Love, Emotion, and Meaning in Life

PHIL 3977
TF 1:00 - 2:15 PM

Course packet

Instructor: John Davenport
Spring 2011
Contents of Course Packet

General Course Handouts

1. Syllabus
2. Reading a Philosophical Text
3. Tips on Essay Writing
4. Philosophy at the Lincoln Center campus (webpage)
5. The Philosophy Major and Careers
6. Handouts on Emotions and Love

Readings

0. Robert Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," ch.10 of Rorty, Explaining Emotions
3. Peter Goldie, Emotions, ch.2: "What Emotions Are"
4. C.S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love, ch.1 on "Courtly Love"
5. Alan Soble, The Structure of Love, chs1-2 on "Two Views of Love" and "Exclusivity"
6. Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, Part III, chs.1 and 3.
9. David Pugmire, Sound Sentiments, ch.5 on "Sentiment and Sentimentality"
13. Thaddeus Metz, "Recent Work on the Meaning of Life," from Ethics 112
14. Gabrielle Taylor, Pride, Shame, and Guilt ch.5 on "Integrity"
15. Vicktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, Part II: Logotherapy

Supplementary Readings on Eres (see this course and "Love, Care, Self, and Autonomy")

1. Martha Nussbaum, "Constructing Love, Desire, and Care," in Sex, Preference, and Family
3. C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves, ch.5 on "Eros" (eres)
5. Gabrielle Taylor, “Deadly Vices?” from How Should One Live, ed. Crisp and Slote
7. Stan van Hooft, “Commitment and the Bonds of Love” Australasian J. Phil 74.3 (1996)
8. Jeffrey Blustein, Caring and Commitment, chs.16-17 on Love, Friendship, & Irreplaceability
10. Flanagan, Varieties of Moral Personality, ch. 4 on Abstraction, Alienation, and Integrity
Love, Emotion, and Meaning in Life (Phil 3977)

Tuesday - Friday 1:00 - 2:15 pm  
Instructor: John Davenport  
Phone: 212-636-7928  
Email: Davenport@fordham.edu  
Office: Rm. 921f; Lowenstein; Mailbox in 916

Office Hours: 3-5 pm on TF at LC and by appointment; Thursdays 4-5 pm at RH (after my grad class on Ethics). Many Wednesdays I'm also at RH for department meetings.

Course Goals: This new course will focus on recent work in moral psychology concerning the nature of various kinds of love, from eros and romantic love to friendship and agapic love. We will connect these case studies with theories of emotion in general and the relation of emotions to forms of “care” of devotion that help make lives meaningful for the persons living them. A closely related theme concerns authenticity: does a meaningful life require authentic emotions, sincerity in one’s relationships, and integrity in standing up for what one believes in? Examples of different types of love will be used as case studies to consider all these themes. Here are some questions we’ll explore:

- Can our loves and cares be autonomous or express our deep identity? Or are they completely outside of our control?
- Are the emotions involved in loving people or caring about community responsive to good reasons for loving and caring, or are they determined by contingencies of our history, aptitudes, temperament and brute preferences that are not responsive to reason?
- Several contemporary accounts of emotions argue that emotions are not simply desires or visceral feelings, but instead embody judgments or perceptions of positive and negative value. Would this imply that emotions involved in love of a friend or romantic partner are based on assessment of their qualities, so they could be replaced by better candidates? Or is our deepest love for an individual as this one, unique, irreplaceable person?
- Is romantic love a myth to be rejected, or really a strategy of control (as Sartre thought), or is it a viable ideal for human happiness? If so, does it require exclusive devotion to one romantic partner?
- Do love-relationships require sincerity? Do emotions in general require authentic feeling and response to the situation, as opposed to defense-mechanism and manipulations? Does a life of meaningful devotions require integrity?
- Finally, how does all this add up to a meaningful life? Does it make sense to distinguish more and less meaningful pursuits, activities, and loves? Is life-meaning reduced by insincerity, loss of integrity, inauthenticity in our emotional life and interactions?

Requirements:

Short Papers: There will be a 6 page paper early in the semester; you will have a choice among set questions asking you to compare, contrast, and evaluate a couple different readings.

The Oral Report: Each student will have the option to complete a second short paper, or to present an oral report on a selected reading for the day: the oral report should analyze the argument and explain the four or five most important points in the reading, note any problems, and raise questions
for class discussion. Your report should be a typewritten presentation of about 2-3 pages to hand in; it should take about 10-15 minutes to read. The report can be in bullet point form, or a narrative that you simply read. If you would like to make a handout for the class to help in delivering your report, you can email it to me for photocopying two days before presentation, or bring 20 copies to class.

Class Participation: This grade depends on the quality of your questions and contributions in class, and 50% on attendance. Please be there and be prepared. The quality of our discussion depends on your doing the reading before the class in which we are discussing the relevant chapter or article.
- More than two unexcused absences will lower your class participation grade significantly;
- more than four absences for any reason (even with excuse) requires withdrawal from the course. Remember that your work schedule does not constitute an excuse; full-time college students should not be working more than 15 hours per week.

Test: Your knowledge of the readings will be evaluated in a take-home test in late March, which will cover most of our semester's material. Attending to class discussion will help a lot here, since test questions will emphasize the material we focus on during class.

Final Paper: There will be a longer 8-10 page paper on a topic of your choice in the philosophy of emotions due near the end, and should develop your own view on one of the central questions of this course. The second paper will involve more choice of topic, and can also involve relevant examples from literature or even film. However, I will also hand out a list of suggested topics to help.

Texts:
3. Course packet required for all the other course readings. (The packet avoids your having to print lots of material off of Eres; I ask you to pay for it with a $25 money order made out to Fordham University so that I can reimburse the dept. for the duplicating costs. The packet would cost 3x more if done through an outside vendor and sold through the campus bookstore).

Any other books in the bookstore are only recommended for this course.

Grading System
First short paper: 17% This breakdown of course components is a basic guide
Mid-term test (April): 24% for you, but there will also be a certain amount of
Oral report or 2nd paper: 16% leeway in assigning the final grade. Due credit will
Class participation 15% be given for improvement as the semester progresses.
Final essay: 28%

Honesty and Citation: (this text was written for the freshman & sophomore core classes, but I'll include it anyway): I take the issue of academic honesty very seriously; cheating is the one unforgivable sin in my class. Handing in work you did in another class without clearing it with me is cheating. Handing in work written in whole or part by anyone else, or copying from any secondary source, without citing it constitutes plagiarism. Copying from an uncited Internet webpage
constitutes plagiarism, even if the wording has been significantly changed. You are welcome to bring in ideas and quotes from secondary sources, but you must cite them either by footnotes, or parenthetical references in the main text referring to a bibliography at the end of the paper. Even if you acknowledge an internet site, for example, you can't just lift large sections of its text wholesale: only take short quotations, clearly indicated as such in your paper. Every quote should be explained and have a clear purpose in your argument.

—This includes paraphrases: even if you reword what the author said, cite the page number.
—It also includes websites: give the full URL of the page you cite. Note that webpages should never be the only source you cite in college essays.
—Every semester I fail someone for academic dishonesty. Don't let it be you. Be fair to other students, and to yourself, by honoring the values of academic honesty.

Absences: More than two unexcused absence will significantly lower your class participation grade. More than three absences for any reason requires withdrawal from the course. There can be no exceptions to this policy. Remember that this is a seminar-style course focused on discussion of life-issues and the collective engagement with the readings: this requires your active presence!

Tentative Schedule

Part One: Emotions

1/18 - 1/21: Introduction: Setting up the Questions about Emotions and Love
(1) Eros as sexual desire, and Eros as generalized desire in Plato's the Symposium (discussion)
(2) The many senses of "love" developing from ancient Greece and Rome to modern Europe.
(3) Richard White, Love's Philosophy, Introduction.
(4) Theories of emotion in psychology and philosophy: three opposing views.
   (a) the James-Lange affect theory; (b) the rational judgment theories; (c) intermediate theories:
      (c1) emotions as construals; (c2) emotions as salience guides; (c3) as precommitments.
(5) Short selection from Sartre's Freudian/rationalist view of emotions as defense mechanisms.
(6) Robert Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," ch.10 of Rorty, Explaining Emotions (eres)

1/25- 1/28: Rationalist, Visceral, and Construal Theories
(1) Jon Elster, Strong Feelings ch.2: Emotion (course packet and eres)
(2) Short vignette on jealousy (in class).
(3) Robert C. Roberts, Emotions: An Essay..., ch.2, pp.60-93 (in course packet and on eres)

2/1 - 2/4: Emotions: from Construal to Narrative Theory
(1) Roberts continued.
(2) Peter Goldie, Emotions, ch.2: "What Emotions Are" (packet)
(3) Recommended: Martha Nussbaum, "Constructing Love, Desire, and Care," in Sex, Preference, and Family (eres)

Part II: Romantic Love, Autonomy, and Authenticity
2/8 - 2/11: The Romance Genre and the Question of "Property-Basing"
(1) C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, ch.1 on "Courtly Love" (eres and course packet)
(2) Alan Soble, *The Structure of Love*, ch.1 on "Two Views of Love" (eres and course packet)
(3) Recommended: C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, ch.5 on "Eros" (eres)

2/14: Happy Valentine's Day!

2/15 - 2/19: Sartre's Pessimism: does autonomy require domination of others?
(1) Soble continued.
(3) Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part III, ch.3: “Concrete Relations with Others” (course packet)
(4) Is it possible to care about the other person for her own sake (as an end in herself)? (discussion)

2/22: Classes follow a Monday schedule following President's Day

2/25: Sartre's version of Hegel's "master-slave" dialectic.
(1) Sartre's pessimistic view continued.
(2) First paper due.

3/1 - 3/4: Nagel's Reflexive Account of Sexual Desire and Kierkegaard's "Aesthete"
(2) Could Nagel's account be extended to a communicative structure in romantic love? (discussion).

(1) Kierkegaard's "Seducer's Diary" continued.
(2) David Pugmire, *Sound Sentiments* ch.5 on "Sentiment and Sentimentality" (eres and packet)
(3) The opposite of aestheticism: commitment and emotion with expressive final ends (discussion)
(4) Recommended reading: *The Rules*, by Ellen Fein (eres): contemporary aestheticism?

3/14 - 3/18: Spring Break (enjoy!)

3/22-3/25: Romantic Love and Friendship
(2) Authentic romantic love as friendship plus the erotic? (discussion)
(3) Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment" (course packet).
(4) Recommended: Neil Delancy, "What Romance Could Not Be" (eres).

3/29 - 4/1: Romantic Love, Commitment, and Exclusivity?
(1) Alan Soble, *The Structure of Love*, ch.3 on "The Uniqueness of the Beloved" (packet)
(2) Ronald de Sousa, "Lovers Arguments," in *The Rationality of Emotion*, chs. 9-10 sel. (packet)
(3) Recommended: Jeffrey Blustein, *Caring and Commitment*, ch2. 16-17 on Love, Friendship, and Irreplaceability (eres)
Part III: Agapē and Life-Meaning

4/5-4/8: The Radical Turn to Agapic Love
(1) Andreas Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, short selections (course packet)
(2) Richard White, *Love's Philosophy*, ch. 4 on the Love of Humanity

4/12 - 4/15: Martin Buber on Creativity and Love: The I-Thou Encounter
(1) Buber, *I and Thou*, part one.
(2) Buber, *I and Thou*, part two.

4/19: Buber on Interhuman Agapē
(1) Buber *I and Thou*, part two, continued.
(2) Take-home test due 4/19

4/22: Easter Break

4/26 - 4/29: Integrity and Meaning in Life
(1) Thaddeus Metz, "Recent Work on the Meaning of Life," from *Ethics* 112 (eres and packet)
(2) Gabrielle Taylor, *Pride, Shame, and Guilt* ch.5 on "Integrity" (eres and course packet)

5/3 - 5/6 [final class in lieu of exam]: Frankl: Meaning through Love
(1) Vicktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Part II: Logotherapy (eres)
(2) Overflow: any remaining discussion of readings.
(3) Any remaining oral reports.
(4) *Final essay due on May 6*! (esp. for all seniors!!).