PHIL 170: Philosophy of Love & Sex

Instructor: Maggie Newton
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am-12pm in Susan Campbell Hall 158
Class meeting time: MTWR in 301 Condon Hall 9-9:50am

Course Description

Love and sex are so ubiquitous to human experience; it’s amazing how little time we spend seriously contemplating the complexities of these aspects of human life. This course will offer you the opportunity to consider challenging questions like: What exactly is love? Could we, and should we, define it? If so, in what way(s)? What exactly are sex, sexual desire, and sexual orientation? How do we, and how should we, be understanding these concepts? What are the connections between love, sex, pleasure, and an ethically lived life? Should ethics factor into a discussion of love and sex, in the first place? How do femininity, masculinity, and culture, factor into this discussion? Those are just a few of the challenging questions we will consider this term. Throughout the course, we will draw on historical, sociological, religious, feminist and philosophical work in order to help us consider these questions as carefully and critically as possible. My hope is that you walk away from this course with a better understanding of, and better able to articulate, the views and beliefs you hold about love and sex - it might even be the case that your views shift and evolve as we move along in the term.

Very important note about this course:

This course will ask you to engage with some highly charged and deeply personal texts. All students will be expected to remain respectful towards each other's in class contributions at all times. Although thoughtful disagreement is welcome, always keep in mind that we are here to learn from one another’s unique perspectives, and that this cannot happen if you do not come to class open to listening to each other’s differing viewpoints.

Required Texts:
- All reading assignments will be available on Canvas
Courses Requirements:

Participation and Attendance 15%
Critical Question 5%
Completion of Surveys 16% (4 worth 4% each)
Film Quizzes 4% (2 worth 2% each)
Essays 60% (3 worth 20% each)

Participation and Attendance: Expectations for this portion of your grade are as follows:

A – Excellent: the student missed no more than two classes, they consistently contributed to our class discussion. Furthermore, they brought thought provoking question to class, and showed clear signs of having done the reading (e.g. having printed and brought the reading to class and referenced the text in discussion). Moreover, they were respectful of their peers in class.

B – Very good: Students missed no more than three classes and took a very active role in discussion and brought a printed copy of the text to every class. Moreover, they were respectful of their peers in class.

C – Good: Students missed no more than four class sessions, they sometimes participated in discussion, and only brought a printed copy of the text sometimes. Moreover, they were respectful of their peers in class.

D – Poor: To student missed over four classes, only participated in discussion very rarely or never, and only occasionally brought a printed copy of the text to class. And, or, they were rude or disrespectful of their peers during class.

Film Quizzes: This course will ask you to watch two films that will be available to watch on Canvas. The following class periods you will take a short 10-minute quiz testing your understanding of the film. If missed, film quizzes cannot be made up.

Surveys: Throughout the course you will be asked to complete 4 online surveys. These surveys will be anonymous, and you will receive full credit just for completing them. See course schedule for survey due dates; if missed, surveys cannot be made up.

Essays: Throughout the course you will be asked to write three prompted, "take home," essays. The third essay will be due during finals week (week 11). More details will be provided in class. Late essays will be accepted with a letter grade penalty per 24 hours late.
Moreover, your essays will be graded according to the following rubric:

19-20 = No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.
16-18 = No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.
14-15 = Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.
12-13 = Several errors, a tenuous grasp of the material.
<12 = Problematic on all fronts, indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

**Critical Question:** Beginning Week 2 you will be asked to sign up to bring a crucial question to class on a Thursday of your choosing. In order to receive full credit for this assignment you must come up with one 70-100 word critical question on one of that week’s assigned readings, and submit your question on canvas no later than **Wednesday by 5:00pm** of that week. On Thursday, we might read what you wrote to the class for your peers to consider. More details will be provided in class. (For reference, this description is 97 words).

**Electronics**

Laptops, cell phones, ipads, electronic readers, headphones, etc., are strictly prohibited unless you have a documented disability that makes it important for you to have these kinds of technology on hand (if so, let me know).

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating will result in a 0 for the assignment and potentially a failure from the course. Please review these tips and guidelines for avoiding plagiarism: [http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html](http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html)

And, be mindful of the university’s plagiarism policy: [http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx](http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx)

**Document Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible.
Reading Schedule

Unit I – Love and Sex and in the History of Philosophy

Week 1
- 1/8: Introduction to the course; hooks (recommended reading)
- 1/11: Group Discussion

Week 2
- 1/15: No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday
- 1/16: Kant “On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime” p. 76-86
- 1/17: Kant “On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime” p. 87-96
- 1/18: Group Discussion

Weeks 3
- 1/24: Lorde “Uses of the Erotic” from Sister Outsider p. 53-59
- 1/25: Group Discussion

Unit 2 – Sex as Conquest or Communication

Week 4
- 1/30: Bordo, “Gentleman or Beast” pp. 229-264
- 1/31: Watch Tough Guise; take online quiz
  - Recommended reading: Katz, excerpts from “The Macho Paradox”; hooks, “Reconstructing Black Masculinity”
- 2/1: Group Discussion

Week 5
- 2/5: Phillips, “What's a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 33-61
- 2/6: Phillips, “What's a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 62-78
- 2/7: Watch Flirting with Danger; take film quiz online
- 2/8: Group Discussion

Weeks 6
- 2/12: Read two articles:
Unit 3 – Sexual Desire and Sexual Orientation

Week 7

- 2/18: Eribon, “The Shock of Insult” and “Heterosexual Interpellation”
- 2/19: Eribon, “Existence Precedes Essence” and “To Tell or Not to Tell”

Week 8

- 2/26: Christina Greta, “Are we having sex or what?”
- 2/27: Diamond “Will the Real Lesbian Please Stand Up”
- 2/28: Burke “Sexuality as Becoming”
- 3/1: Group Discussion

Unit 4 – Love and Relationships

Week 9

- 3/5: Kollontai, “Make Way for Winged Eros” (16 pages)
- 3/6: Solomon, “The Self in Love” (26 pages)
- 3/7: Solomon Cont.
- 3/8: Group Discussion

Week 10

- 3/12: Beauvoir, “The Woman in Love” (25 pages)
- 3/13: Merleau-Ponty excerpts from Phenomenology of Perception
- 3/14: Beattie, “Learning to Fall” (11 pages)
- 3/15: Group Discussion