EMT3934/6934*
Good Sex: Theo-ethics and Social Dis/order

Dr. Marilyn Legge
Room 210
Office hour: Wednesday 3 pm – 4 pm
Or by appointment: m.legge@utoronto.ca

* Pre-requisites: ethics, theology, bible
* Designated Elective: theology/ethics

Course Description
This course aims 1) to deepen awareness of personal, social, cultural, and religious dimensions of sexuality, especially as these affect being human in intersecting embodied relations, and 2) to frame a constructive Christian sexual ethics. It will explore the meaning and requirements of sexual justice for church and wider publics by critically appropriating insights and responding to challenges from various sources, including scriptures, traditions and feminist and GBLTQI movements. Seminar discussion. Written work: short engagement paper (15%); book review (25%); text presentation (20 %); final integrative project (40%).

Learning Outcomes -- Upon completion of this class, students in relation to:

1. **Christian Faith and Heritage**
   - Demonstrate knowledge of Christian heritage and ability to articulate one’s own theological position in relation to sources and norms for doing theology and ethics with reference to sexuality and social order. **HOW**: Written work, text presentation, use of the guiding critical questions.

2. **Culture and Context**
   - Demonstrate an ability to employ methods of contextual analysis and to be informed by them;
   - Show evidence of critical self-awareness with regard to one’s own and other faith perspectives and practices. **HOW**: practice using critical guiding questions to explore and put into dialogue different positions regarding sexuality and ethics; develop and articulate features of one’s own constructive Christian sexual ethic, including the significance of embodiment, moral agency and justice-love in community. **HOW**: in all written work, especially the Final Project.

Texts (Available at CRUX BOOKS and on the EC Library Reserve shelf)
3. For Book Review, one Marvin Ellison, *Making Love Just: Sexual Ethics for the Rest of Us*  
   OR Marie Fortune, *Love Does No Harm*
4. Reading Packet = RP. Purchase at Vic Print Shop, basement of Old Vic.

*AD EMT 6934: Margaret Farley, Just Love*

Recommended (*book review options, on reserve) WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHY
- James Alison, *On Being Liked*
- Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*
- Lisa Sowel Cahill, *Sex, Gender and Christian Ethics*
- Patrick Cheng, *Radical Love: An Introduction to Queer Theology*
- Patrick Cheng, *Rainbow Theology: Bridging Race, Sexuality and Spirit*
- Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being*
- Kelly Brown Douglas, *Sexuality and the Black Church*
*Marvin Ellison, *Making Love Just: Sexual Ethics for Perplexing Times*
*Margaret A. Farley, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics*
*Marie M. Fortune, *Love Does No Harm: Sexual Ethics for the Rest of Us*
  Eleanor Haney and Susan Davies, eds. *Redefining Sexual Ethics*
  Lisa Isherwood and E. Stuart, *Introducing Body Theology*
*Mark Jordan, *The Ethics of Sex*
  Margaret D. Kamitsuka, ed. *The Embrace of Eros*
*Karen Lebacqz and Ronald Barton, *Sex in the Parish*
  Karen Lebacqz with David Sinacore-Guinn, eds. *Sexuality: A Reader*
*Gerald Loughlin, *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body*
*Melanie May, *A Body Knows: A Theopoetics of Death and Resurrection*
  Elizabeth Stuart and Adrian Thatcher, eds. *Christian Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender*
  Elizabeth Stuart and Adrian Thatcher, *People of Passion: What the Churches Teach About Sex*
*Kathleen Talvacchia et.al. Queer Christianities: Lived Religion in Transgressive Forms*
*Justin Tanis, *Transgendered: Theology, Ministry and Communities of Faith*
*Tracy J. Trothen, *Linking Sexuality and Gender: Naming Violence against Women in the United Church of Canada*
  Johanna van Wijk-Bos, *Called Out With: Stories of Solidarity in Support of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People*

**Class Rhythm**
Each week come prepared for informed discussion of the day’s topic. This will include reading, reflection and “processing” before hand and along the way. We will balance attention to the assigned common texts with space for your questions, dialogue, quiet reflection, and instructor’s input.

**Emmanuel College Attendance Policy**
Academic credit for a course requires regular class attendance, whether or not this is stated in the syllabus and is not just a matter of completing the assignments. Attendance means being present in the class for the entire scheduled class meeting, not just part of it. In the event of absence for any reason including sickness, students are responsible for any information or class content missed. Students are expected to inform the professor prior to class; she may require additional work to make up for an absence and will be required to inform the Basic Degree Committee if students miss two classes. For students who miss three classes, this may result in a lower grade or even a failing grade for the course. If attendance is poor due to extenuating circumstances, students may petition the Basic Degree Committee to drop a course without academic or financial penalty. For all other academic policies consult the TST BD Handbook.

**Accessibility services and learning accommodations** = [http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca](http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca)
Students with diverse learning styles are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations to facilitate your learning, please contact the instructor and/or the University of Toronto Office of Accessibility Services as soon as possible. Because it takes time to implement accommodations, the sooner you meet with a counsellor at Accessibility Services, the sooner the counsellor can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. Please contact the Accessibility Services by e-mail at [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca)

**Inclusivity Policy**
“Emmanuel College is intentionally inclusive, welcoming people regardless of ethnic or racial origin, faith expression, gender, age, or sexual orientation. The current community of faculty, staff and students is composed of a variety of people who come together for the common purpose of theological study in the Torontonian, Canadian, North American and global contexts.”

*Emmanuel College Basic Degree Handbook.*
EMT 3934 Course Requirements

1. **Short Engagement Paper** (3 - 4 pages, 750 – 1000 words max) (15%)  
   In 750-1000 words, write about what you have been discovering over the last few years about yourself as a sexual person. For example, what things do you now realize about yourself that you wish someone had told you five, ten or more years ago? How do these discoveries affect your self-presence/sense of personhood and your relationships with others? Comment on or connect with at least two ideas or insight in 2 or more of the readings. Cite your references, e.g., (Soelle, 124). What are your questions now? What do you want to explore next? **Due January 11.**

2. **Discussion leadership on one topic.** (3 – 5 pages, 750 – 1000 words plus one page handout) (20%)  
   You will each take a turn teaching the material of one week. i) While it might include the briefest of summaries, it is not just a summary paper. Choose something that you find compelling, challenging or of particular interest. For example, you might consider what norms/action guidelines, values, obligations, vision and/or practices the authors contribute to reconstructing Christian sexual ethics. You do not necessarily have to arrive at conclusions; you want to engage the material to open up discussion. ii) Bring a one-page handout for the class that includes 2-3 key points from the text(s) (citing some references/page numbers so your peers can see where you engage the author and can join the text discussion later). Ask at least one question you want the group to think with you about.  
   After the instructor has made any necessary comments about the topic and the flow of the course, you will have 15 minutes to present. **Sign up in second week of class.**  
   (Tip: “Questions to Guide your reading and work” may help you to frame your reading and presentation/response.)

3. **Book Review** (5 – 7 double-spaced, 1250 – 1750 words), **Due Feb 15 OR Feb 28 (25%)**  
   **Choose one:** Marvin Ellison, *Making Love Just OR* Marie Fortune, *Love Does No Harm*  
   First, explicate the audience of the book, its purpose, and how the author meets it -- *from the author's point of view*. Then, having listened carefully to the author, next offer your comments in dialogue: affirm strengths, note weaknesses or limits in terms of *what the book’s stated aim is* and of its contribution to a contemporary Christian sexual ethics. Feel free to bring in other course materials in dialogue and offer something that you find particularly important – or that you challenge – and why.

4. **Final Project** (40%) (8-10 typed, double-spaced pages, 2000-2500 words,) **DUE Tuesday 11 April**  
   **EITHER:** A. Integrative Essay  OR  B. A Theo-Ethical Issue Related to Sexuality and Social Order  
   **A. A constructive proposal for a contemporary Christian [religious] sexual ethics.**  
   Develop your own proposal or emerging stance for a contemporary Christian sexual ethics. At this point, how do you understand sexuality as a moral and theological issue? What are the key assumptions and values you hold? What issues and concerns are central to this ethics and why? What would you want the churches to be teaching about sexuality? Name one or two practices for such teaching. (Make sure to explain--give reasons for-- your current position/understanding. What marks or criteria demonstrate when Christian communities and wider societies are serving common good? Use two or more perspectives from the readings (it can include but not rely heavily on your book review) which you have found most instructive (helpful or problematic) for developing your own theo-ethics. Speak both to personal and social/political dimensions of sexuality as lived experience. If you are a candidate for ministry, explicitly address your church context in relation to issues of sexuality and ministry.

   **B. A Theo-Ethical Issue Related to Sexuality and Social Order**  
   Reflect ethnically on a topic of concern to you in relation to this course (e.g., “the family,” marriage, celibacy, singleness; sexual violence; HIV/AIDS; sexuality and disability; sexuality and consequences of use of power in church and congregation...). Your essay should include: (1) a statement of the problem, (2) clarification of your interest in the topic (and what’s at stake for you and one of your communities), (3) review of pertinent literature (minimum of 3 journal articles and 2 books; (4) identification of sources and an analysis of how specific ethical norms apply to this issue; (5) discussion of obstacles as well as resources found in the Christian tradition, (6) explication of your own ethical position and (7) elements/strategies you advocate for living out a constructive Christian ethics. **Due: Tuesday 11 April by email and in the Main Office.**
NOTE: To receive your final paper after it has been marked, you must either submit with the paper a stamped self-addressed envelope, OR pick up the paper from me in my office.

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As per EMT 3934 following alterations below, plus ALL additional reading noted AD*.

1. Engagement paper (5 pages, 1000 words max) (15%) In response to the assigned readings, clarify each author’s main concern, practice applying several of the Guiding Questions. Conclude with an insight, concern and/or a question for dialogue.

2. Discussion leadership/text presentation. (30 %) As above but using an additional text (author/essay/book) relevant to your topic.

3. Book Review (20%) (1250 - 1500 words, double-spaced) Due February 15
Choose a book from the Recommended List and confer with Legge. As above in EMT 3934, explicate the purpose/argument of the book from the author’s point of view. Use selected “Guiding Questions” to frame and discuss the method, sources and norms used by the author. Conclude with your comments on strengths and/or weaknesses you identify and where you stand on their contributions to a contemporary sexual ethics. Email m.legge@utoronto.ca and bring hard copy to class.

4. Final project (40%) For either option, write 15 – 20 pages 750 - 5000 words, pages, use a minimum of 5 articles, 2 books (3 if you include your book reviewed.)

Criteria of ALL Written Work

- Overall clarity of your thinking and expression.
- Your critical engagement with texts, including demonstration of your understanding of the author’s points and ability to evaluate them fairly.
- Your ability to state and give reasons (an accounting for) your own position in relation to other voices, similar and different, in the course.
- Demonstration of familiarity and ability to apply the Guiding Questions.
- Late work will be penalized 1 percentage point per day.

See also The Emmanuel College Basic Degree Handbook, “Written Work” TST Grading Scale.
EMT 3934/6934  Course Outline

1. January 4  Getting Started
   Introductions, syllabus and
   Generating questions/learning goals + your learning goals (handout);
   Making connections: bodies/sex + theology/ethics
   Sign up for text presentations on one of weeks 3 – 11.

2. January 11  Rethinking Sexuality, Positioning Our Work
   Read:  Marvin Ellison, “Sexuality and Spirituality…Connection” (pdf)
        Dorothee Soelle, “Ecstasy and Trust” in To Work and To Love: A Theology of
        Creation, 120 – 139 (RP)
        Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic” in Sexuality and the Sacred, 69-72
   AD*:  Margaret Farley, Just Love, ch.1
          Jeffrey Weeks, Introduction: Values, whose values?” (RP)
          Stephen Seidman, “Theoretical Perspectives” (RP)
   ENG DUE Engagement Paper: “Rethinking sexuality, positioning myself”

3. January 18  Christian Sexual Ethics: Methods and Sources
   Read:  Patrick Cheng, Radical Love, Intro and chapter 1, ix – 24
       Ellison, “Introduction: Why do we have to keep talking about sex all the time?”
       Making Love Just, pp. 7 – 22 (Book on Library Shelf)
       Farley, Just Love ch. 2, “The Questions and Their Past”
       Plaskow, “Authority . . . Jewish Feminist Reflections on Good Sex,” Body + Soul
   AD*:  Marvin Ellison, “What Makes “Good Sex” Good?” (RP)

4. January 25  Sexuality, Spirituality, Embodiment
   Read:  Stuart and Thatcher, “The Body,” People of Passion, 89 - 112 (RP)
       Sexuality and Spirituality, Part 2: Introduction, Lorde, Cannon, Nelson,
       Cheng, Kwok (Douglas recommended)
       James Nelson, “Embracing Masculinity” (RP)
       Farley, Just Love, ch. 4 “Sexuality and its Meanings,”
       Jackie Leah Scully, “When Embodiment Isn’t Good” (RP) OR
       Sharon Betcher, “Monstrocities, Miracles &Mission: Religion and the Politics
       of Disablement” (RP)
   FYI:  Lisa Cahill, “The ‘body’ – in context” in Sex, Gender, Christian Ethics, 73 -107

5. February 1  Constructions of Gender, Race and Sexual Identities
   Read:  Sexuality and Spirituality Part 3 -- Choose 3 of Gudorf, Harrison & Heyward,
           Hunt, Schneider, Hopkins, De La Torre
           Interview with V. Namaste, “Transsexual, transgender, and queer” (RP)
           Body + Soul Part Two -- Choose 3 of Douglas, Craig, Glaser, Haffner, Peters,
           Maguire, Mollenkott
           Harrison, “Misogyny and Homophobia” in Making the Connections (RP)
6. **February 8**

**The Bible, Tradition and Sexuality**


Johanna W.H. van Wijk-Bos, “How to Read What We Read: Discerning Good News about Sexuality in Scripture,” in *Body and Soul*, pp. 61-77 (RP)

Walter Wink, “Homosexuality and the Bible” (RP)


**AD*: Farley, *Just Love*, ch. 5 “Just Love and Just Sex”

Kwok Pui-Lan, “Finding Ruth a Home: Gender, Sexuality … Otherness” (RP)

**Study Cues:**

Think about one biblical text or theme that has had a negative impact on your (or others’) understanding of sexuality and sexual ethics. Or go the other way and identify a biblical text or theme that functions positively. What ideas help you to explain the significance of the biblical text/theme of interest, *in relation to how you understand sexuality and spirituality? Whose perspective differs? Why?*

7. **February 15**

**Family, Marriage and Fidelity**


Gloria Albrecht, “Re-Forming Families: Producing The New Ideal” (RP)

Wanda Deifelt, “Beyond Compulsory Motherhood” (RP)

Marvin Ellison, “Beyond Same-Sex Marriage” (RP)

United Church of Canada, “Same-Sex marriage: Of Love and Justice”

________. “Chronology of Marriage and Equality Rights in Canada (RP)

________. “Celebrating God’s Presence in the Covenant of Marriage and Life Partnership posts @ www.united-church.ca

**FYI:** *Sexuality and the Sacred Part 6: Marriage Equality*

**AD*: Farley, *Just Love*, ch. 7, “Patterns of Relationships: Contexts of Just Love”


**DUE**

**Book Review Option:** Marvin Ellison, *Making Love Just*

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February 20 - 24

READING WEEK

NO CLASS

8. **February 28**

**Pain and Violence as Theo-ethical Issue**

*Read:* Doris Dyke, *Crucified Woman*, 1-24 (pdf)

Lesley Orr Macdonald. “A spirituality for justice: the enemy of apathy” (RP)

Loren Broadus, “Sex and Violence in the Family and Church” (RP)

*Body and Soul, Part Four: Underwood, “Sexual Misconduct” PLUS Burgonia-Watson or Ellison

**AD*: Davies, “Reflections on the Theological Roots of Abusive Behaviour” (RP)

**DUE**

**Book Review Option** on Marie Fortune, *Love Does No Harm*
9. March 1  
**Reframing Christian Sexual Ethics I**

**Read:** Beverly Harrison, Interview by Jane Hicks, “Challenging Sexual Ethics and Social Order” (RP)

*Sexuality and the Sacred: Part 4: Introduction, Ellison, Lebacqz*  
Gabrielle Brown, “Attitudes for Celibacy: Letting Go of Sex” (RP)

**AD*:** Farley, *Just Love*, ch. 6 “Framework for a Sexual Ethic: Just Sex”

10. November 22  
**Reframing Christian Sexual Ethics II**

**Read:**  
*Sexuality and the Sacred Part 4: Harrison, Alpert, Haldeman*  
Daniel Maguire. “Heterosexism, Not Homosexuality, is the Problem” (RP)


11. November 29  
**Collegial Working Session on Final Papers**

Bring a topic with a working bibliography and outline of your final project discuss in small groups.

12. December 6  
**Embodying Integrity for Faithful Moral Life**

**Read:** Ellison, “Epilogue: How far can we draw outside the lines and still be in the picture? (RP)

The Religious Declaration on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing @  

**Course Evaluation and Closure**
Guiding Questions for Christian Sexual Ethics

1. How is sexuality defined? Why is sexuality important? What’s at stake? For whom?

2. What is the purpose of sex?

3. How are gender/gender relations approached? Are they biologically given (essentialism)? Socially constructed? A mix? Does it matter? Why or why not?

4. What are the sources for a Christian sexual ethics? How much weight, if any, is given to scripture, tradition, critical social theory, and/or experience? Whose experience counts? Whose authority?

5. What values are central to the author’s or text’s ethic? What are the normative claims about sexuality? About change and transformation? About community?

6. How are conflicts resolved when there are disputes over values and norms concerning sexual ethics?

7. How does this reading/text deal with power relations? How is power defined, e.g., individually? structurally? Discursively? Power in a contextual analysis of overlapping structural systems of power is “the ability to control and to make things happen. In order to know whether power is good or bad, we need to know where it comes from, the intention with which it is used and the outcomes of its use….We can see violence as a misuse or abuse of power. That should not make us deny power or refuse to use it….We need power to right wrongs and to bring healing and reconciliation. Without the use of power, nothing good happens. There is a saying that evil triumphs when good people do nothing.” (Diane Mavunduse and Simon Oxley, Why Violence? Why Not Peace? Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2002, p.10.)

Discourse as defined by Michel Foucault, refers to: ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity, and power relations which inhere in knowledges and relations constituted between them. Thus, critical social discourse theories investigate more than ways of thinking and producing meaning: “knowledge” is not innocent but has embodied social effects however indirect or complicated. Contextual discursive thinking aims to understand how all knowing about any relations is construed by larger operations of power, whether about discourses of “oppression” or “forming community.”


9. What are the practical implications of the author’s/text’s point of view? For individuals? For the community? For faith communities? For specific others (e.g., poor people, racialized or minoritized people, for women, for bisexual persons, transgender and transsexual persons, gays, lesbians and/or queer people, single people, youth, older persons, people with disabilities)?

10. What is missing from the author’s or text’s analysis and proposal?

(Adapted from Marvin Ellison with permission)