

PHIL 1700 (A)
Philosophy of Love and Sex
8:35 a.m. – 9:55 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays
Online Blended: mix of asynchronous and synchronous

I General information

Instructor: Sacha Ghandeharian

On-line Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Wednesdays (email for appointment, via Zoom).

Email: sacha.ghandeharian@carleton.ca

All communication is to be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts, not personal emails. Please note that students should carefully read the course outline and stay up to date on content posted on Brightspace (Announcements and Forums). Students should also regularly check their Carleton email account for important course information. It is strongly recommended that students remain subscribed to Brightspace email notifications. Emails with questions that are already answered on the course outline and/or Brightspace will usually not receive a reply. Please allow up to 2 business days for a reply.

II Course description

A survey of philosophical classics, on themes of romantic love, self-love, altruistic love, sexuality, eroticism and the passion/reason dichotomy, from Plato's *Symposium* to Foucault's *History of Sexuality*; and an examination of related contemporary issues in light of these perspectives. [0.5 credit]

In particular, this course looks at how different philosophical perspectives/texts (both canonical and contemporary) have theorized various facets of love and sexuality as dimensions of human life that must be regulated, channelled, critiqued and/or liberated. As such, love and sex – as well as their treatment in philosophical discourse – are seen as intersecting with broader social and political forces, issues and questions. The overarching theme of the course can be characterized as a philosophical investigation of how love and sexuality are shaped by, and implicated in, other features of human, social and political life, thus creating various debates, tensions and opportunities moving forward. The investigation of contemporary issues related to love and sex will, in part, highlight feminist perspectives on the issues.

III Course format, structure, and other important details

This course is blended and contains a mix of asynchronous and synchronous elements. Typically, each week will involve one or more required readings and a pre-recorded lecture video (sometimes students will also be asked to watch a short video clip from YouTube which is related to the week's topic/reading and often features a prominent contemporary philosopher discussing a topic related to love and sex). The pre-recorded lecture videos will provide a roadmap to understanding the week's reading(s), will identify and elaborate on some of the key aspects of the reading(s) and help place said readings/perspectives within the broader intellectual/philosophical context of the thinker(s).

Much of the course is thus ‘asynchronous.’ However, there are important synchronous aspects as well and registration in the course comes with the expectation that students will be available during the official timeslot and avoid scheduling conflicts. There will be (4) synchronous class meetings over the course of the term (via Zoom) which will include an introduction to the course, two in-term Q&A sessions and a concluding Q&A session. These meetings will take place during the timeslot for the course and the specific dates can be found in the schedule below. These synchronous class meetings are required and attending them is part of the evaluation (see below). Please note that in the interest of privacy, live sessions will not be recorded, and students are prohibited from recording. The ‘First Test’ will also be scheduled according to the official course timeslot. All times are Eastern time zone.

Please note that in lieu of emailing direct or straightforward questions about the course material (lectures, readings, videos, etc.), or general questions about the tests/exam, students are asked to post these questions to corresponding forums created on Brightspace. This practice will help to create a more collaborative class environment and will allow everyone to benefit from the questions posed by students and the subsequent answers provided in the same forum; students are expected to regularly review these forums. Students are asked to stay up to date with the material and to post any questions during the week that corresponds to the topic, reading(s) and pre-recorded lecture; otherwise, the question is best saved for the live Q&As. Proper classroom etiquette is mandatory in forums and live sessions. In weeks without a live class meeting, the instructor will be available during the Wednesday timeslot, and will expand the timeslot to two hours (8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.), for consultation via Zoom on more in-depth questions. Students are asked to email the instructor 24hrs in advance to make an appointment. Students can email the instructor for more personal matters pertaining to the course.

Based on the above, students can think of the typical week for this course as having a three-pronged approach to learning that they should actively engage with: a) attentive reading of the assigned text(s), b) consulting the pre-recorded lecture video and taking good notes (also watch YouTube clips when assigned), and c) asking questions to clarify and elaborate on their understanding of the material. The readings have been chosen, and the lectures are designed, to be digestible on a weekly basis and to allow time for asking questions, and reading answers, on the forums, and/or making an office hours appointment for more in-depth/open-ended questions that are not conducive to a forum post. Philosophical theories and writings can be difficult to understand, and, therefore, students are encouraged to consult the material (readings and lectures) carefully and attentively and to ask questions when they are having difficulty understanding. Please note that while the instructor will post (via Brightspace) templates based on the PowerPoint slides presented in the pre-recorded lecture to help with the students’ own notetaking, copies of the full slides will not be posted beyond their presentation in the pre-recorded lecture video. The idea is that since students have been provided with access to a recording that they can consult at their own convenience, that they will use this opportunity to practice effective notetaking which is an important part of studying philosophy (and other subjects).

Alongside the First Test (must be completed during class timeslot), there will be a Take-home Midterm Test and a Take-home Final exam for the course (see more on evaluation below).

Intellectual property: The materials created for this course (including lecture presentations, posted notes, and tests/exams), as well as other contributions from the instructor, TAs and students, remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal educational use only. They are not to be reproduced or redistributed.

IV Learning outcomes

- An understanding of a selection of important philosophical texts, perspectives and debates related to love and sexuality in the history of philosophy.
- An understanding of how these perspectives and debates are situated-alongside, shaped-by, and intersect-with, other key social and political questions/issues with philosophical significance.
- The ability to critically reflect on the role of love in contemporary society, as well as on a selection of important issues related to contemporary sexuality.
- Develop skills related to the critical reading of texts, as well as the construction and expression of philosophical analysis/arguments in written form.

V Texts

The readings for this course are composed of various books and journal articles. These will all be accessible through the Library Reserves Ares system. There will be a link to the Ares on the Brightspace page for the course. Alternatively, the Ares can be accessed through the library website, or the online catalogue can be used to search for certain individual readings. No text(s) need to be purchased.

Please note that students should use the versions of the texts that are made available via Ares. Therefore, while some of these texts will have different editions and translations (some available online), for the sake of remaining consistent across the class and with the presentation of the material in lectures/assessments/forums, it is advisable that students consult the exact editions identified in this syllabus and made available by the library.

All readings are required unless specifically noted as “optional.” YouTube clip links will be available on Brightspace as well as the course Ares.

VI Evaluation at a glance

- 1) Attendance in synchronous class meetings for full duration (4 X 1.25%): 5%
September 8th, October 6th, November 10th, and December 8th
- 2) First Test (October 13th – must be completed during class time on Brightspace): 25%
- 3) Take-home Midterm Test (due November 17th): 30%
- 4) Take-home Final Exam (due December 23rd): 40%

Total = 100%

Please note that alternative and/or extra-credit assignments will not be an option and the structure of the evaluation will not be changed.

Students are responsible for being aware of, and abiding by, Carleton University’s Academic Integrity Policy; suspected violations of the policy such as, but not limited to, plagiarism and not complying with the rules of tests/exams cannot be settled with the instructor. A full copy of the policy can be found here: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-2021.pdf>

VII Evaluation in detail

Attendance (5% total -- on specified days/times listed in below schedule during class timeslot)

As noted above ('Course format...' section) students are required to attend the (4) synchronous class meetings that will take place over the course of the term and each led by the instructor. Attendance, for the full duration of meetings, is worth 1.25% of the final grade per meeting. Please note that these live classes will not be recorded, and students are not permitted to record them, so students should ensure that they avoid scheduling conflicts; this is an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the material in more of a live class environment. Students should ensure that they have setup a Zoom account, have downloaded the Zoom application, and that their account/display name reflects the name under which they are registered in the course before they join the meeting (important, since if a student cannot be identified on the attendance list, then credit cannot be given). A link to a 'Zoom Resource Site for Carleton Students' will be provided, and meeting link/info will be posted on Brightspace the day before each meeting. Students will require a device on which they can download the Zoom application and a reliable internet connection. To participate, students will also require a microphone (external or built-in). While students are invited to turn on their cameras when asking a question or making a comment, there is no requirement to do so, and a webcam is not a requirement for either attending or participating. Proper classroom etiquette is required for all participants. Please note that there is no way to make-up for missing these live class meetings and being absent means 0/1.25 for that meeting.

First Test (25% -- October 13th during class time, via Brightspace)

The First Test will take place on Brightspace and will be held during the scheduled timeslot for the course. It will test students on the material from Topics 1-4 and the format will be short answer in the form of multiple choice, true/false, and/or fill in the blank. The objective will be to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the material presented in lecture videos and required readings. Please note that the test must be completed during the assigned class time, will have a fixed time-limit and collaboration is prohibited. A make-up test will only be considered in cases of serious illness/injury or family emergency that is supported by appropriate documentation and where the student has contacted the instructor (via email) as soon as possible (do not delay) and, in all cases, within 3 working days of the test. It is the responsibility of students to have the necessary technical requirements (i.e., working computer and reliable internet connection) to complete the test and if students encounter technical difficulties during the test they should contact the ITS Service Desk and/or Brightspace Technical Support (contact info will be provided) for assistance and should not abandon taking the test.

Take-home Midterm Test (30% -- due November 17th via Brightspace)

The Take-home Midterm Test will be posted on Brightspace following the Zoom Q&A on November 10th. It will test students on the material from Topics 5-7 and the format will require written responses (in full and complete sentences); specific details will be finalized closer to the day of posting. Students will be asked to respond to multiple interpretive questions which will require them to accurately explain and/or evaluate certain key aspects of the material presented in lecture videos and the required readings in their own words, as well as identify their significance for the philosophy of love and sex. The clarity of writing, including proper spelling, syntax and grammar is an inherent part of demonstrating one's understanding of the material. Only course materials (lecture notes and readings) are to be used to complete the test – no outside sources. Students should include proper citations (CMS Author-Date)

when referring to the readings (citation guide will be provided). This is an individual test and collaboration is thus prohibited. Late midterms will only be accepted within 3 calendar days of the due date and will be penalized by 5% per day; midterms will no longer be accepted past 3 calendar days of the deadline and a grade of zero will be assigned. Exceptions will only be considered in cases of serious illness/injury or family emergency that is supported by appropriate documentation, but only if the request is submitted to the instructor (via email) as soon as possible (do not delay) and, in all cases, within 3 working days of the due date.

Take-home Final Exam (40% -- due on December 23rd via Brightspace)

The Take-home Final Exam will ask students to respond to a certain number of prompts and provide an essay-style response to each. The purpose of this exam will be to demonstrate students' understanding of key aspects of the material looked at over the entire course of the term (with the potential for an emphasis on Topics 8-11). It will build on the first two tests by asking students to synthesize the material in a way that evaluates both their knowledge/understanding of the course material, but also their ability to critically analyze and develop an argument about the material. As such, things like the clarity, precision, and organization of writing/arguments, as well as proper spelling, syntax and grammar are part of the evaluation. Lecture notes and the readings will be the materials that students will use to complete the exam, and specific evidence of diverse engagement with the readings is an expectation. Students should include proper citations (CMS Author-Date) when referring to the readings (citation guide will be provided). Outside sources are not to be used for the purposes of completing the exam. Please note that the take-home final exam must be completed independently, and collaboration is prohibited. Late exams will NOT be accepted, and the instructor cannot provide extensions nor accept exams via email past the deadline. If a student requires a deferral, they must formally apply to the Registrar's Office directly. Students should consult Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar for the specific policies on deferring final (take-home) exams.

VIII Course schedule

Pre-recorded lecture videos made accessible via Brightspace on Mondays; Wednesdays are for other course elements – i.e., Zoom Q&As, office hours, and/or the First Test.

Content warning: please note that given the subject matter of the course, some of the material students encounter may cause emotional discomfort or distress (for example, aspects of the material from Topics 7-9). While this material is always situated within the context, and for the purpose, of academic study, its presence in the course, and the fact that engaging with said material is required, may nonetheless be something that students wish to take into consideration when deciding to register for the course.

Introductory *Zoom* Class Session (September 8th)

Please read this course outline carefully, taking note of important dates, deadlines, and policies. The introductory Zoom session is the ideal time to ask questions to clarify any aspect of the outline.

Fassio, Alessandra. 2017. "My PPLS Journey Student Blog: How to read Philosophy (a step-by-step guide for confused students!)." *The University of Edinburgh School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences*, February 28, 2017. <https://www.blogs.ppls.ed.ac.uk/2017/02/28/read-philosophy-step-step-guide-confused-students/>

Topic 1 (September 13th and 15th): Freud on The Role of Love and Sex in Human Life

Freud, Sigmund. 2014. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Translated by David McLintock. London: Penguin Classics. (Chapter 4).

YouTube clip: Žižek, Slavoj. 2014. "Slavoj Žižek: Events and Encounters Explain Our Fear of Falling in Love." *Big Think*, November 30, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXqPIYWJSII>

Topic 2 (September 20th and 22nd) – The Relationship between Love and Knowledge in Plato

Plato. 1989. *Symposium*. Translated by Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. (189A-212C, pages 23-60).

Topic 3 (September 27th and 29th) – The Role of Friendship in Aristotle's *Ethics*

Aristotle. 2014. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by C.D.C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. (Book VIII).

YouTube clip: 2007. "Jacques Derrida: On Love and Being." *YouTube*, January 26, 2007. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj1BuNmhjAY>

Topic 4 (October 4th and 6th*) – Conceptions of Self-Love in Rousseau

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 2016. *A Discourse on Inequality*. New York: Philosophical Library. ('First Part' and pages 34-36 from 'Second Part').

***Zoom Q&A Session: October 6th (8:35 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.)**

Statutory Holiday (October 11th) – University Closed

FIRST TEST: October 13th (8:35 a.m. – 9:55 a.m. on Brightspace)

Topic 5 (October 18th and 20th) – Love and Dependency: Human Connection in Current Times

Gilligan, Carol, and Naomi Snider. 2017. "The Loss of Pleasure, or Why We Are Still Talking About Oedipus." *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 53 (2): 173-95.

YouTube clip: Tronick, Edward. 2009. "Still Face Experiment: Dr. Edward Tronick." *UMass Boston*, November 30, 2009. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGEbZht0>

Optional: Gilligan, Carol. 1993. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 1: "Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle").

FALL BREAK (October 25th-29th)

Topic 6 (November 1st and 3rd) – Questioning Monogamy and Understandings of Sex/Gender

Shotwell, Alexis. 2017. "Ethical Polyamory, Responsibility, and Significant Otherness." In *Desire, Love, and Identity: Philosophy of Sex and Love*, edited by Gary Foster, 277-286. Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada.

YouTube Clip: Butler, Judith. 2011. "Judith Butler: Your Behavior Creates Your Gender | Big Think." *Big Think*, June 6, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo7o2LYATDc>

Optional: Irigaray, Luce. 1993. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. Translated by Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. (Chapter 1: "Sexual Difference").

Topic 7 (November 8th and 10th*) – Love, Sex, and the Dangers of Objectification

Nussbaum, Martha C. 1995. "Objectification." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 24 (4): 249-91.

Optional: Catharine A, MacKinnon. 1989. *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Chapter 7: "Sexuality").

***Zoom Q&A Session: November 10th (8:35 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.)**

Take-home Midterm Test will be posted following the Q&A session and due the following week (Nov 17th)

Topic 8 (November 15th and 17th*) – Roleplay, Power Dynamics, and Contemporary Sexuality

Miller, Shaun. 2017. "BDSM." In *Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings* (7th Edition), edited by Raja Halwani, Nicholas Powers and Sarah Hoffman, 421-436. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Optional: Bartky, Sandra Lee. 1984. "Feminine Masochism and the Politics of Personal Transformation." *Women's Studies Int. Forum* 7 (5): 323-34.

**Take-home Midterm Test due November 17th (submit via Brightspace)*

Topic 9 (November 22nd and 24th) – Contemporary Sexuality and Issues Related to Race

Zheng, Robin. 2016. "Why Yellow Fever isn't Flattering: A Case Against Racial Fetishes." *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 2 (3): 400-19.

Khan, Ummni, and Maggie FitzGerald. 2018. "We Do Have Nice Tits; Thank You for Noticing! (Or, An Intersectional Pleasure-Positive Defence of Catcalling." *Ryerson University Centre for Free Expression*. <https://cfe.ryerson.ca/blog/2018/08/we-do-have-nice-tits-thank-you-noticing-or-intersectional-pleasure-positive-defence>

Topic 10 (November 29th and December 1st) – Sex and the Self in Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*

Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books. (Part Three).

YouTube clip: 2021. “Foucault on Power (1981).” *YouTube*, April 6, 2021.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x5M-Gs2X1M>

Topic 11 (December 6th and 8th*) – Revisiting the Role of *Eros* in Society

Lorde, Audre. 2007. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley: Crossing Press. (“Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power”).

Optional: Marcuse, Herbert. 1966. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Boston: Beacon Press. (“Political Preface”).

***Concluding Zoom Q&A Session: December 8th (8:35 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.)**

Take-home Final Exam Posting (December 10th) – this will also serve as an alternative date for concluding Zoom Q&A in case of technical difficulties or if other in-term rescheduling occurs. December 10th follows a Monday schedule.

Note: there is always a chance that unforeseen events will require a modification to the above schedule and/or plan; if this is the case, students will be notified of the change as soon as possible.

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (Fall/Winter 2021-22)

Assignments:

Please follow your professor's instructions on how assignments will be handled electronically. There will be NO hard copies placed in the essay box this coming year.

Evaluation:

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they should contact their course instructor no later than *three working days* of the due date. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of the term. Term work cannot be deferred by the Registrar.

Deferrals for Final Exams:

Students are expected to be available for the duration of a course including the examination period. Occasionally, students encounter circumstances beyond their control where they may not be able to write a final examination or submit a take-home examination. Examples of this would be a serious illness or the death of a family member. If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a take-home examination by the due date, you may apply for a deferral no later than *three working days* after the original due date (as per the University Regulations in [Section 4.3 of the Undergraduate Calendar](#)). Visit the [Registrar's Office](#) for further information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. ([Section 10.1 of the Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations](#))

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term:

- *Pregnancy or religious obligation:* write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the [EDC](#) website.
- *Academic accommodations for students with disabilities:* The [Paul Menton Centre](#) for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class test or exam requiring accommodation. After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.
- *Survivors of Sexual Violence:* As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per [Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy](#).
- *Accommodation for Student Activities:* Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

Important Dates:

Sept. 8	Classes start.
Sept. 22	Last day for registration and course changes for fall term and fall/winter (two-term) courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from fall term or two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Oct. 11	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 25-29	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 26	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, before the official examination period.
Dec. 10	Last day of fall term classes. <i>Classes follow a Monday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall term courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for a fall term course.
Dec. 11-23	Final examinations for fall term courses and mid-term examinations in two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Dec. 23	All take-home examinations are due.
Jan. 10	Classes begin.
Jan. 24	Last day for registration and course changes in the winter term.
Jan. 31	Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter term courses or from the winter portion of two-term courses. Withdrawals after this date will result in a permanent notation of WDN on the official transcript.
Feb. 21	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 22-25	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 29	Last day for summative tests or examinations, or formative tests or examinations totaling more than 15% of the final grade, in winter term or fall/winter courses before the official examination period.
Apr. 12	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i> Last day for academic withdrawal from fall/winter and winter courses. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for two-term and for winter term courses.
Apr. 13	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 14-28	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 28	All take-home examinations are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:
www.carleton.ca/philosophy
520-2110

Registrar's Office:
www.carleton.ca/registrar
520-3500

Academic Advising Centre:
www.carleton.ca/academicadvising
520-7850

Writing Services:
<http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>
520-3822

MacOdrum Library
<http://www.library.carleton.ca/>
520-2735