

**ST. PETER'S SEMINARY/KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
AT WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
FALL 2015**

**THEOLOGY T5243  
THE THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY  
WEDNESDAYS 09:30-12:30**

**PROFESSOR: DR. R. PEREIRA**

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Office hours by appointment.

**A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a theological and pastoral investigation of the meaning of Christian marriage and human sexuality. The course covers the scriptural, historical and theological development of the sacrament of marriage. Included in the semester will be discussions on the theology of the body, heterosexual and homosexual moral concerns, divorce and family life, and new challenges to marriage today. Practical applications of the material covered in class will be stressed.

**B. GOALS**

This course will allow the students to grow in the following knowledge, skills and attitudes;

**KNOWLEDGE:**

1. To understand the Roman Catholic tradition of marriage, its foundation in God's revelation to us in Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and human reasoning regarding God's salvation at work in marriage and family life;
2. To understand the methodology of moral theology as it applies to questions of marriage, human sexuality, and the 21st century, drawing on the four sources: (1) biblical themes of scripture, (2) the historical testimony of the Catholic moral tradition, (3) rational philosophical reasoning, and (4) the influences of modern sciences such as psychology and sociology;
3. To acquaint the student with some of the classical Christian writers dealing with marriage and human sexuality, along with more recent writers;
4. To include other faith-based and secular perspectives important for critical and ethical

dialogue in a secular and pluralistic society;

5. To acquaint the student with some of the more recent theological attempts to articulate or understand marriage and human sexuality;

6. To understand how the action of the Holy Spirit in the world can make it possible for a faith-based position to impact on the secular systems legislating on moral questions;

7. To discuss the “real-world” situation of marriage and sexuality in society and local parishes, so as to make students aware of the sensitivity and understanding required to develop welcoming church communities.

### **SKILLS:**

1. To enable the student to understand the scriptural background and applicability of divine inspiration and revelation pertinent to marriage and sexuality;

2. To expect the student to understand, and for Catholics to be able to accept, the Church's Magisterium as the normative source of teachings on faith and morals, and to appreciate the openness of the tradition to historical development in the understanding of the sacrament of marriage and of the teachings on human sexuality;

3. To enable the students to read and analyze appropriately the documents of Church teaching on marriage and human sexuality;

4. To develop a practical set of prudential and pastoral skills in dealing with people struggling to live up to Church teachings regarding marriage and human sexual encounters;

5. To assist the students to integrate what they have learned by witnessing and using adult modes of education regarding various kinds of lectures, discussions, role-playing scenarios, audio-visuals, written projects and reflective modes of learning.

### **ATTITUDES:**

1. To develop in the student a critical awareness of the present moral climate regarding marriage and human sexuality in order to promote the dignity of the human person, of the human body, of marriage and the family as seen by our Christian and Catholic tradition;

2. To foster a sense of compassion and care for all those who struggle in areas of marriage and divorce as well as various difficulties encountered in living out one's own sexuality;

3. To help the student to embrace and resist when necessary, disagreement and ambiguity in the relationship of the teachings of the church and its application in our modern society;

4. To allow for just and hope-filled approaches in articulating our church teachings in school and pastoral settings regarding human relationships;

5. To encourage an understanding of the sacrificial nature of marriage and human sexuality as lived out with the grace in our often broken world.

## C. ASSESSMENT

### 1. Paper Presentation:

- Value: 20%
- Students will give a presentation and lead a discussion on selected topics.
- Each student will need to prepare a small package for distribution.
- **Topic sign-up is on September 30th**
- **Student-led Discussion Days: November 25th**

### 2. Essay

- Value: 25%
- Due: **November 18th**
- Students will write an essay with the same topic as their presentation.
- The essays are due one week before the student-led discussion class.
- Topic sign-up is on September 30th

### 3. Weekly News Reports

- Value: 15%
- Each week, students will read two news articles about marriage and/or sexuality from mainstream news services (e.g. CNN, Zenit, BBC, Newsweek, London Free Press, etc.). Students have the freedom to choose the articles they want to read.
- Two students each week will give a very brief synopsis of the articles and note how they are relevant to the course at hand.

### 4. Final Exam:

- Value: 40%
- Date: TBA (to be scheduled during the Western exam period).

## D. READING

### Required:

Weekly news articles pertaining to marriage and sexuality.

## **Recommended:**

Carl Anderson and Jose Granados, *Called to Love: Approaching John Paul II's Theology of the Body*, New York: Doubleday, 2009.

Gerald Coleman, *Human Sexuality: An All-Embracing Gift*, New York: Alba House, 1992.

Daniel Hauser, *Marriage and Christian Life: A Theology of Christian Marriage*, Lanham: University Press of America, 2005.

These three books are on course reserve at the A.P. Mahoney Library.

## **E. THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE**

- Topic 1:** Introduction  
Marriage, Sexuality and the Family Today
- Topic 2:** Marriage and Sexuality in the Ancient Middle East  
Marriage and Sexuality in the Hebrew Scriptures
- Topic 3:** Marriage and Sexuality in Greco-Roman Times  
Marriage and Celibacy in the New Testament
- Topic 4:** The History of Marriage and Sexuality
- Topic 5:** Middle Ages to the Modern Period
- Topic 6:** The Sexual Revolution  
Marriage in the Post-Modern Period  
Vatican II  
*Humanae Vitae*
- Topic 7:** *Familiaris Consortio*  
Marriage Breakdown  
Divorced Remarried Catholics  
*"It's just a piece of paper"*: The Rise of Common-Law Relationships

- Topic 8:**        *The Theology of the Body*  
A New Vision for Marriage Preparation
- Topic 9:**        Gender Differences and Cultural Norms  
LGBTQ Orientations  
Same-Sex Marriage
- Topic 10:**       Sexual Encounters Without Love and/or Commitment  
*The Fifty Shades* of Sexual Activities between Consenting Adults  
Self-Pleasure and Pornography  
Violence through Sex (pedophilia and sexual abuse)
- Topic 11:**       Handling Difficult Sexual and Marital Issues in Pastoral Settings

## **F. POLICIES REGARDING SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS**

Students are responsible for knowing the University's academic policies and regulations and any particularities of their own course of study. These can all be found at the University's website (<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>). Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for any violation thereof. The following policies are particularly important to note:

I It is the responsibility of the student to organize his or her work so that the research paper is completed on time. For a serious reason, a student may approach the professor before the due date, and may be granted an extension at the discretion of the professor. Any medical reasons will be confirmed by proper documentation as approved by the Dean's Office. A penalty of 10% of the value of the assignment will be deducted for each day it is overdue without permission.

II **Plagiarism:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt by quotation marks and/or footnotes. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students are required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

III **Selection and Registration of Courses:** Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all prerequisite course(s) have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken.