

Philosophy 8700—Seminar: Metaphysics

Autumn 2016

Instructor: Ben Caplan
Time: T 3:55 PM – 6:40 PM
Location: 353 University Hall
Office: 372 University Hall
Office hours: T 2:15 PM – 3:45 PM, or by appointment
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Description

The seminar is on the metaphysics of sexual orientation. We will ask whether there is such a thing as sexual orientation and, if so, what it is. We will begin by reviewing some scientific research on sexual orientation from the last twenty-five years. Topics to be discussed might include which sexual orientations there are, if any, and how sexual orientation differs, if at all, from sexual preference and sexual identity.

We will read some chapters from some books: Edward Stein's *The Mismeasure of Desire* (OUP, 1999); Simon LeVay's *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why* (OUP, 2011); and perhaps also Cheshire Calhoun's *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet* (OUP, 2000). We will also read some recent papers: William Wilkerson's "What Is 'Sexual Orientation'?" (*The Philosophy of Sex*, 2013); Robin Dembroff's "What Is Sexual Orientation?" (*Philosophers' Imprint*, 2016); and Esa Díaz-León's "Sexual Orientations" (forthcoming).

It would be helpful if students were willing to discuss their sexual identities and how they experience their sexual orientations.

Requirements

The course grade will be based on one seminar paper (10–15 pages).

Schedule

There are sixteen Tuesdays during the autumn semester this year. We will meet twelve times. Accordingly, will not meet these four weeks: 11 October 2016 (Canadian Thanksgiving, or Autumn Break); 22 November 2016 (American Thanksgiving); 29 November 2016 (the week after American Thanksgiving, or the second-to-last week of the semester); and 6 December 2016 (the last week of the semester). So our last meeting will be on 15 November 2016.

A detailed schedule will be posted and updated on ~~Carmen Canvas Carmen (D2L)~~ Carmen (Canvas) as we go.

In accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-8-15, which prohibits any change in the time of a scheduled class without the approval of the registrar's office, chairs, and deans, I will not *officially* change the starting time of the seminar to 4 PM.

Academic Misconduct

In accordance with Faculty Rule 3335-5-487, all suspected cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the university's Committee on Academic Misconduct. For further details, see the Code of Student Conduct at studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp.

Accessibility

I'm committed to making this class as accessible as possible. If you have any particular accommodation requests, please speak to me as soon as possible.

Nondiscrimination

Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status in its programs, activities, employment, and admission.

Title IX

Title IX—a portion of the United States Education Amendments of 1972, Public Law No. 92-318, 86 Stat. 235 (23 June 1972), codified at 20 U.S.C. Section 1681–1688—states (in part), “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you can find resources at titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu.

Readings

The science of sexual orientation (a few primary sources)

- Hamer, Dean H.; Stella Hu; Victoria L. Magnuson; Nan Hu; and Angela M.L. Pattatucci. 1993. "A Linkage Between DNA Markers on the X Chromosome and Male Sexual Orientation." *Science* 261.5119 (16 July): 321–327.
- LeVay, Simon. 1991. "A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men." *Science* 253.5023 (30 Aug.): 1034–1037.

The science of sexual orientation (a few secondary sources)

- Horvath, Christopher. 2007. "Biological Explanations of Human Sexuality: The Genetic Basis of Sexual Orientation." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of Biology*. Ed. David L. Hull and Michael Ruse. Cambridge Companions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 291–303.
- LeVay, Simon. 2011. *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chapter 6 ("The Role of Sex Hormones"), pp. 129–156.
- Chapter 7 ("The Role of Genes"), pp. 157–189.
- Chapter 8 ("The Brain") pp. 191–219.
- and Dean H. Hamer. 1994. "Evidence for a Biological Influence in Male Homosexuality." *Scientific American* 270.5 (May): 44–49.
- Stein, Edward. 1999. *The Mismeasure of Desire: The Science, Theory, and Ethics of Sexual Orientation*. Ideologies of Desire. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chapter 5 ("The Emerging Scientific Program for the Study of Sexual Orientation"), pp. 119–163.

Criticisms of the science of sexual orientation

- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 1995. "Animal Models for the Development of Human Sexuality: A Critical Evaluation." *Journal of Homosexuality* 28.3–4 (June): 217–235.
- and Evan Balaban. 1993. "Genetics and Male Sexual Orientation." *Science* 261.5126 (3 Sept.): 1257.

Stein, Edward. 1999. *The Mismeasure of Desire: The Science, Theory, and Ethics of Sexual Orientation*. Ideologies of Desire. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 6 (“Animal Models and Evolutionary Accounts in the Emerging Research Program”), pp. 164–189.

Chapter 7 (“Critique of the Emerging Research Program”), pp. 190–228.

Wilkerson, William S. 2007. “Science and Sexual Orientation.” In *Ambiguity and Sexuality: A Theory of Sexual Identity*. The Future of Minority Studies. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan. 105–128.

What is sexual orientation?

Calhoun, Cheshire. 2000. *Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet: Lesbian and Gay Displacement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 3 (“The Gender Closet”), pp. 49–74.

Dembroff, Robin A. 2016. “What Is Sexual Orientation?” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 16.3 (Jan.): 1–27.

Díaz-León, Esa. forthcoming. “Sexual Orientations: The Desire View.” In *Feminist Philosophy of Mind*. Ed. Keya Maitra and Jennifer McWeeny.

LeVay, Simon. 2011. *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 1 (“What Is Sexual Orientation?”), pp. 1–26.

Stein, Edward. 1999. *The Mismeasure of Desire: The Science, Theory, and Ethics of Sexual Orientation*. Ideologies of Desire. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 1 (“Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation”), pp. 23–38.

Chapter 2 (“What Is a Sexual Orientation?”), pp. 39–70.

Chapter 3 (“Human Kinds”), pp. 71–92.

Wilkerson, William S. 2013. “What Is ‘Sexual Orientation’?.” In *The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings*. Ed. Nicholas Power, Raja Halwani, and Alan Soble. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. 195–213.