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LOVE

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

Instructor: Vincent Lloyd
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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11am-2pm
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DESCRIPTION:

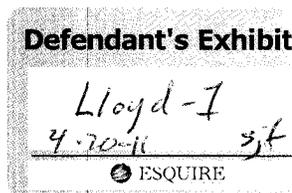
Does love allow us to ascend to a higher reality, to come closer to God? Is true love possible in a “fallen” world? Are such questions tainted by theological assumptions – and, if so, is there a different way to think about (and practice) love?

Beginning with the *locus classicus* of philosophical discussions of love, Plato’s Symposium, we will explore the role of love in philosophical inquiry, and the philosophical significance of love. We will also think about how Plato’s account of love provides the foundations for the central role love plays in Christian theology. After the violence and destruction of the twentieth century, are Platonic or Christian accounts of love plausible? We will critically examine Georges Bataille’s proposal that Plato must now be inverted, that “eroticism” must be at the core of “a-theology.” In the final third of the seminar, we will explore a different response to violence and oppression. We will examine the connection between love and justice in twentieth century African American literature and politics, reading short stories by James Baldwin and speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Throughout the course, we will work on developing the ability to closely read different types of texts, critically engaging with their substance, carefully analyzing their style, and thinking about how substance and style are related. Students will be expected to actively participate in weekly class discussions, carefully listening to classmates and articulating their own views. Additionally, students will complete brief, informal weekly responses to the readings. One of these responses will be expanded into a modest research assignment that will proceed in stages through the second half of the semester.

READINGS:

Are available through the GSU library’s “e-reserves” (go to <http://www.library.gsu.edu/services/> and click on “Find Course Reserves” from the left column; the password is 1h87wektF). You must bring a paper copy of the readings to class during the relevant weeks.



Love Freshman Seminar Syllabus: 1

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WORKLOAD:

Conventional wisdom holds that an undergraduate student should spend 3 hours outside of class doing readings and preparation for each hour s/he spends in class. That means you should be spending about 3 hours outside of class preparing each week. If you find yourself spending significantly more or less time, please speak with the instructor.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

50%: *weekly reading responses*. Each week bring to class a one page (3 or 4 paragraph) response paper. In writing these, start by choosing a passage (a sentence or two) from the reading that you found especially interesting, or provocative, or confusing. Then just describe what it is about that you find interesting, provocative, or confusing. Feel free to be creative! If you need a place to start, see the questions we're handing out each week.

50%: *paper*. As you write weekly reading responses, think about whether there is one that you would like to expand into a full paper. We will work through the paper-writing process together, in stages, during the final third of the class. Due on Dec. 9, one week after the last day of class (there will be earlier deadlines for topic, outline, and draft). 7pp.

SCHEDULE:

- 8/19: Introduction (reading from Augustine's *City of God* in class)
- 8/26: Plato, *Symposium*, through p.480
- 9/2: Plato, *Symposium*
- 9/9: Luce Irigaray, "Sorcerer Love"
- 9/16: Martha Nussbaum, "The Speech of Alcibiades"

- 9/23: Georges Bataille, *Erotism*, Introduction and Part 1/Chapter 1
- 9/30: Georges Bataille, *Erotism*, Part 2/Chapter 5
- 10/7: Susan Sontag, "The Pornographic Imagination"
(optional: Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye*)
- 10/14: Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression" in *Faubion...*
- 10/21: Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf*, Chapter 1

- 10/28: Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1, Part II*
- 11/4: James Baldwin, "The Outing" and "Going to Meet the Man"
- 11/11: Martin Luther King, Jr., selected speeches from *A Testament of Hope*
- 11/18: Rowan Williams, "The Body's Grace" and Joseph Ratzinger, "Letter to the Bishops..." both from Eugene Rogers (ed.) *Theology and Sexuality*
- 12/2: Gillian Rose, Chapters 5, 7, and 8 of *Love's Work*