



PHIL*1030 Sex, Love, and Friendship

Fall 2020

Section(s): 01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - September 01, 2020

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course introduces students to philosophical inquiry through the careful study of the forms of interpersonal relationships. Issues central to friendship, love, and sexuality which may be addressed include pleasure, happiness, responsibility, power and oppression, gender, marriage and morality.

1.2 Course Description

This course introduces students to philosophy through issues of central importance to our lives: sex, love, and friendship. Our central topics will be love and sex, while friendship will come up along the way in our discussions of its role in loving relationships. With sex and love, philosophers do not address questions of mechanism (e.g., what happens in the brain when someone is in love?) or technique (e.g., how can I please my lover?) but rather definitional questions (what is it?) and normative questions (how should we act with regard to it?). So, our course will be focused on the questions: What is love? What is sex? These are definitional questions. Are love/and sex (at least sometimes) good? Do they have an important role in a well-lived human life? Are they compatible with being a morally good person? These are normative questions. In this class, we will bring our philosophical exploration to bear on a recent set of interesting issues regarding sex robots. Are we having a mutual sexual relationship when having sex with a robot? Or is it lacking something important that one can only find in human sexual relationships? Could you love an artificially intelligent robot? Are sex robots good for us because they generate pleasure we might otherwise miss out on or might sex robots create the conditions for developing our darker desires? Further, given that we are now living under the conditions of a pandemic, might sex robots be a safe alternative to human sexual interactions?

1.3 Timetable

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

Exam time and location is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor: John Hacker-Wright
Email: jhackerw@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Zoom/Microsoft Teams meeting by appointment (use email to make an appointment).

Due to the pandemic, I won't be in my office this semester, but I'm happy to meet with you on-line. Please feel free to reach out!

2.2 Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistant: Ashley Raspopovic
Email: araspopo@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Zoom or Microsoft Teams meetings arranged by appointment.

Sections 0101 & 0102

Teaching Assistant: Jacob Fehr
Email: jfehr@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Zoom/Microsoft Teams meetings by appointment.

Sections 0103 & 0104

Teaching Assistant: Amber Spence
Email: aspen04@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Zoom/Microsoft Teams meetings arranged by appointment.

Sections 0105 & 0106

Teaching Assistant: Haomiao Yu
Email: hyu10@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Zoom/Microsoft Teams meeting by appointment.

Sections 0107 & 0108

Teaching Assistant: Robert Minatel
Email: rminatel@uoguelph.ca
Office Hours: Zoom/Microsoft Teams meetings by appointment.

Sections 0109 & 0110

Teaching Assistant: James Belford
Email: jbelford@uoguelph.ca

Office Hours:
Section 0111

Zoom/Microsoft Teams meetings by appointment

3 Learning Resources

We will be using the following textbook in this class. Philosophy is very "text-driven": that means you will have to read, re-read, and think about what you have read in order to do well. Philosophy readings require thoughtful, slow engagement. Purchasing a copy of the book from the bookstore is a great idea!

3.1 Required Resources

Text 1 (Textbook)

Carrie Jenkins. *What Love is: and What it Could Be*, Basic Books, 2017

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. *Use* key tools for sound justification and rational persuasion.
 2. *Recognize* the main subfields of philosophy, including moral philosophy, social and political philosophy, metaphysics (the theory of reality), epistemology (the theory of knowledge), and the history of philosophy.
 3. *Understand, explain* and assess the significance of some basic concepts in philosophy, such as the appearance-reality distinction, the fact-value distinction, validity and soundness, free-will, knowledge, nature and community, and so on.
 4. *Present* a philosophical position and engage with others in discussion of the merits of the position.
 5. *Argue* competently for one's own view and be able to identify and critically evaluate patterns of argumentative reasoning in the work of others.
 6. *Compose* a piece of clear philosophical writing in which basic philosophical problems are supported by arguments.
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Please see Schedule of Readings and Assignments on Courselink.

6 Assessments

Please see Schedule of Readings and Assignments on Courselink for due dates.

6.1 Assessment Details

Reading Quizzes (25%)

Date: On-line (Courselink)

The quiz questions are multiple choice and should be straightforward to answer if you have done the reading. You should complete the reading before taking the quiz and have the reading on hand when you take the quiz. The questions are designed to help you to grapple with the reading in a deeper and more systematic manner, which you need to do in order to develop philosophical views in response to them. The quizzes will be taken on Courselink and are to be completed by the dates listed on the Schedule of Readings and Assignments. The two lowest grades will be dropped. These will contribute 25% to your grade.

Philosophical Experiment: Could you Love a Machine? (15%)

This will be a 1500 word reflection on your experience using an app, Replika, accessible for free through your phone or computer. The app is designed to be an artificially intelligent friend. I will ask you to interact with the app for at least a couple of hours and describe your experience with it. Then I will ask you to reflect on that experience from the perspective of our philosophical readings. The key question will be: could you form a love relationship or friendship with your AI?

Experiential Learning Project: Op-Ed on Sex Robots (30%)

One of your main projects for this semester will be writing an op-ed for publication in the Ontario. You will employ knowledge of philosophical views and skills of philosophical reasoning to write an accessible, persuasive essay on the issue of whether sex-robots could provide a helpful, safe alternative to human sexual relationships in the time of COVID-19.

Completing this assignment successfully will require you to understand and critically evaluate philosophical arguments on this topic and to be able to successfully communicate them to an audience. You will be evaluated for your knowledge of course content as reflected in the op-ed as well as the cogency of your arguments and your ability to communicate them clearly.

I will gather the top-five papers by grade to be published on-line in the Ontario with a special introduction.

Take Home Final Exam (30%)

There will be a **comprehensive take-home** final exam at the end of the course. This will consist of a set of three essay questions answerable in around 2500 words total. The questions will test your mastery of the course material and require you to have thought

critically about that content. You will have one week to write the exam after it is released. This will contribute the remaining 30% of your grade.

7 Course Statements

7.1 Late Policy

Please let me know if you will not get your work handed in on time and arrange for the delivery of your work. Note that this is your responsibility. Consult the Reading and Assignment Schedule on Courselink. For the **papers** only, you will have a 24 hour grace period during which there will be no deduction. After the grace period, **each 24-hour period will result in a 5% reduction on your final mark for that assignment**, unless you can demonstrate grounds for academic consideration as defined in the Undergraduate Calendar. Reading quizzes will be assessed a 10% deduction per 24 hrs late without grace period.

The **final exam must be submitted by the due date**, unless you can demonstrate grounds for academic consideration as defined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

7.2 Participation and Respectful Classroom Conduct

One of the best ways of learning to do philosophy is to jump into a discussion on philosophical topics with other people. Philosophical discussions always involve disagreement, but disagreement does not imply disrespect. In fact when you say to someone "I disagree and here is why," you are implying that they can reason and understand you, whereas if you assume another person wouldn't listen or understand, there is a kind of disrespect involved. So, I encourage you to jump in and disagree with me and others in class: in doing so, try to listen carefully to others, and present reasons for your views.

We will be discussing issues that are sometimes sensitive in nature: sexuality, gender, relationships. Although I will endeavor not to be gratuitously explicit when discussing such matters, we will need to be direct at times. Everyone should feel respected, and I encourage you to let me or one of the teaching assistants know if there is content or discussion that makes you feel uncomfortable and especially if there is disrespectful language or views (e.g., racist, sexist, or homophobic language or views). Everyone should feel respected in their identity in this classroom.

8 University Statements

8.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

8.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or

compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

8.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

8.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

8.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

8.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

8.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

8.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

8.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

8.10 Illness

The University will not require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for the fall 2020 or winter 2021 semesters.
