

# PHIL 4030

## Seminar in Ancient Philosophy: Love & Friendship

Course Instructor: Michael Montess  
Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30  
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Course Time: Monday 11:30-2:30  
Course Location: HNE 230

This seminar will focus on the concepts of love and friendship as discussed by Plato and Aristotle. We will compare and contrast Plato and Aristotle's theories of love and friendship with each other and modern theories. Modern theories of love challenge Plato and Aristotle's theories in interesting ways. We will consider both ancient and modern concepts related to love and friendship, including pederasty, sexual orientation, gender identity, monogamy, polyamory, amatonormativity, marriage, family, etc. We will discover that Plato and Aristotle's theories of love and friendship are still relevant today. We will also discover that philosophy can be practical in our personal lives by helping us further our understanding of love and friendship, concepts that still are among the most important to us today.

### Course Texts

C. D. C. Reeve. (2006). *Plato on Love: Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades, with Selections from Republic and Laws*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. by Terrence Irwin. (2000). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Additional readings will be made available online.

### Course Requirements

Weekly Question (8) 16%

Students are expected to submit a weekly question. Each submission is worth 2%, but this requirement is crucial for the course. Seminars require discussion on the part of the students, so the weekly question will help encourage discussion by focusing on the students' questions about the weekly readings. The weekly question should be approximately 200 words and include a brief summary of the context for the question and a developed philosophical question about the reading. The weekly questions are due via Moodle by noon the day before class (i.e. Sunday) and students should attend the seminar ready to present their question. There is no weekly question due the first week and there are 3 other free weeks.

## Presentation 14%

Students are expected to give one seminar presentation. The presentation is worth 14%. The presentation should be approximately 10 minutes. This presentation should be treated like an extended version of the weekly question, introducing the other students to the reading and the context for your question and then presenting a question about one aspect of the reading and developing a critical analysis. Presentations have to include a handout and a power-point presentation is encouraged, but optional. The goal of your presentation is to provoke further class discussion. There will be a sign up sheet to determine which week each student presents and we will try to avoid multiple presentations on the same reading. If 2 students want to present on the same reading, then they will have to coordinate their presentations on different aspects of the reading.

## Participation 10%

The participation requirement reinforces a commitment to all the requirements of this course for the students.

## Digital Literacy Assignment 10% (Due on or before February 25)

Students are expected to find and critically analyze digital media that demonstrates either a connection to Plato and Aristotle's theories or concepts related to love and friendship that we are investigating in the course. This can include popular news articles, YouTube videos, TV shows, blog posts, popular songs, etc. Students are expected to share the links to these sources and provide a critical analysis of either how Plato and Aristotle's theories connect to the source or how the source addresses concepts related to love and friendship. This assignment should be approximately 500 words. The digital literacy assignment is worth 5% and it should be submitted via Moodle any time before the due date (i.e. on or before February 25). This digital literacy will help demonstrate the relevance of ancient Greek philosophy, and philosophy in general. Students might be asked to share their sources with the class, especially if the modern sources help clarify the theories or concepts we are investigating.

## Essay Question 5% (Due March 25)

This requirement has 2 two parts, a short presentation and a submission. Students are expected to be prepared to present their essay question and the context for their question to the class. This presentation should be approximately 5 minutes. Students will also be encouraged to comment on other student's essay questions with respect, enthusiasm and constructive engagement. Students are also required to submit their essay question via Moodle by noon the day before class (i.e. March 24). It is always possible to choose a different essay question after this presentation and submission, but the essay question needs to be approved.

## Essay Outline 10% (Due April 1)

This requirement again has 2 parts, a short presentation and a submission. Students are expected to identify their thesis, outline their argument, explain who or what they are drawing on for support and gesture towards the kind of conclusions they hope to draw and why they think these conclusions are significant. This presentation should be approximately 10 minutes. Students should also be prepared to answer questions about their outlines and to ask questions of others. These presentations have to include a handout as well. Students are also expected to submit their essay outline via Moodle by noon the day before class (i.e. March 31). This submission should include a thesis, an outline and an annotated bibliography, along with a handout.

## Final Essay 35% (Due April 15)

Students are expected to submit a final essay. A complete draft of the paper is due online via Moodle by midnight. The final essay should be approximately 2000-4000 words. Students will be provided with detailed guidelines for the final essay in advance of the due date.

## Course Schedule

**Week 1** - January 7 - Introduction (What Is Love?)

**Week 2** - January 14 - The Origin of Love

Plato, *Symposium* “Phaedrus” (178a-180c), “Pausanias” (180c-186a), “Eryximachus” (186a-189c), “Aristophanes” (189c-195a) & “Agathon” (195a-201d)

**Week 3** - January 21 - Platonic Love

Plato, *Symposium* “Socrates” (201d-212c) & “Alcibiades” (215b-222c)

**Week 4** - January 28 - The Madness of Love

Plato, *Phaedrus* (227a-257c)

**Week 5** - February 4 - Love Vs. Friendship

Plato, *Lysis*

**Week 6** - February 11 - Aristotelian Friendship 1

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, “Book VIII”

**Reading Week - February 18 - No Class**

**Week 7** - February 25 - Aristotelian Friendship 2

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, “Book IX”

**Digital Literacy Assignment Due**

**Week 8** - March 4 - The Philosophy of Love 1 (The Union View)

Nozick, R. “Love’s Bond”. *The Examined Life*

**Week 9** - March 11 - The Philosophy of Love 2 (The Robust Concern View)

Frankfurt, H. G. “On Love and Its Reasons”. *The Reasons of Love*

**Week 10** - March 18 - The Philosophy of Love 3 (The Valuing View)

Velleman, J. D. “Love as a Moral Emotion”. *Ethics*

**Week 11** - March 25 - Monogamy Vs. Polyamory

Brunning, L. “The Distinctiveness of Polyamory”. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*  
Jenkins, C. “Modal Monogamy”. *Ergo*

**Essay Question Due**

**Week 12** - April 1 - Amatonormativity

Brennan, S. & Cameron, B. “Is Marriage Bad for Children? Rethinking the Connection  
Between Having Children, Romantic Love, and Marriage”. *After Marriage*  
Diaz-Leon, E. “Reflections on Same-Sex Marriage, Amatonormativity, and the  
Discrimination of Singles” & “Lacking a Language: Amatonormativity  
and Hermeneutical Injustice”

**Essay Outline Due**

**Essay Due April 15**