

## **PHIL 315 TOPICS IN CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

T/R 130-255

Rangeview 244

Fall 2009

Prof. Kory Schaff

Department of Philosophy

Occidental College

Johnson 303 (x2824)

Office Hours: T/R 1130 - 1

[kschaff@oxy.edu](mailto:kschaff@oxy.edu)

[www.mindchanging.com/philosophy](http://www.mindchanging.com/philosophy)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

*The Concept of Sexuality.* This topics course focuses on the theme of human sexuality. Historically, the ordinary concept of “sexuality” is contested by various ideological interpretations of it. In the Continental tradition these include the psychoanalytic doctrine of Sigmund Freud, the Marxist critique of Herbert Marcuse, and the so-called “post-structuralism” of Michel Foucault. Each of these traditions offers a competing interpretation of the concept “sexuality,” some of which are incompatible, but all of which share key features of the ordinary concept. The goal of this course will be to apply this methodological distinction to several classic texts in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complex phenomena associated with human sexual behavior. In doing so, we shall read, discuss, and critically evaluate the arguments of these texts closely, identifying the various ways in which they presuppose shared features of the ordinary concept of sexuality while offering competing accounts of how we ought to conceptualize and act on human sexuality. Readings from Plato, Freud, Marcuse, Foucault, and Davidson.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1. Plato, *Symposium*
2. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*
3. Hebert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Critique of Freud*
4. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*
5. Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality, Volume 2*
6. Arnold Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts*

The editions and/or translations of required texts can be found in the Occidental College Bookstore (x2630). They are affordable and you must use these editions

since the class stresses close textual reading. Additionally, required and suggested secondary readings will be put on Course Reserves in the Oxy Library. The course reserves link can be found on the website [www.mindchanging.com/philosophy](http://www.mindchanging.com/philosophy), as well as through a search of PHIL 315 or SCHAFF on the Oxy Library's website.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course requires *minimally* completing the following assignments. No email submissions of work done in this course will be accepted. No unstapled papers will be accepted. If a student needs an extension for a given deadline, ask at least 3-4 days ahead of the deadline, not at the last minute by email. No exceptions.

1. (2) Presentations	30 percent
2. (1) Take-home Midterm	30 percent
3. (1) Final Paper	40 percent

1. Each student is responsible for making a **presentation** *at least twice* on the assigned reading. A presentation should reconstruct the arguments of the text accurately, and provide some questions and/or criticism to get class discussion started. The presentation should be 3-4 pp. typed, and its evaluation will be based on these two objectives as well as the student's preparation. **15 percent each.**

2. Each student is responsible for handing in a **take-home midterm**. I will provide the midterm exam prompts at least one week in advance. **30 percent.**

3. The topic of the **final paper** is the responsibility of the student to develop and research. Part of its requirement will be to develop a 1-2 pp. thesis summary of the project that I must approve, which is due November 3 in class. **40 percent.**

Class attendance and participation is expected. There are five basic rules in this classroom: (1) read all assigned material before class, (2) ask questions if you don't understand, (3) participate in the discussion if you have something to say, (4) respect others by directing comments as arguments relating to the text rather than at other students, and (5) turn off your wireless devices.

It is the policy of Occidental College to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you require these accommodations, please see me no later than the second week of class. For information on documentation requirements for these requests, contact the Center for Academic Excellence (x2849).

This syllabus represents a contract. As students you are expected to fulfill your duties in this course, just as the administration, faculty, and students of Occidental College have a right to expect me to fulfill my duties as instructor.

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

Plagiarism is misrepresenting the work of others as your own. Plagiarizing material in this course and academic misconduct more generally will be turned over to the Judicial Examiner. It is standard to receive an “F” for the assignment and/or course for students who commit academic misconduct. There is an Academic Code at Occidental College that can be found at the following link: <http://departments.oxy.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/academic.policies/academic.ethics.html>

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:**

1. 9/1 – 9/11            Plato, *Symposium*
2. 9/15 – 9/29        Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: HOS, Volume 2*
3. 10/1 – 10/15        Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*
4. 10/20                Fall break
5. 10/29                Take-home midterm due in class
6. 10/22 – 11/3        Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*
7. 11/3                 Final paper thesis summary due in class
8. 11/5 – 11/24        Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*
9. 12/1 – 12/9         Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume 1*
10. 12/11              Final Papers due by 5 pm