

Introduction to the Philosophy of Love

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I. Practical Information

When? 8.–12. May, 2017.

Credits: 7,5

Level: MA/PhD

Topic: This course will provide an introduction to the philosophy of love. Love is central in our lives; so central, in fact, that many have argued that our loving relationships play a key role for our self-esteem, self-realization, and well-being. Others go even further, arguing that love is what makes life worth living. In the course, we will discuss the nature of love and the meaning of our erotic existence, as well as various ethical issues related to these things. We will engage with philosophical treatments of love, from erotic love in Plato to contemporary theories of love and desire.

What will you learn? At the end of the course, you should be able to understand and to think critically about different conceptions of love that are present in the philosophical literature.

Sessions: There will be 9 sessions, 2x45 min. All participants are expected to have read the relevant course literature in advance of each session. Participants should bring the relevant course literature to the sessions.

- 1st hour: *Lecture*. 45 min. Lecture on a certain topic and relevant course literature
 - 15 min. break
- 2nd hour: *Seminar*. 45 min. Discussion. During the seminars, a list of questions for discussion will be handed out. Presentations given by participants will also be given during the seminar-session.

Activities: Each participant is expected to give an individual presentation (10-20 minutes) at some point during the course. The presentation will be rated as passed/failed, and is **obligatory**; it is a precondition in order to take the exam. Topic-suggestions for presentations will be given in writing.

Examination: Written essay on one of the three questions handed out in writing on the next to last course-day. Essay is submitted 14 days after ended course. Min. 3500 /max. 4000 words, *Times New Roman*, 12 pt. 1.5 space.

Registration: Do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions about the course. You may **register** by sending me an email: hege.dypedokk.johnsen@philosophy.su.se

II. Course schedule

| Time | Lecture | Guiding question(s) | Readings |
|------------------------|--|--|--|
| Session I, Monday | <i>Introduction: Love as a Philosophical Subject</i> | | |
| Session II, Monday | <i>Plato on Intense, Passionate Desire</i> | What are the different views on desire/love (<i>eros</i>) that emerge in the three speeches? | Plato, <i>Symp.</i> Aristophanes' speech (189c-193d), Socrates' speech (199c-212c), Alcibiades' speech (215a-22b). |
| Session III, Tuesday | <i>Vlastos' Critique of Plato's Theory of Love</i> | What are Vlastos' main charges against Plato's theory of love? | Vlastos, pp. 3-34. |
| Session IV, Tuesday | <i>Aristotle on Friendship (philia).</i> | Does the virtuous and supremely happy person need friends? | Aristotle, <i>NE</i> . Passages from Book 8 and 9, 1155a1-1157b5; 1165b.15-1169b10; 1236a35. Annas (1977), pp. 532-554. |
| Session V, Wednesday | <i>Kant(ians) on Love</i> | Is it possible to be a good Kantian and a good lover at the same time? | Velleman, (1999), pp. 338-374. |
| Session VI, Wednesday | <i>The Importance of What We Care About</i> | What (if any) are the differences between caring and loving? | H. G. Frankfurt, (1982), pp. 257-272. |
| Session VII, Thursday | <i>Loving Relationships</i> | What are the core arguments against Velleman and Frankfurt? | Kolodny, (2003), pp. 135-189 Abramson&Leite (2011), pp. 673-699. |
| Session VIII, Thursday | <i>Love and Rationality</i> | Is love blind? What characterizes a rationalist view on love? | Jollimore (2011), pp. 1-45. |
| Session VIII, Friday | <i>Flexible</i> | | |

III. Literature

Ancient literature:

Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. Passages from Book 8 and 9, 1155a1-1157b5; 1165b.15-1169b10; 1236a35. (Translation of own choosing.)

Plato. *The Symposium*. Aristophanes' speech (189c-193d), Socrates' speech (199c-212c), Alcibiades' speech (215a-22b). (Translation of own choosing.)

Other:

Annas, J. 1977. "Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism". *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 86, No. 344, pp. 532-554

Abrahamson, K. & Leite, A.. 2011. "Love as a Reactive Emotion". *The Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 61 No. 245, pp. 673-699

Frankfurt, Harry. G. 1982. "The Importance of What We Care About", *Synthese* 53, pp. 257-272.

Jollimore, T. 2011. *Love's Vision*. Princeton Uni. Press, pp. 1-45.

Kolodny, N. 2003. "Love as Valuing a relationship." *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 2, pp. 135-189

J. D. Velleman, 1999. "Love as a Moral Emotion". *Ethics*. Vol. 109, No. 2, pp. 338-374

Vlastos, G. 1969. "Individual as an Object of Love in Plato". *Platonic Studies*, pp. 3-34.