**Syllabus: Philosophy of Love and Sex (Summer 2015)**

**PHIL 170/CRN 41770**  
Katherine Logan  
MTWRF, 4p to 4:50p  
Office location: Knight Library 412

**Location: Lillis 175**  
Office hours: T and F, 3p to 4p (or by appt.)  
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**Course Description**

Love and sex are so central to human life that many would argue that our intimate relationships are the key to self-esteem, fulfillment, and even happiness itself. In fact, our intimate relationships are probably more important to our sense of well-being than our careers. Yet we spend remarkably little time *thinking* about love and sex, even as we spend years preparing ourselves for the world of work. In this course you will be asked to reflect on the most intimate sphere of human existence. We will draw on historical, sociological, religious, feminist, and philosophical work to shed critical light on a variety of questions, including: What is love? How are our understandings of masculinity and femininity tied in with what we believe about love and sex? What happens to sex when it is associated with “scoring” (the conquest model of sex)? Is there, or should there be, an ethics of love and sex? What is moral, what is normal, and who gets to decide? How do homosexuality, transgender identity, and race challenge conventional understandings of love and sexuality? Why do love and sex make us both thoroughly happy and utterly miserable?

You should come away from this class with a more considered understanding of your own beliefs and values about love and sex. Further, you will develop habits of thinking that are helpful in real-life situations in which either love, or sex, or both, become difficult, delightful, overwhelming, painful, or ethically challenging.

Our readings for the course are drawn from a variety of sources: the commonly recognized texts/thinkers of the western philosophical tradition, Christian thinkers of various time periods, contemporary empirical work, and contemporary philosophers and theorists. If you feel that you cannot benefit by engaging or learn from each of these perspectives, whether or not you agree with them, this is probably not the class for you. We address issues of sexism and sexuality along with questions about the meaning of our erotic existence and the nature of love. Furthermore, there is explicit content in some of the texts.

**A Special Note**

This class requires students to engage with themes that can be highly charged and deeply personal. While no one is required to disclose personal information, many students often do. I expect all participants in the class to handle such disclosures in a respectful and sensitive manner, to refrain from inappropriate humor (though appropriate humor is encouraged), and to work hard to maintain an attitude of openness to experiences or points of view that you do not share.

**Course Format/ Pedagogy**

We will do some tough philosophical reading, but use that reading to think about our own lives and how we live them. Most class sections will include a lecture and discussion (both small group and whole class). Most lectures will be accompanied by a power point presentation. Unless you have a documented disability that requires such accommodation, please do not ask for lecture notes or power point slides to be made available to you outside of lecture.

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REQUIREMENTS

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, please let me know right away.

Academic Honesty
It is my practice to assign a grade of F for the course to students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty, which in this class would mean cheating on an exam. For a full description of forms of academic dishonesty, please see “Statement on Academic Honesty” on the Blackboard site for the course.

Reading
All readings will be available through the Blackboard site for the course. Go to the Blackboard site when it is up and look under “Readings.” Students are expected to bring them to class each day, having prepared for class by reading closely and carefully.

Reading Summary and Discussion Questions
Prior to class each day, via Blackboard, you will be required to submit a two- to three-sentence summary of the main points of the assigned reading for that day. In addition, you will also include one discussion question for the reading. This will help you to prepare for class discussion as well as the exams. On the Course Calendar, you will see that we sometimes take more than one day to cover a particular reading. On these days, please provide a summary of and discussion question for any section of the reading. For review days, instead of a summary, please prepare several questions for the review session. Participation counts for 30% of your grade (see “Grading” below), and the reading summaries and discussion questions (30 total submissions, worth ½ point each) will count towards 50% of your participation grade.

Exams
You will complete four exams for this course, all of which are take-home essay style exams. You will turn the exams in through the Assignment for each exam on Blackboard. Exams will be based on readings, whether or not we have discussed them in class, and on lectures, whether or not material from the lectures is referenced in the readings. Exams will not be cumulative, but will instead cover the material from each unit. However, you are allowed to make reference to reading from prior units if it helps you to more effectively complete the exam. As the term goes on, your exams are worth an increasing percentage of your grade. This is to make room for improvement in your ability to read, understand, and write about philosophical texts.

Attendance/Participation
Attendance and active participation are required. See “Grading” below. “Active participation” means you attend lecture and discussion sections, you READ before you come to class, and you participate in discussion in a way that shows evidence of careful reading beforehand.
GRADING

Take-Home Essay Exams
- Unit 1 Exam 15% of Final Grade
- Unit 2 Exam 15% of Final Grade
- Unit 3 Exam 20% of Final Grade
- Unit 4 Exam 20% of Final Grade

Participation 30% of Final Grade
Reading summaries and discussion questions 50% of Participation Grade
In-class attendance and participation 50% of Participation Grade
- A: Exceptional. To achieve an A the expectations are that student has perfect attendance, he/she is recognized as a leader in discussion and consistently both contributes to and brings the conversation to a deeper level, without dominating the discussion to such an extent that it inhibits participation by other students.
- B: Very Good. To achieve a B expectations are that the student will miss no more than two classes. Takes a very active role in discussion section and remarks are consistently helpful and on topic.
- C: Good. To achieve a C expectations are that the student will miss no more than three classes. Participates in discussions, but not consistently.
- D: Poor. To achieve a D expectations are that the student will miss no more than four classes. Participates in discussions sporadically.
- F: Failing. Misses more than four classes and/or is not a positive contributor to discussions.

To calculate grades for “participation,” I will weigh all of these factors in a holistic manner at the end of the term.
## Course Calendar

### Unit 1  
**Love and Sex in the History of Philosophy**

**Week 1  
**Love and Philosophy**

| Day |作业 |  
|-----|------|---|
| M   | Introduction |  
| T   | Plato “Symposium” (47 pages) |  
| W   | Plato “Symposium” (continued) |  
| R   | Augustine “Confessions” (6 pages), Heloise and Abelard “Letters” (15 pages) |  
| F   | Kant “On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime” (20 pages) |  

**Week 2  
**Love and Philosophy**

| Day |作业 |  
|-----|------|---|
| M   | Kant “Beautiful and Sublime” (continued) |  
| T   | Wollstonecraft “Introduction” (5 pages); “The Prevailing Opinion” (22 pages) |  
| W   | Beauvoir, “Introduction,” from The Second Sex (15 pages) ; **Unit 1 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in class today** |  
| R   | Review of key points in Unit 1 |  
| F   | No class; **Unit 1 Exam due by 5p today through Assignment on Blackboard** |  

### Unit 2  
**Sex, Conquest, and Communication**

**Week 3  
**Conquest: Sex, Use and Violence**

| Day |作业 |  
|-----|------|---|
| M   | No class |  
| T   | Wojtyla (Pope John Paul), “Analysis of the Verb ‘To Use’” (23 pages) |  
| W   | Bordo, “Gentleman or Beast” (19 pages) |  
| R   | Katz, excerpts from “The Macho Paradox” (21 pages) |  
| F   | Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think,” pp. 33-52 (19 pages) |  

**Week 4  
**Communication: Talking through the Paradoxes of Femininity/Masculinity; Communication as Paradigm for Healthy Sexuality**

| Day |作业 |  
|-----|------|---|
| M   | Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think,” pp. 53-78 (25 pages) |  
| T   | Millar, “Toward a Performance Model of Sex” (12 pages); Bussel, “Beyond Yes or No: Consent as a Sexual Process” (18 pages) |  
| R   | Guest speaker: Polyamory (Reading TBD) |  
| F   | Review of key points in Unit 2; **Unit 2 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in class today** |  

**Su**  
Unit 2 Exam due by 5pm today: turn in through the Assignment on Blackboard
Unit 3  Nature, Normalcy, Morality, and the Sexual Politics of Difference

**Week 5  Nature/God, Normalcy, and Morality**

M  Aquinas, Thomas “The Purpose of Sex” (5 pages); Vatican, “Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics” (10 pages)

T  Foucault, “The Repressive Hypothesis” (31 pages)

W  Levin, “Why Homosexuality is Abnormal” (12 pages)

R  Corvino, “Why Shouldn’t Tommy and Jimmy Have Sex” (14 pages); Bradshaw, “Reply to Corvino” (14 pages)

F  Topic of interest: Marriage (same-sex and otherwise)? Homosexual sex and how it differs from heterosexual sex? Trans* sexuality? (Reading TBD)

**Week 6  The Sexual Politics of Difference**

M  Eribon, “Existence Precedes Essence” (6 pages); Nestle, “Lesbian Memories 1: Riis Park, 1960” (3 pages)

T  Springer, “Queering Black Female Heterosexuality” (14 pages)

W  Perez, “When Sexual Autonomy Isn’t Enough: Sexual Violence Against Immigrant Women in the United States” (9 pages); Mukhopadyay, “Trial by Media: Black Female Lasciviousness and the Question of Consent” (8 pages)

R  Topic of interest: Sex activism? Sex trafficking? Guest speaker? (Reading TBD)

F  Review of key points in Unit 3; Unit 3 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in class today

Su  Unit 3 Exam due by 5pm today: turn in through the Assignment on Blackboard

Unit 4  The Nature of Love and Desire

**Week 7  Everyday Love: Self and Family**

M  Frankfurt, “The Dear Self” (29 pages)

T  Solomon, “The Self in Love” (26 pages)

W  Beauvoir, “The Woman in Love” (25 pages)

R  Young, “House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme” (30 pages)*

F  Heavy reading week, we will use this day to catch up

*I may switch this reading out for another, still working on it!

**Week 8  What is Love?**

M  Topic of interest: Friendship? Familial love? Love for “others”? Reading TBD

T  Kollontai, “Make Way for Winged Eros” (16 pages)


R  Nussbaum, “Love’s Knowledge,” pp. 261-274 (13 pages); Beattie, “Learning to Fall” (11 pages)

F  Review of key points in Unit 4; Unit 4 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in class today

Su  Unit 4 Exam due by 5pm today: turn in through the Assignment on Blackboard