PHIL 2190
PHILOSOPHY AND SEXUALITY
Prof. Neil McArthur
Course Syllabus: Fall 2019

My Office: 352 University College  E-mail: neil.mcarthur@umanitoba.ca

Office Hours: T/Th 11.00-12.00. My office hours are often busy. Please email me before coming to see me so I can ensure I do not have a meeting and that that day’s hours have not already been booked by other students.

Required Texts

The course package, containing the required readings, is available for download from the course UMLearn page.

Objectives

This is a course on sexual ethics. Sex is (usually) a private act. Yet the sexual choices we make are not private ones. They affect our partners, our families, and our society. And we make judgements about other people’s sexual behaviour, just as, like it or not, they make judgements about ours. This course is premised on the idea that we should make such judgements, to the extent possible, based on reason and argument, and that philosophy can help us make better ones.

We will examine various moral, political and legal issues related to sexuality. The course does not presume any particular moral framework. Instead, we will try to identify interesting, controversial issues, and examine them from a variety of perspectives. Topics to be considered include: Is it wrong to have casual sex? Should we be monogamous? Should society support marriage? Should sex work be legal? Should pornography be banned?

Like all philosophy classes, this course will proceed through open debate. For each issue we take up, we will look at arguments on both sides, and students must be prepared to approach all issues with an open mind. 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 two in-class tests: on October 24 and December 5. The first is worth 30% and the second is worth 20% of the final grade. Please ensure that you are able to attend on those dates, since make-ups cannot be scheduled without a medical note. There is an essay worth 40% of the final grade. It is due December 9. There will be five reading quizzes, each worth 2%. The reading quizzes will be assigned at the start of class on random days. No make-ups will be allowed.
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:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>75-79</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>67-74</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>60-66</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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Withdrawal Deadline

The last date for voluntary withdrawal from courses in the Fall 2019 term is November 18.

Late Policy

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

Email and Technology

Please keep your phones away, with the ringers off, during class. This is a gesture of respect towards your fellow students, who will find it distracting if you do not, and it helps create a professional classroom atmosphere.

Email communication is important at university. If you do not use email regularly, it is time to start. First of all, you must ensure that your UMLearn account includes an email address that you check regularly. I often use email for important class communications, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you receive all messages in a timely way. I am not responsible for any consequences resulting from missed emails. Second, you must ensure that all emails sent to me follow proper etiquette. They must include the course number in the subject line of the message. In the body of the message, you must address me directly, and sign your full name. Otherwise I will not respond. Finally, I can provide answers to short, practical questions via email, but I cannot summarise my lectures or attempt to explain philosophical issues. For these matters, please come see me in person.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Please consult the relevant section of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements in your Undergraduate Calendar to ensure you understood the rules regarding plagiarism and cheating.

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. If you have any questions, please come see me.