



**PHIL 3150-001**  
**Philosophy of Love, Sex, and Sexuality**

Department of Philosophy and Religion  
University of North Texas  
Fall 2025



**Class Location:** Matthews Hall, Room 112

**Class Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00-3:20 pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Asaf Angermann (*he/him*)

**Email:** [asaf.angermann@unt.edu](mailto:asaf.angermann@unt.edu)

**Office:** ENV 225E (Environmental Science Building, 1704 W Mulberry St.)

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:30 pm and by appointment

**Teaching Assistant:** Hyun Yang (*he/him*)

**Email:** [HyunYang@my.unt.edu](mailto:HyunYang@my.unt.edu)

**Course Description**

This course explores philosophical questions about love, desire, gender, sexuality, sexual difference, and sexual identity. It examines the ethical, social, historical, and psychological aspects of thinking philosophically about topics such as romantic and sexual attraction, lust, pleasure, consent, harassment, online dating, and sexual orientation, as well as transgender and non-binary identities.

**Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will:

1. be knowledgeable of the various philosophical traditions, questions, and arguments concerning the meaning of love, sex, and sexuality, from ancient times until today.
2. have expertise in the philosophical discussion of different perspectives, problems, and challenges that arise when analyzing central issues related to love, sex, and sexuality.
3. be proficient in critically assessing, developing, and presenting erudite, precise, and cogent philosophical arguments.

## Course Materials and Readings

No book purchase is required for this course. All course materials and readings will be available in electronic format on the course Canvas page and/or through the UNT library catalog.

It is important to complete each reading before the class meeting for which it is scheduled to be discussed. Readings may be printed out or accessed on the student's electronic device.

## Technology in the Classroom

Use of all technology (laptops, tablets, phones) in the classroom is permitted, as long as it is done primarily for learning purposes and does not cause distraction. Use of technology for other purposes (such as texting, social media, watching videos) is not permitted, since it causes distraction and disturbs other students. Students who use technology for such purposes will be asked to leave for the duration of the class. This policy is subject to change according to circumstances.

## Course Requirements and Grade Components

### **1. Attendance and Participation**

Attending class meetings and actively participating in the discussions are essential for succeeding in this course. If unavoidable, absences should be communicated to the instructor via email prior to the class. Two unexcused absences will have no effect on the final course grade. More than five unexcused absences will result in failing the course. Active participation in the course will positively contribute to your final grade in the course. = 10% of final grade.

### **2. Ten Reading Responses**

Ten reading responses shall be completed throughout the semester. Every student is free to choose any ten readings from the course syllabus for writing reading responses on. Only ten reading responses are required.

Reading responses are short (about one page; 250-350 words) written responses to the assigned readings. They shall be based solely on the readings (not using any other materials). They are responses; not summaries: They shall not summarize the reading, but rather respond to 2-3 of the following points:

- What was your reading experience? Was the reading difficult, accessible, challenging, meaningful, relatable, etc.? Explain and discuss why.

- What do you find to be the reading's main argument? Explain what the author argues for and what your view on it is – do you agree, disagree, ambivalent, indifferent? Why?
- Choose a sentence or a paragraph that seems central or meaningful to you. Explain why you chose it and how you understand it.
- If you had the chance to meet the author and discuss their argument with them, what would you like to ask? What would you like to know? What would you like to tell them? What would you like to hear from them?

Reading responses shall be submitted on Canvas by the end of day before the class meeting in which the reading is scheduled to be discussed (that is, by end of day on Monday/Wednesday).

Overall, 10 reading responses shall be completed throughout the semester. Each reading response is worth 2 points x 10 reading responses. = 20% of final grade.

### 3. Three Quizzes

Quizzes include questions – true/false, multiple choice, and open questions – on class materials. Each quiz includes 10 questions to be completed within 30 minutes. The questions cover only materials from the readings, lectures, and class discussions. – Each quiz is worth 20% of the final grade x3 = 60% of final grade.

**Note: Alternative option** - Students who are experienced with and confident about writing a philosophical essay, may complete such an essay (about 5 pages), discussing a topic related to the class, instead of the third quiz. Topics should be discussed with and approved by the instructor in advance.

### 4. Class Summary

Class summaries are 2-3 pages summaries of the class's main topics, arguments, and discussions. They shall consist of full texts (rather than bullet-point lists). Each student shall write one summary during the semester. The summaries shall be helpful in making it possible for students who have missed the class and for students with different abilities to catch up on class materials. Summaries shall be completed and submitted by the end of day in which the class took place, so they can be made available on Canvas before the next class. = 10% of final grade.

#### Course Grade Component Summary:

1. Attendance and Participation = 10% of final grade
2. Ten Reading Responses = 20% of final grade
3. Three Quizzes = 60% of final grade
4. Class summary = 10% of final grade

-----  
Total: 100 %

## Grading System and Policies

The grading system for the course is as follows:

A: 90-100%, B: 80-90%, C: 70-79%, D: 60-69%, F: 0-59

**Reading responses** shall be completed and submitted on Canvas the day before the class for which the reading is scheduled. Reading responses submitted after the class in which the reading is scheduled to be discussed cannot be accepted. Students are free to choose which readings to write reading responses on. If you are unable to complete the reading response before the class for which it is scheduled, you can just complete a response on another reading.

**Class summaries** shall be completed on the day in which the summarized class took place, so that they can be made available on Canvas before the next class. Students will sign up for class summaries at the beginning of the semester, to make sure that all classes are covered by class summaries. However, it is not a problem to change the date for the class summary during the semester.

**Quizzes** can be taken at any time during the week for which they are scheduled. Once you begin, you will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz.

**Students who need accommodations** (such as extra time for quizzes) shall contact the Office of Disability Access to obtain a letter of accommodation. This should be arranged before assignments are due. Should you experience any difficulty in obtaining such a letter, or if you have any other concerns, please do not hesitate to discuss this directly with the instructor.

## Academic Success, or: How to Succeed in This Course

Every student can succeed in this course! Your success in this course is important to me as your instructor and it is my goal to help you succeed. Success in this course means passing with a good grade. Attending classes, reading the texts, participating in class discussions, and completing assignments and assessments are the best ways to succeed in this course.

Some readings and arguments may be easier and some more difficult than others. Different students engage differently with different materials. I am here to help and support you. My office hours offer you an opportunity to ask for clarification or find support with understanding class material. Come visit me! I encourage you to connect with me for support. If you can't make my regular office hours, please email me so we can find a different time that works for you!

**Please note that, as the course title indicates, this course discusses philosophical arguments and different perspectives on love, sex, and sexuality. Some of the course topics may seem thought-provoking, challenging, or even provocative to some students. Mutual respect and open-mindedness are expected for participation and success in the course.** If you are struggling with the course topics, please come and talk with me, so we can find a way to support you. If you are uncomfortable with the course topics, the Department of Philosophy and Religion offers many other courses which you are welcome to take instead of this course.

## Academic Success Resources

UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you, and I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out [mental health services \(https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies\)](https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies), visit [unt.edu/success](https://unt.edu/success), and explore [unt.edu/wellness](https://unt.edu/wellness). To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to [scrappysays.unt.edu](https://scrappysays.unt.edu).

## Academic Integrity

“UNT promotes the integrity of learning processed and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the university. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the university’s actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence.” (UNT Academic Integrity Policy description, <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>)

Please note that plagiarism is considered an academic offense. Plagiarism means representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise, such as:

1. Submitting as one’s own a paper written by another person or by a commercial “ghost writing” service,
2. Exactly reproducing someone else’s words without identifying the words with quotation marks or by appropriate indentation, or without properly citing the quotation in a footnote or reference,
3. Paraphrasing or summarizing someone else’s work without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference,
4. Using facts, data, graphs, charts, or other information without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference. Borrowed facts or information obtained in one’s research or reading must be acknowledged unless they are “common knowledge”. Clear examples of “common knowledge” include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, and the meaning of fundamental concepts and principles in a discipline. When in doubt, footnotes or references should be used.

The likely penalty for plagiarism is failing the course.

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **Use of Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence) Tools**

The use of Generative AI tools is neither encouraged nor prohibited in this class. It is fine and acceptable to use these tools as long as they do not substitute the reading of class materials and as long as classwork – or any part thereof – submitted using these tools is acknowledged as such. This means that if you use any Generative AI tools, you must indicate which sentences or paragraphs have been written using these tools (for example, by highlighting or underlining these sentences or paragraphs). Unauthorized use of AI tools in an assignment may lead to failing the assignment.

Please note that in philosophical papers, Generative AI tools may lead to wrong answers or incorrect arguments. Only use these tools after you have read the relevant materials and only if you are confident that the information they provide aligns with the philosophical content of the assignment.

Using Generative AI content without proper credit or substituting your own work with Generative AI undermines the learning process and violates academic integrity. If you are unsure whether something is allowed, please seek clarification.

### **Title IX Statement on Sexual Misconduct, Sexual Harassment, and Survivor Advocacy**

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at [oeo@unt.edu](mailto:oeo@unt.edu) or at (940) 565 2759.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (ADA Statement)**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that

students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

### **Inclusive Learning Environment, Chosen Names, and Preferred Pronouns**

UNT students represent a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please let me know. We are all learning together and we can all learn from each other!

#### ***Chosen Names***

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like it to be used in class, please let the instructor know.

#### ***Preferred Pronouns***

Pronouns (*they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.*) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns. You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

### **Course Schedule, Topics, and Readings**

\* Please note that minor changes to the schedule may be made during the semester according to the course progression and students' interests. The most updated schedule will always be available on Canvas.

#### **Week 1: Introduction to the Course**

##### **Tue., Aug. 19**

What is love? What is sex? What is sexuality?  
What does philosophy have to say about them?  
What will this course be about?

##### **Thu., Aug. 21**

How to succeed in this course?  
Course and syllabus overview

## ***Part I: Love***

### Week 2: Love and Knowledge / Love as Knowledge

Tue., Aug. 26

Plato, *The Symposium* (I)

Thu., Aug. 28

Plato, *The Symposium* (II)

### Week 3: Love as Care, Romantic Love, and Divine Love

Tue., Sep. 2

St. Augustine, *The Confessions* (Selected sections from Chapters 1,2,3,10)

Thu., Sep. 4

Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, Part I

### Week 4: Love and Faith

Tue., Sep. 9

Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, Part I

Thu., Sep. 11

Simone Weil, “Love,” and “Attention and Will,” from *Gravity and Grace*

Iris Murdoch, “The Idea of Perfection,” from *The Sovereignty of Good*

### Week 5: The Ethics of Love

Tue., Sep. 16

Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, Ch. II.1. “Love, the Answer to the Problem of Human Existence”

Thu., Sep. 18

bell hooks, *All About Love*, Ch. 6. “Values: Living by a Love Ethic”

### Week 6: The Politics of Love

Tue., Sep. 23

Hannah Arendt and Gershom Scholem, *Correspondence* (selected letters)

Thu., Sep. 25

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love*

### **Quiz #1**



## ***Part II: Sex***

### Week 7: Sex and Morals

Tue., Sep. 30

Immanuel Kant, “Of Duties to the Body in Regard to the Sexual Impulse,” from *Lectures on Ethics*

Irving Singer, “The Morality of Sex – Contra Kant”

Thu., Oct. 2

Søren Kierkegaard, “The Seducer’s Diary,” from *Either/Or, A Fragment of Life, Part I*

### Week 8: Sex and Normativity

Tue., Oct. 7

Thomas Nagel, “Sexual Perversion,” from *Mortal Questions*

Thu., Oct. 9

Alan Wertheimer, “Consent and Sexual Relations”

### Week 9: Sexual Harassment and Sexual Empowerment

Tue., Oct. 14

Catharine Mackinnon, “Racial and Sexual Harassment,” from *Only Words*

Thu., Oct. 16

Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,” “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Defining Difference” from *Sister Outsider*

### Week 10: Online Sex

Tue., Oct. 21

Neil McArthur, “Sex and Technology: The Ethics of Virtual Connection”

Thu., Oct. 23

Amia Srinivasan, “The Right to Sex” from *The Right to Sex: Feminism in the Twenty-First Century*

## ***Quiz #2***

### ***Part III: Sexuality***

#### Week 11: The History of Sexuality

Tue., Oct. 28

Sigmund Freud, *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Lecture 20.

Thu., Oct. 30

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol 1, Parts 1 and 2

#### Week 12: The Epistemology of Sexuality

Tue., Nov. 4

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, Ch. 1.

Thu., Nov. 6

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Part 1.1 and Part 2.6

#### Week 13: Sexual Desire and Its Object(ification)

Tue., Nov. 11

Raja Halwani, "Racial Sexual Desires"

Thu., Nov. 13

Raja Halwani, "Casual Sex, Promiscuity, and Objectification"

#### Week 14: Sexual and Gender Identity

Tue., Nov. 18

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "The Epistemology of the Closet"

Thu., Nov. 20

Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*, Introduction

#### **Thanksgiving Break - Nov. 24-30: No Classes**

#### Week 15: Sexuality, Race, and Ethnicity

Tue., Dec. 2

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Ch. 2

José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Introduction

Thu., Dec. 4: Course overview, conclusions, and summary

#### **Quiz #3**