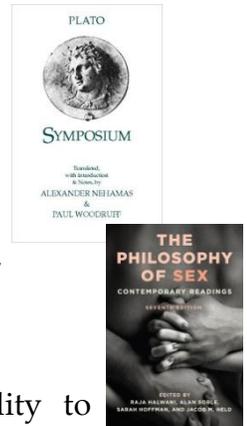


PHI 3930 # 20429: Philosophy of Love and Sex  
Professor: Arina Pismenny  
Office: Griffin-Floyd Hall 306  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:50 - 2:50, or by appointment  
Email: [arinapismenny@ufl.edu](mailto:arinapismenny@ufl.edu)

MWF 12:50-1:40  
LEI 0104

**Required Texts:**

1. Plato, *Symposium*. Translated by Nehamas and Woodruff. (1989). Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872200760
2. Raja Halwani, Alan Soble, Sarah Hoffman and Jacob M. Held, *The Philosophy of Sex* (2017). 7th Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN: 978-1-4422-6143-3



Additional reading materials are posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to download them and read them. The readings posted on Canvas are designated by [CN] on the syllabus.

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

**Course Description:**

Love and sex are essential to human life, and many would argue that our intimate relationships are the key to self-esteem, fulfillment, and even happiness itself. In fact, our intimate relationships are probably more important to our sense of well-being than our careers. Yet we spend tremendously little time thinking about love and sex. In this course, you will be asked to reflect on the most intimate sphere of human experience.

We will explore several philosophical problems arising from reflection on romantic love and sex including the nature of love, the relationship between value and desire, the rationality of emotion, the issue of irreplaceability. In addition, we'll look at moral questions concerning sex, and discuss why certain practices are considered perverse or immoral. We will examine the role of consent as a necessary and/or sufficient condition for legitimate sexual intercourse. Furthermore, we will examine the concepts of sex and gender, and discuss the ways in which they figure in one's sexual desire. We will also discuss sexual orientation and non-monogamous relationships in trying to account for the complexity of sexual practices and romantic relationships, and put pressure of the heteronormative norms such as sexual and emotional exclusivity.

The goal of the class is to be useful to you in your own lives. Reflection on personal experience, beliefs, and values will be central to the course as a whole. I hope that in the end you will obtain a better understanding of your own beliefs and values about love and sex, and acquire tools for thinking about problems concerning these topics.

### **General education objectives and learning outcomes**

This course is a Humanities (H) subject area course in the UF General Education Program. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

PHI 3930 accomplishes these goals by familiarizing students with some key philosophical topics and arguments concerning knowledge, personal identity, and the nature of ethical truths as well as others. Students will become adept at thinking critically, analyzing arguments, and writing clearly and persuasively.

**The General Education Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's)** divide into three areas: **CONTENT** – students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline; **COMMUNICATION** – students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline; and **CRITICAL THINKING** – students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

**Students will satisfy the CONTENT SLO** by demonstrating a mastery of some key philosophical concepts as well as central arguments in the discipline. The **COMMUNICATION SLO** will be achieved by two Argumentative Essays (1500-2000 words each), and regular participation in class. Students will be required to explain and evaluate various philosophical views. Students will also demonstrate achievement of the **CRITICAL THINKING SLO** through the Argumentative Essays, which will be on assigned topics designed to test students' critical thinking abilities. Writing assignments will be graded on the bases of a student's comprehension of the relevant issues, development and cogent defense of her or his position, clarity of expression, and mechanics.

In short, at the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain some traditional philosophical positions as well as common objections to these.
- Analyze, evaluate, construct, and present persuasive and cogent arguments for particular philosophical positions
- Think critically about difficult and complex topics

### **Teaching Philosophy:**

My goal is not to convince you that any of the authors in our text have all the answers. It is to help you understand their thoughts so that critical reflection on those thoughts can play a meaningful role in forming your own.

## II. DOING YOUR PART

It's your decision whether or not to remain in this course. If you decide to stay, think of your decision as a commitment to participate actively in your own learning, take responsibility for your education, and be an active learner in this course. Philosophy requires a lot of reading, and it is very difficult reading. You will need to devote a significant amount of time to it. You will need to carefully follow the schedule at the end of the syllabus, regularly participate in class discussions, and seriously prepare for the assignments.

## III. HOW YOU AND I WILL MEASURE YOUR PROGRESS

Measuring your progress in points will make it easy for you to determine your own grade and progress at any time. The total possible number of points for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be assigned on the standard point/percentage scale:

**A: 93.0-100; A-: 90.0-92.9; B+: 87.1-89.9; B: 83.0-87.0; B-: 80.0-82.9; C+77.1-79.9; C: 73.0-77.0; C-: 70.0-72.9; D+: 67.1-69.9; D: 63.0-67.0; D-: 60-62.9; E: 0.0-59.9.**

### **What do grades mean at UF?**

A is for excellent work.

B is for very good work.

C is for adequate or average work.

D is for below average, inadequate work.

E is for unacceptable work, i.e., work that is not at the college level.

### **Components of Course Grade**

**In-class quizzes (5): 6 pts/quiz; 30%**

**Group presentation: 15%**

**Midterm paper: 20%**

**Final paper: 25%**

**Attendance: 5%**

**Participation: 5%**

**Total: 100%**

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

**Homework:** You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials and answering study questions.

**In-class quizzes:** Please refer to the tentative schedule to see the dates on which the quizzes will take place. The quizzes will take place in class and will be 15 minutes long, and will have three questions about the readings due that week, and, sometimes, the week before. You will be tested on major terms and arguments that appear in the assigned readings. Your answers should be as precise and as detailed as possible. Each quiz will be worth 6%. There will be 6 quizzes in total. At the end of the term, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped, and only five will count towards your final grade. In-class quizzes are worth 30% of your final grade.

**Extra credit:** dropping the lowest score for one in-class quiz is the only extra credit offered in this course.

**Group presentations:** The class will be divided into four groups, with approximately five people per group. The group presentation should be on the specified topic, presenting a specific philosophical problem relevant to the class topic for that week. The problem should be presented clearly. The group will need to provide arguments as to why this is a problem, and consider objections, and responses to the objections. Group members will receive one grade, and, for this reason, are encouraged to work as a *team*. To ensure that everyone is doing their fair share of work, each group member will e-mail me their peer review reports, grading everyone's performance in the group, including one's own. Group presentations are worth 15% of the final grade.

**Midterm and final papers:** You are asked to write two thesis papers for this course. The midterm paper should be between 1000 and 1500 words long, and the final paper should be between 1500 and 2000 words on any topic we have covered in class. In it, you will need to take a stand on a philosophical issue and defend your point of view with evidence and arguments. You will need to demonstrate the knowledge you have acquired in the course. The midterm paper is worth 20% and the final paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

**\*Late Work** will not be accepted. There will be no make-ups for missed assignments. This policy may be overridden only by extenuating cases. In order to make up an assignment, the following conditions must be met: (i) the instructor must be notified well in advance, (ii) the student must have a formal written excuse, and (iii) the missed assignment must be made-up within one calendar week.

**Attendance:** Your presence in class is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. More than **four** absences, for any reason, create an academic problem, which may result in you being dropped from the course. Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 1% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worthy 5% of your final grade.

Please be aware that people who are sleeping in class will be marked absent because it is not enough to be physically present in class. You also have to be conscious.

If you need to leave early, please consult me before class.

**Latenesses** will also affect your attendance record. Two latenesses will count as one absence. If you do arrive late, make sure to notify me at the end of the class that you were here. Otherwise, once marked absent, the attendance record will not be changed.

**Note taking:** [Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned](https://tinyurl.com/h98vbgr)

< <https://tinyurl.com/h98vbgr> >. When taking notes, you should write down ideas. You should **not** be copying the text of the slides, as the slides are available on Canvas, and you are wasting time re-writing them. Instead, you should be summarizing the material in your own sentences. This is a very good way to learn.

Hand-written notes are superior to typed-up notes because writing notes by hand engages your mind to a much greater extent than typing does. For this reason, I recommend to all of you to write your notes by hand.

**Electronic devices class policy:** Cell phone and smart watch use during class is not allowed for any reason. Please be sure that they are turned off. If you use your cell phone in class, you will be asked to leave, and attendance points will be subtracted.

You may use a laptop or tablet for note-taking *only*.

If you wish to record a lecture, be sure to obtain permission from me first.

**Participation:** Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. This will enable me to learn your names. Your class participation will be tracked. Participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

**Students with disabilities** requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via **GatorEvals**. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>. In evaluating this course, you should refer to the **Learning Objectives** on the syllabus (pp. 1-2).

**Cheating and Plagiarism policy:** If you are cheating on an assignment, you will receive an F on that assignment (no retakes). If you plagiarize an essay, full penalties of the university will be strictly enforced.

Here is **University of Florida's Policy on Academic Honesty**

[https://flexible.dce.ufl.edu/media/flexible.dce.ufl.edu/documents/uf\\_policy\\_student\\_conduct.pdf](https://flexible.dce.ufl.edu/media/flexible.dce.ufl.edu/documents/uf_policy_student_conduct.pdf)

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

**The Honor Pledge:** We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by Students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

**A. Cheating.** A Student cannot use unauthorized materials or resources in any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit. Cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another Student without the other Student's express Consent or without proper attribution to the other Student.
2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to the Student.
3. Using additional time, or failing to stop working when instructed, on any time-bound academic activity.
4. Failing to follow the directions of a proctor of any academic activity, when such conduct could lead to an academic advantage or benefit.
5. Collaborating with another person, through any medium, on any academic activity, when Faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.

**B. Complicity in Violating the Student Honor Code.** Attempting, aiding, encouraging, facilitating, abetting, conspiring to commit, hiring someone else to commit, giving or receiving bribes to secure, or being a participant (by act or omission) in any act prohibited by the Student Honor Code.

**C. False or Misleading Information.**

1. A Student must not make a false or misleading statement during the Investigation or resolution of an alleged Student Honor Code violation.
2. A Student must not make a false or misleading statement for the purpose of procuring an improper academic advantage for any Student.
3. A Student must not use or present fabricated information, falsified research, or other findings if the Student knows or reasonably should be aware that the information, research, or other finding is fabricated or falsified.

**D. Interference with an Academic Activity.**

1. A Student must not take any action or take any material for the purpose of interfering with an academic activity, through any means over any medium.
2. A Student must not be disruptive to the testing environment or other academic activity.

**E. Plagiarism.** A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

**F. Submission of Academic Work Purchased or Obtained from an Outside Source.** A Student must not submit as their own work any academic work in any form that the Student purchased or otherwise obtained from an outside source, including but not limited to: academic materials in any form prepared by a commercial or individual vendor of academic materials; a collection of research papers, tests, or academic materials maintained by a Student Organization or other entity or person, or any other sources of academic work.

**G. Unauthorized Recordings.** A Student must not, without express authorization from Faculty, make or receive any Recording, through any means over any medium, of any

academic activity, including but not limited to a Recording of any class or of any meeting with Faculty. Students registered with the Disability Resource Center who are provided reasonable accommodations that include allowing such Recordings must inform Faculty before making such Recordings.

**H. Unauthorized Taking or Receipt of Materials or Resources to Gain an Improper Academic Advantage.** A Student, independently or with another person or other people, must not without express authorization take, give, transmit, or receive materials, information, or resources in any manner, through any medium, for the purpose of gaining or providing an improper academic advantage to any Student.

#### IV. USEFUL LINKS

##### **Canvas**

<https://ufl.instructure.com/>

**Canvas help:** <<http://guides.instructure.com>> You will also see more help options by clicking "help" in the upper right corner of the Canvas homepage. I am not qualified to give tech help for Canvas; if you need help, contact UF's Computing Help Desk: <<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>>

##### **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>

##### **Counseling and Wellness Center**

<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, (352)392-1575

##### **University Police Department**

<https://police.ufl.edu/> (352)392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies

##### **Sexual Harassment/Misconduct Resources**

<https://titleix.ufl.edu/full-sexual-harassment-and-misconduct-policy/>

##### **Writing Studio**

<https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

##### **Libraries**

<https://www.ufl.edu/academics/libraries/>

**LGBTQ Affairs**

<https://lgbtq.multicultural.ufl.edu/>

***Philosophy at UF:***

**Philosophy Department**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/index.html>

**Philosophy Discussions – Food and Talk**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugrad-food&talk.html>

**Undergraduate Philosophy Society**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8317358197/about/>

**Philosophy Major and Minor Requirements**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/ugrad-major.html>

**Hare Essay Competition**

<http://www.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad.html?page=hare>

***Philosophy Research Sources***

**How to write a good philosophy paper:**

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

**Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

**The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy**

<http://www.iep.utm.edu>

**Philosophy Bites Podcast**

<http://philosophybites.libsyn.com>

**Philosophy of TED Talks**

<https://www.ted.com/talks?topics%5B%5D=philosophy>

**VI. COURSE SCHEDULE**

The source of the reading is indicated by the following abbreviations:

**PS** – *The Philosophy of Sex* by Halwani et al.

**CN** – Canvas

**Course Outline\* Subject to Change:**

**WEEK 1 8/21 & 8/23 WELCOME! Introduction to Philosophy of Sex and Love**

Readings: Chapter 1 – Alan Soble & Raja Halwani, "Introduction: The Analytic Categories of the Philosophy of Sex" [PS] (also available on Canvas), Susan Wolf, "Love: The Basic Questions" [CN]

**WEEK 2 8/26, 8/28 & 8/30 The Nature of Romantic Love**

Readings: *Symposium* – read the whole thing

**WEEK 3 9/4 & 9/6 The Nature of Romantic Love**

**9/2 NO CLASS – Labor Day**

Readings: *Symposium* continued, Martha Nussbaum, "The Speech of Alcibiades" [CN]  
**Recommended:** Jerome Neu, "Plato's Homoerotic Symposium" [CN], Iakovos Vasiliou, "Plato, Socrates, and Love" [CN]

**WEEK 4 9/9, 9/11, & 9/13 Eros, Agape, and Philia**

Readings: Anders Nygren, "Eros and Agape" [CN], John Brentlinger, "The Nature of Love" [CN], Aristotle On Friendship from *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VIII [CN]

**Recommended:** Neera Badhwar and Russell Jones, "Aristotle on the Love of Friends" [CN], John Cottingham, "Love and Religion" [CN]

**In-class quiz 1 9/9**

**WEEK 5 9/16, 9/18, & 9/20 Love, Autonomy, and Gender**

Readings: Robert Nozick, "Love's Bond" [CN], Simone de Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love" [CN], Kathryn Morgan "Analysis of Beauvoir" [CN], Skye Cleary, "Simone de Beauvoir on Love" [CN]

**Recommended:** Nora Isolde Kreft, "Love and Autonomy" [CN]

**Group 1 Presentation**

**WEEK 6 9/23, 9/25, & 9/27 Appraisal vs. Bestowal**

Readings: David Velleman, "Love as Moral Emotion" [CN], Irving Singer, "Appraisal and Bestowal" [CN], Kate Abramson and Adam Leite, "Love as a Reactive Emotion" [CN]

**Recommended:** Daniel Callcut, "Tough Love" [CN], Elijah Millgram, "Kantian Crystallization" [CN]

**In-class quiz 2 9/23**

## **WEEK 7 9/30 & 10/2 Love as a Relationship**

### **10/4 NO CLASS – Homecoming**

Readings: Christopher Grau, "Irreplaceability and Unique Value" [CN], Nico Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship" pp. 135-153 [CN]

Recommended: Robert Kraut, "Love De Re" [CN], Christopher Grau, "Love and History" [CN]

## **WEEK 8 10/7, 10/9, & 10/11 Reasons for Love and of Love**

Readings: Arina Pismenny, "Why Romantic love is not a moral emotion" [CN], Aaron Smuts, "Normative Reasons for Love I & II," [CN], Harry Frankfurt, "The Reasons of Love" [CN]

**Recommended:** Laurence Thomas, "Reasons for Loving" [CN], Nick Zangwill, "Love: gloriously amoral and arational" [CN]

### **Group 2 Presentation**

## **WEEK 9 10/14, 10/16, & 10/18 Love and Biology**

Readings: Helen Fisher, "Lust, Attraction, Attachment: Biology and Evolution of the Three Primary Emotion Systems for Mating, Reproduction, and Parenting [CN], Michael Ruse, "Love and Evolution" [CN], Arina Pismenny and Jesse Prinz, "Is Love an Emotion?" [CN]

**Recommended:** Helen Fisher et al., "Defining the Brain Systems of Lust, Romantic Attraction, and Attachment" [CN], Raja Halwani, "Love and Sex" [CN]

### **In-class quiz 3 10/14**

## **WEEK 10 10/21, 10/23, 10/25 Polyamory**

Readings: Chapter 12 – "Is "Loving More" Better? The Values of Polyamory", Elizabeth Brake [PS], Luke Brunning, "The Distinctiveness of Polyamory", Ronald de Sousa, "Love, Jealousy, and Compersion" [CN]

**Recommended:** Arina Pismenny "[What Can Polyamory Tell Us About Jealousy?](#)", Luke Brunning, "[Imagine, There's No Jealousy](#)"

### **In-class quiz 4 10/21**

## **WEEK 11 10/28, 10/30, & 11/1 Sex and Objectification**

Readings: Chapter 2 – Greta Christina, "Are We Having Sex Now or What?" [PS], Immanuel Kant, "Duties Towards the Body in Respect of Sexual Impulse" and "Crimina Carnis" from *Lectures on Ethics* [CN]

**Recommended:** Chapter 21 – Lina Papadaki, "Sexual Objectification" [PS], Chapter 22 – Raja Halwani, "Casual Sex, Promiscuity, and Objectification" [PS]

**MIDTERM PAPER DUE ON 11/1 AT 11:59 PM THE LATEST**

### **WEEK 12 11/4, 11/6, & 11/8 Sex and Consent**

Readings: Chapter 16 – Thomas Mappes, "Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using Another Person" [PS], Howard Klepper, "Sexual Exploitation and the Value of Persons" [CN]

**Recommended:** Chapter 18 – Alan Wertheimer, "Consent and Sexual Relations" [PS], Chapter 17 – Alan Soble, "Sexual Use" [PS]

**Group 3 Presentation**

### **WEEK 13 11/13 & 11/15 Sex and Sexual Perversion**

**11/11 NO CLASS – Veterans Day**

Readings: Chapter 3 – Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion" [PS], Chapter 5 – Robert Grey, "Sex and Sexual Perversion" [PS]

**Recommended:** Robert Solomon, "Sexual Paradigms" [CN], Janice Moulton "Sexual Behavior: Another Position" [CN]

**In-class quiz 5 11/13**

### **WEEK 14 11/18, 11/20, & 11/22 Sexual Desire**

Readings: Chapter 4 – Alan Goldman, "Plain Sex" [PS], Chapter 19 – Seiriol Morgan, "Dark Desires" [PS], Chapter 23 – Shaun Miller, "BDSM" [PS]

**Recommended:** Ronald de Sousa and Arina Pismenny, "The Erotic as a Value" [CN]

**Group 4 Presentation**

### **WEEK 15 11/25 Sex and Gender**

**11/27 & 11/29 NO CLASSES – Thanksgiving**

Readings: Chapter 8 – Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans 101" [PS], Talia Mae Bettcher, "Full-Frontal Morality: The Naked Truth about Gender" [CN], Jan Morris, from *My Conundrum* [CN]

**Recommended:** Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans Identities and First-Person Authority", Robin Dembroff, ["Why Be Nonbinary?"](#), Abigail C. Saguy, Juliet A. Williams, Robin Dembroff and Daniel Wodak, ["We Should All Use They/Them Pronouns ... Eventually"](#)

### **WEEK 16 12/2 & 12/4 Sex and Sexual Orientation**

Readings: Chapter 13 – Robin Dembroff, "What is sexual orientation?" [PS], Chapter 14 – Kim Hall, "Thinking Queerly about sex and sexuality" [PS], Chapter 10 – Kayley Vernallis, "Bisexuality and Bisexual Marriage" [PS]

**Recommended:** Chapter 15 – Kathy Rudy, "LGBTQ...Z?" [PS], Ann Tweedy, "Polyamory as Sexual Orientation" [CN]

**In-class quiz 6 12/2**

**FINAL PAPER DUE 12/6 (TBC)**