***Sexual Ethics***

**50:730:393**

**Margaret Betz, Ph.D. MW 12:30-1:50pm**

Office hours: 12:30-1:50pm Tuesday & Thursday Room 306, 429 Cooper St.

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**Text**: PDFs, links to online readings on our Canvas site, and directions to find the article or book online through the university library system. Each week’s reading link will appear under that week’s **Module**.

***Course Description***: This course examines various philosophical and ethical issues related to the behaviors, practices, norms, and attitudes around sexuality. Topics include consent and sexual assault; monogamy and non-monogamy; surrogacy; and sex work.

The course will include partnership with the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance.

The course fulfills the EAV Gen Ed requirements:

**ETHICS AND VALUES (EAV)**  
General education courses in this area focus on the exploration of the nature and demands of ethical reasoning about right and wrong human conduct and/or the ways in which individuals and communities articulate and embody their values. Students will learn how to think critically about and to evaluate individual, social, and cultural judgments of good and bad, right and wrong, justice and injustice, and to apply these ethical concepts to historical debates and contemporary dilemmas in areas such as politics, medicine, business, gender, ethnicity, the environment, culture, and religion. Upon completing a course in this category, students should be able to do at least three of the following:

1. Interpret, explain, and compare significant systems and theories of human ethics and/or values.  
   2. Examine ways in which ethical values change over time and/or differ across cultures and historical periods.  
   3. Analyze ethical debates in terms of their underlying assumptions and implications.  
   4. Recognize the ethical values at stake in practical, concrete, and/or everyday situations.  
   5. Apply ethical reasoning toward solving practical problems.  
   6. Formulate, communicate, and evaluate effective ethical arguments.

In this course, students will engage with:

1., 2.and 3. Students will consider traditional views throughout history about various sexual practices, behaviors, and standards. Students will be encouraged to assess those positions and provide moral arguments that critique them. For instance, the complexities surrounding sexual consent have historically resulted in evolving discussions about things like consent within a relationship, consent regarding non-traditional sexual practices, etc. Students will be encouraged to carefully define “consent” through consulting various scholarly works and ethically assess past and contemporary interpretations.

4. Students will be encouraged to examine the various ways “sexual ethics” expresses itself in their own lives, through examples like the expectations of their own romantic lives; the accepted behavior and practices among their peers and people of their generation; and the ways these practices and behaviors might be improved through the insights of the arguments covered in the course material.

This course also fulfills the XPL Gen Ed learning goals:

**Experiential Learning General Education Goals**

**Course and Partnership Characteristics**

1. Experiential learning classes must offer formal, supervised settings in which educators purposefully engage with students in direct experience and focused reflection to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values and utilize theory in applied practice. Courses that involve activities outside the classroom must provide adequate preparation and support for such activities, like providing transportation to off-campus sites or instruction in community safety.
2. Course-specific learning outcomes will reflect the goals of the specific discipline(s) and be met through hands-on experience. Examples of the kinds of course that are likely to involve experiential learning include, but are not limited to, clinical education, cooperative education, field-work, internships, practicums, service learning, study abroad programs and primary research.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes for students in experiential learning courses should include:

1. Application of ideas, concepts, and skills developed at the university, departmental or course level(s) to new and different contexts;
2. Active reflection on the meaning of their experience through journal entries, blog posts, discussion boards, discussion groups, team meetings, sketches, field notes, or similar activities;
3. Production of a final project, paper, presentation or creative work that provides a synthesis of their experience and research.

In this course, students will engage with:

1. (Partnership) Through partnership with the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance, students will be introduced to real life examples and discussions of the various topics covered in the course, including sexual consent and sexual assault; empathetic aid to victims; and advice for the best policies regarding the prevention of sexual assault on college campuses.
2. (Student Learning) Students will keep a journal throughout the semester reflecting on the course material and class discussions. They will be invited to consider and critique the sexual practices and norms of contemporary culture and their peers.
3. (Student Learning) Students will be assigned a final paper that requires them to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the course’s scholarly works and apply their conclusions to real life examples, whether an example from their own lives, a current event, or a contemporary norm or practice. Another final paper option will involve reflecting on what they have learned from university events/guest speakers/volunteering with the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance.

**Guidelines and Class Policies**

**Success in this course**: active involvement with the course weekly and in general making a good effort will all lead to the better chance of doing well in this course. Throughout the semester I will post Announcements on our Canvas site with reminders about upcoming assignments, clarifications, and notification if I need to miss class. You must regularly check your university email and regularly visit our Canvas site in order to pass the course.

It is important that we all maintain a respectful, comfortable course dynamic. Philosophical topics involve debate, which are expected to be carried out in a respectful manner. Many of these topics include details that will be potentially sensitive areas of discussion to students in the course (sexual assault, sexual identity, etc.); please do your best to recognize in discussions that what is a purely theoretical argument to you may be insulting or dehumanizing to someone directly affected by it. Also, material and topics of a sexual nature will be discussed this semester as well. Please stay mindful to discuss them in respectful ways suitable for classroom decorum.

All assignments submitted should have normal margins and spacing and be in 12 font. Failure to follow directions will negatively impact the grade. Check to make sure your submissions to Canvas’ Assignments go through. If I cannot open a file because it’s corrupted, I will deduct points from your grade. If there is any doubt your assignment successfully uploaded, email it to me immediately at  [margbetz@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:margbetz@camden.rutgers.edu) to timestamp when you submitted it.

**Attendance:** Because of Covid regulations create various restriction about coming onto campus, I cannot enforce an attendance policy this semester. However *you are responsible* for whatever is covered each class meeting. It’s best to buddy-up with someone else in the course to contact for missed notes or discussions for whatever days you miss.

 Please see the university’s updated **Academic Integrity Policy** here. [https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)](https://deanofstudents.camden.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity)

 As with any course, there is the full expectation that  the material you hand in is exclusively your own. **Plagiarism will result in failure.**

**Disability services:**Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

[https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form at [https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)](https://webapps.rutgers.edu/student-ods/forms/registration)

Here is the link:

[https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services (Links to an external site.) (Links to an external site.)](https://success.camden.rutgers.edu/disability-services)

**Student Needs -** the university has created an easy navigation site to direct students for their out-of-class needs. See here:

<https://studentaffairs.camden.rutgers.edu/who-contact>

**Course Assignments and Grading:**

**Participation: 10%**philosophy requires that we discuss, debate (and often challenge!) the philosophical arguments presented in the readings. Participation is an important aspect of the course. It can be carried out through any/all of the following: contributing to class discussion, speaking to me after class or during my office hours, email exchanges about the course reading material.

**Journal 20%:** every two weeks you will write something in your online journal that reflects on the course material. These entries will not be graded on content but simply on the fact they have been completed/not completed.

**Midterm Exam 20%** This will include all material covered up until this point.

**Final Paper 20%** A **5** paged double-spaced paper due on the last class day. During the semester, I will give you a list of possible paper topics from which you may choose **one**topic.

**Final Exam 25%**The Final Exam will be the same format as the Midterm and will cover only the second half of the course.

Your final grade in this course determines your letter grade, applying the following scale:

A 90% and above

B+ 85% to 89%

B 80% to 84%

C+ 75% to 79%

C 70% to 74%

D 60% to 69%

F Below 59%

***Course Outline:***

**September W 7** Introduction to the course

**M 12** Ethical Frameworks

**W 14** Ethical Frameworks continued

**M19** **Consent:** Carole Pateman “Women and Consent”

**M 21 [no class]** “The Purity Myth” on Kanopy <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/databases/kanopy>

**M 26** Antioch College’s Sexual Assault Prevention Policy <https://antiochcollege.edu/campus-life/sexual-offense-prevention-policy-title-ix/#:~:text=All%20sexual%20interactions%20at%20Antioch,not%20tolerated%20at%20Antioch%20College.>

**W 28** Quill Kukla “That’s What She Said”

**October M 3** Katherine Angel excerpt from *Tomorrow Sex Will Be Good Again: Women and Desire in the Age of Consent*

**W 5** Sylvia Burrow “Gender and Politeness, Self-Respect and Autonomy”

**M10 Midterm Review**

**W 12 Midterm Exam**

**M 17** guest speaker – Bindu Jayne, Title IX officer at Swarthmore College

**W 19 Sex Work:**  Julie BindelSex Trade/Slave Trade article

**M 24** *Debating Sex Work* – Lori Watson and the Nordic Model

**W 26**  Watson continued

**M 31** Flanigan and Decriminalization

**November W 2** Flanigan continued

**M 7** Sex Work Advocacy group <https://www.hips.org/sex-worker-advocates-coalition-swac.html#:~:text=SWAC%20is%20a%20group%20of,of%20criminalization%20of%20sex%20work.>

**W 9 Sexual Assault and Harassment:** Anita Hill documentary “Speaking Truth to Power”

**M 14** Claudia Card “Rape as a Terrorist Institution”

**W 16** Tarana Burke excerpt from *Unbound*

**M 21** Debra Bergoffen “(Un)gendering Vulnerability: Re-scripting the Meaning of Male-Male Rape”

**W 23 \*Thanksgiving Break\***

**M 28 Surrogacy:** Jorgenson“Paternalism, Surrogacy, and Exploitation”

**W 30** Tieu “Objectification of the Surrogate Mother”

**December M5 Non-Monogamy**: Brake “Is Loving More Better?”

W 7 excerpts from *The Ethical Slut*

M 12 *Ethical Slut* continued

W 14 Concluding remarks

***Sexual Assault***:

Kelly Oliver, “Rape as a Spectator Sport and Creep Shot Entertainment: Social Media and the Valorization of the Lack of Consent” *American Studies Journal* (10):1-16, 2015

Debra Bergoffen, “Gendering Vulnerability: Re-Scripting the Meaning of Male-Male Rape”  - 2014 - Symposium 18 (1):164-175.

Claudia Card, “Rape as a Terrorist Institution” in *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Excerpts from *Rethinking Rape* Ann Cahill, Cornell Press, 2001

Lisa Campo-Engelstein, “Rape as a Hate Crime: An Analysis of New York Law” - 2016 - Hypatia 31 (1):91-106.

Sarah Miller Clark, “Resisting Sexual Violence: What Empathy Offers” In Wanda Teays (ed.), [*Analyzing Violence Against Women*](https://philpapers.org/rec/TEAAVA). New York: Springer. pp. 63-77 (2019)

Excerpts from *Unbound: My Story of Liberation and the Birth of Me Too*. Tarana Burke, Flatiron Press, 2021

***Consent***:

Antioch College’s Sexual Consent Policy

<https://antiochcollege.edu/campus-life/sexual-offense-prevention-policy-title-ix/>

Carole Pateman, “Women and Consent”  - 1980 - Political Theory 8 (2):149-168.

Quill Kukla, “That’s What She Said: the Language of Sexual Negotiation” - 2018 - Ethics 129 (1):70-97.

Sylvia Burrow, “[Gendered Politeness, Self-Respect, and Autonomy](https://philpapers.org/rec/BURGPS)” - 2008 - In Bernard Mulo Farenkia (ed.), [*In De la Politesse Linguistique au Cameroun / Linguistic Politeness in Cameroon*](https://philpapers.org/rec/MULIDL). Peter Lang.

***Sex Work***:

Excerpts from *Debating Sex Work* Jessica Flannigan and Lori Watson, Oxford University Press, 2020

Excerpts from *Playing the Whore: The Work of Sex Work*, Melissa Gera Grant, Verso Books, 2014.

***Monogamy and Non-Monogamy***:

Excerpts from *The Ethical Slut*, Dossie Easton and Janet Hardy, Greenery Press, 1997

Elizabeth Brake “Is ‘Loving More’ Better?: The Values of Polyamory,” *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, 7th edition, ed. Raja Halwani, Sarah Hoffman, and Alan Soble (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), pp. 201-220.

John Portmann, “Chatting is not Cheating,” *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*, 7th edition, ed. Raja Halwani, Sarah Hoffman, and Alan Soble (Rowman and Littlefield, 2017).

***Surrogacy***

Rosalie Ber, “Ethical Issues and Gestational Surrogacy” [*Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*](https://philpapers.org/asearch.pl?pub=1085) 21 (2):153-169 (2000)

M. M. Tieu, “Altruistic Surrogacy: The Necessary Objectification of Surrogate Mothers” [*Journal of Medical Ethics*](https://philpapers.org/asearch.pl?pub=547) 35 (3):171-175 (2009)

Christine Overall, “Reproductive ‘Surrogacy’ and Parental Licensing”  2015 - Bioethics 29 (5):353-361.

Henrik Jorgensen, “Paternalism, Surrogacy, and Exploitation” [*Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*](https://philpapers.org/asearch.pl?pub=630) 10 (1):39-58 (2000)

**Film**: *Flirting with Danger: Power and Choice In Heterosexual Relationships*

***Course Assignments:*** Assignments for the course will encourage students to actively engage with, reflect on, and critique cultural norms and current events related to course material. Assignments will include reflection writing through semester-long journals; using course material to critique a current event; engagement through various events/volunteering with the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance; and scaffolding writing assignments where students assess their positions on various topics at the beginning of the semester and at the end, reflecting on how their position changed and why.

***Possible Course Activities*** Partnership with the Office of Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance includes these possible activities: guest speakers from this Office visiting the class; course requirements that involve attending/volunteering for Office-sponsored events and lectures; and assignments that engage course reading material with events/speakers.