

Philosophy 170: Love and Sex

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Winter 2017, Mondays and Wednesdays from 10-11:50 AM in 303 Gerlinger

Office hours: Wednesdays from 12:30 to 2:20 PM, and by appointment

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to philosophical approaches to understanding love, sex, and intimate relationships. We will discuss questions about attraction and desire, gender roles, sexual orientation, and the relation between emotional and physical intimacy in the context of the history of Western philosophy, including religious, feminist, existentialist, and Marxist texts. This means that we will discuss very contentious and personal topics, and we will do so by asking for reasons and justifications to support our values and beliefs. Our search for reasons will take us to difficult and profound questions: What is love, and why do we associate it with happiness? What counts as sex and what is an ethical way of having it? What are the possible harms and benefits of intimate relationships in our society today and for you as college students? What conceptual frameworks, stretching back thousands of years, underlie our assumptions about love and sex in our society? And can we or should we change them to make us happier or make our society more just?

Be aware that this course deals with difficult and divisive issues and may touch on instances of trauma. **If you do not think you will benefit from discussion of these issues or are unwilling to consider the multiple perspectives represented by the assigned texts, you probably should not take this course.** If you are interested in these topics, personally invested in them, and/or ready to take the risk of questioning them, you are welcome. If you are unsure, please let me know so that we can discuss.

Course Objectives

In this course, students will:

- 1) Learn about the history of philosophical approaches to love and sex.
- 2) Develop the ability to understand and construct philosophical arguments.
- 3) Be personally challenged by varied perspectives on divisive issues pertaining to love and sexuality.
- 4) Conduct themselves respectfully and charitably toward their fellow students and the authors of the texts.

Course Requirements

Reading

All readings will be available online on Canvas. No books need to be purchased for this class. You must come to class each day with your readings printed up and prepared to participate and take notes on the material. You will also be required to watch two films, *Tough Guise* and *Flirting with Danger*, in Week 4 and Week 5 respectively.

Surveys

There will be four surveys throughout the course that you must take online. These surveys will be anonymous and the results will be shared in class and used to guide discussion. You will receive full credit just by taking the survey before the deadline. You may not take surveys late.

Film Quizzes

There will be two short online quizzes on Canvas to test your knowledge of the two films, *Tough Guise* and *Flirting with Danger*. They will be due the night before the class in which we will discuss the films.

Essays

There will be three 1500-word essays assigned during the course that will require you to analyze and evaluate the arguments made in the text and in lecture. Each essay will be assigned on a Thursday after discussion and will be due on Canvas the following Saturday before midnight. I will be available in my office hours on Wednesday and will host additional office hours on Fridays when essays are due to discuss questions you might have and help you develop your argument, but I will not read drafts.

Participation

This class requires your participation. Please read this section carefully.

20% of your grade – the difference between an A and a C – depends on you speaking up in class discussions. Each class you may earn 10 points, or 1% of your grade, by asking a relevant question, making a good faith effort to answer a question, or offering a relevant comment. That means that **for full participation credit, you must speak up in all 20 of our class sessions**. I will give everyone the opportunity to do this by asking many review, reading, and interpretive questions at the beginning of each class and by facilitating large class discussions at the end.

If you are uncomfortable speaking up in class or fail to do so, you may attend my office hours to earn 10 participation points for that week. This means that you can get full participation credit for speaking up in one class and attending my office hours once per week. This also means, however, that you can only get at best half-credit if you never speak up in class. You may not exceed 20 points per week, so if you participate in both classes, office hours will not give you extra credit (though it will definitely help you to prepare for the essays!).

Attendance

In addition to your participation grade, 10% of your grade is based on attendance. If you are absent from class unexcused, you will receive neither attendance nor participation points for that day. That effectively means that **you will lose 1.5% of your total grade per unexcused absence**. If you are sick or have a documented emergency, **e-mail me before class and tell me**. I am willing to excuse absences if you notify me in advance, but not if you tell me after the fact.

Grading

Surveys:	10%	100 points (25 each)
Essays:	55%	550 points (150 for 1 st essay, 200 for 2 nd and 3 rd)
Film Quizzes:	5%	50 points (25 each)
Participation:	20%	200 points (10 per class, 20 per week)
Attendance:	10%	100 points (5 per class, 10 per week)

Schedule

Week 1

- M 1/9 Class canceled, **but complete Survey 1!**
- W 1/11 bell hooks, "Eros, Eroticism, and the Pedagogical Process." Plato, *Symposium*: the speeches of Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, and Aristophanes.

Week 2

- M 1/16 Martin Luther King holiday
- W 1/18 Plato, *Symposium*: the speeches of Agathon, Socrates/Diotima, and Alcibiades. Selections from St. Augustine's *Confessions*; Heloise and Abelard, *Letters*

Week 3

- M 1/23 Rousseau, excerpt from *Emile*; Kant, "On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime"; Wollstonecraft, "Introduction" and "The Prevailing Opinion"
- W 1/25 Beauvoir, "Introduction" from *The Second Sex*; Hegel, "Lordship and Bondage" from *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
First paper topics will be assigned at the end of class.
- Sat 1/28 **First paper due on Canvas by 11:59 PM.**
Survey 2 must be completed by 11:59 PM.

Week 4

M 1/30 Wojtyla, "Analysis of the Verb 'To Use'"; Bordo, "Gentleman or Beast"

W 2/1 Katz, excerpts from "The Macho Paradox." **Watch the film *Tough Guise* and complete Film Quiz 1 before class.**

Week 5

M 2/6 Phillips, "What's a Young Woman (Not) to Think."

W 2/8 Mann, "Creepers, Flirts, Heroes, Allies." **Watch the film *Flirting with Danger* and complete Film Quiz 2 before class.**

Week 6

M 2/13 Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia"

W 2/15 Jensen, "Patriarchal Sex"; hooks, "Reconstructing Black Masculinity." **Second paper topics assigned.**

Sat 2/18 **Second paper due on Canvas by 11:59 PM.
Survey 3 must be completed by 11:59 PM.**

Week 7

M 2/20 Kimmel, "Babes in Boyland: Pornography." **Read also two articles:**
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/09/26/making-sense-of-modern-pornography>
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/04/pornography.aspx>

W 2/22 Bauer, "Pornutopia" and "Lady Power."

Week 8

M 2/27 Eribon, "The Shock of Insult," "To Tell or Not to Tell," "Heterosexual Interpellation," "Existence Precedes Essence"

W 3/1 Burke, "Sexuality as Becoming." **Read also two articles:**
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dennis-mcfadden/is-sexual-orientation-innate_b_1974818.html
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2015/jul/10/born-this-way-society-sexuality-gay-gene>

Sat 3/4 **Survey 4 must be completed by 11:59 PM.**

Week 9

M 3/6 Kollontai, "Make Way for Winged Eros"

W 3/8 Solomon, "The Self in Love"; Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love."

Week 10

M 3/13 Proust, excerpt from "Remembrance of Things Past," and Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge"

W 3/15 Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge" continued and Beattie, "Learning to Fall"
Third paper topics assigned.

Sat 3/18 **Third paper due on Canvas by 11:59 PM.**