

PHIL 2170 (TOPICS 1)
PHILOSOPHY AND SEXUALITY
Prof. Neil McArthur
Course Syllabus: Winter 2012

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Office Hours: MWF 10.30-11.30. It is a good idea to email me before coming to see me in case that day's hours have already been booked by other students.

Required Texts

A course package will be posted in PDF format on the course Jump page.

Objectives

This course will examine how sexuality has been conceived in the western philosophical tradition, and will consider various moral and legal issues related to sexuality. We will read works by classic figures such as Plato, Augustine and Kant, as well as writings by contemporary philosophers. Issues to be considered include: Should pornography be banned? Should prostitution be legal? Do we have a moral duty to inform a friend if we know their partner is having an affair? Should we restrict the number of children we have? Is it moral to "out" gay politicians who make anti-gay statements or who support anti-gay legislation?

Issues surrounding sexuality have not always been central to the concerns of professional philosophers. Yet they are obviously central to how we live our lives. Like all philosophy classes, this class will proceed through open debate dedicated to clarifying both sides of a given issue, and students must be prepared to approach all arguments relevant to a particular topic with both charity and rigor. Readings will be assigned for each topic, and students must read each text carefully and come to class prepared to discuss it.

Grading

There will be an in-class midterm exam, worth a total of 20% of the final grade, and a final exam, worth 35%. There is an essay, 14 to 20 pages long and worth 35% of the final grade. It is due on April 6. Class attendance and participation is mandatory, and accounts for 10% of the final grade.

Grades

In this course (though not necessarily in any other course in the Department of Philosophy) the following equivalence between letter grades and percentages is used:

A+: 90-100	A: 80-89	B+: 75-79	B: 67-74
C+: 60-66	C: 50-59	D: 45-49	F: 0-45

Withdrawal Deadline

The last date for voluntary withdrawal from courses in the Winter 2012 term is March 16, 2012.

Late Policy

Overdue papers will only be accepted with a documented medical or compassionate excuse.

How to Reach Me

Email is an efficient way to reach me if you have practical questions (e.g. “Can I bring a dictionary into the exam?”; “How should I format my footnotes?”) or administrative matters that need clearing up. However, I cannot answer actual philosophical questions (e.g. “Why do some liberals oppose judicial review?”) through email. Questions like that really need to be worked through in person. Please come see me during my office hours – or if that is not possible, email me to set up an appointment.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Please consult section 7 of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements in your Undergraduate Calendar for information concerning plagiarism and cheating, which can also be found on the Web at:

<http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/calendar07/regulations/plagiarism.asp>

Plagiarism is a very serious offence that can result in failure of this course and more serious penalties. It is never tolerated. Often, worries about plagiarism are the result of simple misunderstandings about standards of academic honesty, misunderstandings that can easily be cleared up *in advance*, before it is too late. Professional scholars consult and rely on other people’s work all the time; students may as well. The important thing is to *acknowledge* the place from which you’ve taken your information or ideas. If you have any questions about academic honesty, please come talk to me.