

**Love: Philosophical-Theological Issues**

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Professor of Theology and Religion

**Prerequisite: None**

Spring 2019 Wed. 1-3:30pm

*What do I love when I love my God?*

--St. Augustine

*Loving people is the only thing worth living for.*

--Soren Kierkegaard

*Religion is for lovers. . . The opposite of a religious person is a loveless person.*

--John Caputo

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

*Love* in various forms is as old as humankind. However, love has never been as socially, politically, existentially, philosophically, and theologically decisive as it is in contemporary societies. As people have lost their belief in traditional values such as God/ the Divine, the Revolution, or the Nation State, love has become the only thing everyone still holds on to both in the private and the public spheres, regardless who/what one is. In this context, the world is currently going through a *revolution of love* (Luc Ferry) and love becomes significant sources of the creative human power, and of the meaning of life. The increasing significance of love in various sectors of human life is a crucial theme for philosophical and theological reflections and for theorizations of contemporary societies. In this course, we will explore philosophical and theological approaches to *love* as discourse and practice.

The readings and discussions for the course are drawn from a variety of sources: the recognized texts and thinkers of philosophical and theological traditions from various time periods and perspectives such as feminist, queer, postcolonial, postmodern. In this course, we will examine various philosophical and theological themes to shed critical lights on a variety of questions, including:

- What does constitute *love* in contemporary world, whether erotic love, religious love, romantic love, moral love, humanist love, or mutual love?
- Why do we humans associate *love* with happiness and meaning when it often makes us so miserable and painful?
- What is *ethical*, what is *normal* in the discourse and practice of love? Who gets to decide? On what grounds?
- Love is a crucial site of power asymmetries. In what ways can love be both mutually enhancing and egalitarian, and oppressive and exploitative?
- How does the *politics of love* function in religion and politics in the way they maintain, perpetuate, legitimate their desire for power?

**COURSE PROCEDURES**

In-class presentations, lectures and in-depth discussion of the issues

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

1. Critical Reading Paper: 20 points
2. Presentation: 20 points
3. Reflection Paper: 20 points

4. Take-Home Exam Paper: 40 points
  - 4,000~5,000 words for M.Div/MTS/MACS;
  - 5,000~6,000 words for D.Min/Th.M/ Ph.D
- *This requirement is subject to change depending on the size and pedagogical need of the class.*

## **COURSE TEXTS**

Arendt, Hannah. Love and Saint Augustine. Ed. And with an Interpretive Essay by Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. ISBN-13: 978-0226025971. \$15.42

Badiou, Alan with Nicholas Trung. In Praise of Love. Trans. Peter Bush. 2009; New York: The New Press, 2012. ISBN-13: 978-1595588777. \$14.95

Ferry, Luc. On Love: A Philosophy for the Twentieth-First Century. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013. ISBN-13: 978-0745670171. \$12.95.

Norton, David L. and Mary F. Kille, eds. Philosophies of Love. Totowa, NJ: Chandler Publishing Company, 1971. ISBN-13: 978-0822603764. \$34.36.

Secomb, Linnell. Philosophy and Love: From Plato to Popular Culture. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0253219473. \$21.76.

Wagoner, Robert. The Meanings of Love: An Introduction to Philosophy of Love. Praeger Publisher, 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0275958404. \$25.15