

Love, Care, Self, & Autonomy

Course packet

Instructor: John Davenport
Spring 2008

Phlu 3972

Contents of Course Packet

General Course Handouts

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7. The Philosophy Major and Careers
8. Philosophy Minors for different Majors
9. Philosophy Courses at Lincoln Center (webpage)

Readings

0. Robert Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," ch.10 of Rorty, *Explaining Emotions*
1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part III, chs.1 and 3.
2. Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion," from *Mortal Questions*.
3. Kierkegaard, selections from "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or* vol. I, tr. Hong and Hong.
4. Ellen Fein and Scherrie Schneider, *The Rules* (Warner Books, 1995) selections.
5. John Davenport, "The Binding Value of Earnest Emotional Evaluation," *International Journal of Decision Ethics* 2 no.1 (Fall 2006): 107-23.
6. Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment," APQ 33 no.4 (Oct. 1996).
7. Ronald de Sousa, "Lovers Arguments," in *The Rationality of Emotion*, chs. 9-10 selections
8. Stan van Hoof, "Commitment and the Bonds of Love" (course packet)
9. Harry Frankfurt, "The Importance of What We Care About," in *The Importance of What We Care About* (Cambridge University Press, 1988)
10. Harry Frankfurt, "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love," in *Necessity, Volition, and Love*.
11. Harry Frankfurt, "On Bullshit," in *The Importance of What We Care About* (Cambridge University Press, 1988)
12. Andreas Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, selections from *Eros, Agape, and Philia*, ed. Alan Soble.
13. Davenport, *Will as Commitment and Resolve* (Fordham University Press, 2007), ch. 14.

Supplementary Readings on Eros

1. Rolf Johnson, *Three Faces of Love*, chs. 1 & 2
2. Gabrielle Taylor, "Deadly Vices?" from *How Should One Live*, ed. Crisp and Slote
3. Martha Nussbaum, "Constructing Love, Desire, and Care"
4. Keith Lehrer, "Love and Autonomy" in *Love Analyzed*, ed. Lamb.
5. Thomas Hill, "Servility and Self-Respect," *Autonomy and Self-Respect*, chapter 1
6. Gabrielle Taylor, "Integrity," ch.5 of *Pride, Shame, and Guilt*
7. Sabini and Silver, "Sincerity," in *Emotion, Character, and Responsibility*.
8. Flanagan, *Varieties of Moral Personality*, ch. 4 on Abstraction, Alienation, and Integrity
9. Jeffrey Blustein, *Caring and Commitment*, ch. 16 on Love and Friendship

Love, Care, Self, Autonomy (PHLU 3972)

Monday - Thursday 2:30 - 3:45 pm

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Office Hours: 4-6 pm Mondays and Thursdays at LC and by appointment; Fridays 4-5 pm at RH (after my grad class on free will). Most Wednesdays I'm also at RH for department meetings.

Course Goals: This 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 this with discussions of "caring" and forms of commitment to relationships, roles, long-term projects, and life-goals that define a person's practical identity – who you really are. The course presupposes no background beyond the freshman and sophomore philosophy core courses.

Main questions include:

- How can our loves and cares define our "self" or practical identity -- who we are in a practical sense -- if their sources lie outside our control? In other words, can loving and identity-defining commitment be autonomous?
- Are the emotions involved in loving people or caring about issues, causes, and ideals 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 rational deliberation?
- Can the will, including higher-order volitions concerning what motives we act on, help us shape and become responsible for our own character?
- And if the will does play a role, then how do we decide what goals to pursue, which commitments to make to persons and projects, and when to stick to them and when to revise them? In particular, can ethical consideration inform these deeply personal aspects of our lives?
- 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?

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:

1. Robert Solomon, *About Love* (Hackett Publishing, 2006 reprint) ISBN 978-0-87220-857-5
2. Raja Halwani, *Virtuous Liaisons* (Open Court/Carus Publishing, 2003) ISBN 0-8126-9543-7
3. Harry Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love* (Princeton University Press; new pb ed, 2006)
ISBN 13: 978-0691126241
4. Richard White, *Love's Philosophy* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) pbk: 0-7425-1257-6
5. Robert Ehman, *The Authentic Self* (Prometheus Books, 1994) 978-0879758462
6. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, tr. Kaufmann (Free Press; Reprint edition, February 1, 1971)
ISBN: 978-0684717258
7. *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 \$20 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

Short paper:	17%	
Final essay:	28%	This breakdown of course components is a basic guide
March test:	24%	for you, but there will also be a certain amount of
Oral report or 2nd paper:	16%	<i>leeway</i> in assigning the final grade. Due credit will
Class participation	15%	be given for improvement as the semester progresses.

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 four absences for any reason requires withdrawal from the course. 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

1/14 - 1/17: Introduction: Setting up the Questions about Emotions, Eros, Love

- (1) Theories of emotion in psychology and philosophy: three opposing views.
 - (a) the James-Lange affect theory; (b) the rational judgment theories; (c) construal theories.
- (2) Robert Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," ch.10 of Rorty, *Explaining Emotions* (handout)
- (3) Eros as sexual desire, and Eros as generalized desire in Plato's the *Symposium* (discussion)
- (4) The many senses of "love" developing from ancient Greece and Rome to modern Europe.
- (5) Robert Solomon, *About Love: Reinventing Romance for Our Times*, chs.1-2. (pp.1-128)

1/21: Happy *Martin Luther King* day: no class.

1/24: Love and Friendship

- (1) Robert Solomon, *About Love*, chs.1-2 continued.
- (2) Richard White, *Love's Philosophy*, Introduction and ch. 1 on friendship in Aristotle and others
- (3) Friendship and the paradoxes of "eudaimonism."

1/28-1/31: Sartre's Pessimism: does autonomy require domination of others?

- (1) Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part III, ch.1: "The Look" (course packet)
- (2) Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part III, ch.3: "Concrete Relations with Others" (course packet)
- (3) Is it possible to care about the other person for her own sake (as an end in herself)? (discussion)

2/4: Nagel's Sartrean and Reflexive Account of Sexual Desire becoming Erotic Interest

- (1) Sartre's pessimistic view continued.
- (2) Thomas Nagel, "Sexual Perversion," from *Mortal Questions* (course packet)
- (3) Could Nagel's account be extended to a communicative structure in romantic love? (discussion)

2/7: professor is in Charleston giving a paper; class will meet to watch one hour of a film.

2/11-2/14: Kierkegaard's Critique of Inauthentic Erotic Love [Happy Valentines Day]

- (1) Kierkegaard on boredom, eros, and romanticism: selections from "The Seducer's Diary" in *Either/Or* vol.1 (course packet): especially pp.411-45.
- (2) Selection from *The Rules*, by Ellen Fein (course packet): contemporary aestheticism?
- (3) The opposite of aestheticism: commitment and emotion with expressive final ends (discussion)
- (4) *Recommended*: Davenport, "The Binding Value of Earnest Emotional Evaluation," (packet)

2/12: The 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln!

2/18: Happy *President's Day*: no class (but we meet on Tuesday instead this week)

2/19-2/21: More Optimistic Accounts of Romantic Love

- (1) Robert Solomon, *About Love*, ch.3 Falling in Love.
- (2) Richard White, *Love's Philosophy*, ch. 2 on the Value of Romantic Love.
- (3) Authentic romantic love as friendship plus the erotic? (discussion)
- (4) First short paper due 2/21.

2/25-2/28: Romantic Love, Commitment, and Exclusivity? [Happy leap day on 2/29]

- (1) Ronald de Sousa, "Lovers Arguments," in *The Rationality of Emotion*, chs. 9-10 sel. (packet)
- (2) Neil Delaney, "Romantic Love and Loving Commitment" (course packet).
- (3) *Recommended*: Stan van Hooft, "Commitment and the Bonds of Love" (course packet)
- (4) Begin Frankfurt, time permitting.

3/3-3/6: Frankfurt: Caring and Commitment as Key to Authentic Identity

- (1) Introduction to Frankfurt on personhood: the wanton vs "higher-order volition" (discussion)
- (2) Frankfurt, "The Importance of What We Care About" (course packet)
- (3) Frankfurt, "Autonomy, Necessity, and Love" (course packet)
- (4) *Recommended*: Frankfurt, "On Bullshit" (course packet)

3/10: The Radical Turn to Agapic Love

- (1) Andreas Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, selections (course packet)
- (2) Richard White, *Love's Philosophy*, ch. 4 on the Love of Humanity

3/12 thru Monday 3/24: *Happy Spring Break!*

3/27: Buber's version of Agapē: The I-Thou Encounter

- (1) Buber, *I and Thou*, part one.
- (2) Buber, *I and Thou*, part two.

3/31-4/3: Bringing I-Thou Transparency into Romantic Relations: Robert Ehman

- (1) Buber *I and Thou*, part two, continued.
- (1) Robert Ehman, *The Authentic Self*, chs. 1-4 (especially the later chapters on sexual love)
- (2) Is sex an I-Thou encounter??

4/1: 4 pm LC Forum on Global Justice and Cosmopolitan Identity [no April fools!]

4/7-4/10: From Buber to Care Ethics and Romantic Virtues

- (1) Ehman continued: is passive openness to others more authentic than devotion to projects?
- (2) Raja Halwani, *Virtuous Liasons*, ch. 1 on Nel Noddings' Care Ethics

(3) Halwani, *Virtuous Liasons*, ch. 2 on Romantic Love

4/11-4/12: Graduate Student Conference on Cosmopolitanism at RH

4/14-4/17: Romantic Love and Erotic Love reconsidered from the perspective of care & virtue

(1) Halwani, *Virtuous Liasons*, ch. 3 on Sex and Relationship Ideals

(2) Robert Solomon, *About Love*, ch.5 on the Dynamics of Love.

(3) Does Solomon's account adequately respond to Halwani's critiques (discussion)

(3) Take-home test due 4/17

4/16: Natural Law Lecture at Law School (LC)

4/21-4/24: Frankfurt's on Essentially Individualistic Caring and Value-Subjectivism

(1) Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*, chs. 1-2.

4/28: A Critique of Frankfurt

(1) Frankfurt continued.

(2) Davenport, *Will as Commitment and Resolve*, ch. 14 (course packet)

5/1: Reading Day: no class.

5/5. Conclusion [final class in lieu of exam, as required by Fordham statute]

(1) Overflow: any remaining discussion of readings.

(2) Any remaining oral reports.

(3) *Final essay due!*