

St. Jerome's University in the University of Waterloo
Department of Religious Studies
Fall 2020
RS 254 Christian Sexual Ethics

Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. David B. Perrin

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Office Hours: By appointment any time mutually agreeable 10 a.m. – 12 noon and 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contact the professor by email a full 24 hours prior to your desired appointment to reserve time for a telephone conversation or WebEx conversation. Email messages sent Monday to Thursday EST will be responded to within 24 hours. Emails sent on Fridays before 12 noon EST will be responded to by 4 p.m. EST the same day. Emails sent after 12 noon EST on Fridays will be responded to by the end of the workday the following Monday EST.

Course Description:

This course exams human sexuality as a reality which incorporates all aspects of the person, for example, the affective, cognitional, psychological, sensual, relational, and spiritual. From this anthropological perspective we see how human sexuality, viewed as an integral component of all areas of human life and action, impacts Christian living. Understanding how human beings construct (e.g. through language) and regulate sexual identities and modes of sexual relating is fundamental in this course. Political bodies, religious institutions, accepted (and disputed) social norms, as well as normative interpretations of gender and sexual relationship, all contribute toward these constructions and regulations. A brief examination of the history of Christian thought on human sexuality will lead us to explore the principle perspectives in sexual ethics which form the components of the various current debates in this particular field of study. Several expressions of human sexuality will be critically examined from within the framework of Christian sexual ethics developed in this course.

Learning Objectives:

- A. To understand the fundamental terms, concepts, and reasoning used in Christian sexual ethics.
- B. To understand human sexuality as a “language.”
- C. To develop a framework that will facilitate systematic reflection on moral actions.
- D. To assess critically key themes and sources in sexual ethics.
- E. To articulate informed positions regarding contemporary issues in sexual ethics.

- **REQUIRED readings, videos, PowerPoints and other course materials: accessed through LEARN**

- **RECOMMENDED optional additional resources:**

Cahill, Lisa S., *Between the Sexes: Foundations for a Christian Ethics of Sexuality*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press; New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

Countryman, L. William, *Dirt greed & sex: Sexual ethics in the New Testament and their implications for today*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

Farley, Margaret A., *Just love: A framework for Christian sexual ethics*. New York: Continuum, 2006.

Gudorf, Christine Erhart, *Body, Sex, and Pleasure: Reconstructing Christian Sexual Ethics*, Cleveland, Pilgrim Press, 1994.

Hanigan, James P., *What are they saying about sexual morality?*, New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

Salzman, T.A and M.G. Lawler, *Sexual Ethics: A Theological Introduction*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 2012.

Class Schedule: The schedule below is to provide you with a pace of study that will support you completing all requirements for the course in a timely way. PowerPoint presentations are accessed on LEARN: go to “Content” and then to “Table of Contents” to access PowerPoint presentations by date. Readings indicated below are accessed through **e-reserve** on LEARN.

It is highly recommended you follow the reading and work schedule as indicated, that is, by the end of the date indicated you will have completed the reading or work indicated in the schedule. You can work ahead of the schedule if you so choose. Tests, LEARN posts and assignments are due on the dates/times indicated. Again, work with the schedule so you don’t get behind.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/Work
1	September 8	Course Outline	Read in detail this Course Outline
	September 10	Understanding Christian Sexual Ethics in Today’s World	PowerPoint: “Lecture 1 Premodern, modern, and postmodern self” Hendershot, “Virgins for Jesus”; Grenz, “Star Trek and the Postmodern Generation”

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/Work
			E-Reserve: CBC News – The National, “How Social Media is Effecting Teens” : Video (6:18 minutes)
2	September 15	Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics	PowerPoint: “Lecture 2 Understanding Ch Sex Ethics Differentiation” Farley, “Framework for a Sexual Ethic ...”
2	September 17	Sources of Christian Ethics	PowerPoint: “Lecture 3 Sources of Christian Ethics – Overview” Countryman, “New Testament Sexual Ethics”
3	September 22	Sources of Christian Ethics (cont.)	E-reserve: “Aristotle and Virtue Theory: CCP #38” (9:21 min.) E-reserve: “Natural Law Theory: CCP #34” (9:38 min.) PowerPoint: “Lecture 4 Natural Law” Catch up on readings or review as required; Work on Media Analysis (see below for details)
	September 24	Spirituality, Sexuality and Embodiment	PowerPoint: “Lecture 5 Gender (Sexuality) and Christian Spirituality” PowerPoint: “Lecture 6 Sexuality and Embodiment”; Work on Media Analysis E-Reserve: Bible Project, “Overview: Song of Songs” : Video (6:59 minutes)
4	September 29	Sexual Anthropology	PowerPoint: “Lecture 7 Natural Law and Sexual Anthropology” Kant, “Duties Toward the Body ...”; Kant, “An Answer to the Question ...” Word Document: “Fundamental Course Concepts” [to date]
	October 1	Review; Work on Media Analysis	Work on Media Analysis; Review “Fundamental Course Concepts” and work on preparation for Test One: See “Test ONE Fall 2020 Review Questions”

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/Work
5	October 6	Media Analysis Due! Review; Prepare for Test One	Review "Fundamental Course Concepts"; Review and work on preparation for Test One: See "Test ONE Fall 2020 Review Questions"
	October 8	Test One	LEARN Quizzes:Test One
	READING WEEK Oct 12-16		
6	October 20	Sexual Fecundity; The Role of Pleasure; Celibacy	PowerPoint: "Lecture 8 Sexual Fecundity PLEASURE" Abbott, "Later Christianity ..."
	October 22	Sexual Violence Against Women; Patriarchy	PowerPoint: "Lecture 9 Violence Against Women NOTES From Fiorenza" Kaufman, "Pain Flows from the Source of Power ..."; Fiorenza, "Ties That Bind ..."
7	October 27	Issues of Sexual Expression: Reproductive Sexual Ethics; Abortion	PowerPoint: "Lecture 10 Abortion within a Christian Framework" Nelson, "Embryos and Ethics"; Kissling, "Is There Life After Roe ...";
	October 29	Issues of Sexual Expression: Reproductive Sexual Ethics (cont.)	Traina, "Papal Ideal, Marital Realities"
8	November 3	Issues of Sexual Expression: Sexual Fantasies; Pornography	PowerPoint: "Lecture 11 Sexual Fantasies and Pornography Nelson; Guindon" Guindon, "Sexual Fantasies"; Nelson, "The Morality of Sexual Variations," 160-168.
	November 5	Review; Prepare for Test Two	Review: work on preparation for Test Two
	November 10	Test Two	LEARN Quizzes: Test Two

Week	Date	Topic	Reading/Work
9	November 12	Issues of Sexual Expression: Masturbation; Oral-Genital Expression; Anal Intercourse	PowerPoint: "Lecture 12 Masturbation" Nelson, "The Morality of Sexual Variations," 152-160; 168-179
10	November 17 November 19	Issues of Sexual Expression: Homosexuality and Same-Sex Relationships Issues of Sexual Expression Last date for LEARN postings.	PowerPoint: "Lecture 13 Bible Quotes on Homosexuality" Hendershot, "Holiness Codes..." Haldeman, "A Queer Fidelity..." E-reserve: Dallas Theological Seminary, "Discussing Homosexuality and Sexuality together" : Video (19:21 minutes) Nelson, "Sources for Body Theology ..."; Salzman/Lawler, "Homosexuality"
11 11	November 24 November 26	Issues of Sexual Expression: Cohabitation Term Review	PowerPoint: "Lecture 14 Cohabitation and History of Marriage" Review: Work on preparation for Test Three
12	December 1 December 3	Term Review Test Three	Review: Work on preparation for Test Three LEARN Quizzes: Test Three END OF COURSE

Marking Scheme for Course Evaluation/Final Grade:

LEARN Original Postings: 10%

LEARN Response Postings: 10%

Media Analysis: 10%

Test One: 20%

Test Two: 25%

Instructions for Assignments:

Media Analysis: Due by October 6: 11:30 p.m. EST

1. **Choose a media piece, eg. an ad or a short article** from the internet, out of a newspaper, or popular review, or a magazine, in which the notion or expression of human sexuality and/or sexuality activity is apparent (either explicitly or implicitly). An ad is especially suitable for this assignment. Submit an electronic copy or scan the page(s) of the ad or article. This must be included with your paper in the Dropbox. Be sure to include the full reference (e.g. title, date of publication and page number if it is a magazine for example) in your paper. Alternatively, you may choose a short YouTube Video not longer than 4 minutes in length. The same analysis applies as indicated below. Submit the hyper-link of the YouTube video with your paper in the Dropbox.
Length: Your written analysis is 900-1000 words.

2. **Elements to include in your written analysis:**

- i. Describe the general position (model) the author has taken on sexuality and/or the sexual activity?
- ii. What is the author's perspective on the specific issue being treated?
- iii. What norms and values are being reflected?
- iv. What are the characteristics of the sexual anthropology – either implied or explicit -- in the piece?
- v. Evaluate the position of the author according to what we have studied in the readings, other course Content and the PowerPoint presentations posted on LEARN. The evaluation of the media piece is a values-based analysis according to the framework for Christian sexual ethics being developed in this course.

(Question from a student inquiry last time: "Don't some of the elements overlap?" Response: You are correct that some of the elements overlap. But each element also has its own specificity: for example, i. get's at the portrayal of human sexuality generally speaking; ii. asks what the author specifically is trying to get at; iii. takes the analysis further into either a criticism of norms and values or perhaps upholding certain norms and values; iv. deals with "what it means to be human"; and then v. is your analysis of all of this. So, yes, overlap but also distinction. Remember, to assist in this piece of work are also

the concepts which we have studied in the course to date as well as the example of media analysis done in the "Virgins For Jesus" article.)

Practical advice for doing this assignment: This work is essentially one of reflection and critique using the readings and LEARN Content. I do not expect to find a bibliography and references other than that of the media piece itself. Avoid critiquing the media piece in general. Provide specific critique and analysis of the specific points you have highlighted according to the outline above. Discuss the media piece from the perspective of Christian sexual ethics.

LEARN Original Postings: Up until November 19 your 10 brief *summaries* of an assigned reading/video or *principal points* from an assigned reading/video or points you found of *particular interest* in an assigned reading/video can be posted on the LEARN site. You can post only one original posting **per reading/video**, that is, you can start only one thread per assigned reading/video. Your original LEARN post must be a minimum of 5 sentences per posting, based on the above description, in order to be awarded the 1% per posting. Students may read and comment on the postings of all other students. Note that the postings must be done by 11:30 p.m. EST on the day the reading/video is due. The LEARN site closes for postings on that reading/video at that time. Try to post ahead of the deadline to give other students an opportunity to read and respond to your post.

LEARN Response Postings: Respond to 10 different original LEARN Posts (threads) which other students make on LEARN to get the 10% for this part of the course. You can respond only once *for the mark* per original LEARN post (thread) by another student. Your Response Post to an original thread must be a minimum of 5 sentences, based on the above description, in order to be awarded the 1% per posting. Please note that the LEARN site closes at 11:30 p.m. the day readings/videos are assigned; your response needs to be posted prior to that time. Students can read and comment on your response to the postings so, in order to give them an opportunity to do so, it would be helpful to post well before the 11:30 p.m. EST deadline. You will also benefit from other students posting a few hours ahead of the deadline so you can respond to them. The last opportunity for responding to postings is November 19.

Asking Questions: You are encouraged to ask questions on lecture material, either assigned readings or PowerPoints posted on LEARN. Please make an appointment as stated above to discuss your questions with the Professor.

What to call professors: "Professor" or "Doctor" works well for both men and women.

Tests: All Tests are written and done on-line through the LEARN site for this course under "Quizzes." They will contain questions based on the compulsory readings and the PowerPoint material presented in the course as listed below in "Important Dates to Remember."

Important Dates to Remember:

October 6 Media Analysis: Due by 11:30 p.m. EST

October 8 Test One: content: *all* material to date

November 6 Test Two: content: since last test only (October 20–November 5)

November 19 Last chance to post on LEARN

November 29 Test Three: content: September 10-October 6; November 12-26

Course Website Information: LEARN

Using your WatIAM username and password, you can access the course website at:
<http://learn.uwaterloo.ca>

LEARN is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (e.g. posting of resource materials), interact with their students (e.g. drop boxes for student submissions, on-line quizzes, discussion boards, and e-mail students), and provide feedback (e.g. grades and assignment comments). The degree to which LEARN is utilized in a particular course is left to the discretion of the instructor; therefore, you may find a large variance in how LEARN is being used from one course to another.

On the RS 254 course website, you will be able to:

- . Engage other students
- . Download PowerPoint slides
- . Submit your written assignment
- . Access some reading material
- . Read announcements
- . Do the Tests under Submit/Quizzes
- . View some of your grades

Important Note on PowerPoint Presentations by the Professor: The Professor's select lecture slides posted on LEARN do not substitute for your own notetaking from the readings posted on E-reserve and listed in the Course Outline.

For further help on LEARN you may visit the help website at:
<https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students>

You may also contact support staff via e-mail at: learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca

Correspondence and Appointments:

Appointments with the Professor are during office hours. If these hours do not work please suggest an alternative date/time and I will accommodate as much as possible. When requesting an appointment do so a full 24 hours of your desired time and indicate your desired date and time of the day (or provide a couple options if you like). Students using email to contact me must include their first and last names, student number, and course in which they are enrolled *in the email subject line*. Your "@uwaterloo.ca" email account is the preferred account for email communications with the Professor in this course. Commercial email accounts (such as "Hotmail") are sometimes blocked by spam filters. Email is not conducive to

discussion and not an alternative way to receive class material and thus will not be used for such. Appointments with the Professor are the appropriate way to deal with your questions.

Professors welcome hearing from students, and emails are a great opportunity to practice your skills in professional communication when setting up your appointment with the Professor. Good professional format includes a standard greeting (“Dear Professor or Doctor [name],”); unless it’s well into the semester, identifying yourself (“I’m a student in your RS 254 Class”); using your best grammar; proofreading; and signing off formally (“Sincerely, [your name]”). When you get a response, it’s a good habit to send a note of acknowledgment and, if appropriate, thanks.

Discussion of assignments, class material, or other issues that may arise is welcome to be the subject of discussion during an appointment with the Professor. In order to be sure I am available during office hours (for example, I am not meeting with another student) it is helpful to make an appointment at least 24 hours ahead of the desired appointment time. However, if you want to take a chance, please feel free to send an email during office hours to see if I am available for a discussion (for example, again, I may be with another student). If I am not available please send me another email to make an appointment with a specific date and time that fits your schedule during office hours.

Late Work

Part of a university education is learning to organize your time given the multiple demands on your time and talent. Planning and organizing ahead to ensure readings and assignments are completed within the deadlines is necessary. Unless an extension is requested in writing (at least 48 hours ahead of a due date/time) – and granted in writing – a penalty of 10% is applied if assignments are not turned in at the time they are due. Thereafter, for each day the assignment is late – calculated as of 4 p.m. – a further 5% penalty is applied.

Essay Writing, Formatting, References, etc.: For instructions on how to write and cite correctly please refer to <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre>
Also access the following tutorial for excellent information on plagiarism from Indiana University: <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd>

Policies Regarding Illness and Missed Tests; Other Information

[The University of Waterloo Examination Regulations](#) state that:

- A medical certificate presented in support of an official petition for relief from normal academic requirements must provide all of the information requested on the “[University of Waterloo Verification of Illness](#)” form or it will not be accepted. This form can be obtained from Health Services or on the link provided above. If a student has a test/examination deferred due to acceptable medical evidence, he/she normally will write the test/examination at a mutually convenient time, to be determined by the course instructor.
- The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University

community, some students may on religious grounds require alternative times to write tests and examinations.

- Elective arrangements (such as travel plans) are not considered acceptable grounds for granting an alternative examination time.

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) webpage [for more information](#).

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the [St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. [Read the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome’s University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the [St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.