

Philosophy 3820-001: Theories of Sex and Gender

MWF 2:30-2:20

Professor: Arina Pismenny

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 AM-11:30 AM, or by appointment

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**Required text:**

Raja Halwani, Alan Soble, Sarah Hoffman and Jacob M. Held, *The Philosophy of Sex* (2017). **7th Edition**. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. [PS] ISBN:

978-1-4422-6143-3

Additional readings are posted on *Canvas* [CN].

**Course Description:**

This course will provide an introduction to philosophical questions surrounding sex, gender, and sexual orientation. We will address the questions about sexual dimorphism (or polymorphism) at the biological level (female, male, hermaphrodite) and at the cultural level (feminine, masculine, transvestite, trans man, trans woman, intersex, etc....) and the complicated relations between the two (e.g. do transsexuals change sex or do they change gender?) Throughout this process we will attempt to flesh out the issues with definitions of each of these categories, and attempt to zoom in on the kinds of definitions needed for different kinds of inquiry, i.e., metaphysical, scientific, moral and political. While laying out the foundation for understanding these categories, we will also look at social and political issues surrounding them.

**General Objectives of the Course**

At the end of the course, you will be asked to evaluate the course's success at meeting these objectives:

2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, lit, etc.).
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

**Teaching Philosophy:**

My goal is not to convince you that any of the authors in our text have all the answers. It is to help you understand their thoughts so that critical reflection on those thoughts can play a meaningful role in forming your own.

## II. DOING YOUR PART

It's your decision whether or not to remain in this course. If you decide to stay, I would like you to understand this decision as a kind of commitment: a commitment to participate actively in your own learning, to take responsibility for your education, to be an active learner in this course. Philosophy requires a lot of reading, and it is very difficult reading. You will need to devote a significant amount of time to keeping up with the course's reading. You will need to carefully follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus, regularly participate in class discussions, read all the assigned readings very carefully, and seriously prepare for the online quizzes.

## III. HOW YOU AND I WILL MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

Measuring your progress in points will make it easy for you to determine your own grade and progress at any time. The total possible number of points for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the standard point/percentage scale:

**A: 93.0-100; A-: 90.0-92.9; B+: 87.1-89.9; B: 83.0-87.0; B-: 80.0-82.9; C+: 77.1-79.9; C: 73.0-77.0; C-: 70.0-72.9; D+: 67.1-69.9; D: 63.0-67.0; D-: 60-62.9; F: 0.0-59.9.**

### **What do grades mean at USU?**

A is for excellent work.

B is for very good work.

C is for adequate or average work.

D is for below average, inadequate work.

F is for unacceptable work, i.e., work that is not at the college level.

### **Components of Course Grade**

**Canvas quizzes (5): 7 pts/quiz; 35%**

**Group presentation: 10%**

**Midterm paper: 20%**

**Final paper: 25%**

**Attendance: 5%**

**Participation: 5%**

**Total: 100%**

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Homework:** You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials.

**Canvas quizzes:** These quizzes will be taken on Canvas. They are a substitute for exams and therefore will be difficult. You will need to study for them. Study questions will be provided for each quiz. Each quiz will test you on *memorization* and *understanding*. In preparing for the quiz you should study the following: philosophers (who said what), terms and concepts (what do they mean?), theories (what does each theory try to explain, show, state?), arguments (what are the arguments provided in support of each theory?), objections (what are some problems with a given argument, theory, concept?) There will be 6 quizzes with 10 multiple choice questions each. Each quiz will last 45 minutes. You will be given a time window to complete the quizzes (from Friday to Saturday nights). The lowest quiz score will be dropped, and only 5 out of 6 quizzes will count towards your final grade. Each quiz is worth 7% of your final grade, and 35% of your final grade in total. You may go over the correct answers to the quiz on Sundays from 12 am to 11.59 pm.

\**Note* that people have done well on the quizzes when they did not copy the text from the slides, did not take notes verbatim but rather printed out the slides before class and took notes next to the slides.

**Extra credit:** You may earn extra points by attending a philosophy event on campus and submitting a report on it. The extra points will be added to a specific assignment.

**Group assignments:** In the second half of the course, we will devote 25 minutes to group presentations. The group presentation should be on the specified topic, presenting a specific ethical problem relevant to the class topic for that week. The problem should be presented clearly. The group will need to provide arguments as to why this is a problem, and consider objections, and solutions to the said problem. Group members will receive one grade, and, for this reason, are encouraged to work as a *team*. To ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of work, each group member will e-mail me their peer review reports, grading everyone's performance in the group, including one's own. Group presentations are worth 10% of the final grade.

**Midterm and Final Paper:** You are asked to write two thesis papers for this course. The midterm paper should be between 1000 and 1500 words long, and the final paper should be between 1500 and 2000 words on any topic we have covered in class. In it, you will need to take a stand on a philosophical issue and defend your point of you with evidence and arguments. You will need to

demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired in the course. The midterm paper is worth 20% and the final paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

**Late Work** will not be accepted. There will be no make-up quizzes or exams. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to make-up a quiz or paper, the following conditions must be met: (i) the instructor must be notified well in advance, (ii) the student must have a formal written excuse, and (iii) the quiz or paper must be made-up within one calendar week.

**Attendance:** Your presence in class is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. More than **four** absences, for any reason, create an academic problem, which may result in you being dropped from the course. Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 1% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worthy 5% of your final grade.

Please be aware that people who are sleeping in class will be marked absent because it is not enough to be physically present in class. You also have to be conscious.

If you need to leave early, please consult me before class.

**Latenesses** will also affect your attendance record. Two latenesses will count as one absence. If you do arrive late, make sure to notify me at the end of the class that you were here. Otherwise, once marked absent, the attendance record will not be changed.

**Participation:** Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. This will enable me to learn your names. I will be keeping track of each student's participation. Participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

**Note taking:** every student must carry a notebook with them to class. You will need it for writing your reflection journal entries as well as note taking. Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned. You should write down ideas. *You should not be copying the text of the slides, as the slides are available on Canvas, and you are wasting time re-writing them.* Instead, you should be summarizing the material in your own sentences. This is a very good way to learn.

Hand-written notes are superior to typed-up notes because writing notes by hand engages your mind to a much greater extent than typing does. For this reason, I recommend to all of you to write your notes by hand.

**Electronic devices class policy:** Cell phone and smart watch use during class is not allowed for any reason. Please be sure that they are turned off. If you use

your cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave, and attendance points will be subtracted.

You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking *only*. Your use of a laptop or a tablet for note taking during class will be reflected in your record, and you will be required to e-mail me the notes within 15 minutes after class. The notes must be at least 375 words-long. You should put the word count at the top of the document. Otherwise, your use of electronic devices in class is not permitted. In your electronic notes, you **may not** copy the text from the slides.

**Course Evaluations:** at some point during the semester you will be asked by USU to evaluate this course. The procedure will be done online. It is an USU policy that you should e-mail me a confirmation code you will receive after completing the course evaluations. Your participation is mandatory. In evaluating this course, you should refer to the **General Objectives of the Course** on the syllabus.

**Cheating and Plagiarism policy:** If you are cheating on a quiz or exam, you will receive an F on that quiz or exam (no retakes). If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.

Here is **Utah State University's Policy on Academic Honesty**

<<http://catalog.usu.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=3140>>

The University expects that students and faculty alike maintain the highest standards of academic honesty. For the benefit of students who may not be aware of specific standards of the University concerning academic honesty, the following information is quoted from The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University (revised September 2009), Article VI, Section 1:

### **Section 1. University Standard: Academic Integrity**

Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the University by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty and by reporting all violations or suspected violations of the Academic Integrity Standard to their instructors.

**The Honor Pledge**—To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

Violations of the Academic Integrity Standard (academic violations) include, but are not limited to:

1. **Cheating:** (1) using or attempting to use or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any

other academic exercise or activity, including working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done "individually"; (2) depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work; (4) acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission; (5) continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity; (6) submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or (7) engaging in any form of research fraud.

2. **Falsification:** altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.
3. **Plagiarism:** representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

## **Section 2. Reporting Violations of Academic Integrity**

The Academic Integrity Violation Form (AIVF) provides guidance to instructors and students, ensures minimum due process requirements are met, and allows tracking of repeat offenders at the University level. The AIVF is available through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Once an instructor has determined that an academic violation has occurred and that a sanction is appropriate, an AIVF must be submitted prior to application of the sanction. The student may appeal the determination that an academic violation occurred if the AIVF is not filed.

All submitted AIVF forms are kept in the Vice President for Student Affairs Office for the duration of the student's academic career at Utah State University. When a resolution has been reached between the student and instructor, a Resolution Report detailing the action taken and agreement of both parties on that action shall be submitted to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. If no Resolution Report has been filed for a submitted AIVF within the semester, the Campus Judicial Officer will investigate to determine if a solution was reached and why no Resolution Report was filed.

## **Section 3. Discipline Regarding Academic Integrity Violations**

An instructor has full autonomy to evaluate a student's academic performance in a course. If a student commits an academic violation, the instructor may sanction the student. Such sanctions may include: (1) requiring the student to rewrite a paper/assignment or to retake a test/examination; (2) adjusting the student's grade—for either an assignment/test or the course; (3) giving the student a failing grade for the course; or (4) taking actions as appropriate. Additional disciplinary action beyond instructor sanction shall be determined by the Judicial Officer and the University.

The penalty that the University will impose on a student for the first Academic Integrity violation is placement on academic integrity probation after the first offense.

The penalties that the University may impose on a student for multiple or egregious academic integrity violations are:

1. **Probation:** continued participation in an academic program predicated upon the student satisfying certain requirements as specified in a written notice of probation. Probation is for a designated period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary penalties if the student does not comply with the specified requirements or is found to be committing academic integrity violations during the probationary period. The student must request termination of the probation in writing.
2. Performance of community service.
3. **Suspension:** temporary dismissal from an academic program or from the University for a specified time, after which the student is eligible to continue the program or return to the University. Conditions for continuance or readmission may be specified.
4. **Expulsion:** permanent dismissal either from an academic program or from the University.
5. Assigning a designation with a course grade indicating an academic integrity violation involving academic integrity. Conditions for removal may be specified, but the designation remains on the student's transcript for a minimum of one year; provided however, that once the student's degree is posted to the transcript, the designation may not be removed thereafter.
6. Denial or revocation of degrees.

### USU useful links (also posted on CN under 'Pages'):

#### **Canvas:**

<https://usu.instructure.com/>

Canvas help: <<http://guides.instructure.com>> You will also see more help options by clicking "help" in the upper right corner of the Canvas homepage. I

am not qualified to give tech help for Canvas; if you need help, contact MSU's Office of Information Technology: < <https://it.usu.edu/>>

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

<https://www.usu.edu/drc/>

**Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Resources**

<http://aaeo.usu.edu/sexual-misconduct/sexual-assault-resources>

**USU Writing Center**

<https://writing.usu.edu/>

**USU Library**

<https://library.usu.edu/>

**Office of Information Technology (IT)**

<https://it.usu.edu/>

**LGBTQA Center**

<https://accesscenter.usu.edu/lgbtqa/index>

*Philosophy at USU:*

**Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies Department (LPCS)**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/>

**Philosophy Club and Honors Society**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/philosophy/clubs-activities>

**Philosophy Major and Minor Requirements**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/philosophy/WEB%20--%202017%20PHILOSOPHY%20MAJOR%20BA%20BS.pdf>

**Philosophy Scholarships**

<https://lpcs.usu.edu/programs/languages/scholarships/scholarships-and-fellowships>

*Philosophy Research Sources*

**How to write a good philosophy paper:**

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

**The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

**Philosophy Bites Podcast**

<http://philosophybites.libsyn.com>

**Philosophy of TED Talks**

<https://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=philosophy>

## V. COURSE SCHEDULE

Keep tabs on what's required a few days ahead on the schedule so that you can be prepared for due dates.

### Course Outline\* Subject to Change:

**WEEK 1 1/7, 1/9 & 1/11 WELCOME!** Introduction, What is Philosophy? What is Philosophy of Sex and Gender?

**NO CLASS ON 1/7**

**PS:** Chapter 1 – Alan Soble & Raja Halwani, "Introduction: The Analytic Categories of the Philosophy of Sex", Chapter 2 – Greta Christina, "Are We Having Sex Now or What?"

**WEEK 2 1/14, 1/16 & 1/18**

John Maynard Smith & Eörs Szathmáry, "The Origin of Sex" [CN]

Cindy Meston & David M. Buss, "Why Humans Have Sex" [CN]

**WEEK 3 1/23 & 1/25**

**1/21 NO CLASS – Martin Luther King's Day**

Wojtyla, "Periodic Continence" [CN]

Immanuel Kant, "Duties Towards the Body in Respect of Sexual Impulse" and "Crimina Carnis" from *Lectures on Ethics* [CN]

**WEEK 4 1/28, 1/30, & 2/1**

John Finnis, "The Wrong of Homosexuality" [CN]

Burton Leiser, "Homosexuality and the "Unnaturalness Argument" [CN]

**Recommended:** Natural Law article from the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

<https://www.iep.utm.edu/natlaw/>

**Quiz 1 is due on Sunday, 2/3 at 11.59 pm the latest**

**WEEK 5 5 2/4, 2/6, & 2/8**

PS: Thomas Mappes, "Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using Another Person"

Howard Klepper, "Sexual Exploitation and the Value of Persons" [CN]

PS: Alan Wertheimer, "Consent and Sexual Relations"

*Group 1 presentation: sex work*

**WEEK 6 2/11, 2/13, & 2/15**

Stephen Clark, "The Universality of Sex Roles" [CN]

Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna, "The Primacy of Sex Roles" [CN]

*Quiz 2 is due on Sunday, 2/17 at 11.59 pm the latest*

**WEEK 7 2/20 & 2/22**

**2/18 NO CLASS – PRESIDENT'S DAY**

Mary Midgley and Judith Hughes, "Biology, Mere and Otherwise" [CN]

Joan Roughgarden, "Sex and Gender" [CN]

Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes" [CN]

**WEEK 8 2/25, 2/27, & 3/1**

Rebecca Jordan-Young, "Masculine and Feminine Sexuality" from *Brain Storm* [CN]

Michael Kimmel, "Gendering Desire" from *The Gender of Desire*

Simone de Beauvoir, selections from the *Second Sex* [CN]

*Quiz 3 is due on Saturday, 3/2 at 11.59 pm the latest*

*Group 2 presentation: pornography*

**WEEK 9 3/4, 3/6, & 3/8 Guest Lecture: Ronald de Sousa, University of Toronto**

Cordelia Fine, selections from *Delusions of Gender* [CN]

Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* selections [CN]

**Midterm Paper is due on Wednesday, March 13, At 11:59 PM the Latest**

**WEEK 10 3/11, 3/13, 3/15 – NO CLASSES – SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 11 3/18, 3/20, & 3/22**

PS: Chapter 8 – Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans 101"

Jan Morris, from *My Conundrum* [CN]

PS: Chapter 9 – Burkay Ozturk, "The Negotiative Theory of Gender Identity and the Limits of First-Person Authority"

*Quiz 4 is due on Sunday, 3/24 at 11.59 pm the latest*

**WEEK 12 3/25, 3/27, & 3/29**

*Screening Paris is Burning followed by a discussion*

**WEEK 13 4/1, 4/3, & 4/5**

PS: Chapter 19 – Seirion Morgan, “Dark Desires”

PS: Chapter 11 – Raja Halwani, “Racial Sexual Desires”

*Group 3 presentation: sexual desire*

*Quiz 5 is due on Sunday, 4/7 at 11.59 pm the latest*

**WEEK 14 4/8, 4/10, & 4/12**

PS: Chapter 13 – Robin Dembroff, “What is Sexual orientation?”

PS: Chapter 14 – Kim Hall, “Thinking Queerly about sex and sexuality”

*Group 4 presentation: Sex Education*

**WEEK 15 4/15, 4/17, & 4/19**

PS: Chapter 10 – Kayley Vernallis, “Bisexuality and Bisexual Marriage”

PS: Chapter 15 – Kathy Rudy, “LGBTQ...Z?”

Ann Tweedy, "Polyamory as Sexual Orientation" [CN]

*Quiz 6 is due on Sunday, 4/21 at 11.59 pm the latest*

**WEEK 16**

4/22 Summing up

**Final paper is due on Friday, April 26, at 11:59 PM the latest.**

*Good luck!*