

PHIL 1700 (A)
Philosophy of Love and Sex

16:35 p.m. – 17:55 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays

This course will be held remotely online – blended: recorded lectures; live assessments and office hours.

I General information

Instructor: Sacha Ghandeharian

On-line Office Hours: 16:35 p.m. – 17:55 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays (by appointment via Zoom).

Email: sacha.ghandeharian@carleton.ca

TA(s): TBA

All email communication is to be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn, not personal emails.

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.

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 repressed, 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.

III Course format

This course is blended and contains a mix of asynchronous and synchronous activities. Typically, each week will involve one or more required readings and a pre-recorded lecture (sometimes students will also be asked to watch a short video clip from YouTube). The majority of the course is thus asynchronous. However, there are important synchronous aspects as well. The first two assessments (i.e., tests) for this course will be held live on cuLearn during the official timeslot for the course (see above). Students must avoid scheduling conflicts that will prevent them from being able to complete the live assessments. Documented serious illness or personal emergency are the only legitimate grounds for requesting a makeup test. **Note:** There is always the possibility that an unexpected cuLearn outage will require rescheduling a test.

In addition, office hours will also follow the official timeslot for the course. **Please note** that students are asked to post questions about course material (lectures, readings, videos, etc.) to the corresponding forum on cuLearn which will be monitored by TAs and/or the instructor; each topic section/week will

have a dedicated forum. This 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 posted by TAs and/or the instructor. Students are required to practice proper etiquette in forum discussion. The instructor will be available during the times listed above to answer emails or meet with students via Zoom regarding more specific or urgent matters pertaining to the course. Students are asked to email the instructor in advance if they wish to schedule a Zoom meeting during the indicated timeslots.

Alongside the two above-mentioned tests, the final assessment for the course will be a take-home examination distributed on the day of the last class (see more on evaluation below).

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 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 cuLearn for the course. Alternatively, the Ares can be accessed through the library website, or the online catalogue can be used to search for 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 numerous 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.” The lectures will be posted on cuLearn, as will links to YouTube clips.

Note on intellectual property: The materials created for this course (including lecture presentations 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 use only. They are not to be reproduced or redistributed.

VI Evaluation at a glance

First Test (February 11th): 25%

Second Test (March 18th): 35%

Take-home Final Exam (due April 27th): 40% **Total = 100%**

VII Evaluation in detail

First Test (25% -- February 11th)

The first test will take place on cuLearn 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. The objective will be to evaluate students' knowledge and understanding of the material presented in lectures and required readings. This is a closed-book and individual test; students are NOT allowed to consult any materials in the process of completing the test and collaboration is prohibited.

Second Test (35% -- March 18th)

The second test will take place on cuLearn and will be held during the scheduled timeslot for the course. It will test students on the material from Topics 5-8 and the format will be short answer. The objective will be to evaluate students' understanding of key concepts and theories presented in lectures and the required readings, as well as the ability to identify their significance for the philosophy of love and sex. This is a closed-book and individual test; students are NOT allowed to consult any materials in the process of completing the test and collaboration is prohibited.

Take-home Final Exam (40% -- due on April 27th)

The take-home final exam will ask students to respond to two questions and provide an essay-style answer to each. The purpose of this exam will be to demonstrate students' overall understanding of the themes, theories, theorists, concepts and/or debates looked at over the course of the term. 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 primary 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 making reference 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 exam must be completed independently, and collaboration is prohibited.

VIII Course schedule

Topic 1 (January 12th and 14th) – Introduction: The Role of Love and Sex in Human Life

Freud, Sigmund. 2014. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Translated by David McLintock. London: Penguin Classics. (Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

YouTube clip: "Slavoj Žižek: Love is Evil"

Topic 2 (January 19th and 21st) – The Relationship between Love and Knowledge in Plato

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

Topic 3 (January 26th and 28th) – 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: "Jacques Derrida: On Love and Being"

Topic 4 (February 2nd and 4th) – Conceptions of Self-Love in Rousseau

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 2016. *A Discourse on Inequality*. New York: Philosophical Library. (First Part).

Topic 5 (February 9th and 11th) – 'Care' and Dependency in the Formation of the Self

Oliver, Kelly. 2002. "Subjectivity as Responsivity: The Ethical Implications of Dependency." In *The Subject of Care: Feminist Perspectives on Dependency*, edited by Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen K. Feder, 322–333. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

Optional: Hegel, G.W.F. *Love*. Translated by T.M. Knox.
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/love/index.htm>

FEBRUARY 11th: FIRST TEST

WINTER BREAK (February 15th-19th)

Topic 6 (February 23rd and 25th) – The Question and Significance of Sexual Difference

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

YouTube clip: "Judith Butler: Your Behaviour Creates Your Gender"

Topic 7 (March 2nd and 4th) – Love, Pleasure and Empathy: Patriarchy and Relationships

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

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").

Topic 8 (March 9th and 11th) – Love, Sex and the Dangers of Objectification

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

Topic 9 (March 16th and 18th) – Power Dynamics and Contemporary Sexuality

Benjamin, Jessica. 1983. "Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination." In *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*, edited by Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson, 280-99.

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

MARCH 18th: SECOND TEST

Topic 10 (March 23rd and 25th) – 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 11 (March 30th and April 1st) – Sexuality 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: "Foucault on Power (1981)"

Topic 12 (April 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").

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

Conclusion (April 13th) – Review and Take-home Exam Instructions

Note: There is always a chance that unforeseen events will require a modification to the above schedule; 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 2020-21)

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. 9	Classes start.
Sept. 23	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. 12	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Oct. 26-30	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 27	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. 11	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. 12-23	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. 11	Classes begin.
Jan. 25	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. 15	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Feb. 15-19	Winter Break – no classes.
Mar. 31	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. 2	Statutory holiday. University closed.
Apr. 14	Last day of two-term and winter term classes. 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. <i>Classes follow a Friday schedule.</i>
Apr. 15	No classes or examinations take place.
Apr. 16-27	Final examinations for winter term and two-term courses. Examinations are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 27	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