

PHIL 550: Metaphysics (core)

Metaphysics of Love

Syllabus
W1 2023-24

SYLLABUS OUTLINE

DETAILS TO BE FINALIZED WHEN THE COURSE IS RUNNING

This course takes place on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəṽəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

This seminar for philosophy graduate students investigates the metaphysics of love. Core questions include:

1. *What is love?*
2. *Is love real?*
3. *Is love natural?*
4. *What do questions 2 and 3 mean?*

As a “core” seminar, the course aims to provide students with a background in contemporary analytic metaphysics that can serve as a preparation for further study. We will use the metaphysics of love as an example and draw connections with other areas of metaphysical enquiry to cover such topics as:

- Realism and anti-realism
- Physicalism
- Naturalism
- Functionalism
- Fictionalism
- Social constructionism
- Metaphysics of gender
- The abstract/concrete distinction
- Grounding and dependence
- Metametaphysics

Texts will be drawn primarily from the European/“Western” tradition, from Plato to contemporaries.

This seminar strongly emphasizes in-class discussion, especially student-led discussion, as a primary mode of learning. Students are expected to prepare thoroughly for each meeting and to take turns leading class discussions.

Instructor

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

Email policy

Please put "PHIL 550" 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 emails sent outside of working hours (i.e. after 5pm or before 9am PST) aren't received until the next working day.

Office hours

TBA in [Carrie's Zoom office](#)

If you can't make these times or prefer an in-person meeting, contact [Carrie](#) for an appointment

Canvas

TBA

Classes

In person, Wed 6-9pm, SFU Harbour Centre

Assessment

- **Participation: 10%**
 - Participate regularly and thoughtfully in class activities to earn this part of your grade
- **Weekly short responses: 20%**
 - Length: 300-500 words (prose)
 - Due at the start of class
 - Graded pass/fail (i.e. a pass = 100%)
- **Presentations and class leadership: 20%**
 - Each student will present and lead discussion twice during the semester (10% per presentation)
 - The second presentation should be on the topic of the final paper
 - Guide length for presentation: 20-30 minutes
- **Draft of final paper: 10%**
 - **Due TBA**
- **Final paper: 40%**

- Papers should be around 4000-5000 words in length, including footnotes but excluding bibliography
- **Due TBA**

If you can't do the work on time

I get it. I am happy to 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 I can manage my overall teaching workload and fairly grade everyone's work.

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

The topics of this course will comprise sensitive material for many people. While we may be examining and questioning beliefs, including some deeply-held ones, everyone in the course—instructor 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 discussions is not to “win” arguments or to prove how smart we are, but to learn collaboratively with others.

Schedule TBA

Week 1	
Week 2	
Week 3	
Week 4	
Week 5	
Week 6	
	MIDTERM BREAK
Week 7	
Week 8	
Week 9	
Week 10	
Week 11	
Week 12	
Week 13	

Readings TBA