

Philosophy 170  
Philosophy of Love and Sex  
Winter 2015  
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Office: ? Susan Campbell Hall  
Office Hours: Mondays 12:30 to 2:30

**Course Description:**

Although philosophy has its origins in a claim to love wisdom, or sophia, throughout much of the history of philosophy, it has been practiced as a love of logic, or logos. Love and sex, meanwhile, were often regarded as irrational and illogical. This nearly exclusive focus on reason and logic has led to a proliferation of ignorance about some of the most profound and intimate aspects of human experience. This ignorance contradicts the famous maxim cited by Socrates to “Know thyself.” As a result, philosophy has not adequately developed the methodology or the vocabulary to inquire into the meaning of the experiences of love and sex. This leads to the question of whether philosophy as a discipline can inquire into love and sex without distortion or destruction. In other words, can philosophy go beyond its infatuation with logic and live up to its original promise to love wisdom?

This course contains three units. The first unit centers on questions about the relationship between philosophy and love and considers various theories about the meaning of love that various philosophers have proposed. The second unit is concerned with how theories of love and sex have been used to create, justify, maintain, and resist social inequalities such as colonialism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, and gender inequalities. The third unit turns to the application of philosophy as a method of cultural criticism to try to analyze contemporary issues and definitions of institutions and definitions such as marriage, pornography, and standards of consent.

This is not a literature class. The primary aim of the class is not for you to read about philosophy but to actually experience the process of doing philosophy for yourself. Therefore, you will be expected to participate actively in reading, reflecting and discussing the issues raised by the

texts. Passively reading and memorizing the texts will not be sufficient to achieve a high grade in this class.

### **Course Objectives:**

The successful student will demonstrate the development of written and oral communication skills, the ability to read and understand philosophical texts, the ability to analyze, construct and defend philosophical arguments and a willingness to identify and question common assumptions about the topic through critical thinking and philosophical reflection.

### **Readings:**

Readings will be made available on Blackboard. You will need to have access to either a printed or electronic copy of the readings during class.

### **Grading:**

200 Total Points Possible

Required Elements: 155 Points Possible

Paper: 30 Points Possible

Presentation: 30 Points Possible

Reading Questions: 30 Points Possible\*

Quizzes: 20 Points Possible

Attendance and Participation: 45 Points Possible\*\*

Option 1: 45 Points Possible

Second Paper

Option 2: 45 Points Possible

Second Presentation

Option 3: 45 Points Possible

Final Exam

\*The reading questions will consist of three levels. The first level will test your comprehension of the text. A perfect score on this section will guarantee a grade of C on the assignment. The second level will ask you to analyze the text. A perfect score on this section will guarantee a grade of B on the assignment. The third level will ask you to philosophically engage the issues raised in the text. A perfect score on this section will guarantee a grade of A on the assignment.

\*\*The participation and attendance score will be primarily based on your

performance during in-class symposia which will be graded on a pass/no pass basis.

**Due Dates:**

Required Paper: 2/11 (Week Six)

Required Presentation: Sign Up (Week Nine)

Reading Questions: Weekly at the end of class on Wednesday

Optional Presentation: Sign Up

Optional Paper: 5:00 Wednesday 3/18

Optional Final: 10:15 Wednesday 3/18

**Classroom Policies:**

Due to the sensitive nature of some of the topics, it is especially important to use respectful and inclusive language. You will be expected to discuss issues that may be controversial. The participation grade in this class will be affected by your ability to communicate on these topics in an appropriate manner. I expect all students to avoid discriminatory language.

I am committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

I will do my best to provide trigger warnings for survivors of assault. You will be expected to have the readings done before class on the day that they are to be discussed. You are encouraged to bring your reading questions to class.

Students will be held to standards of academic integrity as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. A student caught violating standards of academic integrity through cheating, plagiarism, or fabrication should expect to fail the assignment. For a full description of definitions and standards visit

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx>.

Please feel free to consult with me to clarify specific questions about academic honesty before submitting any work.

## Tentative Schedule of Readings

### Unit One:

Week One: Plato  
Week Two: Frankfurt  
Week Three: Aristotle  
Week Four: Augustine  
Kant

### Unit Two:

Week Five: Beauvoir  
Smith  
Flores  
Week Six: Capellanus  
Corvino  
Week Seven: Rubin

### Unit Three:

Week Seven: Miedzian  
Crowley  
Week Eight: Messner  
Benedict  
\*Recommended Reading: Kimmel  
Week Ten: Langton  
Hill Collins  
Nussbaum