

PHIL 170: Philosophy of Love & Sex

Claire Pickard

University of Oregon

Summer 2017, MTWRF 2pm-3:50pm in 111 Lillis

Office hours: Mondays 12-2pm and by appointment

Office: 232 Susan Campbell Hall

Email: cpickard@uoregon.edu

Course Description

The word ‘philosophy’ is derived from the Greek words ‘philos,’ meaning love, and ‘sophia,’ meaning wisdom or knowledge. Thus, ‘philosophy’ literally means love of wisdom. Even without this etymological analysis, people tend to think of philosophy as associated with abstract conceptions of ‘wisdom’ or ‘knowledge.’ However, the “philos” is often ignored. This course aims to challenge that tradition by revealing the historical links between philosophy, love, and sex, as well as by integrating philosophical approaches into analyses of issues such as dating apps, sexual assault, and pornography.

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 Objectives

- 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

You are required to purchase *The Symposium* (Penguin Classics, trans. Christopher Gill), which will be available at the Duck Store. All other readings will be available in a course packet that **must** be purchased at the Duck Store. You must come to class each day prepared to participate and take notes on the material.

Surveys

There will be two 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.

Essays

There will be two 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 Friday before midnight. I will be available in my office hours on Wednesday and may host additional office hours when essays are due to discuss questions you might have and help you develop your argument, but I will not read drafts. Some students may be inspired to write on a topic other than what is suggested, which is perfectly fine so long as you discuss the paper idea with me in advance.

The essays are designed to both test your knowledge of the course material as well as your ability to form a coherent argument. There should be a clearly stated (or implied) thesis that has the support of reasons or warrants. Papers should be written in Times New Roman 12pt font and be double-spaced. All un-excused late papers will receive reduced grades. Final papers will not be accepted late.

Participation

Attendance and active participation are required. “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.

Academic Integrity

If you plagiarize, cheat, fabricate, or in any other way demonstrate academic dishonesty, you will fail the course and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students.

Disability

Please see me if you require accommodations. **NO ELECTRONICS** unless you have a documented disability.

Grading

Surveys: 5%
Midterm Essay: 25%
Final Essay: 40%
Active Participation: 20%
Attendance: 10%

Schedule

<p>Week 1 M: Introduction to the course T: Plato, <i>The Symposium</i> 172a -197e W: Plato, <i>The Symposium</i> 198a -223d R: Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> [excerpts] F: Abelard and Heloise, <i>Letters</i> [excerpts] Survey 1 due at 10pm</p>
<p>Week 2 M: Aquinas, “Of Lust” T: Wollstonecraft, “Introduction, and “The Prevailing Opinion” W: No class for Independence Day R: Beauvoir, <i>The Second Sex</i> “Introduction” F: Foucault, <i>History of Sexuality</i>, “We, Other Victorians” First Essay due at 11:59 PM</p>
<p>Week 3 M: Ahmed, “Sexual Orientation” T: Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” Survey 2 Due at 10pm W: Bordo, “Gentleman or Beast” R: Davis, “Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Racist” F: Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 33-51</p>
<p>Week 4 M: Phillips, pp. 52-78 T: Pickard, “Epistemic Injustice and Sexual Assault on College Campuses” W: Altman, “The Right to Get Turned On” R: Brison, “The Price We Pay” F: <i>Wisecrack</i>, “Is Tinder Killing Love?” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3y5t8rVglFc Final Essay due at 11:59 PM</p>