Dr. Chun-fai MA
(cfma@cuhk.edu.hk)

UGED2891 Philosophy of Love

Course Outline

Teacher: Dr. Chun-fai MA
Time: Thursday, 13:30–16:15
Venue: LSK302

Course Overview

- This course aims at a philosophical discussion on the theories of love in Chinese and Western cultures.
- Topics include concepts of love in evolutionary theory and mythology, Greek theories of erotic love and friendship, Christian thought on unconditional love, traditional Chinese theories of love, and contemporary philosophies of love from the contemporary psychoanalytic, sociological, and existentialist points of view.

Learning Outcomes

- Recognize and appreciate different concepts and theories of love.
- Recognize the relationship between love experience, self-development, relations with other human subjects, and the value of human life as a whole.
- Critically evaluate the different theories of love and formulate their own understanding of love.

Learning Activities

1. In-class:
   - Lecture: 26 hours
   - Discussion and Presentation: 13 hours
2. Out-of-class:
   - Reading (1–2 hours/lecture)
   - Movie Watching (~120 minutes)

Assessment

Task	Description	Weight (%)
1. Class Participation	• Participate actively in class discussion (including the presentation sessions)	10%
2. Class Presentation	• Make one formal in-class presentation on an assigned article (group presentation, around 20 minutes)	20%
3. Film Review	• View one of the assigned films and write a reflective review* (1200–2500 words)	25%
4. Final Examination (Centralized)	• To answer essay-type questions (2 out of 7, open-note)	45%
[*]: 10% mark penalty for each day of delay		

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Grade Descriptors

Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

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/academichonesty/ .

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.

AI Tools Usage Approach

Class presentation outline (assessment task no. 2, 20% of course assessment), and:
Film review (assessment task no. 3, 25 % of course assessment)

- The usage of AI tools is allowed.
- Its usage is strictly limited to **checking grammar** only.
- The use of AI tools should aim solely to improve the readability of texts in grammatical or expressive senses.
- Students should declare the AI tools they used in writing the review.

Final exam (assessment task no. 4, 45% of course assessment)

- **No usage of AI** tools is allowed when creating the exam note (also known as the "cheat sheet"), including for grammar checking, content generation, summarization, drafting, or structuring.

Course Schedule & Lecture Readings

Date	Topic	Lecture readings (Presentation readings are marked with an asterisk [**])
Week 1 (10 Sept)	The Philosophy of Love: What is it?	• "Puzzles" (De Sousa, 2015) • "What Love is?" (Johnson, 2001)
Week 2 (17 Sept)	The "Origin" of Love: Evolutionary Theory and Mythology	• *The Anatomy of Love* (Fisher, 2016) • "Metamorphoses of Mythology" (Morales, 2007) • "Romantic fatalism" (De Botton, 2006)

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Week 3 (24 Sept)	*Eros*: Platonic Love	• *Symposium* (Plato, 1997) • "The Speech of Alcibiades" (Nussbaum, 2001) **
Week 4 (8 Oct)	*Phila*: Aristotelian Friendship	• *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 2019) • "When Harry and Sally read the Nicomachean Ethics" (Meilaender, 1997) **
Week 5 (15 Oct)	*Agape*: Love of Redemption in the Christianity	• *Agape and Eros* (Nygren, 1982) • "Appraisal and Bestowal" (Singer, 2009) **
Week 6 (22 Oct)	Romantic Love: Passion and Death	• "The Concept of Courtly Love" (Singer, 2009) • "The Tristan Myth" (De Rougemont, 1983) **
Week 7 (29 Oct)	*Qing* (情): Love in the Chinese Tradition	• 〈情感的旅程〉(李歐梵，2005) ** • 〈唐君毅之愛情哲學〉(張燦輝，2023)
Week 8 (5 Nov)	In Love, Nowadays: Chaos and Liquidity of Love	• "From Love to Liaison" (Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) ** • 〈浪漫愛情之延續：傳統愛情思想的轉向〉(張燦輝，2023)
Week 9 (12 Nov)	"True" Love? Love as an Illusion	• "On Love" (Stendhal, 1991) • "Love as the Urge to procreate: Schopenhauer" (May, 2011) ** • "Will, Body and the Self" (Janaway, 2002)**
Week 10 (19 Nov)	Love is "Blind": Love and Unconscious	• *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (Freud, 1964) • "Love as a History of Loss: Freud" (May, 2011) **
Week 11 (26 Nov)	The "War" of the Lovers: Existentialist Theory of Love	• *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1993) • "Jean-Paul Sartre and Loving Sadomasochistically" (Cleary, 2015) **
Week 12 (3 Dec)	Lovers' Union: I, You, and We	• *In Praise of Love* (Badiou, 2009) • "Love's Bond" (Nozick, 1989) **

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Major Readings

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

張燦輝。《生死愛欲 I & II》。臺北：漫遊者，2023。

Optional Readings for Extended Learning

Aristotle. 2019. *Nicomachean Ethics.* Translated by T. Irwin. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Armstrong, John. 2003. *Conditions of Love: the Philosophy of Intimacy*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.,.

Badiou, Alain. 2009. *In Praise of Love*. New York: The New Press Palgrave.

Bauman, Zygmunt. 2003. *Liquid Love: on the Frailty of Human Bonds*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Beck, Ulrich, & Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim. 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.

Frankfurt, Harry. 2004. *The Reasons of Love*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Freud, Sigmund. 1964. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 23: An Outline of Psychoanalysis.* Edited by J. Strachey. London: Hogarth Press.

Fromm, Erich. 1956. *The Art of Loving*. New York: Harper Colophon Books.

Giddens, Anthony. 1992. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Grayling, A. C. *Friendship*. 2013. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Janaway, Christopher. 2002. *Schopenhauer: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, Rolf M. 2001. *Three Faces of Love.* DeKalb, Illinois: Northwestern Illinois University Press.

Lee, Haiyan. 2007. *Revolution of the Heart: A Genealogy of Love in China, 1900–1950*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Martin, Adrienne M. (ed.). 2019. *The Routledge Handbook of Love in Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.

Meilaender, Gilbert. 1997. "When Harry and Sally read Nicomachean Ethics: Friendship between Men and Women." In *Friendship: Philosophic Reflections on a Perennial Concern.* 2nd Ed., edited by P. Blosser, & M. C. Bradley. New York: University Press of America, pp. 375–388.

Morales, Helen. 2007. *Classical Mythology: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nozick, Robert. 1989. *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2001. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Revised edition). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Nygren, Anders. 1982. *Agape and Eros.* Translated by P. Watson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Plato. 1997. *Complete Works.* Edited by J. Cooper & D. Hutchinson. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. 2018. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology.* Translated by S. Richmond. New York: Washington Square Press/Atria.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. 1966. *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2. Translated by E. Payne. New York: Dover.

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.

Soble, Alan. 1990. *The Structure of Love*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press.

Stendhal. 1991. "On Love." In *The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love.* Edited by R. Solomon. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, pp.132–139.

唐君毅，2016。《致廷光書 — 唐君毅全集卷二十五》。台灣：學生書局。

李歐梵，2005。《中國現代作家的浪漫一代》，王宏志等譯。北京：新星。

楊聯芬，2016。《浪漫的中國：性別視角下激進主義思潮與文學 (1890–1940)》。北京：人民文學。

理察・大衛・普列希特〔德〕（Precht, Richard David），2021。《愛情的哲學》，闕旭玲譯。臺北 : 商周。

郭柏年，2020。《定見之外：生活日常的哲學短篇》。香港：牛津大學，2020。

馮夢龍，《情史》。

Movies for film reviews

Her (2013, directed by Spike Jones)

《胭脂扣》 (1987, directed by Stanley Kwan [關錦鵬])

La La Land (2016, directed by Damien Chazelle)

Contact

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