



Theology 5243A Theology of Marriage and Sexuality

FALL 2013

Online Lessons posted on Wednesdays

Sept. 11th to Dec. 4th, 2012

Instructor: Fr. Peter Amszej

Office hours by appointment (pamszej@hotmail.com)

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a theological and pastoral investigation of the meaning of Christian marriage and human sexuality. It covers the scriptural, historical and theological development of the sacrament of marriage. Also covered are themes including the theology of the body, heterosexual and homosexual moral concerns, divorce and family life, and new challenges to marriage today.

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 investigate more intentionally the recent writings on "The Theology of the Body" of Pope John Paul II.

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 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 through an attitude of "mercy-in-truth";
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 the attitude of Jesus in teaching the Father's will about marriage and human sexuality as lived out with the grace of the Holy Spirit in our often broken world;

C. ASSESSMENT

1.	Ten (10) answers submitted online to questions on weekly reading assignments (each worth 5%)	50%
2.	Research paper and presentation notes on a pastoral situation/question related to marriage and sexuality [due Dec. 4 th]	35%
3.	Final Exam (written "take home" to be submitted online)	15%
TOTAL		100%

Explanation of assignments

#1. These will be written answers of roughly 400-500 words (1.5 to 2 pages) submitted through the university's online learning website: <http://owl.uwo.ca>

#2. A list of suggested pastoral questions/situations will be posted online. The student can choose one of the posted questions or work on another one they propose if it has been approved by the professor. The student must submit a 7 to 8 page research essay along with speaking notes (assuming a 15 to 20 minute talk) that would be used to present their work to a parish or school group. Speaking notes must be geared toward the intended audience. For the more adventurous, a video recording of their presentation may be submitted.

#3. The submission date of final exam will be determined later in the semester. The content of the exam will involve a critique of the presentation of marriage and sexuality in mass media in light of the teaching of our faith.

D. TEXTBOOK (*Required*)

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

The book will be provided free-of-charge to students.

Links to other course readings will be provided online with each lesson.

E. STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Week 1

Sept. 11th – Marriage and Sexuality Today: Challenges of the Cultural Context We Live In

Week 2

Sept. 18th - Marriage and Sexuality in the Old Testament

- 1st online answer due

Week 3

Sept. 25th – Marriage and Sexuality in the New Testament

- 2nd online answer due

Week 4

Oct. 2nd – History of Church Teaching on Marriage & Sexuality: Part I

- 3rd online answer due

Week 5

Oct. 9th – History of Church Teaching on Marriage & Sexuality: Part II

- 4th online answer due

Week 6

Oct. 16th – Marriage Preparation & the Marriage Liturgy

- Challenges of co-habitation, mixed marriages, etc.
- 5th online answer due

Week 7

Oct. 23rd – Divorce, Separation and Re-Marriage; Problems of Pornography

- 6th online answer due

Week 8

Oct. 30th – Theology of the Body: Part I

- Introduction and chapters 1 through 4 of Called to Love textbook
- no online answer due as this is the seminary's Fallow Week

Week 9

Nov. 6th – Theology of the Body: Part II

- Chapters 5 through 7 of Called to Love textbook
- 7th online answer due

Week 10

Nov. 13th – Theology of the Body: Part III

- Chapters 8 through 10 of Called to Love textbook
- 8th online answer due

Week 11

Nov. 20th – Same-sex attraction and same-sex “marriage”

- 9th online answer due

Week 12

Nov. 27th – Responsible Parenthood: Artificial Contraception vs. Natural Family Planning

- 10th online answer due

Week 13

Dec. 4th – The Family: Its Life & Mission

- Research paper and presentation notes due

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 Assignments are due at 10:00 p.m. on the dates as given above. Assignments will not be accepted by the online system after that time.

II 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.

III **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.

IV **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.