

The Philosophy of Sex and Love



Love and sex are often considered to be two of the most important components of a flourishing human life. This course aims to introduce students to some of the various issues of ethical and conceptual significance surrounding love and sex, along with an understanding of how these issues interrelate. Questions discussed will include: What is the difference between friendship and romantic love? Is there a necessary connection between sex and romantic love? And what, exactly, is wrong with paedophilia?

Course Texts

As there is no single text that is appropriate to the course, all the reading will be collected in a module course pack and/or be made available online on MOLE. However, there are a few useful anthologies which students might wish to utilise:

Baker, Robert B.; Elliston, Frederick A. And Winner, Kathleen J. (Eds.) *Philosophy and Sex*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1998. (referred to as *Philosophy and Sex* from here on)

Soble, Alan (Ed.) *The Philosophy of Sex*. Maryland. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002. (referred to as *The Philosophy of Sex* from here on)

Stewart, Robert Michael. *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995. (referred to as *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love* from here on)

This is also a useful introductory text, which covers many of the topics we will discuss:

Primoratz, Igor. *Ethics and Sex*. London: Routledge, 1999

Useful Information

Lectures	Tues 3-4pm AT LT1 Thurs 2-3pm AT LT8
Seminars	Tues 4-5pm Thurs 4-5pm + 1 other tba
Course website	Access via: http://vista.shef.ac.uk/ Or: https://portal.shef.ac.uk/ Use this site to download: Course Booklet Lecture slides
Coursework	Due date: 4pm 20 th November (Tuesday of Week 9) 3000 – 4000 words Essay questions at the end of the course booklet
Exam	Pre-released
Long Essay	You may choose to be assessed by long essay instead of by examination. 4500 – 6000 words Deadlines: Plan approved by Wednesday of Week 8 (14 th November) Students are required to attend one half-to-one-hour session with the course teacher to discuss a draft of their essay. A shorter initial meeting will also need to be held to discuss the essay plan, sometime before the end of week 7, either in office hours or by arrangement. Essay submitted by 4 p.m. on Wednesday 23 rd January

Lecturers' Details	Peter Caven and Natasha McKeever Office: B25 Email: p.caven@shef.ac.uk; n.mckeever@shef.ac.uk Office hours: Tuesday 2-3pm and Thursday 3-4pm
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Course Structure

The course shall be comprised of five sections, each concentrating on topics which fit a particular theme in the philosophy of sex and love. After the introductory section of the first week, we will discuss whether there are reasons for love and, if so, what are they, as well as the relation of love to sex. We next discuss the philosophical significance of sexual desires and practices that are commonly taken to be deviant. The final section will explore aspects of sexual morality specifically related to gender relations. We have aimed to structure the course so that each section follows from the other in a way which will allow students to develop an extensive philosophical understanding of various issues pertaining to love and sex, and how these relate to one another.

Course Outline

Section 1: Introduction

The first section will set the scene of the course, providing students with a general overview and how it will be structured. It will also tackle a fundamental issue that will be relevant throughout the course – the concept of the ‘natural’ and how it potentially relates to the ethical evaluation of love and sex.

Week 1:

- 1) Introduction to the philosophy of sex and love.

In the introductory lecture, we will acquaint students with the overall structure, the themes that we shall be discussing and the sort of issues that the course will address.

- 2) The natural and the normative

In this lecture, we discuss the basis of the commonly cited claim that particular forms of love and sex are unnatural, and therefore morally problematic. We will provide an introduction to evolutionary psychological theory and how such a descriptive account might help to provide a naturalistic basis for various aspects of sexual and loving conduct between humans. Building on this, we will examine what kind of relevance, if

any, these sorts of accounts might have towards the chief focus of our course – the ethical evaluation of key issues in love and sex.

Suggested reading:

Buss, David. *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating*. New York: Basic Books/HarperCollins. 1994

Hume, David. *Treatise of Human Nature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1739 Book III, Part I, Section I.

Moore, G. *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1903 Chapters I and II

Wilson, David Sloan. Dietrich, Eric and Clark, Anne. 'On the Innappropriate use of the Naturalistic Fallacy in Evolutionary Psychology.' *Biology and Philosophy*. 2004.

Section 2: Romantic Love

Section 2 of the course will focus on romantic love. We will review accounts which attempt to understand love as rational and as non-rational. We then discuss how romantic love may be distinguished from and contrasted with friendship and what the relationship, if any, is between love and sex.

Week 2

3) Love without reasons (Harry Frankfurt)

Folk notions of love are seemingly inconsistent – people typically think that love can be grounded in reasons, and yet that it is fundamentally irrational. Furthermore, we tend to think that love provides us with decisive reasons for action that may override all other reasons. In this week, we shall consider philosophical accounts of the relation between love and rationality. Firstly, we shall consider Harry Frankfurt's argument that love is not responsive to reason.

4) Responses to Frankfurt

In this lecture we consider strengths and weaknesses of Frankfurt's understanding of love. We will point out that although in some ways it fits with our intuitions about loves, it also

makes love seem somewhat mysterious and perhaps too general. Furthermore, it has problems accounting for romantic love.

Suggested Readings:

Delaney, Neil. 'Romantic Love and Loving Commitment: Articulating a Modern Ideal.' *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. 33. No. 4 (Oct. 1996).

Edyvane, Derek. 'Against Unconditional Love'. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*. Vol. 20, No. 1. 2003.

Foster, Gary. 'Bestowal Without Appraisal: Problems in Frankfurt's Characterization of Love and Personal Identity'. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*. Volume 12, 2009.

Frankfurt, Harry G. *Necessity, Volition and Love*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Frankfurt, Harry G. *The Importance of What We Care About*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Frankfurt, Harry G. *The Reasons of Love*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Frankfurt, Harry G. 'Reply to Susan Wolf' in Buss, Sarah and Overton, Lee (eds.), *The Contours of Agency: Essays on Themes from Harry Frankfurt*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

Frankfurt, Harry G. 'Taking Ourselves seriously and Getting it Right' in Satz, Debra (ed.) *Taking Ourselves Seriously and Getting it Right*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 2006.

Jollimore, Troy. *Love's Vison*. Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2011.

May, Simon. *Love: A History*. London: Yale University Press. 2011.

Shand, John. 'Love As If'. *Essays in Philosophy*. Volume 12, Issue 1, 2011.

Soble, Alan. 'Review of "The Reasons of Love"'. *Essays in Philosophy*. Volume 6, Issue 1. January 2005.

Solomon, Robert C. 'Reasons for Love'. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*. Vol. 32, No. 1. 2002.

Taylor, Gabriele. 'Love'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. Vol. 76 1975-1976

Vannoy, Russell. Part two of *Sex Without Love*. New York: Prometheus Books, 1980.

Week 3

5) Love for reasons

We briefly consider two alternative explanations for why we love the people we do: the view that we love people for their qualities and Kolodny's view that we love people for the relationship we share with them. We will point out that it is important to consider the reasons we love people in order to understand why we love people in different ways and what the relationship between love and sex is which will be issues that come up later in the course.

6) Friendship v romantic love

We tend to think we know when a relationship is a friendship and when it is a romantic relationship. However, sometimes 'drawing the line' can be difficult. In this lecture we consider whether romantic love is different in kind from friendship or only in degree and explore what some of the essential differences may be.

Suggested reading:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 8 and 9.

Conlon, James: 'Why Lovers Can't be Friends' from *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Dixon, Nicholas. 'Romantic Love, Appraisal, and Commitment'. *Philosophical Forum*. Vol. 38, No. 4, 2007.

Fox, Ellen. 'Paternalism and Friendship' in *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Keller, Simon. 'How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Properties.' *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Volume 37, Number 2. (April 2000).

Klaassen, Johann A. 'Friends and Lovers' in *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 35 No. 3, Fall 2004, p.414

Kolodny, Niko. 'Love as Valuing a Relationship'. *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 2 (April 2003)

Landrum, Ty. 'Persons as Objects of Love'. *Journal of Moral Philosophy*. Vol. 6, 2009.

Lewis, C.S. *The Four Loves*, London: Cox and Wyman, 1960

Nozick, Robert. 'Love's Bond' in Stewart, Robert M. (Ed.) *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex & Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995.

Smith, Thomas H. 'Romantic Love'. *Essays in Philosophy*. Volume 12, Issue 1 (2011)

Week 4

7) Sex and Love

8) Sex and Love

These lectures will explore the relationship between sex and romantic love. We will first consider if there is a necessary moral connection, particularly focusing on Roger Scruton's account of sexual desire. We will then discuss whether there is any reason to think there is a conceptual link between love and sex.

Suggested readings:

Giles, James (1994). 'A Theory of Love and Sexual Desire.' *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 24 (4):339–357.

Gregory, Paul. 'Eroticism and Love'. *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Volume 25, Number 4. October 1988, p339.

Scruton, Roger. Chapter 2, 'Arousal,' *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation*,

Scruton, Roger. Chapter 3, 'Desire,' *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation*, particularly pp. 74-76 ("The personal nature of the object of desire"), 78-83 ("Individualising thought" and "the first person perspective in desire"), 85-93 ("The course of desire" and "The aim of desire").

Scruton, Roger. "The Moral Birds and Bees: Sex and Marriage, Properly understood." *National Review*, September 13, 2005. Available at <http://www.nationalreview.com/flashback/flashback200602140942.asp> (Note this gives a nice overview of Scruton's

views on sexual morality but is no substitute for the detailed philosophical argument of the book chapters.)

Johnson, Edward. 'Inscrutable Desires: Review Essay of Scruton's Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic.' In, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Jun 1990; vol. 20: pp. 208 - 221

Nussbaum, Martha C. "Sex in the Head", *New York Review of Books*, Volume 33, No. 20, (December 18th 1986) (Review of Scruton's *Sexual Desire*)

"Sexual Desire": An Exchange, by Roger Scruton, reply by Martha C. Nussbaum, *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 34, No. 8 (May 7th 1987). Available online at: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/4778>

Week 5

9) Monogamy, Infidelity and Jealousy

10) Monogamy, Polygamy and Marriage

Monogamy is generally taken to be a central aspect of most romantic relationships, and sexual infidelity is strongly condemned as intrinsically morally wrong. In these lectures, we will evaluate the basis for the norm of monogamy and departures from this norm. We will first discuss what, exactly, is wrong with sexual infidelity within the context of a monogamous relationship, and how sexual jealousy might be grounded. In the second lecture, we explore the moral and legal issues concerning polygamous relationships.

Suggested readings:

Brooks, Thom. 'The Problem with Polygamy.' *Philosophical Topics* Vol. 37, issue 2 pp.109-22. (2009).

Finnis, John. 'Marriage: A Basic and Exigent Good'. *The Monist*. Vol. 91, No.3 (July 2008).

Martin, Mike W. 'Adultery and Fidelity' in *Philosophy and Sex*.

McMurtry, John. 'Monogamy: A Critique', *The Monist*, Vol. 67, pp587-99. (1972)

Overall, Christine. 'Monogamy, Nonmonogamy, and Identity'. *Hypatia*. Vol. 13. No. 4 (Autumn 1998)

Pope Paul VI. 'Humanae Vitae' in *Philosophy and Sex*.

Primoratz, Igor. Chapter 7: 'Marriage, Adultery, Jealousy' *Ethics and Sex*. London: Routledge. 1999.

Wasserstrom, Richard. 'Is Adultery Immoral?' in *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Weaver, Bryan R. and Woollard, Fiona, "Marriage and the Norm of Monogamy", *The Monist*, Volume 91, No. 3-4 (July-October 2008).

Section 3: Sexuality and Deviancy

Section 3 will introduce accounts of sex that don't rely on any connection with love. We will then examine the concept of sexual perversity, before evaluating the morality of two particular forms of sexuality which are sometimes regarded as perverse, namely homosexuality and paedophilia.

Week 6

11) Plain Sex

12) Plain Sex and 'Sex in the Head'

In these lectures we consider Alan Goldman's paper 'Plain Sex' whereby he argues that 'sexual desire is desire for contact with another person's body and for the pleasure which such contact produces.' He thus denies that sex is necessarily a means to any other end (such as love or reproduction) but is simply good in itself. We will then discuss Primoratz's 'Plainer Sex' account, 'plainer' because it removes the need for 'another person's body' to be included in the definition. We discuss problems with these accounts, suggesting that they are both too wide and too narrow to account for human sexual desire. In the second lecture we put forward Seiriol Morgan's argument, in his paper, 'Sex in the Head', that human sex often involves non-physical aspects and that it is 'essentially open to being caught up in intentional significance'. (p3)

Suggested readings:

Calhoun, Cheshire 'Review of *Sexual Investigations* by Alan Soble', *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 4 pp. 928-931. 1999.

Christina, Greta. 'Are We Having Sex Now or What?' in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Goldman, Alan. 'Plain Sex'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3 1977.

Morgan, Seiriol. 'Sex in the Head', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 20:1 2003.

Morgan, Seiriol. 'Dark Desires', *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 6:4 2003.

Primoratz, Igor. Chapter 5: 'The Pleasure of Sex', *Ethics and Sex*

Soble, Alan. 'Masturbation: Conceptual and Ethical Matters' in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Week 8

13) Sexual perversion

14) Sexual perversion

We tend to categorise sexual preferences, desires and behaviours into those that are 'normal' and those that are perverted. Some desires are almost unanimously considered perverted to varying extents, from foot fetishism to bestiality. However, what makes a sexual desire or practice perverted is difficult to define, and there are certain sexual behaviours that some consider perversions but others do not. Indeed, some argue that there no sexual practices can legitimately be counted as perversions. In these lectures we will examine some possible explanations as to why some people have various sexual perversions, and look at some attempts made by philosophers to draw the line between what behaviour is perverted and what is not. We consider whether sexual perversions which don't harm anyone are in any sense morally problematic, or whether the concept best be discarded entirely.

Suggested readings:

Aquinas, Thomas 'The Purpose of Sex' in *Philosophy and Sex*, 1998.

Davidson, Arnold. 'Conceptual History and Concepts of Perversion' in *Philosophy and Sex* 1998.

Gray, Robert. 'Sex and Sexual Perversion.' *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 75, pp189-199. 1978.

Humber, James M. 'Sexual Perversion and Human Nature'. *Philosophy Research Archives* Vol. 13, pp.331-350. 1987.

Levy, Donald. 'Perversion and the Unnatural as Moral Categories' *Ethics*, Vol. 90 No.2 pp.191-202 1980.

Miller, Kristie. 'On the Concept of Sexual Perversion.' *Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 60 pp.808-830. 2010.

Moulton, Janice. 'Sexual Behaviour: Another Position,' in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Nagel, Thomas. 'Sexual Perversion.' *Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 66, issue 1, pp. 5-17. 1969.

Primoratz, Igor. Chapter 6: 'Sexual Perversion', *Ethics and Sex*. London: Routledge. 2005.

Ruddick, Sara 'Better Sex' in *Philosophy and Sex* pp.280-299

Scruton, Roger. Chapter 10 of *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation* London: Continuum. 2006.

Soloman, Robert. 'Sexual Paradigms' in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Williamson, Francis. 'Sex, Disorder and Perversion' *Philosophical Papers*, Vol. 33 2 pp.203-239 2004

Week 9

15) Homosexuality

16) Homosexuality

Homosexuality was illegal in the UK until 1967, and is still illegal in about a third of the world's countries today. Despite changing attitudes, it remains stigmatised and homosexuals still suffer from prejudice. In these lectures we consider whether there is any justification for treating homosexuality as morally distinct from heterosexuality. We examine various arguments which contend that homosexuality contrary to good of sex and/or marriage, that it is debasing, narcissistic, or 'unnatural'. Finally, we will explore issues related to the legality of homosexuality and homosexual marriage.

Suggested reading:

Baker, Robert 'Pathologizing Homosexuality' in *Philosophy and Sex*. 1998

Corvino, John. 'Why Shouldn't Tommy and Jim Have Sex?' in John Corvino (ed.) *Same Sex: Debating the Ethics, Science and Culture of Homosexuality*. Shorter version reprinted as "Homosexuality: The Nature and Harm Arguments" in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Corvino, John. 'Homosexuality and the PIB Argument' *Ethics*, Vol.115 No.3 .2005 pp.501 – 534

Devlin, Patrick. 'Morals and the Criminal Law' from *The Enforcement of Morals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1965

Dworkin, R 'Lord Devlin and the Enforcement of Morals' *75 Yale Law Journal*. 1966.

Finnis, John. 'Marriage: A Basic and Exigent Good,' *The Monist*, Vol. 91, pp. 388-406. July and October 2008.

Finnis, John and Nussbaum, Martha C., "Is Homosexual Conduct Wrong? A Philosophical Exchange", in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Lee, Patrick. 'Marriage, Procreation, and Same-Sex Unions'. *The Monist*. Vol. 91, No.3 (July 2008).

Levin, Michael E. 'Against Homosexual Liberation' in Thomas and Levin (eds.) *Sexual Orientation and Human Rights*, pp.124-45. Reprinted in *The Philosophy of Sex*.

Mercier, Adèle. 'On the Nature of Marriage: Somerville on Same-Sex Marriage' *The Monist*, Vol. 91, pp.407-421. July and October 2008.

Pickett, Brent. 'Homosexuality' in *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*

Primoratz, Igor, Chapter 9: Homosexuality, *Ethics and Sex*

Rajczi, Alex. 'A Populist Argument for Legalising Same-Sex Marriage,' *The Monist*, Vol. 91, pp.475-505. July and October 2008

Scruton, Roger. Chapter 10 of *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation*
London: Continuum. 2006.

Week 10

17) Paedophilia

18) Paedophilia

Paedophilia is one form of sexual desire that is almost universally considered intrinsically immoral, even if the desire is not acted upon. Its wrongness is generally explained in terms of both the harm that paedophilia inflicts upon children, and most particularly, the inability of a child to properly consent to sex. Yet some have argued that adult-child sex need not necessarily cause harm, and that the legal age of consent is an arbitrarily defined and thus morally irrelevant social norm. In these lectures we will examine such claims and evaluate whether there are, in fact, good reasons to maintain a strong moral and legal prohibition against paedophilia.

Suggested readings:

Archard, David. *Children: Rights and Childhood*, particularly "Children's rights to vote and sexual choice" and "The Problem of Child Abuse" (Chapters 7 and 14th of 2nd Edition)

Alcoff, Linda "Dangerous Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Pedophilia" in BWE.

Benatar, David. "Two Views of Sexual Ethics: Promiscuity, Pedophilia, and Rape". In *The Philosophy of Sex* (Fifth Edition)

Ehman, Robert. "Adult-Child Sex" in Robert Baker and Federick Elliston (eds.), *Philosophy and Sex* (SECOND EDITION).

Frye, Marilyn "Critique" of Ehman, Robert. "Adult-Child Sex" in Robert Baker and Federick Elliston (eds.), *Philosophy and Sex* (SECOND EDITION)

Powell, G.E and Chalkley, A.J. "The Effects of Paedophile Attention on the Child", in Brian Taylor (ed.) *Perspectives on Paedophilia* Batsford Academic and Educational. 1981.

Righton, P. "The Adult" in Brian Taylor (ed.) *Perspectives on Paedophilia* Batsford Academic and Educational. 1981.

Cook, M. and Howells, K (eds.) *Adult Sexual Interest in Children*. Academic Press. 1981.

Primoratz, Igor. Chapter 10: 'Pedophilia' *Ethics and Sex*.

Section 4: Sex and Gender Relations

In the final section of the course, we tackle two issues in the ethics of sex which are especially significant in terms of gender relations – rape and prostitution.

Week 11

19) Rape

20) Rape

Rape is widely recognised as one of the most horrific things one person can do to another. This widespread agreement hides many areas of disagreement. What is rape? – Which acts count as rape? Is rape sex? What is wrong with rape? Is rape as bad as we think it is? In this lecture we will first consider how rape is to be defined, paying particular attention to issues of consent. We will discuss controversial cases, such as when an individual consents to sex but is under the influence of alcohol. In the second lecture we will examine whether rape counts as sex, and how bad sex is.

Suggested reading:

Anderson, Scott. A. 'Sex under Pressure: Jerks, Boorish Behaviour, and Gender Hierarchy'. *Res Publica*. 11: 349-369. 2005.

Archard, David. 'The Wrong of Rape.' *Philosophical Quarterly*. Vol. 57, issue 228, pp.374–393. 2007.

Baber, H. E., 'How Bad Is Rape?' *Hypatia* Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp.125 – 138. 1987

Bogart, John H. 'On the Nature of Rape' in *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Brison, Susan T. 'Surviving Sexual Violence: A Philosophical Perspective.'
Journal of Social Philosophy 24 (1):5-22, 1993

Cahill, Ann, J. 'Foucault, Rape, and the Construction of the Feminine Body.'
Hypatia, Vol. 15, No. 1, Winter 2000, pp43-63

Conly, Sarah. 'Seduction, Rape, and Coercion' *Ethics*, Vol. 115, No. 1. Oct.,
2004, pp 96-121

Ellis, Lee. *Theories of Rape: Inquiries into the Causes of Sexual Aggression*.
London: Hemisphere Publishing Corporation. 1989.

Husak, Douglas N. and Thomas, George C. 'Date Rape, Social Convention, and
Reasonable Mistakes' *Law and Philosophy*, Vol. 11, No. 1/2 (Philosophical
Issues in Rape Law), pp. 95-126

Primoratz, Igor. Chapter 11: 'Sexual Harassment and Rape,' *Ethics and Sex*

Wertheimer, Alan. 'Consent and Sexual Relations' *Legal Theory*. Vol. 2, Issue
2, p89-112. 1996

Week 12

21) Prostitution

22) Prostitution

In these lectures we consider the debate between philosophers such as Primoratz and Ericsson, who argue that the sale of sex should be treated in the same way as the sale of other services, and those who think that prostitution is relevantly dissimilar. We will discuss whether sex is different from other services, and if so why. Secondly, we will look at the gender imbalance in prostitution, questioning whether this should be a reason to regard prostitution as morally problematic.

Suggested reading:

Ericsson, Lars O. "Charges against Prostitution: An Attempt at a Philosophical Assessment" *Ethics*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (April, 1980).

Green, Karen. 'Prostitution, Exploitation and Taboo'. *Philosophy* Vol. 64, issue 250, pp.525 - 534

O'Connell Davidson, Julia. 'The Rights and Wrongs of Prostitution.' *Hypatia* Vol. 17, issue 2, pp.84-98. (2002).

Pateman, Carole. 'Defending Prostitution: Charges against Ericsson'. *Ethics* Vol. 93, No. 3, April 1983

Primoratz, Igor. (1993). 'What's Wrong with Prostitution?' *Philosophy* Vol. 68, issue 264, pp.159 - 182.

Primoratz, Igor. Chapter 8: Prostitution, *Ethics and Sex*. London: Routledge. 1999.

Parent, William. 'A Second Look at Pornography and the Subordination of Women' in *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Shrage, Laurie. 'Should Feminists Oppose Prostitution?' in *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Stewart, Robert. 'Moral Criticism and the Social Meaning of Prostitution' in *Philosophical Perspectives on Sex and Love*.

Seminars

Week 3: The Reasons for Love

- Compulsory reading:

Keller, Simon. 'How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Count the Properties.' *American Philosophical Quarterly*. Volume 37, Number 2. (April 2000).

Discussion questions:

- 1) What justification is there for the 'no reasons' view regarding love?

- 2) Should we trust our intuitions when it comes to love?

- 3) What are the problems with the view that we love people for their properties?

- 4) Does the 'relationship view' of love provide a better account of love than the 'quality view'?

- 5) Do you think there are reasons for love? If so, what are they?

Week 4: Sex and Love

- Compulsory reading:

Scruton, Roger. Chapter 2 'Arousal' of *Sexual Desire* (a PDF is available on MOLE. When referencing you can use the page numbers from there)

- 1) Is Scruton right to say that with sex "...the aim is 'union with the other' where 'the other' denotes a particular person with a particular perspective on my actions." (p. 89)

- 1) A.H Lesser states: '... sexuality motivated by lust can still be harmless or beneficial; and love can lead to all kinds of cruelty and dishonesty.' Even though this may be held as true why do we still value love so much in sexual relationships, and hold a widespread cultural belief in monogamy?

- 2) Is sex without love less good than sex with love? If so, what kind of 'good' do we mean? Is it less morally good or simply less fulfilling?

- 3) Russell Vannoy tries to state that sex 'unencumbered' love is in fact better than sex with love. Do you agree?

- 4) Is it possible to have a romantic relationship without sexual attraction or is sexual attraction what distinguishes romantic love from friendship? If so, what is the connection between sex and romantic love?

Week 5: Monogamy and Adultery

- Compulsory reading:

Calhoun, Cheshire. 'Who's Afraid of Polygamous Marriage?' *San Diego Law Review*. 2005

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What reasons are there to be monogamous?
- 2) Does the fact that many people divorce or cheat on their partners give us reason to believe that monogamy doesn't work?
- 3) In addition to involving promise-breaking and deception, is there anything particularly wrong with adultery?
- 4) Ought polygamy be legalised?
- 5) Would the legalisation of polygamy lead to children being harmed?

Week 6: Plain Sex and Sex in the Head

- Compulsory reading:

Goldman, Alan. 'Plain Sex'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring, 1977)

- 1) Do you agree that sexual activity solely chases pleasure and that this is the only reason we venture into it?
- 2) Goldman says that love can be expressed without sex. Do you think that sex is really necessary in a loving relationship?
- 3) What do you think of Morgan's mind/body dualism approach to human sexual activity?

- 4) Goldman claims that masturbation counts as sexual activity but only as an “imaginative substitute for the real thing”. What-if anything- is wrong with categorising masturbation in this way?

- 5) Primoratz adopts the ‘plainer sex’ view. He argues that: sexual desire is desire for “the sort of bodily pleasure experienced in the sexual parts of the body or at least related to those parts in that if it is associated with arousal, the arousal occurs in those parts.” Does the plainer sex account solve the problems with the plain sex view and is this a good/plausible account of sex?

- 6) Is Goldman right that: “There is no morality intrinsic to sex, although general moral rules apply to the treatment of others in sex acts as they apply to all human relations”

Week 8: Sexual Perversion

- Compulsory reading:

Levy, Donald. ‘Perversion and the Unnatural as Moral Categories’ *Ethics* Vol. 90, pp.191-202. (1980).

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What sorts of sexual practices do you think of as perversions?
- 2) What is Nagel’s account of sexual perversion? Do you find it convincing?
- 3) How might sexual perversion be grounded in terms of unnaturalness?
- 4) Is sexual perversion morally wrong in a distinct sense?
- 5) Should the concept of sexual perversion be discarded?

Week 9: Homosexuality

- Compulsory reading:

Finnis, John and Nussbaum, Martha C., “Is Homosexual Conduct Wrong? A Philosophical Exchange”, in *The Philosophy of Sex*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Does homosexual sex fail to connect to the proper essence of sex?
- 2) What does Finnis mean when he claims that homosexual sex treats the body in an objectionable manner?
- 3) What is Devlin's argument that homosexuality should be illegal? How might it be countered?
- 4) Is a marriage that is intentionally non-procreative immoral? Or lacking in some higher good?
- 5) Should the state legalise all forms of discrimination against homosexuality?

Week 10: Paedophilia

- Compulsory reading:

Ehman, Robert. 'Adult-Child Sex' in Robert Baker and Federick Elliston (eds), *Philosophy and Sex*

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are the main arguments against adult-child sex?
- 2) If a child is not harmed by sex with an adult, and enjoyed the experience, has the adult done anything wrong?

- 3) Should there be an age of consent for children having sex with each other (e.g. two 11 year olds)? If two children have sex, and are both as consenting and willing as each other, has either of them done anything morally wrong?
- 4) Do you think that the age gap makes a big difference in our assessment of adult-child sex? For example, do you think sex between a 20 year old and a 13 year old is as bad as sex between a 40 year old and a 13 year old? Why?
- 5) Do you agree with Primoratz that we should have a 'generous conception of sexual education for children and a permissive attitude to their sexual play, exploration and pleasure?' Or are there good reasons to not tell children about sex?
- 6) Is it child abuse to show a child a porn video?

Week 11: Rape

- Compulsory reading:

Conly, Sarah. 'Seduction, Rape, and Coercion' *Ethics*, Vol. 115, No. 1. Oct., 2004, pp 96-121

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Does the fact that rape is forced sex make it different to other kinds of assault?
- 2) Conly argues that, in the context of a romantic relationship, it is not usually rape if the man threatens to break up their relationship if the woman will not have sex with him. Do you agree?
- 3) Can a man be raped by a woman?
- 4) Is it possible to provide a clear definition of rape?
- 5) If a woman consents to sex when she is drunk that she would not have

consented to had she been sober, has she been raped? Does it make a difference if the man knows she would not have consented had she been sober?

Week 12: Prostitution

- Compulsory reading:

Pateman, Carole. 'Defending Prostitution: Charges against Ericsson'. *Ethics* Vol. 93, No. 3, April 1983

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Ericsson states that 'we must liberate ourselves from those mental fossils which prevent us from looking upon sex and sexuality with the same naturalness as upon our cravings for food and drink.....coition resembles nourishment in that if it cannot be obtained in any other way it can always be bought.' Is he right?
- 2) Is it morally wrong to buy sex from someone whom is selling sex to pay for an addiction? Is it wrong to buy fruit and vegetables from a greengrocer who is selling them to pay for an addiction? Is there a morally relevant distinction between the two cases?
- 3) Pateman argues that 'sexuality and the body are...integrally connected to conceptions of femininity and masculinity, and all these are constitutive of our individuality, our sense of self-identity. When sex becomes a commodity...so, necessarily, do bodies and selves.' Do you agree? Is sex more closely related to our identity than other services in a way that makes its sale morally problematic?
- 4) Why do you think that there are so few male heterosexual prostitutes?
- 5) Should prostitution be legal?
- 6) Does prostitution play a useful role in society?

Assessment

This will be in the standard format for third year students consisting of EITHER one long essay of 4500-6000 words OR a shorter essay of 3000-4000 words + a 2 hour pre-released exam.

The essay questions will cover topics from weeks 1-6 and the exam will cover topics from weeks 7-12.

All essays must be submitted **both electronically and in paper form**. Electronic submission is done through MOLE, which you can access through your MUSE web-page. Go to the Assignments link of the relevant module, and upload your essay there. Be sure to press the submit button.

The paper copy may be submitted by handing it in to the Departmental Office (45 Victoria Street, right inside the front door) during office hours (9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (or 4 p.m. on day of deadline)).

Peer Feedback Sessions

Peer feedback sessions will take place in week 5 to help students with writing their coursework essays. In preparation for the session, you will be given a selection of fully anonymised past student essays. **You should read these essays and attempt to mark and comment upon them *before coming to the session***. During the session, you will discuss as a group the comments and marks you have given the essays, comparing them to the actual marks that the essays were given and considering how the essays might have been improved. You will thereby gain valuable insights into our marking standards and into how to read each other's draft essays and improve your own.

You will be given the opportunity to sign up for peer feedback sessions during seminars in Week 4.

Late Submission Penalties

If an essay is submitted late and you have not been granted an extension, a penalty of 5% of the mark will be deducted for each working day after the submission date. The 5 working day deadline for late submission is absolute and any work submitted after the 5 working day period without a special dispensation will receive zero marks.

Students who believe they may need an extension are advised to speak to the Director of 2nd and 3rd Year Studies (Miranda Fricker) as soon as possible. Requests for extensions when already past a deadline are not normally granted.

Unfair Means

The following four examples of unfair means in non-invigilated examinations are serious academic offences and may result in penalties that could have a lasting effect on a student's career, both at University and beyond.

Plagiarism (either intentional or unintentional) is the stealing of ideas or work of another person (including experts and fellow or former students) and is considered dishonest and unprofessional. Plagiarism may take the form of cutting and pasting, taking or closely paraphrasing ideas, passages, sections, sentences, paragraphs, drawings, graphs and other

graphical material from books, articles, internet sites or any other source and submitting them for assessment without appropriate acknowledgement.

Submitting bought or commissioned work (for example from internet sites, essay “banks” or “mills”) is an extremely serious form of plagiarism. This may take the form of buying or commissioning either the whole assignment or part of it and implies a clear intention to deceive the examiners. The University also takes an extremely serious view of any student who sells, offers to sell or passes on their own assignments to other students.

Double submission (or self plagiarism) is resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement). This may take the form of copying either the whole assignment or part of it. Normally credit will already have been given for this work.

Collusion is where two or more people work together to produce a piece of work, all or part of which is then submitted by each of them as their own individual work. This includes passing on work in any format to another student. Collusion does not occur where students involved in group work are encouraged to work together to produce a single piece of work as part of the assessment process.

The University subscribes to an electronic plagiarism detection service, which can check any piece of work against a vast database of web pages, essays available for purchase over the internet, and previously submitted student essays. This makes it fairly easy to detect plagiarism, as well as providing hard evidence to back up the claim that a student has cheated. It has resulted in numerous convictions in the past. So, do not be tempted! If you are in any doubt about what counts as fair and unfair use of other people's work, or adequate acknowledgement, ask your lecturer for advice.

Essay questions

1. Are there reasons for love? If so, what are they?
2. What, if anything, is distinct about romantic love, as opposed to other kinds of love?
3. Is there a relationship between sex and love? If so, what is it?
4. Infidelity is fairly prevalent amongst individuals in a supposedly monogamous relationship. Does this show that monogamy is an unrealistic ideal? Should the state be more supportive of non-monogamous relationships?
5. Can the Plain Sex view do justice to the complexity of human sexuality?