

## **PHIL 225g: Love and its Representations in Western Literature, Film and Philosophy**

### **Fall 2010**

Professor Edwin McCann

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Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Thursdays 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and by appointment.

### **Course Overview:**

Our heads are stuffed with images, songs, poems, stories, and phrases about love. Think of how many movies and TV series have one or more love stories either as major subplots or as the principal focus of the story; think how many popular songs (and operas and classical music pieces, for that matter) have love as their central topic; think how many works in popular literature (bestsellers, romance literature, etc.) center on love-relationships; think how many advertisements, in whatever medium (TV ads, magazine ads, billboards, etc.) try to make a quick link between their products and themes of love, sex, and domesticity.

We begin with a basic formative work for the Western conception of love, one which helped introduce the phrase ‘platonic love’ into our vocabulary, namely Plato’s dialogue *Symposium* (early 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE). We’ll follow the argument in this work as it leads to Plato’s conclusion that the proper object of love is not an individual person but is Beauty itself. This Platonic ascent or ‘ladder’ of love was taken up by St. Augustine (late 4<sup>th</sup> century CE) and synthesized with Christianity, resulting in the claim that only God is the appropriate object of love and that our fallen nature makes us particularly susceptible to lust, which we confuse with love. We then touch down in the Medieval period, reading some of the courtly romance literature that introduced and shaped our notion of romantic love. Dante, writing in the Renaissance, a period characterized by the recovery of ancient (pagan) classics, fuses this new conception of romantic love with traditional Christian themes. We’ll look at some selections from Ovid and Virgil, classical sources of inspiration for Dante the poet; we’ll then read all three canticles of his *Divine Comedy*, tracing how his love for Beatrice leads him finally to discover that the whole cosmos, physical and moral, is held together and harmonized by Love. Shakespeare, three centuries later, reflects a more modern preoccupation with lives lived by individuals, and explores the tragedy and the comedy that love brings to those lives. We’ll study two of his plays, the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* and the comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. We’ll then finish off the first part of course by reading Milton’s great seventeenth century epic poem *Paradise Lost*. It will return us the themes of St. Augustine with the Fall of man, the relations between Adam and Eve as cause of the Fall, and the ‘glamour of evil.’ We cap off our consideration of Milton by comparing it with a recent re-imagining of *Paradise Lost* in John Collier’s ‘screenplay for cinema of the mind.’

The second part of the course brings us up to modern times. Existentialist writers have made use

of the notion of love to explore the alienation and loss of meaning attending the modern condition of life. In Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer* we'll see how an 'aesthetic' approach to life causes a young man to trick and seduce an innocent girl as a piece of 'performance art,' and we'll find that his 'ethical' uncle tries and fails to convince him that the oath and bonds of marriage can themselves be aesthetically valuable. In another pseudonymous 'aesthetic' work, *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard uses the image of chivalrous love, tongue-in-cheek, to illustrate his distinction between the Knight of Faith and the Knight of Infinite Resignation. In Dostoevsky's novella *Notes from Underground* we follow the tale of a young man who makes himself into a despairing loner as a result of his inability, due to his pride and hyperconsciousness, to accept the simple love a woman offers him. We finish this second section of the course with a chapter from Jean-Paul Sartre's very important but very demanding philosophical treatise *Being and Nothingness*; on Sartre's analysis both love and sexual desire are self-deceptive ploys we use to try to be the foundation of our own being, or to use the more colloquial expression of Jerry Maguire, to be 'completed,' a project that is doomed to failure, on Sartre's telling.

The third part of the course takes us from print to screen. In an arc that goes, frankly, from the sublime to the ridiculous we'll look at three movies about love and marriage (in the case of the last one, marriage averted) which take place largely on boats. First, there is Jean Vigo's luminous masterpiece *L'Atalante* (the name of a river barge, but one named after the heroine of one of the tales of Ovid we read earlier). It is probably the most moving and subtle depiction of the early marriage ever put on film. We then watch a wild screwball comedy from Preston Sturges starring Henry Fonda and Barbara Stanwyck, *The Lady Eve*. Finally, we'll look at what is still the highest grossing picture in its initial release, *Titanic*.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Introduce students to some of the central literary works in the European and American cultural inheritance. We will be reading only primary sources (in translation, in many cases), written by such figures as Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and Kierkegaard.
2. Explore the ways in which later writers in the tradition adapt, allude to, and respond to the works of earlier writers, and situate each writer within his or her historical context.
3. Analyze the various strategies of representation that these works employ, and the variety of modes of reception they enjoyed. We will be looking at various literary forms: poems, plays, films, philosophical prose. Each has its own representative affordances and limitations.
4. Develop critical and analytical skills through close reading and analysis of complex texts, and communication skills in both contribution to group discussion and in argumentative and critical writing in essay form.

## **Course Requirements:**

1. Regular attendance at lectures and your assigned discussion section and participation in the discussion section. (15% of the course grade.)
2. Four essays, one for each of the four segments of the course. I will post a list of topics, one for each week in that segment, prior to the beginning of any given segment. You choose which week, and therefore which topic, you will write a paper on. There is a rewrite option for one paper. (Each paper counts for 15% of the course grade.)
4. Final examination: short answer section and two in-class essays, with the essay questions distributed in advance. (20% of the course grade).
5. Performance bonus: the highest grade on any of the above four elements of the grade (participation, papers, final exam) will carry an extra 5% weight for the determination of the final grade.

## **Course Textbooks:**

1. Plato, *Plato on Love: Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades, with Selections from Republic and Laws*. Ed. C. D. C. Reeve. Hackett. ISBN: 978-0872207882
2. St. Augustine, *Confessions*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Tr. Sheed. Hackett. ISBN 978-0-872-208162
3. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. Tr. Melville. Oxford World's Classics, Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0199537372
4. Dante Alighieri. *The Portable Dante*. Tr. and ed. Mark Musa. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 978-0142437544
5. Joseph Bédier (editor and compiler) *The Romance of Tristan and Iseult*. Vintage. ISBN 978-0-679-750161
6. Marie de France, *The Lais of Marie de France*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Penguin Classics. ISBN: 978-0140447590
7. William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet (Arden Shakespeare: Second Series)*. Arden. ISBN 978-1903436417
8. William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream (Arden Shakespeare: Second Series)*. Arden. ISBN 978-1903436608
9. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Kastan. Hackett. ISBN 0872207331
10. Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*. Tr. Hannay. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 978-0140445770
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. Tr. Barnes. Washington Square Press. ISBN: 9780671867805

## Schedule of readings and lectures:

Tu Aug 24 Introduction and overview of course

### EARLY 4TH CENTURY BCE

Th Aug 26 Platonic love: the speeches of Socrates's fellow symposiasts

Reading: Plato, *Symposium* 172a-197e5 (Reeve, pp. 26-56)

Tu Aug 31 Platonic love: Socrates in action, and the ascent of love

Reading: Plato, *Symposium* 197c6-223d11 (Reeve, pp. 56-87); Socrates's second speech about love from Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a3-257b5 (Reeve, pp. 108-122)

### LATE 4TH CENTURY CE

Th Sep 2 Platonic love made Christian

Reading: St. Augustine, *Confessions* Bk One, secs. I-XII (Sheed, pp. 3-14), XIX-XX (Sheed, pp. 19-21); Bk Two (Sheed, pp. 25-34); Bk Three (Sheed, pp. 37-51); Bk Four (Sheed, pp. 55-72); Bk Five, secs. I-II (Sheed, pp. 75-76), VIII-XII (Sheed, pp. 83-90); Bk Six (Sheed, pp. 95-114); Bk Seven (Sheed, pp. 117-137); Bk Eight, secs. I, V, VII-XII (Sheed, pp. 141-142, 147-148, 152-160)

Tu Sep 7 St. Augustine on love and lust

Reading: St. Augustine, *Confessions* Bk Nine, secs. VII-XIII (Sheed, pp. 174-185); Bk Ten (Sheed, pp. 189-229); Bk Eleven, secs. XIV (Sheed, pp. 242-243), XXVIII-XXXI (Sheed, pp. 254-257); Bk Thirteen, sec IX (Sheed, pp. 294-5); excerpt from St. Augustine, *The City of God* tr. Marcus Dods (The Modern Library, 1950), Book XIV. pp. 441-477 on library reserve, and available online at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm>

### 12TH AND 13TH CENTURIES CE

Th Sep 9 Courtly love: chivalry and the invention of romantic love

Reading: Bédier, *Romance of Tristan and Iseult*

Tu Sep 14 Medieval romance and troubadour poetry

Reading: Marie de France, *Lais of Marie de France*, Lai #1 (Guigemar), Burgess & Busby pp. 43-55, Lai #2 (Equitan), Burgess & Busby pp. 55-60, Lai #5 (Lanval), Burgess & Busby pp. 73-81, Lai #7 Yonec), Burgess & Busby pp. 86-93, #11 (Chevrefoil), Burgess & Busby pp. 109-110, #12 (Eliduc), pp. 111-126; Dante, *Vita Nuova* (Musa, pp. 589-649)

### LATE 1ST CENTURY BCE THROUGH EARLY 1ST CENTURY CE

Th Sep 16 Classic sources of the poetry of transformation and the journey through

the underworld (ca. late 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE through early 1<sup>st</sup> century CE)

Reading: Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Books I, IV, part of VI (pp. 1-27, 81-104, 141-62)

<http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasaeneid.htm>; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* at [http://](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasovid.htm)

[www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasovid.htm](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/klineasovid.htm)

From Book I Apollo (Phoebus) and Daphne; Jupiter and Io

Melville pp. 14-18

Bk I:438-472 Phoebus kills the Python and sees Daphne

Bk I: 473-503 Phoebus pursues Daphne

Bk I:504-524 Phoebus begs Daphne to yield to him

Bk I:525-552 Daphne becomes the laurel bough

Bk I:553-567 Phoebus honours Daphne

Melville pp. 18-23

Bk I:568-587 Inachus mourns for Io

Bk I:587-600 Jupiter's rape of Io

Bk I:601-621 Jupiter transforms Io to a heifer

Bk I:622-641 Juno claims Io and Argus guards her

Bk I:642-667 Inachus finds Io and grieves for her

Bk I:668-688 Jupiter sends Mercury to kill Argus

Bk I:689-721 Mercury tells the story of Syrinx

Bk I:722-746 Io is returned to human form

Melville pp. 38-66

Bk III:253-272 Juno sets out to punish Semele

Bk III:273-315 Semele is consumed by Jupiter's fire.

Bk III:316-338 The judgement of Tiresias

Bk III:339-358 Echo sees Narcissus

Bk III:359-401 How Juno altered Echo's speech

Bk III:402-436 Narcissus sees himself and falls in love

Bk III:474-510 Narcissus is changed into a flower

From Book IV: Pyramus and Thisbe; Salamacis and Hermaphroditus; Cadmus and Harmony

Melville pp. 76-79

Bk IV:55-92 Arsispe tells the story of Pyramus and Thisbe

Bk IV:93-127 The death of Pyramus

Bk IV:128-166 The death of Thisbe

Melville pp. 91-93

Bk IV:563-603 Cadmus and Harmonia become serpents  
From Book V: Dis and Proserpine  
From Book VI: Tereus and Philomela

Melville pp. 134-142

Bk VI:401-438 The marriage of Procne and Tereus  
Bk VI:438-485 Tereus's passion for Procne's sister Philomela  
Bk VI:486-548 Tereus forces Philomela  
Bk VI:549-570 Philomela is mutilated  
Bk VI:571-619 The truth is revealed  
Bk VI:619-652 The pitiless feast  
Bk VI:653-674 They are transformed into birds

From Book IX: Byblis and Caunus; Iphis and Ianthe

Melville pp. 213-220

Bk IX:439-516 Byblis falls in love with her twin brother Caunus  
Bk IX:517-594 The fatal letter  
Bk IX:595-665 The transformation of Byblis

From Book X: Pygmalion and the statue; Myrrha and Cinyras; Venus and Adonis;  
Atalanta and Hippomenes

Melville pp. 232-248

Bk X:243-297 Orpheus sings: Pygmalion and the statue  
Bk X:298-355 Orpheus sings: Myrrha's incestuous love for Cinyras  
Bk X:356-430 Orpheus sings: Myrrha and her nurse  
Bk X:431-502 Orpheus sings: Myrrha's crime and punishment  
Bk X:503-559 Orpheus sings: Venus and Adonis  
Bk X:560-637 Venus tells her story: Atalanta and Hippomenes  
Bk X:638-680 Venus tells her story: The foot-race  
Bk X:681-707 Venus tells her story: The transformation  
Bk X:708-739 Orpheus sings: The death of Adonis

**End of 1st paper segment: 1st paper must be submitted no later than Tu Sep 21**

EARLY 14TH CENTURY CE

Tu Sep 21 Dante's descent into hell; Love perverted by or overpowered by Appetite  
Reading: Dante, *Inferno* Cantos 1-17 (Musa, pp. 3-94)

Th Sep 23 Dante in the depths of hell; Circles 8-9: Love vanishes as Reason is put aside by violent bestiality (Circle 8) or Reason is perverted by putting it in the service of treachery (Circle 9)

Reading: Dante, *Inferno* Cantos 18-34 (Musa, pp. 94-191)

Tu Sep 28 Dante's ascent of purgatory; Terraces 1-4: Love wrongly directed (Terraces 1-3) or Love lacking zeal for the Good (Terrace 4)

Reading: Dante, *Purgatory* Cantos 1-18 (Musa, pp. 195-291)

Th Sep 30 Dante from purgatory (Terraces 4-7: Excessive love of earthy things ) to the earthly paradise; meeting with Beatrice

Reading: Dante, *Purgatory* Cantos 19-33 (Musa, pp. 291-387)

Tu Oct 5 Dante's ascent into the heavens; the Moon and inner planets to the Sun (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Heavens): the ascent of love to its fulfillment by Reason

Reading: Dante, *Paradise* Cantos 1-17 (Musa, pp. 391-496)

Th Oct 7 Dante's apotheosis; from Mars through the Empyrean to the Beatific vision (5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Heavens, and then beyond the Heavens): Love takes us beyond Reason

Reading: Dante, *Paradise* Cantos 18-33 (Musa, pp. 496-585).

**End of 2nd paper segment: 2nd paper must be submitted no later than Tu Oct 12**

LATE 16TH CENTURY CE

Tu Oct 12 A Renaissance tragedy of love

Reading: Shakespeare, *The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* (Gibbons, pp. 81-235); Appendix II, Extracts from Brooke's *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* (1562 CE)

Th Oct 14 Romeo and Juliet in the movies

Viewing: at least two of George Cukor, *Romeo and Juliet* (1936); Franco Zeffirelli, *Romeo and Juliet* (1968); Baz Luhrmann, *Romeo + Juliet* (1996); Jerome Roberts and Robert Wise, *West Side Story* (1961)

Tu Oct 19 A Renaissance comedy of love (1595 CE)

Reading: Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Brooks, pp. 5-128)

MID TO LATE 17TH CENTURY CE

Th Oct 21 Satan as questing hero. (1666, 1674 CE)  
Reading: Milton, *Paradise Lost* Books I and II (Kastan, pp. 6-77)

Tu Oct 26 Adam and Eve in paradise: the innocent quarry  
Reading: Milton, *Paradise Lost* Books III and IV (Kastan, pp. 78-143)

Th Oct 28 Adam and Eve instructed and warned.  
Reading: Milton, *Paradise Lost* Books V, VI, and VII (Kastan, pp.144-235)

Tu Nov 2 The Fall and its aftermath  
Reading: Milton, *Paradise Lost* Books VIII, IX, and X (Kastan, pp. 236-346)

Th Nov 4 Milton's poem re-imagined and interpreted (1974 CE)  
Reading: John Collier, *Milton's Paradise Lost: A Screenplay for the Cinema of the Mind* (Course reader, pp. vii-144)

**End of 3rd paper segment: 3rd paper must be submitted no later than Tu Nov 9**

MID 19TH CENTURY CE

Tu Nov 9 Kierkegaard on the love affair as a work of art. (1843 to early 1850's CE)  
Reading: selection from Kierkegaard, *Either/Or* : 'The Diary of a Seducer,' (Hannay pp. 247-376).

Th Nov 11 Kierkegaard on the aesthetic vs. the ethical, and the knight of faith and the knight of infinite resignation.  
Reading: selection from Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*: 'The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage' (Hannay, pp. 392-474); selections from Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (posted on Blackboard).

MID 20TH CENTURY CE

Tu Nov 16 Sartre on the impossibility of love.  
Reading: Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part 3, Chapter 3, Section 1, 'The Existence of Others: First Attitude toward Others: Love, Language, Masochism,' pp. 471-493.

Th Nov 18 Sartre on the failure of the project of sexual desire.  
Reading: Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Part 3, Chapter 3, Section 1, 'The Existence of Others: Second Attitude toward Others: Indifference, Desire, Hate, Sadism,' pp. 494-534.

**End of 4th paper segment: 4th paper must be submitted by Tu Nov 23**

20TH CENTURY CE

Tu Nov 23: Love Boats I: *L'Atalante*, dir. Jean Vigo, 1934.

Recommended reading: Marina Warner, *L'Atalante* (BFI Film Classics, BFI Publishing, 1993), on library reserve

Th Nov 25: Thanksgiving holiday—NO CLASS

Tu Nov 30 Love Boats II: *The Lady Eve*, dir. Preston Sturges, 1941.

Recommended reading: Stanley Cavell, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage* (Harvard University Press, 1981) Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-70), on library reserve

Th Dec 2 (15.2.29) Love Boats III: *Titanic*, dir. James Cameron, 1997.

Recommended reading: essays from Matthew Sandler and Gaylyn Studlar, eds., *Titanic: Anatomy of a Blockbuster* (Rutgers University Press, 1999), on library reserve:

1. Matthew Bernstein, "'Floating Triumphantly': The American Critics on *Titanic*' (pp. 14-28);
4. Melanie Nash and Martti Lahti, "'Almost Ashamed to Say I Am One of Those Girls': *Titanic*, Leonardo DiCaprio, and the Paradoxes of Girls' Fandom' (pp. 64-88);
5. Peter Lehman and Susan Hunt, "'Something and Someone Else': The Mind, the Body, and Sexuality in *Titanic*' (pp. 89-107);
6. Peter Krämer, 'Women First: *Titanic*, Action-Adventure Films, and Hollywood's Female Audience' (pp. 108-131);
7. Alexandra Keller, "'Size does Matter: Notes on *Titanic* and James Cameron as Blockbuster Auteur' (pp. 132-154);
9. Laurie Ouillette, 'Cross-Class Romance and the Cultural Fantasy of *Titanic*' (pp. 169-188)

TUESDAY DEC 14: FINAL EXAM, 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

## Course policies

### Students with disabilities

Any student who has registered with the office of Disability Services and Programs (DSP) and who has been identified by DSP as needing specific accommodations will gladly be afforded those accommodations. Please meet with the instructor as early as possible in the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations.

### Academic integrity

Be sure to familiarize yourself with Section 11 of *SCampus*

(<http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>). If you are unsure about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please see the instructor or your Teaching Assistant. Any violation of academic integrity standards will result in a grade of 'F' for the course and a referral to Judicial Affairs, so please be very careful about this.

**Paper submission, deadlines and format**

Please submit your papers through Blackboard; your TA may ask you to directly submit to him or her a printed hardcopy as well, but if you do this also submit an electronic version through Blackboard (in case the printed copy goes missing and to establish a record of the submission date, and so that we can use the Turnitin system to help preserve academic integrity). No papers will be accepted after the deadline, except for documented extraordinary hardship or emergency situations. (One of the advantages of flexible or rolling weekly paper deadlines is that there is no need to ask for extensions of deadlines; if for any reason you can't make a given week's deadline, you can just turn in a paper for a later week in the segment. Of course, if you don't make the deadline for the last paper in a given paper segment of the course, you will have missed your chance to submit a paper for that segment.) Please format your papers as follows: at least 12 point font, double-spaced, at least one inch margins all around, your name and your section meeting time on the top right hand corner of the first page, no cover or title page necessary.

**Classroom protocol**

Different students have different learning styles and manners, so I'm setting aside the last three rows of the lecture hall as the Neutral Zone. Please seat yourself there if you wish to read the newspaper, study for another class, surf the web, send and receive text messages, carry on (very quiet and short) conversations between yourselves or over your phone, come late to class or leave early, eat, or engage in any other activity that may prove distracting to students who wish to attend to the lecture. Students seated in the Neutral Zone will not be recognized for purposes of asking questions or offering comments during lecture. Students engaging in any of the behavior listed above who are not seated in the Neutral Zone may be asked to relocate immediately to a Neutral Zone seat, and will continue to seat themselves in the Neutral Zone for the remainder of the semester. Violation of any of the Neutral Zone guidelines may result in the immediate assignment of a '0' for class participation.

**Communication**

We (the instructors) will strive to respond promptly to your e-mail inquiries, comments, etc. Given the volume of e-mail we receive daily, it will help us if you will begin the subject line of your messages with '225.' Examples: '225 request for a meeting' or '225 question about the lecture.' If you send one of us a message without this subject line format, you should consider that you have not sent us a message, and so should not be surprised if it goes unanswered.