Discussion Forums 1,3,5,7,9 "From My perspective,"

5 x 1 pts each = 5

Discussion Forums 2,4,6,8,

4 x 5 pts each = 20

Quizzes Sessions 2, 3, 4, 5

4 x 5 pts each = 20

4 Essays

4 x 10 pts each = 40

Final Project Paper accompanying the Art piece

pts= 10

Final Exam Peer Review

pts = 5

100 points