

Reading response assignment #5 (critical thinking)

Content note: This assignment involves subject matter that some students might find to be disturbing or even traumatizing to write on. If this applies to you, please let me know in advance so that we can discuss alternatives; I won't ask for an explanation, and you don't have to provide one.

In "Hooking Up and Opting Out," Wade and Heldman summarize and analyze the experiences of 44 first-year students with hookup culture on a college campus. Perhaps you or someone you know had similar experiences with hookup culture in college. Hookup culture raises the question: Setting aside flat-out instances of sexual assault or rape, is the rate of seriously wrong sexual acts in college higher than many college students realize? This question is not simply empirical; it is also ethical. For given the same empirical facts, different moral theories might provide different answers.

In "Sex, Lies, and Consent," Dougherty provides a number of arguments for the conclusion that the Lenient Thesis is false, and in the process (on pp. 734–39), he develops a substantive account of consent. Dougherty points out that his conclusions will strike many as counterintuitive, because they imply that certain sexual acts that many would consider to be moral gray areas (or *minor* wrongs) are instead *seriously wrong*.

Use the following question as the basis for your submission:

1. Pick a situation that meets the following three criteria: (a) it is one in which students at UT Austin frequently find themselves; (b) a substantial portion of students at UT Austin would consider engaging in sexual activity in such a situation to be at most a moral grey area (or a *minor* wrong); and (c) if the Lenient Thesis is false (and/or Dougherty's account of consent is true), engaging in sexual activity in such a situation would be *seriously wrong*. (If you're having trouble coming up with such a situation, feel free to draw on the experiences summarized by Wade and Heldman.)
2. Explain why it follows from the falsity of the Lenient Thesis (and/or the truth of Dougherty's account of consent) that engaging in sexual activity in such a situation would be seriously wrong.

Your response should be **500–700 words**. Please attach it as a **PDF (not .pages, .doc, etc.)** through Canvas.