

Gay and Lesbian Studies

Philosophy 390: Gay and Lesbian Studies
Spring, 2000 Monday 6:30-9
Mark Chekola Office Hours: M3-4
Bridges 359D T 10:45-12; 2:15-3:30
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Objectives of the Course: We will explore and critique issues related to homosexuality from a philosophical point of view, using the techniques of philosophical analysis and argumentation. It is expected that members of the class will be open in their thought and, given that some of the issues being covered are controversial, respectful of varying points of view.

Texts:

Same Sex, ed. John Corvino
Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism, Suzanne Pharr

Reading packets, available at Copies PlusReadings:

Jan. 24 Introduction. Corvino, "Why Shouldn't Tommy and Jim Have Sex? A Defense of Homosexuality," and Bradshaw, "A Reply to Corvino"; Finnis, "Law, Morality and 'Sexual Orientation,'" (Corvino, pp. 3-43)

Jan. 31 Natural Law Arguments Koppelman, "Homosexual Conduct: a Reply to the New Natural Lawyers"; The Ramsey Colloquium, "The Homosexual Movement"; Williams, "A Reply to the Ramsey Colloquium (Corvino, pp. 44-80.); Nussbaum, "Platonic Love and Colorado Law." (Available at Copies Plus)

Feb. 7 Religion and Homosexuality Helminiak, "The Bible on Homosexuality: Ethically Neutral"; Schmidt, "Romans 1:26-27 and Biblical Sexuality". (Corvino, pp. 81-104.)
Boswell, Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality, Introduction (Reading packet at Copies Plus) *Submit proposed topic for shorter paper

Feb. 14 Science and Homosexuality Byne and Lasco, "The Origins of Sexual Orientation: Possible Biological Contributions"; Bem, "The Exotic-Becomes-Erotic Theory of Sexual Orientation"; Stein, "The Ethical Relevance of Scientific Research on Sexual Orientation". (Corvino, 107-148)

Feb. 21 Science, cont'd Golden, "Diversity and Variability in Women's Sexual Identities," Suppe, "Explaining Homosexuality: Who Cares Anyway?" (Corvino, 149-175.) Kramer, "Bachelor Farmers and Spinsters: Gay and Lesbian Identities and Communities in Rural

North Dakota." (Reading packet at Copies Plus) *1/2 shorter papers due

Feb. 28 Transgender Issues (readings to be announced) *1/2 shorter papers due

March 6 Identity and History Plato, "Aristophanes' Speech from the Symposium"; Boswell, "Revolutions, Universals and Sexual Categories"; Halperin, "Sex Before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens" (Corvino, pp. 179-219.); Card, "Finding My Voice" and "What is Lesbian Culture?" (Reading packet)

*Midterm Exam - last half of class session

Mar. 20 Social Constructionism Hacking, "Making Up People"; Mohr, "The Thing of It Is: Some Problems With Models for the Social Construction of Homosexuality." (Reading packet).

*Topic statements for research papers due

Mar. 27 Identity and History (cont'd) Kennedy and Davis, "The Reproduction of Butch-Fem Roles: A Social Constructionist Approach"; Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War II Era" (Corvino, pp. 220-263)

Apr. 3 Homophobia Pharr, Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism

*Progress reports for papers due Apr 17 due

Apr. 10 Oppression and Self-Oppression" With Downcast Gays"; Bartky, "On Psychological Oppression". (Reading packet) *Progress report for papers due Apr. 24

Apr. 17 Outing Mohr, "The Case for Outing"; Stramel, "Outing, Ethics, and Politics: A Reply to Mohr." (Corvino, pp. 281-288.) Chekola, "Outing, Truth-Telling and the Shame of the Closet" (Reading packet) *Progress report for papers due May 1 *1/3 research papers due

Apr. 24 Public Policy Issues: The Military, etc. Luddy, "Make War, Not Love: The Pentagon's Ban is Wise and Just"; Siegel, "Dry-Cleaning the Troops and Other Matters; A Critique of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell". (Corvino, pp. 267-280). Other readings to be announced.

*1/3 research papers due

May 1 Marriage Knight, "How Domestic Partnerships and 'Gay Marriage' Threaten the Family"; Rauch, "Who Needs Marriage?"; Card, "Against Marriage". (Corvino, pp. 289-330.); other readings to be announced. *1/3 research papers due

May 8 Finale Mohr, "A Gay and Straight Agenda" (Corvino, pp. 331-345)

*Final Exam

Requirements:

1. Exams: a midterm (last half of March 6) and a final (May 8)
2. Shorter paper (5-6 pages) Topics are open with the qualification that they be philosophical and in the area of lesbian and gay studies. (Just a couple of examples: science, psychoanalytic concepts of homosexuality, historical conceptions of homosexuality [e.g., Native American, ancient Greek, etc.], transgender issues, bisexuality, social constructionism/essentialism, lesbian ethics, heterosexism). Topic statement due Feb. 7. Due dates are divided over two weeks. Each person handing in a paper will share a report (no more than 10 minutes) of their paper with the class.
3. Research paper: 10 pages. Directions will be provided later. Due date: staggered - 1/3 of class due Apr. 17; 1/3 April 24; 1/3 May 1. Late penalty (unless you have an unexpected serious problem and work out an extension with me) one letter grade per two calendar days late. In a couple of weeks you'll draw dates from a hat. If you don't like your date you should try to exchange with someone with another date. Statement of proposed paper topic is due Mar. 20; progress reports are to be submitted two weeks before your paper is due. Each person handing in a paper will give a 15-minute report on the paper to the class.
4. Discussion starting: All class members are expected to be prepared for class so that we can have good discussions of the issues and materials we are discussing. Each week 2-3 students will be "discussion starters". That involves getting discussion about a reading going by spending several minutes talking about your reaction to it and issues you think the class ought to discuss.
5. Attendance Attendance will be taken, and can affect grades. If you have good attendance (no more than two absences) and are on the borderline (e.g. A-/B+) at the end of the semester, you'll get the higher grade; otherwise you get the lower. Bad attendance (more than four absences--25% of class meetings) and you'll automatically be dropped a letter grade.
6. Grading: General participation 10%; shorter paper 15%; Research paper 25%; Midterm 25%; Final 25%.