

PHIL 450: Topic in Metaphysics
Winter Term 1
Fall 2022

SYLLABUS

OVERVIEW

This course surveys recent debates in social metaphysics, focusing on the metaphysics of love and the metaphysics of gender. Students will study both foundational texts and recent philosophical works in these areas. The course will situate these theoretical writings alongside contemporary issues, with an emphasis on in-class discussion. Students may choose to prepare either a final paper or an op ed/magazine-style article addressing philosophical issues covered during the course. There is no final exam for this course.

Instructor:

Carrie Jenkins, carrie.jenkins@ubc.ca, she/her

Teaching Assistants:

TBA

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2-3pm

If you can't make these times, contact [Carrie](#) for an appointment.

Canvas: Canvas will be used for submission and grading of assessed work. The course Canvas link will be provided here when available.

Classes: The course seminars will be held in person, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-5pm in BUCH D213.

ASSESSMENT

- Participation: 10%
 - Participate regularly and thoughtfully in class activities to earn this part of your grade.
- Short responses: 30%
 - Write a short response to the week's set reading.
 - Length: 300-500 words.
 - Due each Tuesday, at the start of class.
- Final essay or op ed: 60%
 - Due: **TBA**

- **Essays** should be around **2500 words** in length, including footnotes but excluding bibliography.
- **Op eds** should be around **1200 words** in length.

COURSE POLICIES

Instructor email: Please put "PHIL 450" in the subject line. I aim to reply to student emails within two working days (not including weekends and holidays) of receipt. Please note that email sent after working hours (i.e. after 5pm or before 9am PST) aren't received until the next working day.

Grading rubric:

1. Essays: The essay should critically assess one or more of the issues covered in this course. Key factors for assessment will be: (a) depth of understanding, (b) clarity and focus, (c) argumentation and structure.

2. Op eds: The op ed should discuss one or more of the issues covered in this course. Key factors for assessment will be: (a) accessibility to a general audience, (b) quality of philosophical content, and (c) success in using the op ed form to convey philosophical arguments and ideas in a compelling manner.

If you can't do the work on time: I get it. I am happy grant extensions where needed; just ask. However, work submitted late *without* an extension cannot be accepted, unless exceptional circumstances made it impossible to request an extension in advance of the deadline. This policy is in place to ensure that the course TAs are able to manage their grading workload.

Note on Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs where an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e. phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in

any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. A link about Academic misconduct is below:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

Mandatory Syllabus Statement about UBC's Values and Policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available [here](#).

Note on atmosphere: Some of the topics of this course may comprise sensitive material for many people. While we may be examining and questioning beliefs, including some deeply-held ones, everyone in the course—instructor, TAs, and students—has a shared responsibility to ensure that we do so with care and respect, ensuring that our environment is supportive and conducive to learning. No offensive jokes or comments, or other harmful behaviors with respect to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or anything else, will be acceptable. The aim of our online discussions is not to “win” arguments or to prove how smart we are, but to learn collaboratively with others.

READINGS

The full list will be provided at the start of the course. Core texts will include:

Plato: *Symposium* (translation by Nehamas and Woodruff)

De Beauvoir: *The Second Sex*

Butler: *Gender Trouble*

Jenkins: *What Love Is and What It Could Be*