

Professor says marriage unpredictable, changing

By Tom Shelton

Professor Werner Leinfellner found a surprise when he came back to Lincoln after spending the summer in his native Vienna, Austria — far more students than he expected.

Leinfellner, who teaches a philosophy class dealing with the ethics of marriage, was surprised to find 160 students enrolled in his five-week mini-course, 20 more than planned.

Leinfellner said the rapid alteration of the institution of marriage probably accounts for the large class enrollment.

"Marriage is in change," he said. "Nobody knows where it will go in 10 or 15 years. Some say it will become more traditional, more puritanic, but I don't think so."

But, he said, "I didn't expect so many students. Over 200 would have joined if we had let them."

Leinfellner said this is the first time he has taught the course although it was first offered last semester. He said interest in marriage is at an all-time high because of its unpredictable and changing nature.

"Why talk about an institution that's in good standing?" he said.

The philosophy class explores several aspects of marriage and includes the views of several philosophers on the subject, but Leinfellner has his own views too.

"Marriage in America has turned away from the puritanic, traditional life," he said, "away from absolute and rigid forms of marriage. It's loosened up."

Last longer

The professor said the marriages of couples with several children tend to last longer.

"A marriage with one kid is socially different," he said. "If you have three or more, you have to live with the family."

Leinfellner said the presence of children often forces parents to stay at home more, causing both marriage partners to spend more time together.

He said big families are less prevalent today because of economics.

"Look at the economic pinch," he said. "In China, three or four children and you don't get money from the government. In India, big families are prevented by the lack of food."

Leinfellner said the economy of the United States has made large families less common.

He said marriages do not last as long as they used to. "Marriage doesn't last as long — that's a fact," he said. "But it is as common as it used to be."

However, he said, the structure of marriage is flexible. "Old-fashioned marriage where marriage is absolute and without any infidelity is not possible," he said. "We don't need and we don't want it."

Leinfellner, who said his special interest is social philosophy, has had considerable experience in studying social relations on a world-wide basis.

Wittgenstein Symposium

For the past several years he has attended the Wittgenstein Symposium, a yearly gathering in Vienna of over 600 philosophers from around the world. He attended the 1981 symposium Aug. 23 through 30 before returning to teach this semester.

He has frequently taught philosophy courses in Europe. Leinfellner has taught in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia.

He first came to Nebraska in 1967 and since then has found several social differences between the United States and European countries.

"Europe is so liberalized now," he said. "In Vienna, in Germany, everywhere, there is legalized topless swimming in public areas," he said. "The reasoning is if men can swim topless, why can't women?"

"There is even public nude swimming in Europe, it's legal. If people want to take it all off, nobody cares. Most don't, but about 15 to 20 percent do," he said.

Leinfellner said nudity in some public parks in Europe is an example of changing social attitudes.

"In the public parks in Munich, nudity is not allowed legally. But nobody seemed to mind, so no one has been prosecuted for walking around the parks naked," he said.

Open society

Leinfellner said these traits are a demonstration of how open European society is. Not all areas in Europe are as liberal, he said. East Germany is puritanic, but "not so rigid as it used to be," he added.

He described European openness as healthy. "More people talk about social problems in Europe," he said. "In Europe the men and women talk 100 percent more about sex. They also talk more about marriage; that's something that's missing here."

Leinfellner said he approves of couples living together before marriage, provided it is done in the hope of firming a relationship before actual marriage.

He said unmarried couples living together actually practice a form of "trial marriage" which can lead to the legal version if the couple is compatible.

"My general idea of a 'trial marriage' is where you talk to your partner," he said. "You have to be open-minded to your partner to avoid unnecessary suffering. You should maximize your pleasure, but not at the expense of your partner," he said.

Leinfellner said communication about social problems is the best way to become informed about them. He said he encourages his students to share their views and experiences in his class.

"If students talk about what's going on, they'll know how to handle things better," he said.

Book exchange turns best fall profits

More than \$3,000 was made by students during this semester's ASUN Book Exchange, but Dan Renn, ASUN director of records, says he is still disappointed by the turnout.

According to Renn, ASUN acts as an intermediary, selling the books for students and giving them the money, less 5 percent for advertising expenses.

Renn said this semester's exchange was ASUN's most successful fall exchange. More than 500 sales were made.

But Renn says the figure should be much higher.

"We're still not getting the word out to the students," he said, "especially the incoming freshmen."

"We need to get the message across that students can buy and sell books at the best prices with us, especially paperbacks."

"Students are not being paid what they should for their paperbacks. It's a disgrace."

But Renn says he has higher goals set for the second semester book exchange. Among them is to reach between \$5,000 and \$6,000 in sales.

"It's (turnout) usually greater in the spring because more people have heard about it," Renn said.

"We're going to go all out and try to contact as many people as possible and convince them to bring in their books during finals week," he said.

"If someone uses the services, we can't guarantee that their books will be sold, but we'll do everything we can to let people know that they can get a good deal with us."

According to Renn, Iowa University has a successful year-round book exchange.

Although ASUN's exchange isn't of that caliber, Renn says business has been increasing throughout the eight years the group has sponsored UNL's exchange.

Library offers tours

Tours of Love Library will be offered for the next two weeks, said Kay Crawford, of the Bibliographical Services Staff.

The tours, conducted by staff members, are designed to familiarize students with the building layout and the services the library offers.

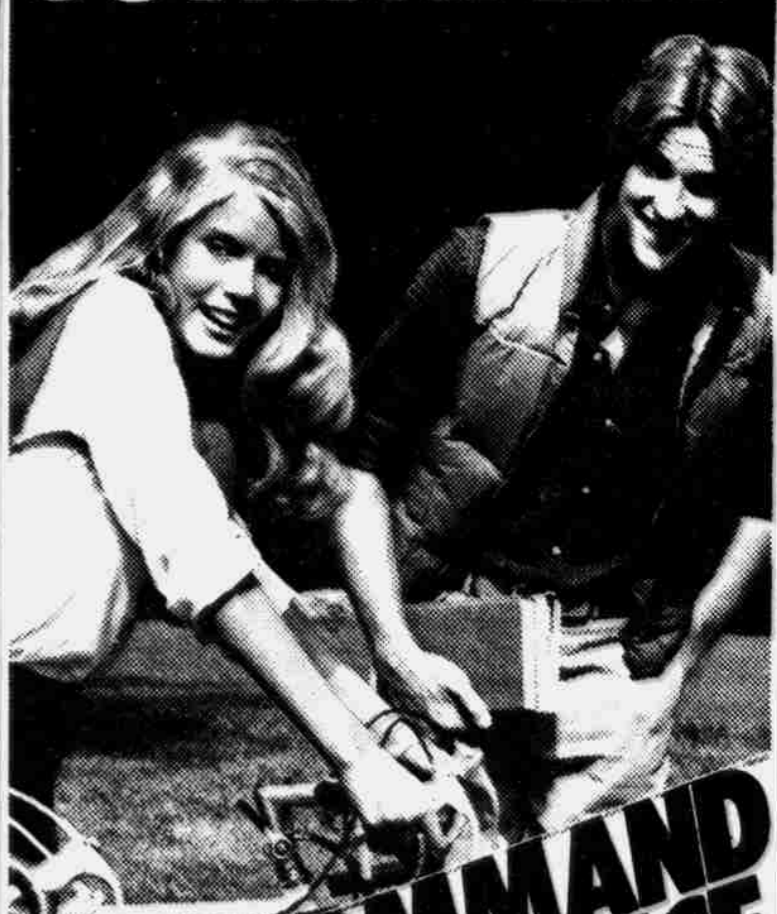
"But if a student comes to the tour with a specific problem — as on a term paper, perhaps — we will be happy to help," Crawford said. The tours replace those formerly conducted by the English department, which have been discontinued, she said.

Interested people should meet on the first floor of Love South, to the left of the circulation desk. The tours will be offered twice daily on the following dates: today at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Thursday at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.; Sept. 21, at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Sept. 23, at 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.; and Sept. 25, at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

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