

PHIL 227: Philosophy of Love, Sex, and Friendship (1.5 units)

Course Information:

PHIL 227 A01 (CRN 12675)

Course Schedule: TWF 9:30-10:20 in COR A129

Prerequisites: None

Instructor Information:

Name: Dr. Audrey Yap (she/they) (you can call me Dr. Yap, Professor Yap, or Audrey)

Email: ayap@uvic.ca

Office: CLE B307

Appointments: In-person drop-in hours Mondays 1-2 or schedule a Zoom appointment with me on Thursdays between 9-11 at <https://calendly.com/ayap/office>

If those options don't work for you, please email me with some suggested dates and times.

Territorial Acknowledgement (Contributed by Scow and Underwood):

The University of Victoria is situated on the unceded territory of the lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples. This is their land—a reality that all of us who have come here must acknowledge. We must also recognize how our presence here interrupts ancient ways of being in this world. We all have a responsibility to prevent further intrusion into lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ lives and, if called upon, to support expressions of lək'wəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ nationhood. We must also recognize that we are living on someone's home—spread across Greater Victoria are the hunting and fishing grounds, village sites and ceremonial places of Salish people, and we must acknowledge how our presence here can either disrupt or repair the relationships between the original people and their territory.

Course Logistics and Technologies:

Course website and all readings posted on Brightspace (<https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home>)

While course will be taught face-to-face, all assignments will be turned in through the course website, and lecture components of each week's instruction will be recorded and posted. In-class activities including class discussion will not be recorded. Philosophy isn't just something you learn by listening to a professor talk about it, or by reading a book, it's also something you need to *do*. As a result, your classes are going to be structured with a mixture of activities in mind. You can expect some classes to have more lecture-style content, while others will involve activities like small group discussion, depending on what our goals for that particular week might be.

Learning Objectives and Strategies:

Chances are you've loved someone, something, or somewhere during your life. And chances are you've also been loved. But the nature of love raises a lot of philosophical questions. For something that seems to be so present throughout our society, it's not always so clear what love actually *is*, not to mention what its relationship is (and should be) to things like friendship and sex. This class will look at philosophical discussions of some questions that

we might have about the nature of love and get a better sense of what some philosophers have to say about it. For example, we'll look at some views about what love is, but also some challenges that standard views about love have to overcome. After all, we want a philosophical account of love that's true to what love looks like in our actual lives. We'll also look at some questions about the boundaries of love, and what kinds of entities we can be in loving relationships with. We'll also think about the role of love in society and in our political lives.

It wouldn't be possible for this class to give you an exhaustive treatment of the philosophy of love, much less of the philosophy of sex and friendship as well. But my goal as your instructor is to help you achieve the following learning objectives during this semester together:

- Familiarity with a variety of philosophical views relating to sex, love, and friendship.
- The ability to understand and clearly explain philosophical ideas and arguments.
- The ability to write both sensitively and rigorously about topics that can be very personal and relate to our everyday lives.

Assessment:

There will be two midterm assignments, each worth 25% of your grade, and a final assignment worth 40%. The remaining 10% will be based on regular engagement with the class material.

Engagement:

Each week you'll have the opportunity to earn an engagement point. Earning 10 of these points will get you full marks for engagement, which means that missing a few weeks will not negatively impact your grade. The activities that will earn you an engagement mark each week might vary from asynchronous commenting on a reading or participation in a class activity. The objective for this is continuing engagement in the class, so **no extensions on engagement marks** will be given. However, you will have 12 opportunities to gain engagement points, which means that you can miss 2 with no penalty.

Assignments:

The midterm and final assignments will all be take-home and open book work. At least two weeks before the submission deadline, the assignment questions will be released. Assignment questions will typically take the form of essays where you will be asked to outline and apply the ideas we have been learning about. There will also be some creative assignment options given, where you might choose to illustrate some aspect of an author's view through a written or visual story, or where you might report on your experiences trying to apply something that we have discussed in your own life.

Essays for the midterm assignments will be approximately 750-1000 words or 3-4 double spaced pages. Essays for the final assignment will be approximately 1250-1500 words or 4-6 pages.

However, I know that sometimes things do not go as planned. You may have **3 days' worth of extensions on assignments**, to be distributed among the assignments as you like. Please let me know before the due date if you are using an extension, and how long an extension you need, though you do not need to tell me why you need it. If you end up needing more than 3 days' worth of extensions during the semester, I highly encourage you to make an appointment with me to talk about how we can plan for you to keep up with the course schedule.

Completing at least one midterm as well as the final assignment means that you will be considered to have **completed the course**. If you do not turn in at least this amount of work, this will result in an N grade regardless of the cumulative percentage on other elements of the course.

Gradeable Item	Description	Value	Total
Engagement	Continuing engagement with the material, assessed weekly	1% x 10 weeks	10%
Midterm Assignments	Short essays or creative projects about the readings	25% x 2 assignments	50%
Final Assignment	Medium length essay or creative project about the readings	40%	40%
		Total	100%

Final course grades will be given as percentile marks, in accordance with the standard university grading scheme:

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/S1AAgoGuV?bc=true&bcCurrent=16%20-%20Grading&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies>.

Academic Integrity:

You are welcome and encouraged to talk to others about your assignments. They are also entirely open book, which means you can consult any past lectures, notes, or course material, with the understanding that you are ultimately responsible for all the content that you submit. You do not need to cite lectures, but you do need to cite readings. You may not, however, use generative AI for this class, and its use is a violation of academic integrity, and any work produced by it will **not be given credit**. More importantly, using it will not actually help you learn the skills we're working on. If there is something you genuinely think you would need it for, I'd encourage you instead to come talk to me about how the course could be more accessible for you.

I teach this course under the assumption that you are here to learn. If you are having trouble with the material, then my expectation is that you will ask me for help or for an extension instead of using a generative AI tool.

You can find UVic's policy on Academic Integrity here:

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/future/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V

Conduct and Communication:

I do not run a formal classroom and I do not insist on titles. You can refer to me as Dr. Yap, Professor Yap, or Audrey, and I genuinely have no preference which you use. She and they are both correct pronouns for me, and if you think I wouldn't know which pronouns you use, please don't hesitate to make me aware.

Email is the best way to get in touch with me outside of class time, particularly if you have any official requests. If you ask me a question over email, you can expect a reply within about 1 working day. If you don't hear back from me after that time frame, feel free to try again in case your message went astray. If you are nervous about sending me an email or asking a question, feel free to include a picture of a puppy (or cute animal of your choice) with your request. This will not affect whether I will be able to help you with your request but will give you an excuse to look for pictures of puppies or other cute creatures. In fact, it will make me happy to know that you have read the course outline to this point, so feel free to send me a picture of a cute animal now.

I also consider you to be the best authority on your needs in the classroom. That means if you need to do things like eat or drink during class, leave the room, knit, stim, or anything else, the only thing I ask is that you respect others in the room and try not to distract them.

Course Schedule:

Week One (Sep 3, 5): Introductions. Why Talk about Love?

Reading: bell hooks, "Values: Living by a Love Ethic"

Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power"

Week Two (Sep 9, 10, 12): Love as a Union

Reading: Robert Nozick, "Love's Bond", in *The Examined Life*

Week Three (Sep 16, 17, 19): Love as Social and Biological

Reading: Carrie Jenkins, "Love is as Love Does: Love's Dual Nature" in *What Love is and What it Could Be*

Week Four (Sep 23, 24, 26): Against Happily Ever After

Reading: Carrie Jenkins: "The Romantic Paradox" in *Sad Love*

Elizabeth Brake, "Amatonormativity: How Marriage Threatens Care" (88-102) in *Minimizing Marriage: Marriage, Morality, and the Law*

Week Five (Oct 1,3): Sexual Agency

Reading: Quill Kukla, excerpts from *Sex Beyond "Yes": Pleasure and Agency for Everyone*.

Assignment One due Oct 5

Week Six (Oct 7, 8, 10): Sexual Orientation

Reading: Arina Pismenny, "Pansexuality: A Closer Look at Sexual Orientation"

Week Seven (Oct 14, 15, 17): Love and Perception

Reading: Iris Murdoch, excerpt from "The Idea of Perfection" (16-23) in *The Sovereignty of Good*

Simone Weil, "Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies" (no, really!) in *Waiting for God*

Week Eight (Oct 21, 22, 24): Who Do We Love? Companion Animals and Significant Others

Reading: Donna Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*, 6-14, 26-39

Alexis Shotwell, "Ethical polyamory, responsibility, and significant otherness"

Week Nine (Oct 28, 29, 31): Love and Animals

Reading: Elisa Aaltola, "Love and Animals: Simone Weil, Iris Murdoch and Attention as Love"

Lori Gruen, "Entanglements", in *Entangled Empathy*

Assignment Two due Nov 2

Week Ten (Nov 4, 5, 7): Parental Love

Reading: Sara Protasi, "'Mama, Do You Love Me?'"

Week Eleven (Nov 14): Love and Kinship

Reading: Áila Kel Katajamäki O'Loughlin, "Surely, you don't mean rocks": Indigenous Kinship Ethics, Moral Responsibility, and So-Called 'Natural Objects'

Week Twelve (Nov 18, 19, 21): Love and Kinship (continued)

Reading: John Miller, "Wahkootowin Vegetarianism: When is it ok to eat your kin?"

Zoe Todd, "Fish, Kin, and Hope"

Week Thirteen (Nov 25, 26, 28): What Can We Love?

Reading: Thich Nhat Hanh, "Please Call Me By My True Names"

Myoe Shonin "Letter to the Island"

Week Fourteen (Dec 2,3): Love in Political Life

Reading: Martin Luther King, "Love your Enemies"

Myisha Cherry, "Love, Anger, and Racial Injustice"

Final Assignment Due Dec 10

Other Resources:

Student Resources

- a. [UVic Learn Anywhere](#). UVic Learn Anywhere is the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
- b. [Library resources](#). Information for students wishing to use the UVic library.
- c. [Student wellness resources](#)
- d. [Ombudsperson](#) A resource to help resolve disputes or complaints.
- e. Indigenous student services ([ISS](#))
- f. Centre for Academic Communication ([CAC](#))
- g. Math & Stats Assistance Centre ([MSAC](#))
- h. Learning Strategies Program ([LSP](#))
- i. [Other student groups and resources](#)
- j. [Academic Concession Regulations](#)
- k. [Academic Concession and Accommodation](#)
- l. Academic accommodation & access for students with disabilities – [Policy AC1205](#)

University statements and policies

- a. University Calendar - Section "[Information for all students](#)"
- b. [Creating a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment](#)
- c. [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- d. [Student Conduct](#)
- e. [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
- f. [Accessibility](#)
- g. [Diversity / EDI](#)
- h. [Equity statement](#)
- i. [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response](#)
- j. Discrimination and Harassment [Policy](#)