

PHI 3930 Philosophy of Love and Sex Fall 2022

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Office Hours: T: 2-3 in person or by [Zoom](#); R: 10:30-12 in person or by [Zoom](#), or by appointment

Class: Tuesdays 11:45 AM - 1:40 PM, Thursdays 12:50 PM - 1:40 PM in Matherly Hall, room 115

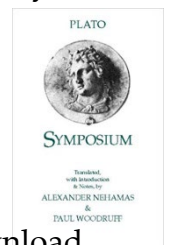
Communication: please contact me by email. It is best to send an email via Canvas. In your email, please indicate your name, course and section. Please allow 24 hours for an answer.

Proper ways to address me: Please address Dr. Arina Pismenny as Dr. Pismenny only.

Required Texts:

Plato, *Symposium*. Translated by Nehamas and Woodruff. (1989). Hackett Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0872200760 (also available on Kindle and via UF Library for free)

All other reading materials are posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to download them and read them.



I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Course Description:

Love and sex are essential to human life. In this course you will be asked to reflect on the most intimate spheres of human experience, addressing questions such as what is love? How do gender norms influence the experience and expression of love? Is polyamory ethically superior to monogamy? What is the relationship between love and sex? Is the use of contraceptive and abortion wrong? Is voluntary informed consent sufficient to address the issues of objectification in sex? Who has a right to sex?

Learning Objectives:

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

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 (p. 1).

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: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 84-86; B-: 80-83; C+: 77-79; C: 74-76; C-: 70-73; D+: 67-69; D: 64-66; D-: 60-63; E: 0-59.

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.

For more information about UF's grading policies please visit [here](#).

Components of Course Grade

Canvas Discussions (5): 6 pts/post; 30%

The Art of Asking Questions: 5%

Midterm paper: 25%

Final paper: 30%

Attendance: 5%

Participation: 5%

Total: 100%

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Homework: You have homework due every week. It consists of reading the assigned materials.

Canvas discussions: almost every other week, due Mondays (available until 11.59 pm the latest), you will need to post on a Canvas Discussion Board. You will need to make at least two posts. In the first post, you will answer the question posted to the whole class, and ask a question about a reading that is due next week. You will need to read the readings due next week to do that. After your first post, you will see your classmates' posts. Then you will need to make a second post, answering someone's question. There are specific instructions provided for posting, asking, and answering questions.

There are six (6) graded discussion assignments. One lowest post score will be dropped. So only 5 discussion grades out of 6 will count towards your final grade. Each quiz is worth 6 points. The discussion posts are worth 30% of the final grade.

The Art of Asking Questions: Each student is assigned a particular reading, on the basis of which they will need to formulate a question, submit it on Canvas, and present it in class, followed by a short in-class discussion (about 15 minutes).

Extra credit: attend one or more of the suggested events, write a report on time to get extra points.

Papers: You are asked to write a midterm and a final paper for this course. All papers are thesis papers. You will need to choose a topic, develop a thesis, and defend it by providing evidence and arguments. You will need to demonstrate the knowledge you

have acquired in the course. The midterm paper is worth 25% each, and the final paper is worth 30% 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 makeup 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 is absolutely necessary to ensure the fullest realization of our learning objectives. You are allowed **four** excused absences in the course. Beyond this number, proper documentation will be required to excuse absences (e.g., a doctor's note). You must provide this documentation to me within one week of the missed class. If you are absent for an excused reason, you will not lose any points and the absence will not exhaust one of your free absences. In most cases you need documentation of the excuse (see below). Excused absences are limited to the following cases:

- *Health.* If your physical or mental health causes you to miss class, a note from your doctor or from the Dean of Students within one week of the absence will count as documentation for this.
- *Personal Reasons.* The Dean of Students will send me a note of excuse if you have personal reasons for needing one, such as a death in the family or an ongoing medical issue. I need your note from the DOS within one week of the absence. Note: I do not get involved in adjudicating good personal reasons from bad ones. I let the DOS handle that.
- *Some UF Activities are excused absences.* You must provide a note for activities absences prior to the day of absence. Notes may come from the activity supervisor, such as a coach. Regular activities absences will lead to make-up assignments.
- *Religious observances.* Talk to me at the beginning of the semester about this.

If you think you have an exceptional case, talk to me.

All other absences are typically unexcused, including some very good reasons to miss a class, like career or family events. I support your interest in these things, and understand why you might prioritize them over class, but that does not make them excused absences.

Please note that you are responsible for the information presented in your discussion section even if you miss class, whether for excused or unexcused reasons.

Once you have passed the allowed number of absences, 5% will be taken off from your attendance points for each additional absence. Attendance is worth 5% of your final grade. Please be on time.

Since we are living a pandemic, it is likely that everyone is facing unique challenges at home, at school, at work. Our goal as your educators is to help you succeed. For this reason, if you are requiring help or assistance, please contact us. We are all in this together.

Covid-19 Recommendations:

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.ufl.edu for screening, testing and vaccinations opportunities.

If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.

Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

Maintain social distancing.

Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.

Participation: Participation means contributing to the class discussions by asking questions, making comments, and answering questions. This portion of your grade will depend on your engagement and contribution (quality, not quantity). Your class participation will be tracked. Participation is worth 5% of your final grade.

In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Note taking: [Research shows that note taking significantly improves students' ability to remember and understand the material they have learned](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312511111_Research_shows_that_note_taking_significantly_improves_students_ability_to_remember_and_understand_the_material_they_have_learned)

< <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.

Accommodations and other services:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, 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.

Counseling services: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 352-392-1575.

The instructors of this course are committed to supporting all of our students. Please let us know about accommodations that will ensure a welcoming space for you.

Health and Wellness Resources:

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

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/flexibleuceufl.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/>>

Zoom www.ufl.zoom.us

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

Course Outline* Subject to Change:

I. Introducing Philosophical Perspectives on Love and Sex

WEEK 1 8/25 WELCOME! Introduction, What is Philosophy? What is Philosophy of Love and Sex?

Readings: The syllabus

Post on Discussion Board "Introduce Yourself" available from 8/24 until 9/2 11:59 PM

Syllabus quiz due Wednesday, 8/31

II. LOVE

WEEK 2 8/30 & 9/1 The Nature of Romantic Love I

Readings: *Symposium* – read the whole thing

Recommended: Jerome Neu, "Plato's Homoerotic Symposium"

Syllabus quiz due Tuesday, 8/31

Post on Discussion Board "Introduce Yourself" available from 8/24 until 9/2 11:59 PM

Discussion Board #1 "The Symposium" available from 8/30 until 9/5 11:59 PM

WEEK 3 9/6 & 9/8 The Nature of Romantic Love II

Readings: *Symposium* continued, Martha Nussbaum, "The Speech of Alcibiades"

Recommended: Iakovos Vasiliou, "Plato, Socrates, and Love"

WEEK 4 9/13 & 9/15 Love, Self, and Gender I

Readings: Robert Nozick, "Love's Bond", Simone de Beauvoir, "The Woman in Love" from *The Second Sex*, Caroline Lundquist, "Internal Bleeding: How Covert Misogyny within Loving Relationships Tears Us Apart"

Recommended: Kathryn Morgan "Analysis of Beauvoir", Skye Cleary, "Simone de Beauvoir on Love"

Discussion Board #2 "Love, Self, and Gender" available from 9/13 until 9/19 11:59 PM

WEEK 5 9/20 & 9/22 Love, Self, and Gender II

Readings: Talia Mae Bettcher, "Trans 101", Gen Eickers, "Being Trans, Being Loved: Clashing Identities and the Limits of Love"

Recommended: Sally Haslanger, "Gender, race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?" Talia Mae Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers: On Transphobic

Violence and the Politics of Illusion"; Watch: *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen* (2020) documentary by Sam Feder (available on Netflix)

In-class discussion of midterm paper writing on 9/22

WEEK 6 9/27 & 9/29 Polyamory

Readings: Elizabeth Brake, "Is "Loving More" Better? The Values of Polyamory"; Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, "'I Am Glad That My Partner Is Happy with Her Lover": On Jealousy, and Compersion"

Recommended: Sophie Hemery, "[Can relationship anarchy create a world without heartbreak?](#)", Luke Brunning, "The Distinctiveness of Polyamory", Jennifer Ryan Lockhart, "The Normative Potency of Sexually Exclusive Love"

Discussion Board #3 "Polyamory" available from 9/26 until 10/3 11:59 PM

Post on Discussion Board "Midterm Thesis Statement" available from 9/27 until 10/5 11:59 PM

WEEK 7 10/4 & 10/6 Romantic Jealousy and Compersion

Readings: Ronald de Sousa, "Love, Jealousy, and Compersion", Luke Brunning, "Compersion: An Alternative to Jealousy?"

Recommended: Arina Pismenny, "[What Can Polyamory Tell Us about Jealousy](#)"

In-class discussion of midterm paper writing on 10/6

Post on Discussion Board "Midterm Thesis Statement" available from 9/27 until 10/5 11:59 PM

MIDTERM PAPER DUE ON 10/7 AT 11:59 PM THE LATEST

III. SEX

WEEK 8 10/11 & 10/13 What is Sex? The Ethics of Contraceptives

Readings: Alan Soble & Raja Halwani, "The Analytic Categories of the Philosophy of Sex"; Greta Christina, "Are We Having Sex Now or What?"; Karol Wojtyla, "Periodic Continence"

Recommended: "[Natural Law](#)" from the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Discussion Board #4 "The Ethics of Contraceptives and Homosexuality" available from 10/10 until 10/17 11:59 PM

WEEK 9 10/18 & 10/20 The Ethics of Contraceptives and Homosexuality

Readings: Burton Leiser, "Is Homosexuality Unnatural?", Naoko T. Miyaji, "Friendly Persuasion?: Legislative Enforcement of Male Responsibility for Contraception"

Recommended: John Finnis "The Wrong of Homosexuality"; Watch: John Corvino, ["What's Morally Wrong with Homosexuality?"](#)

WEEK 10 10/25 & 10/27 Sexual Objectification

Readings: Immanuel Kant, "Duties Towards the Body in Respect of Sexual Impulse" and "Crimina Carnis" from *Lectures on Ethics*

Recommended: Martha Nussbaum, "Objectification", Lina Papadaki, "Sexual Objectification", Raja Halwani, "Casual Sex, Promiscuity, and Objectification"

Discussion Board #5 "Objectification and Consent" available from 10/26 until 10/31 11:59 PM

WEEK 11 11/1 & 11/3 Sex and Consent

Readings: Thomas Mappes, "Sexual Morality and the Concept of Using Another Person", Howard Klepper, "Sexual Exploitation and the Value of Persons"

Watch these videos: [Consent is as Simple as Tea](#); [What is Consent?: Consent #1](#); [Consent and Rights: Consent #2](#); [How Do You Know if Someone Wants to Have Sex with You?](#); [When Someone Isn't Quite Sure If They Want to Have Sex](#); [When Someone Doesn't Want to Have Sex: What is Consent?](#); [How to Talk About Having Safer Sex](#)

Recommended: Carol Hay, "Where the Rubber Meets the Road", [Quill Kukla, "Sex Talks"](#), Alan Wertheimer, "Consent and Sexual Relations", Alan Soble, "Sexual Use"

WEEK 12 11/8 & 11/10 Abortion

Readings: [Thinking Critically About Abortion](#) (2019) by Nathan Nobis & Kristina Grob

Recommended: Judith Jarvis Thomson, "A Defense of Abortion"; Mary Anne Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion"; Don Marquis, "Why Abortion Is Immoral"

Discussion Board #6 "Abortion and the Right to Sex" available from 11/7 until 11/14 11:59 PM

WEEK 13 11/15 & 11/17 The Right to Have Sex

Readings: Amia Srinivasan, "The Right to Sex"

Recommended: Kate Manne, "Threatening Women" from *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*

WEEK 14 11/24 & 11/26 NO CLASSES – THANKSGIVING

11/22 – CLASS CANCELLED

Readings: No new readings

Recommended: Watch one or more of the following: *Paris is Burning* directed by Jennie Livingston (1990). Available on YouTube (for free), and Amazon Prime Video; *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson* directed by David France (2017). Available on Netflix; *Kinsey* directed by Bill Condon (2004). Available on YouTube and Amazon Prime Video

Portrait of Jason by Shirley Clarke (1967). Available on Amazon Prime Video; *Pose* (2018) series available on Netflix

WEEK 15 11/29 & 12/1 Final paper discussion

Readings: None

Tuesday, 11/29, class trip to the Harn Museum

WEEK 16 12/6 Summing up

No new readings

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY, 12/13