

Syllabus: Philosophy of Love and Sex (spring/2013)

PHIL 170/CRN 35488
MWF 10:00-10:50am
180 PLC

Dr. Bonnie Mann
371 PLC
Office Hours: Fridays 11:00am-1:00pm
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This syllabus is subject to revision up until the first day of class.

GTFs: Elizabeth Balskus (LF), Jon La Rochelle, Katherine Logan (MF), Phillip Mayo (RB), Ian Sato (LB), Celena Simpson(RF)

Course Description

Love and sex are so central to human life that many would argue that our intimate relationships are the key to self-esteem, fulfillment, even happiness itself; in fact, our intimate relationships are probably more important to our sense of well-being than our careers. Yet we spend remarkably little time *thinking* about love and sex, even as we spend years preparing ourselves for the world of work. In this course you will be asked to reflect on the most intimate sphere of human existence. We will draw on historical, sociological, religious, feminist and philosophical work to shed critical light on a variety of questions, including: What is love exactly? Why do we continually associate love and sex with happiness and pleasure when they often make us so utterly miserable? Is there, or should there be, an ethics of love and sex? What is moral, what is normal, and who gets to decide? What happens to sex when it is associated with “scoring” (the conquest model of sex)? How are our understandings of masculinity and femininity tied in with what we believe about love and sex?

You should come away from this class with a more considered understanding of your own beliefs and values about love and sex, and with habits of thinking that are helpful in real life situations in which either love, or sex, or both, become difficult, delightful, overwhelming, painful, or ethically challenging.

Our readings for the course are drawn from a variety of sources: the commonly recognized texts/thinkers of the western philosophical tradition, Christian thinkers of various time periods, contemporary empirical work, and feminist theorists. **If you feel that you cannot benefit by engaging or learn from each of these perspectives, whether or not you agree with them, this is probably not the class for you.** We address issues of sexism and sexuality along with questions about the meaning of our erotic existence and the nature of love.

A Special 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 Format/ Pedagogy

We will do some tough philosophical reading, but use that reading to think about our own lives and how we live them. Most class sections will include a lecture and discussion (both small

group and whole class). Most lectures will be accompanied by a power point presentation. Unless you have a documented disability that requires such accommodation, please do not ask for lecture notes or power point slides to be made available to you outside of lecture.

A study guide for each unit of the course is available on Blackboard. The study guides are designed to help you read carefully and closely and prepare for exams.

If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, please let me know right away.

REQUIREMENTS

No extra credit will be offered for the course. Please don't ask.

Academic Honesty

It is my practice to assign a grade of F for the course to students who engage in acts of academic dishonesty, which in this class would mean cheating on an exam. For a full description of forms of academic dishonesty, please see "Statement on Academic Honesty" on the Blackboard site for the course.

Reading

*All readings will be available through the blackboard site for the course. Go to the blackboard site when it is up and look under "readings" Students are expected to **print out** the readings and bring them to lecture and discussion section each week, having read them closely and carefully.*

Electronics (NOT!)

Unless you have a documented disability that necessitates the use of electronic devices, please refrain from using laptops, cell phones, blackberries, ipods, ipads, electronic readers, headphones, and any other electronic devices I don't know the name of yet in class. If you do have a documented disability that makes it important for you to have the technology at hand, just let me know in person, show me the documentation from the Accessible Education Office, and we'll make accommodations.

Seating

You will be assigned a seat in a particular section of the lecture hall with your GTF starting the 2nd week of class. It is your responsibility to know the name of your GTF and which seat you are in. Your GTF will monitor attendance during lecture and figure this into your participation grade for the course.

Surveys

*At the beginning of each of the four units of the course, you will be asked to complete a survey on Blackboard. Surveys will be available immediately after the class period previous to when the survey is to be completed. Surveys must be completed on the assigned date by 11:59pm to receive credit, with the exception of the first survey, which will be open longer for those who join the class late. The survey results will be presented to you in class. **The surveys can only be accessed through the blackboard site for lecture.***

Exams

You will complete three exams for this course, all of which are take-home essay –style exams. You will turn the exams in through Safeassign on your Discussion Section Blackboard Site to insure that you do not cheat on the exam. See the course calendar for exam dates. Exams will be based on readings, whether or not we have discussed them in class, and on lectures, whether or not material from the lectures is referenced in the readings, and on the films you watch.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance and active participation are required, both in lecture and discussion section. See “grading” below. “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.

GRADING

Surveys

- All surveys completed.
- 3 surveys completed
- Fewer than 3 surveys completed

10% of Final Grade

Grade A

Grade C

Grade F

Take-Home Essay Exams

- First Midterm
- Second Midterm
- Third Midterm

20% of Final Grade

20% of Final Grade

20% of Final Grade

Graded Online Quizzes with 4 Films (Unit 2)

10% of Final Grade

Participation/Attendance

20% of Final Grade

- A- Exceptional: To achieve an A the expectations are that student has perfect attendance in discussion section and near perfect attendance at lecture, he/she is recognized as a leader in discussion sections and consistently both contributes to and brings the conversation to a deeper level, without dominating the discussion to such an extent that it inhibits participation by other students.
- B- Very Good. To achieve a B expectations are that the student will miss no more than one discussion section and have very good attendance at lectures (present around 95% of the time). Takes a very active role in discussion section and remarks are consistently helpful and on topic.
- C- Good. To achieve a C expectations are that the student will miss no more than two discussion sections and has good attendance at lectures (present around 90% of the time). Participates in discussions, but not consistently.
- D-Poor. To achieve a D expectations are that the student will miss no more than four discussion sections and attend lecture (around 80% of the time). Participates in discussions sporadically.
- F-Failing. Misses more than four discussion sections and/or has poor attendance at lecture and/or is not a positive contributor to discussions.

To calculate grades for “participation” GTFs will weigh all of these factors in a holistic manner at the end of the term.

Unit 1 **Love and Sex in the History of Philosophy**

Week 1 ***Love and Philosophy***

M 4/1 Opening Class

T 4/2 Unit 1 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm, if you join the class late, the survey will remain open for you to complete until the end of week 2.

W 4/3 Plato “Symposium” (47 pages)

F 4/5 Plato “Symposium” (continued)

Week 2 ***Body and Soul/Man and Woman***

M 4/8 Plato “Symposium” (continued)

W 4/10 Augustine “Confessions” (6 pages) Heloise and Abelard “Letters”(15 pages)

F 4/12 Kant “On the Distinction of the Beautiful and Sublime” (20 pages)

Week 3 ***Love, Use and “The Second Sex”***

M 4/15 Wollstonecraft “Introduction” (5 pages) “The Prevailing Opinion” (22pages)

W 4/17 Beauvoir, “Introduction,” to *The Second Sex* (15 pages)

F 4/19 Lecture Only (Review of key points in Unit 1)

Unit 1 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in Discussion Section Today

Sat4/20 Unit 1 Exam due by 3pm today. Turn in through the “Safeassign” box on Blackboard.

Unit 2 **Sex, Conquest and Communication**

Week 4 ***Conquest: Sex, Use and Violence***

Sunday 4/21 Unit 2 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.

[Homework Assignment for This Week: watch *Tough Guise* and *The Bro Code* before Friday’s Class. Find Live Stream Films on Blackboard Website. Take short graded quiz on each film online.]

M 4/22 Wojtyla (Pope John Paul), “Analysis of the Verb ‘To Use’” (23 pages)

W 4/24 Bordo, “Gentleman or Beast” (19 pages)

F 4/26 Katz, excerpts from “The Macho Paradox” (21 pages): *Tough Guise* and *The Bro Code* Lecture and Discussion

Week 5 ***Communication: Talking through the Paradoxes of Femininity/Masculinity***

[Homework Assignment for This Week: watch *Flirting with Danger* and *The Line* before Friday’s Class. Find Live Stream Films on Blackboard Website. Take short graded quiz on each film online.]

M 4/29 Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 33-52 (19 pages)

W 5/1 Phillips, “What’s a Young Woman (Not) to Think” pp. 53-78 (25 pages)

F 5/3 *Flirting with Danger* and *The Line* Lecture and Discussion

Unit 3 Nature, Normality and Morality

Week 6 Nature, God, Normality and Morality

Sunday 5/5 Unit 3 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.

M 5/6 Aquinas, Thomas "The Purpose of Sex" (5 pages)

Vatican, "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics" (10 pages)

W 5/8 Levin, "Why Homosexuality is Abnormal" (12 pages)

F 5/10 Corvino, "Why Shouldn't Tommy and Jimmy Have Sex" (14 pages)

Bradshaw, "Reply to Corvino" (14 pages)

Week 7 Coming Out in a World of Insult

M 5/13 Corvino and Bradshaw Continued

W 5/15 Eribon, "The Shock of Insult" (3 pages) "To Tell or Not to Tell" (9 pages)

F 5/17 Eribon, "Heterosexual Interpellation" (7 pp) "Existence Precedes Essence" (6 pp.)

Units 2-3 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in Discussion Section Today

Sat4/20 Units 2-3 Exam due by 3pm today. Turn in through the "Safeassign" box on Blackboard.

Unit 4 What is the Nature of Love and Desire?

Week 8

Sunday 5/19 Unit 4 Survey must be completed by 11:59 pm.

M 5/20 Kollontai, "Make Way for Winged Eros" (16 pages)

W 5/22 [Guest Lecture: Katherine Logan] Kollontai (continued)

F 5/24 [Guest Lecture: Celena Simpson] Solomon, "The Self in Love" (26 pages)

Week 9

M 5/27 Memorial Day: No Class

W 5/29 Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love" (25 pages)

F 5/31 Marion, "The Silence of Love," (10 pages)

Week 10

M 6/3 Marion, "What's the Use?" (4pages) "The Erotic Reduction" (7 pages)

W 6/5 *Knowledge/Emotion* Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge" pp. 261-274 (13 pages)

Proust (fragment) "Remembrance of Things Past" (10 pages)

F 6/7 Nussbaum, "Love's Knowledge" pp. 274-285 (11 pages)

Beattie, "Learning to Fall" (11 pages)

Unit 4 Take-Home Essay Exam handed out in Section Today

Sat6/8 Unit 4 Exam due by 3pm today. Turn in through the "Safeassign" box on Blackboard.