TEXTS:


ON LINE READINGS:

The other daily readings of the course (along with other handouts) are available to all registered students on the BLACKBOARD VISTA site for this course. (see note at the end of syllabus). This is accessible by going to [http://cms.bc.edu](http://cms.bc.edu) See appendix to the syllabus for directions on how to get started. The word “VISTA” after a reading means that it should be up on the class site.

- **QUESTION**: WHAT SHOULD YOU READ FOR EACH CLASS?
- **ANSWER**: For each day of the course readings are divided into three categories:
  
  a) **FOCUS READING** - This is the text or texts that we will concentrate on and you should be prepared to discuss in class.

  b) **CONTEXTUAL READING** - These are texts that supply relevant ideas or concepts to which we will have reference in class. They are not “required” but students will find them supplying useful theological or psychological context and will generally find them helpful in understanding in more depth the material discussed in class.

  c) **BACKGROUND / ENRICHMENT READING** - These are texts which provide other perspective, amplifying reflections or are other wise interesting additional perspectives on the work of
the course. There is no expectation that they be read this week, but are meant to be read for pleasure, at leisure and MAY also prove relevant for your final paper project.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE

I. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

- Everyone taking the course will be assigned based on common interests, focus of ministry, or personal preference into a three or four person reflection group which will meet for some part of each class to discuss the readings or some focus topic. Groups may also elect to meet outside the class to prepare assignments or discuss material of interest. Participation in these groups is not optional - no bystanders to the game.

- In order to make an intelligent and informed contribution to the class discussion, but particularly in one’s reflection group, it is asked that everyone, even auditors, spend some time reading and reflecting on focus assignment. Auditors, however, are not required to do any formal written work as part of their preparation, though many may find it helpful simply as a way of organizing and clarifying their thought.

II. WRITTEN WORK

For Credit Students:

- **Four Short Reflection Papers** (1 – 2 pages max) based on questions which will be provided by the instructor daily for the first week only. These will be collected, read and returned within a day or two days of submission. at the end of the first week (Friday July 12th), but not graded, though they must reflect satisfactory care and thought. An “A” for this portion of the course requires that all assignments be done satisfactorily. ½ letter grade off for each missing assignment. (301% of grade)

- **Final Integrative Essay** - due Friday August 5th or Monday August 8th, (6 – 7 pages – double spaced, not counting footnotes). Write a single essay on some aspect of the course that is particularly relevant to you and to your pastoral ministry or personal formation. Grading will be an assessment of the way in which you were able to make intelligent, insightful and appropriate use of the readings that you choose to think with, and the extent to which you give evident of a serious personal appropriation of the material. You may choose a particular topic from the class, discuss a pastoral case or situation that is of special interest and urgency to you, analyze a film, poem or short story relevant to the integration of spirituality and sexuality, discuss one of the topics in our two texts that is not discussed directly in class (e.g. the sexually disenfranchised – elderly persons, physically disabled, seriously ill, mentally retarded – chapter 8 in Nelson and chapter 23, 24 & 25 in Longfellow & Nelson) sexual and spiritual lives of the elderly or handicapped, pornography and sexual addiction, spiritual counsel of the divorced and remarried etc.) Alternatively you may choose to write a highly personal response to the readings discussing your own integrative journey – but always in intentional dialogue with the questions and readings of the course. Be creative, intelligent and passionate.

For Students Needing (3) Credits: As above, but the final paper must be 12 – 14 pages. Due: negotiable.
WEEK ONE

MONDAY JULY 8th  STARTING OUT: DREAMS AND HOPES / DEFINITIONS AND STRATEGIES

What is the focus, aim and foundation of the course? Getting to know your colleagues/ How to talk about difficult topics / introducing the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

FOCUS READING (read in class):

The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt Jonas “Sex and Self Denial” Sermon preached to the community of Bishops of the Episcopal Church – USA, Sept. 20, 1999. (VISTA)


CONTEXTUAL READING:

These readings will explain in greater depth and detail two sets of ideas introduced in today’s class: 1) the on-going tension between “essentialist” understandings of human sexuality and historical/social constructivist approaches to understanding sexuality; and 2) the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” (scripture, reason, tradition and experience) as the sources for Christian theological reflection on human sexuality.


BACKGROUND/ENRICHMENT READING:

Sometimes it is helpful to look at these matters from a different perspective altogether. Sallie Tisdale writes as a practicing Buddhist who shows that Christians do not have the market cornered on ambivalence about human sexuality. Her essay “There is Sex and Then There is Sexuality” appeared in TRICYCLE: THE BUDDHIST REVIEW (Winter 1994). VISTA

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT CLASS (see handout)

TUESDAY JULY 9th  Let’s Start at the Very Beginning: Why is Sexuality Fundamental for Christian Living?

FOCUS READING:


• Nelson & Longfellow, Introduction to part 2 (pp. 71-74)

• Lisa Fullham, “Thou Shalt: Sex Beyond the List of Don’ts” Commonweal  April 14, 2009.

BACKGROUND/ ENRICHMENT READING:

• Audre Lorde “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” Chapter 5 in Nelson & Longfellow.


ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT CLASS (see handout)

WEDNESDAY JULY 10th BEGINNING FROM THE HUMAN WARD SIDE – PHENOMENOLOGY OF SEXUAL EXPERIENCING

Working with the erotic love poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures – what IS is about? /
Getting particular – why Fergus? / the story of Harry and Yvonne

FOCUS READING

• The Song of Songs (New Jerusalem Bible) (VISTA)


• Andre Dubus “If They Knew Yvonne” short story (VISTA)

CONTEXTUAL READING:

• Thomas C. Fox “Carnal Love” (chapter VIII) in Sexuality and Catholicism (George Braziller, 1995) (VISTA)

Tom Fox, editor of the National Catholic Reporter has written a high readable journalistic survey of the historical development and contemporary “state of the question” of the Catholic Church’s positions on a range of matters (abortion, homosexuality, women in the church, birth control, celibacy etc.). In this chapter he looks at the position on masturbation and carnal pleasure in general and also considers contemporary counter voices in the Catholic community, among them Richard Rohr, Thomas Berry, Andrew Greeley and Matthew Fox.

BACKGROUND/ ENRICHMENT READING:

• Carl Ernst “Interpreting the Song of Songs: The Paradox of Spiritual and Sensual Love” (VISTA) introduction to Judith Ernst’s Song of Songs: Erotic Love Poetry (Eerdmans, 2003) see www.gardenenclosed.com for an extraordinary compilation of musical,
artistic and literary references to the Song, and links to related erotic/spiritual poetry in Sufi and Hindu traditions

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT CLASS (see handout)

THURSDAY JULY 11th  SIN and SEXUALITY FROM a DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Sexual Alienation and Sexual Salvation / the toxic role of shame in human sexuality

FOCUS READING

• “Sexual Alienation: The Dualistic Nemesis” (Chapter 3) and “Sexual Salvation: Grace and the Resurrection of the Body” (Chapter 4) in Nelson.
• Paul Tillich Sermon, “You Are Accepted”

CONTEXTUAL READING:

• Tony Campolo, “How Jewish was Jesus?” (Tikkun Magazine) (VISTA) - essay by a well known Evangelical theologian and pastor.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT CLASS (see handout)

FRIDAY JULY 12th  THE SEXUALITY OF JESUS

Exploring together regarding Jesus as fully human and fully divine – which means a fully, wholly and Holy sexual being. What difference might this make?

FOCUS READING

• Joan Timmerman “The Sexuality of Jesus and the Human Vocation” (Chapter 8) in Nelson & Longfellow.
• The Four Gospels (any English language translation)

CONTEXTUAL READING:

• Rev. Kenneth Leech, “God in the Flesh”, from Kenneth Leech, Experiencing God: Theology as Spirituality (Harpers 1985). This chapter by distinguished Anglican pastoral theologian Kenneth Leech is a good illustration of the method of theological reflection we saw in Archbishop Rowan Williams essay. Leech draws heavily on Patristic sources (the early Church Fathers of the Eastern Church), on poetry, hymnody, and literature to make an argument for the radical and still not fully understood Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and its implications for how we live “in the flesh”.

BACKGROUND/ ENRICHMENT READING:
• Joshua S. Anderson, “Naked Christs and Balaam’s Ass: A Blueprint Towards a Renewed Christian Aesthetic” (a discussion of Leo Steinberg’s *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion* and the controversial photographs of Andre Serrano “Piss Christ”). (VISTA)

• Michael Bronski, “Our Jesus, Ourselves” - a reflection on another contemporary artistic presentation of Jesus, Mel Gibson’s film “The Passion of the Christ”. (VISTA)

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT CLASS (see handout)

**WEEK TWO**

**MONDAY July 15**

**MARRIAGE AND FIDELITY / SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY**

What are the meanings and purposes of sexuality in the context of a marital commitment?

**FOCUS READING**

- Mark Oppenheimer, “Married With Infidelities” - NY TIMES MAGAZINE July 3 2011
- Valerie Schultz “God in the Tangled Sheets”, AMERICA, July 1, 2002 (VISTA)

**CONTEXTUAL READING:**

- “Love and Sexual Ethics” Chapter 5 and “The Meanings of Marriage and Fidelity” Chapter 6 in Nelson.
- John Wellwood “Intimate Relationship as Transformative Path” (VISTA)

**BACKGROUND/ENRICHMENT READING:**

- Margaret Farley RSM “Sexual Ethics” in Nelson and Longfellow Chpt 4
- Jack Dominian, “Sex Within Marriage”, Chapter 21 in Nelson & Longfellow

**TUESDAY July 16th WOMEN and MEN’S EXPERIENCE OF SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY**

**FOCUS READING:**

**Both:** Rachel Naomi Remen “Getting Real” from *My Grandfather’s Blessings* (VISTA)

- Male Spirituality and Sexuality
James B. Nelson “Embracing Masculinity” Chapter 15 in Nelson and Longfellow

- Female Spirituality and Sexuality

Heather Corinna “An Immodest Proposal”
www.scarleteen.com/article/pink/an_immodest_proposal

Mary D. Pellauer, “The Moral Significance of Female Orgasm: Towards Sex Ethics that Celebrates Women’s Sexuality”. Chapter 12 in Nelson and Longfellow.

BACKGROUND/ENRICHMENT READING:


- Philip Culbertson “Explaining Men” Chapter 14 in Nelson and Longfellow

- Joseph Glenmullen, M.D. is clinical instructor in psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and the author of *The Pornographers Grief and Other Tales of Human Sexuality* (Harper Collins, 1993). Two of his detailed clinical narratives are illuminating in their capacity to deepen our appreciation for the inexhaustible intricacy and individual uniqueness of human sexual experience. Both cases are of heterosexual couples who come to him for treatment for difficulties in their intimate relationship. “The Woman Who Thought Her Orgasm Was a Gift” and “The Pornographer’s Grief”. (VISTA)

WEDNESDAY July 17th SPIRITUALITY AND SEXUALITY: THE EXPERIENCE OF GAY AND LESBIAN PERSONS

Documentary film *For the Bible Tells Me So* (2007) (BC Media Center – O’Neill Library) about five Christian families whose gay children went public — one of whom is Bishop Gene Robinson, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire. (60 min)

FOCUS READING:

- Introduction to Part 5 Nelson and Longfellow pp. 357-360.
- John Linsheid “Creating Companionship: Queer Notes on Genesis 1:1 – 2:4”
  http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~linsch/QGenesis.htm

CONTEXTUAL READING:


BACKGROUND/ENRICHMENT READING:

Preface to the Fourth Edition of John McNeill’s *The Church and the Homosexual*. John McNeill was a Jesuit theologian and psychotherapist whose book published in 1985 was the first major critical treatment of the Catholic Church’s position on homosexuality. It was officially published with an official *imprimi potest* from Rome which was unexpectedly rescinded two years later. McNeill has written about his own spiritual journey in two books, *Freedom, Glorious Freedom: The Spiritual Journey to the Fullness of Life for Gays, Lesbians and Everyone Else* (Beacon Press, 1995) and *Taking a Chance on God: Liberating Theology for Gays and Lesbians, Their Lovers, Families and Friends* (Beacon Press, 1988).

**THURSDAY July 18th SEXUALITY AND SPIRITUALITY IN COLLEGE AND YOUNG ADULT YEARS**

What kind of spiritual guidance and direction can be offered to young adults who are years away from long term covenants and marriage? Is there a spirituality of dating? What about pre-marital sexuality and the spiritual life of the young adult?

**FOCUS READING:**

- Donna Freitas and Jason King “Sex, Time and Meaning: A Theology of Dating” HORIZONS, 30_1), Spring 2003: 25-40. (VISTA)

**CONTEXTUAL READING:**

- BC Student Papers from *Sexuality and Spirituality*:
  - Senior Male (Chase Reddy) “The Man We Want to Be”
  - Senior Female (anonymous) “Escaping the Hook Up Culture”

**BACKGROUND/ ENRICHMENT READING:**


Donna Freitas is also the author of *Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America’s College Campuses*. (Oxford University Press), 2008. a major study of patterns of intimate relationship and attitudes towards spiritual life at seven American College campus, two Roman Catholic, two Evangelical Protestant, and three secular. [On Reserve]

**FRIDAY July 19th WHAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN AND SAID?**

Making room for issues of interest/ bringing the perspectives of the course to bear on a short story /

**FOCUS READING:**
• James B. Nelson, “The Church as Sexual Community” (Chapter 10) and Epilogue in Nelson.
• Steve Almond short story “The Skull” from his collection *The Evil B.B. Chow and Other Stories*
• BC Senior Student Paper, Jen Arens “The Skull”

**BACKGROUND/ENRICHMENT READING:**


**APPENDIX**

In order to make course readings readily accessible at no cost to the students and make optional background readings available to all students, this summer all the course material is available at the Blackboard VISTA site for this course. Students will be expected to download and run off the focus readings and as many of the additional readings as they may choose to do. Below is how to get started.

**Getting Started with Blackboard VISTA:**

**Step One:** Access materials for TM936 “Spirituality and Sexuality” through the following link: [http://cms.bc.edu](http://cms.bc.edu) On PC the recommended browsers are Internet Explorer (IE) 7 and Firefox 2.0. On the MAC use “Safari”. You will need to type in your assigned BC “user name” and the Password that has also been assigned to you when you registered for the course. If in doubt about these please go the student services desk in LYONS HALL.

**Step Two:** Verifying your system setup.

Upon entering the VISTA site, PC users should click the “Browser Check”. The browser check verifies the configuration items necessary to run Vista properly on the machine you are using. Each item checked also has a link to more information that will help resolve any issues identified. Issues are marked with a red X. You can run the browser check anytime by clicking on the “Browser Check” link located at the top right side of the “My Blackboard” page. If you experience problems completing the browser check or for any other assistance contact [cms@bc.edu](mailto:cms@bc.edu) (Subject: Vista).

**NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE?** Helen Healy, Senior Course Management Administrator in the Department of Information Technology, has kindly offered to be available by phone for any hard to answer questions. Call Helen at 617 552-1998.

**Step Three:** Identifying configuration items

- **Digital Signatures** Upon first run of the system, a pop-up may inform you that a digital certificate for the application needs acceptance by your machine. When you see this pop-up, click RUN.
- **Security Certificates** You will need to accept the new certificates upon first use of the system. Click “Always” in order to prevent this message from appearing upon future logins.
- **JAVA Version**. The latest version should work.
• **Browser Version.** Vista is very particular about which browsers to use. Try to use the recommended browsers and versions. This will minimize issues with using this course site.

• **Pop Ups.** Always allow pop-ups for this site. Vista is heavily dependent on pop-ups. If your pop-ups are blocked, go to your browser settings to always allow pop-ups for Vista.

• **"blocked downloads" in Internet Explorer.** By default Internet Explorer does not allow you to download a document automatically so here are some instructions to get around this:

Blocked Downloads. To stop the Information bar from blocking a file in Internet Explorer from downloading click Tools on the menu bar and then choose Internet Options. Click the Security tab. First, make sure that https://cms.bc.edu is a Trusted Site. Second, when in the "Trusted Sites" zone, lower the security level to "Medium". Within the trusted sites screen you will also see a "custom" tab. Click on this tab and scroll down until you get to the option for downloads and choose to enable prompts for file downloads and also enable file downloads. Click OK/apply and restart Internet Explorer.