PHIL 920-001 Ethical Theory: Love

Description

What is love? What, if any reasons, do we have to love others? And what is the connection (or tension) between love, on the one hand, and morality on the other? This course will focus on contemporary work and will use love to explore questions about the nature of reasons, moral psychology, partiality, impartiality and the foundations of ethics. We'll start with two classic papers that make the case that moral theory somehow fails to accommodate the phenomenon of love. We'll then survey some of the contemporary literature on love and reasons, much of which is a response, in one form or another, to the first week's papers. Having seen that, we'll consider attempts to build an ethical by taking love as a starting point; and we'll turn to criticisms of such attempts. In the final few weeks of the course, we'll turn to the related topic of forgiveness.

Prerequisites:

None

Meeting Times:

Lectures: M 3:30-5:35, LPH 312
Office Hours: by appointment

Contact:

Quinn White
qwhite@unl.edu

Course Readings:

Required Books:

- Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*
- Frankfurt, *Reasons of Love*
- Jollimore, *Love's Vision*
- Keller, *Partiality*
- Løgstrup, *The Ethical Demand*

All other readings will be posted online. Please contact me if book expense will be an issue—I know there are an awful lot of books relative to the number of (free) papers posted on canvas.

Course Requirements:

Final paper of approximately 20 pages. The topic is up to you, but must be approved by me no later than **10/31**. We should meet at least once to speak in depth about your ideas for the paper before you hand anything in. If you do not hand in a paper by the end of term, you will receive an incomplete. That incomplete will expire (i.e., you will not receive credit for the class) if you do not turn in a final draft of the paper by **Feb. 14**, 2021. The paper will constitute 75% of the grade.

Paper Presentation: On the last day of class, all students taking the course for credit will give a 20-30 minute presentation on their paper. Approximately 10 of those minutes will be spent on Q&A. A handout or slides are recommended. The presentation will constitute 10% of the grade.

Participation (including 1 weekly presentation): Weekly participation is required. Everyone attending is expected to have read the materials in advance. Each student will give one presentation on a week's reading lasting 15-20 min. Participation, including on non-presentation days, will constitute 15% of the grade.

Schedule and Readings:

8/17: Love and "Morality"
Williams, "Persons, Character and Morality" (1981)
Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories" (1976)

8/24: Reasons for love 1: The No Reasons View
Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*

8/31: Reasons for love 2: The Vision View
Jollimore, *Love's Vision*, Ch. 1-4

9/7: Reasons for love 3: The Relationships View
Kolodny, "Love as Valuing a Relationship" (2003)
Optional: "Sheffler, Morality and Reasonable Partiality" (2010)
Optional: Jeske, *Rationality and Moral Theory* (2008)

9/14: Reasons for love 4: Humanity
Velleman, "Love as a Moral Emotion"
Millgram, "Kantian Crystalization"

9/21: Reasons for love 5: Individuals Views
Setiya, "Love and the Value of a Life" (2014)
Pettit, "Love and Its Place in Moral Discourse" (1997)

9/28: Reasons for love 5: Enablers
Keller, *Partiality*, Ch. 4-5

10/5: Love as seeing what's real
Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, Ch. 1-2

10/12: Ethics as the Demand to Love Others
Løgstrup, *The Ethical Demand*

10/19: Partiality and Impartiality
Cottingham, "Ethics and Impartiality" (1983)
Wolf, "Moral Saints" (1982)

10/26: Defusing The Tension?
Baron, "Impartiality and Friendship" (1991)
Wolterstorff, *Love and Justice*, selections

11/2: Forgiveness 1
TBA

11/9: Forgiveness 2
TBA

11/16: Forgiveness 3
TBA

11/23: Presentations