

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong (2021-22, Term 2)**  
**UGED2891 Philosophy of Love**  
**Course Outline**

**Course Teacher:** Dr. LAU Po Hei  
**Time:** Fri 15:30-18:15  
**Venue:** SWH 1

**Course Overview**

This course aims at a philosophical discussion on the theories of love in the Chinese and Western culture. Topics include: evaluation of the philosophical approach to the phenomena of love in the Chinese and Western tradition, classical Western theories of love, Christian thought on love, traditional Chinese theories of love, and philosophy of love in modern society.

**Learning Outcomes**

- Recognize and understand concepts and theories about love and their significance.
- Recognize the relationship between love experience and the development of self-understanding, and the value of human life as a whole.
- Critically analyze and evaluate the experiences of love and formulate their own understanding of love.

**Learning Activities**

1. In-class:
  - Lecture: 22 hours
  - Discussion and Presentation: 11 hours
2. Out-of-class:
  - Reading (1-2 hour(s)/week)
  - Movie Watching

**Assessment Scheme**

Assessment Component	Description	Weight (%)
Film Review	to view an assigned film (1 out of 3) and write a review	20%
Presentation	to present an article in class	20%
Take-home Exam	to answer essay type questions (3 out of 5) within 3 days	60%

**Details of Course Website**

- We use Blackboard Online platform in this course. All course materials are posted on the website.

**Feedback for Evaluation**

- Course and Teaching Evaluation Survey will be conducted at the end of the term. The information is highly valuable for enhancement of the course. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback to the course teacher.

<b>Weekly Course Schedule &amp; Reading Assignment</b>		
Week/Date	Topic	Required readings
1. Jan 14	Love: a Philosophical Inquiry	“Puzzles” (De Sousa, 2015: 1-16) “What Love Is” (Johnson, 2001: 7-29) “The Study of Love” (Santas, 1988: 1-13)
2. Jan 21	The Evolution of Love: Battles of the Sexes?	“Battle of the Sexes” (Dawkins, 2006: 140-165) “Out of Eden” (Fisher, 2016: 123-146) 〈愛情與生物學有何關係？〉（普列希特，2011：27-50）
3. Jan 28	<i>Eros</i> (1): Love in Greek Mythology	“The Birth of Aphrodite and a New Vocabulary of Love” (Bergmann, 1987: 21-35) “Greek Love” (Goldhill, 2004: 55-65) “Metamorphoses of Mythology” (Morales, 2007: 56-67)
4. Feb 4	<i>[Lunar New Year Vacation]</i>	/
5. Feb 11	<i>Eros</i> (2): Platonic Love	<i>Symposium</i> (Plato, 1997: 457-505, 506-556) “Plato” (May, 2011: 38-55) “The Speech of Alcibiades” (Nussbaum, 2001: 165-199) “Platonic Eros” (Singer, 2009: 47-87)
6. Feb 18	<i>Agape</i> (1): Love in the Old Testament	<i>The City of God</i> (Augustine, 2008: 380-398) “Hebrew Scripture” (May, 2011: 14-37) “Nomos: Submission to God’s Will” (Singer, 2009: 233-267)
7. Feb 25	<i>Agape</i> (2): Love in the New Testament	<i>Agape and Eros</i> (Nygren, 1982) “Christianity” (May, 2011: 81-94) “Agape: The Divine Bestowal,” (Singer, 2009: 268-311) “Christian Love” (Wagoner, 1997: 31-50)
8. Mar 4	Romantic Love: Passion & Death	“The Tristan Myth,” (De Rougemont, 1983: 15-55) “The Concept of Courtly Love” (Singer, 2009: 19-36) “Romantic Love” (Wagoner, 1997: 51-68)
9. Mar 11	Skepticism of Love (1): Stendhal & Schopenhauer	“Schopenhauer” (May, 2011: 176-187) “The Metaphysics of Sexual Love” (Schopenhauer, 1966: 531-560) “On Love,” (Stendhal, 1991: 132-139)
10. Mar 18	Skepticism of Love (2): Freud & Psychoanalysis	“Freud’s Indebtedness to Plato: The Problem of Sublimation” “What Freud Discovered about Love” (Bergmann, 1987: 144-155, 156-180) “Freud” (May, 2011: 199-214) “Freud’s Theory of Love,” (Santas, 1988: 116-152)
11. Mar 25	Modern Love (1): Sociology of Love	“Falling In and Out of Love,” “In and Out of the Toolbox of Sociality,” (Bauman, 2003: 1-37, 38-76) “Love, Our Secular Religion,” (Beck, 1995: 168-201) “Intimacy as Democracy” (Giddens, 1992: 184-204)
12. Apr 1	<i>[Reading Week]</i>	/
13. Apr 8	<i>[Reading Week]</i>	/
14. Apr 15	<i>[Good Friday]</i>	/
15. Apr 22	Modern Love (2): Sartre’s Existentialism	<i>Being and Nothingness</i> (Sartre, 1993) “Jean-Paul Sartre and Loving Sadoomasochistically” (Cleary, 2015: 99-124)

### **Required Readings**

May, Simon. 2011. *Love: a History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

（中譯本：西蒙·梅。2013。《愛的歷史》，孫海譯。北京：中國人民大學。）

### **Other Recommended Readings/ Learning Resources**

- Armstrong, John. 2003. *Conditions of Love: the Philosophy of Intimacy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo. 2008. *The City of God*, Books VIII-XVI (selection), trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan. Washington: Catholic University of America Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. *Liquid Love: on the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, Ulrich. 1995. *The Normal Chaos of Love*, trans. Mark Ritter & Jane Wiebel. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bergmann, Martin. 1987. *The Anatomy of Loving*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cleary, Skye. 2015. *Existentialism and Romantic Love*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dawkins, Richard. 2006. *The Selfish Gene*, 30th anniversary ed. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.
- De Botton, Alain. 2006. *Essays in Love*. Reprinted ed. London: Picador.
- De Rougemont, Denis. 1983. *Love in the Western World*, rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- De Sousa, Ronald. 2015. *Love: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fisher, Helen E. 2016. *Anatomy of Love: a Natural History of Mating, Marriage, and Why We Stray*. New York: Norton.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1992. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Johnson, Rolf M. 2001. *Three Faces of Love*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Martin, Adrienne M. 2019. *The Routledge Handbook of Love in Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.
- May, Simon. 2019. *Love: A New Understanding of an Ancient Emotion*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nussbaum, Martha Craven. 2001. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, rev. ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nygren, Anders. 1982. *Agape and Eros*, trans. Philip S. Watson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Plato. 1997. "Symposium," "Phaedrus," *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper & D.S. Hutchinson. Indianapolis: Hackett, pp. 457-505, 506-556.
- Santas, Gerasimos. 1988. *Plato and Freud: Two Theories of Love*. Oxford: B. Blackwell.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1993. *Being and Nothingness: an Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnesnger. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. 1966. "The Metaphysics of Sexual Love," *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, trans. E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover, pp. 531-560.
- Singer, Irving. 2009. *The Nature of Love, vol. 1-3*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Soble, Alan (ed.). 1989. *Eros, Agape, and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love*. New York: Paragon House.
- Stendhal. 1991. "On Love," *The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love*, ed. Robert Solomon. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, p.132-139.
- Wagoner, Robert E. 1997. *The Meanings of Love: an Introduction to Philosophy of Love*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
- 張燦輝，2016。《生死愛欲：從希臘神話到基督教》。臺北：漫遊者文化。
- 〔德〕理察·大衛·普列希特（Precht, Richard David），2011。《愛情的哲學》，闕旭玲譯。臺北：商周。

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic\\_honesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic_honesty/) .

With each assignment, students are required to submit a [signed declaration](#) that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via **VeriGuide**, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

## Grade Descriptors for Essays

	Argument	Theory Analysis	Writing Style
<p>[Excellent] A (85–92) or [Very Good] A- (80–84)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You provide a <b>detailed and specific thesis statement</b> that clearly describes the main claim(s) you will be arguing for and indicates how what you plan to say adds something to the discussion, rather than mostly repeating the material we have read.</li> <li>You <b>defend your claims</b> in a well-developed way by giving and explaining your reasons for your position.</li> <li>You identify likely <b>objections</b>, present them charitably and respond to them effectively.</li> <li>You carefully explain the theoretical and/or practical <b>implications</b> of your argument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You provide an <b>accurate account</b> of the relevant parts of the theory.</li> <li>You illuminate the relationship between the theory’s <b>conclusion(s) and its arguments</b>.</li> <li>You quote relevant <b>key passages</b> with proper citations.</li> <li>You define <b>key terms</b>, and explain their role and how they relate to each other.</li> <li>You discuss what the thinker would probably have said about an issue by drawing on what he/she did say about other related matters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You choose your words carefully. The language is <b>precise</b> rather than vague, <b>natural</b> rather than awkward, <b>straightforward</b> rather than ostentatious.</li> <li>Each piece of the essay is presented in a way that makes it clear to the reader how it is <b>relevant to your thesis</b>.</li> <li>Where appropriate, you use real or hypothetical <b>examples to help illustrate</b> abstract points.</li> </ul>
<p>[Good] B+ (76–79), B (72–75) or B- (68–71)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thesis statement is clear, but general and unambitious.</li> <li>The reasons given to support claims are occasionally weak or too brief. Some claims in need of defence are merely asserted.</li> <li>Some key objections are not considered, or the response is weak or too brief.</li> <li>Theoretical and/or practical implications are not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are minor inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some small points are overlooked.</li> <li>The theory’s arguments for its conclusion(s) are described, but the relationship between them is not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise.</li> <li>Use of quotations is sometimes missing or erratic or without proper citations.</li> <li>Some key concepts are not defined, or are defined carelessly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The language is generally clear, but occasionally lacks precision or naturalness or desirable simplicity.</li> <li>The relevance of small parts of the essay is not made clear.</li> <li>Illustrative examples are used rarely or not at all.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fair] C+ (64–67), C (60–63) or C- (56–59)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thesis statement is absent or insignificant or confused.</li> <li>The reasons given to support claims are usually weak or too brief. Many claims in need of defence are merely asserted.</li> <li>Objections are not considered, or they are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are significant inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some major points are overlooked.</li> <li>The theory’s conclusion(s) are described without reference to its arguments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The language is often unclear, due to being vague or awkward or ostentatious.</li> <li>The relevance of significant parts of the essay is not made clear.</li> <li>Illustrative examples are used incorrectly or not at all.</li> </ul>

	<p>only a straw-man version, or the response is ineffective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implications are not identified, or they are asserted without explanation.</li> <li>• The argument is likely to contain contradictions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of quotations is missing or erratic or without proper citations.</li> <li>• Key concepts are not defined, or are defined incorrectly.</li> </ul>	
<p>[Pass]</p> <p>D+ (53–55) or</p> <p>D (50–52)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You demonstrate an awareness of what an argument is, and try to make one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You grasp at least the main features of some of the theory’s most important points.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The language is intelligible more often than not.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fail]</p> <p>F (0-49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You show little awareness of what an argument is, fails to make an argument, and shows almost no effort to make one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You fail to grasp <i>any</i> of the major features of the theory. You have a fundamentally flawed and distorted understanding of the major points of the theory. On the whole, you demonstrate almost no effort in representing the theory accurately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The language is more unintelligible than not and the meaning of the language is very hard to discern. The essay is thoroughly unorganized.</li> </ul>

### ***Grade Descriptors for Essay Examinations***

<p>[Excellent] A (85–92) or [Very Good] A- (80–84)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You faithfully reconstruct the author’s positions, and prove this knowledge by knowing the argument(s) supporting the theses in the text.</li> <li>• You evidence independent and self-initiated thinking and understanding of the arguments and philosophical problems through your ability to present your own counter-arguments and possible replies to counter-arguments.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You exhibit thorough understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.</li> <li>• You demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the relations between the various subjects and authors discussed in the course.</li> <li>• You demonstrate an above-average facility in judgment by applying the various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>
<p>[Good] B+ (76–79), B (72–75), or B- (68–71)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can faithfully reconstruct the author’s positions, and demonstrate a basic comprehension of the arguments supporting those positions.</li> <li>• You show some independence in thinking, but have difficulty developing your own criticisms and rebuttals to criticism.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You exhibit relatively complete understanding of the relations between the authors and the themes presented in the various texts.</li> <li>• You show some basic, though average, facility in judgment by applying the various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fair] C+ (64–67), C (60–63), or C- (56–59)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You demonstrate an ability to properly relay information about the various texts and the positions contained therein, but have difficulty re-constructing the arguments, presenting counter-arguments, and criticism.</li> <li>• You can faithfully relay information, but you show no independence in philosophical thinking, fail to show basic competence in philosophical argumentation and have a difficulty understanding arguments.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You show an incomplete understanding of the relations between the authors discussed in the course as well as the themes presented in the various texts.</li> <li>• You demonstrate competence to memorize information, but you have some difficulty applying various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>
<p>[Pass] D+ (53–55), or D (50–52)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You demonstrate some understanding of the course content, but have difficulty relaying accurate information about the positions and the arguments for such positions in the text.</li> </ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the answers are readable, you exhibit seriously incomplete understanding of the content as well as the relationships between authors and themes covered in the readings and discussed in class.</li> <li>• You fail to demonstrate facility in the application of various theories to cases and situations presented in the course of the exam.</li> </ul>

<p>[Fail] F (0-49)</p>	<p>Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You demonstrate no understanding of the course content. You relay inaccurate information about the positions and arguments for those positions in the text.</li></ul> <p>Theory Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The answers are unreadable, and your answers exhibit a complete lack of understanding of the relationships between authors and themes covered in the readings and discussed in class.</li></ul>
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### ***Grade Descriptors for Tutorial Performance***

<p>[Excellent] A (85–92) or [Very Good] A- (80–84)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You concisely explain the relevant material in a way that clarifies how the various pieces are meant to fit together.</li> <li>● You raise and clearly explain your own insightful questions of interpretation about the material.</li> <li>● You raise and clearly explain your own challenging yet fair objections to the material.</li> <li>● You construct charitable replies on the author’s behalf to your points, and provide your own rejoinders.</li> <li>● You carefully discuss the significance of your points and their theoretical or practical implications.</li> <li>● In discussion, you demonstrate a willingness to share newly formed ideas, and you effectively begin to develop ideas on the spot through constructive yet critical interaction with others.</li> </ul>
<p>[Good] B+ (76–79), B (72–75) or B- (68–71)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explanation of material contains minor errors, or is correct but adds little or nothing.</li> <li>● Questions/objections are relevant, but obvious.</li> <li>● Author’s reply is absent or oversimplified.</li> <li>● Implications are not discussed or are only briefly explained.</li> <li>● Good effort at discussion, but hesitant to take risks and has difficulty developing ideas on the spot.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fair] C+ (64–67), C (60–63) or C- (56–59)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explanation of material contains significant errors or oversights.</li> <li>● Questions/objections are often confused or unclear.</li> <li>● Author’s reply is absent or mistaken.</li> <li>● Implications are not discussed or are confused or unclear.</li> <li>● Little or no effort at discussion.</li> </ul>
<p>[Pass] D+ (53–55) or D (50–52)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You attend and show a reasonable interest in the discussion and a willingness to participate minimally if called upon.</li> </ul>
<p>[Fail] F (0-49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You rarely attend or do not attend at all. You show little or no interest in the discussion and a general lack of willingness to participate if called upon.</li> </ul>

Note: Marks cannot be given for mere “attendance”, but may be deducted for “absences”.