

Syllabus: Philosophy of Love and Sex (spring/2016)

PHIL 170/CRN 34837
MWF 12:00-12:50am
150 Columbia

Dr. Bonnie Mann
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2-4pm
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This syllabus is subject to revision up until the first day of class.

GTFs

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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, 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 exactly? Why do we continually associate love and sex with happiness and pleasure when they often make us so utterly miserable? Is there, or should there be, an ethics of love and sex? What is moral, what is normal, and who gets to decide? What happens to sex when it is associated with “scoring” (the conquest model of sex)? How are our understandings of masculinity and femininity tied in with what we believe about love and sex?

You should come away from this class with a more considered understanding of your own beliefs and values about love and sex, and with 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 feminist 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.

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 (except on surveys which are anonymous), 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.

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

REQUIREMENTS

No extra credit will be offered for the course. Please don't ask.

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 Canvas site for the course.

Reading

*All readings except for a small number, which are online, will be available through the canvas site for the course. Go to the canvas site when it is up and look under "readings" Students are expected to **print out** the readings and bring them to lecture and discussion section each week, having read them closely and carefully.*

Electronics (NOT!)

Unless you have a documented disability that necessitates the use of electronic devices, please refrain from using laptops, cell phones, blackberries, ipods, ipads, electronic readers, headphones, and any other electronic devices I don't know the name of yet in class. If you do have a documented disability that makes it important for you to have the technology at hand, just let me know in person, show me the documentation from the Accessible Education Office, and we'll make accommodations.

Seating

You will be assigned a seat in a particular section of the lecture hall with your GTF starting the 2nd week of class. It is your responsibility to know the name of your GTF and which seat you are in. Your GTF will monitor attendance during lecture and figure this into your participation grade for the course.

Surveys

*At the beginning of each of the four units of the course, you will be asked to complete a survey on Canvas. Surveys will be available immediately after the class period previous to when the survey is to be completed. Surveys must be completed on the assigned date by 11:59pm to receive credit, with the exception of the first survey, which will be open longer for those who join the class late. The survey results will be presented to you in class. **The surveys can only be accessed through the canvas site for lecture.***

Exams

You will complete three exams for this course, all of which are 2 Part Exams. The first part of the exam will be taken in discussion section, the second part is a take-home essay –style exams. You will turn the exams in through the Canvas Site for lecture, to insure that you do not cheat on the exam. See the course calendar for exam dates. 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.

2 Graded Quizzes on 2 Films (Unit 2)

During Unit 2, you will watch two films, available on the canvas site, and take a short quiz in discussion section that Friday for each film.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance and active participation are required, both in lecture and discussion section. See “grading” below. “Active participation” means

- **Reading Checks (75 points):** Preparation for class through careful reading of the required texts for the week. Each week, weeks 2-10, your GTF will conduct a “reading check” for 1/3rd of the class at random. You will present your printed out readings, marked and annotated, for review. Each of you will have 3 reading checks during the term. If you don’t have your readings with you, or if they aren’t marked and annotated, then you will be marked down 25 points in your participation grade.
- **Active Participation (125 points):** Active participation in discussion, small and large groups. If you have a hard time speaking in class talk to your GTF about this right away. Students who contribute to discussions in lecture will get credit as well.
- **Attendance (100 points):** Attendance in lecture and discussion section (2 free absences in lecture, 1 free absence in discussion section—thereafter all unexcused absences result in a 10 point reduction in this aspect of your participation grade).

GRADING OVERVIEW

Surveys	100 points (25 Each)
Take-Home Essay Exams	
• First Midterm	200 points
• Second Midterm	200 points
• Third Midterm	200 points
Graded Online Quizzes with 2 Films (Unit 2)	100 pts. (50 Each)
Participation/Attendance	200 pts
(Reading Checks: 75 points; Active Participation: 125 points; Attendance: 100 points)	

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

Week 1 **Love and Philosophy**

M 3/28 **Opening Class: To prep for today's class read the article at:**

<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>

T 3/29 **Unit 1 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm, if you join the class late, the survey will remain open for you to complete until the end of week 2.**

W 3/30 Plato "Symposium" (47 pages)

F 4/1 Plato "Symposium" (continued)

Week 2 **Body and Soul/Man and Woman**

M 4/4 Plato "Symposium" (continued)

W 4/6 Augustine "Confessions" (6 pages) Heloise and Abelard "Letters" (15 pages)

F 4/8 Kant "On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime" (20 pages)

Week 3 **Love and "The Second Sex"**

M 4/11 Wollstonecraft "Introduction" (5 pages) "The Prevailing Opinion" (22pages)

W 4/13 Beauvoir, "Introduction," to *The Second Sex* (15 pages)

F 4/15 Lecture Only (Review of key points in Unit 1)

Unit 1 Exam Part I in Discussion Section Today

Sun 4/17 **Unit 1 Exam Part II by 11:59pm today. Turn in through the "Vericite" box on the Canvas site for lecture.**

Unit 2 **Sex, Conquest and Communication**

Week 4 **Conquest: Talking through the Paradoxes of Masculinity**

Sunday 4/17 **Unit 2 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.**

[Homework Assignment for This Week: watch *Tough Guise* before Friday's Class. Find Live Stream Film on Canvas Website. Take short graded quiz in discussion section.]

M 4/18 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul), "Analysis of the Verb 'To Use'" (23 pages)

W 4/20 Bordo, "Gentleman or Beast" (19 pages)

F 4/22 **Short Graded Quiz on *Tough Guise* film.**

Katz, excerpts from "The Macho Paradox" (21 pages): *Tough Guise* Lecture and Discussion

Week 5 **Communication: Talking through the Paradoxes of Femininity**

[Homework Assignment for This Week: watch *Flirting with Danger* before Friday's Class. Find Live Stream Film on lecture Canvas Website. Take short graded quiz in discussion section.]

M 4/25 Phillips, "What's a Young Woman (Not) to Think" pp. 33-52 (19 pages)

W 4/27 Phillips, "What's a Young Woman (Not) to Think" pp. 53-78 (25 pages)
F 4/29 *Flirting with Danger* Lecture and Discussion

Unit 3 Nature, Normality and Morality

Week 6 *Coming Out in a World of Insult*

Sunday 5/1 **Unit 3 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.**

M 5/2 Eribon, "The Shock of Insult" (3 pages) "To Tell or Not to Tell" (9 pages)

W 5/4 Eribon, "Heterosexual Interpellation" (7 pp) "Existence Precedes Essence" (6 pp.)

F 5/6 Read: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dennis-mcfadden/is-sexual-orientation-innate_b_1974818.html

Read: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2015/jul/10/born-this-way-society-sexuality-gay-gene>

Diamond "Will the Real Lesbian Please Stand Up" (16 pages)

Week 7

M 5/9 Burke "Sexuality as Becoming" (24 pages)

W 5/11 Ahmed "Sexual Orientation" pp. 65-79

F 5/13 Ahmed, "Sexual Orientation" pp. 92-107

Units 2-3 Exam Part I in Discussion Section Today

Sun 5/15 **Units 2-3 Exam Part II due by 11:59pm today. Turn in through the "Vericite" box on the Canvas site for lecture..**

Unit 4 What is the Nature of Love and Desire?

Week 8

Sunday 5/15 **Unit 4 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.**

M 5/16 Kollontai, "Make Way for Winged Eros" (16 pages)

W 5/18 Kollantai (continued)

F 5/20 Solomon, "The Self in Love" (26 pages)

Week 9

M 5/23 Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love" (25 pages)

W 5/25 Marion, "The Silence of Love," (10 pages)

F 5/27 Marion, "What's the Use?" (4pages) "The Erotic Reduction" (7 pages)

Week 10

M 5/30 Memorial Day: No Class

W 6/1 *Knowledge/Emotion* Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge" pp. 261-274 (13 pages)

Proust (fragment) "Remembrance of Things Past" (10 pages)

F 6/3 Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge" pp. 274-285 (11 pages)

Beattie, "Learning to Fall" (11 pages)

Unit 4 Exam Part I in Section Today

M 6/6 **Unit 4 Exam Part II due by 11:59pm today. Turn in through the "Vericite" box on the Canvas site for lecture.**