



HL3012: The Discourse of Love

AY2025/2026 Semester 2

***this is a provisional syllabus subject to change**

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Seminar: (TBC)

Course Description

This course introduces you to some major trends in contemporary love studies. We will approach love as a philosophy and a discursive practice, as well as address the issues of subjectivity, the Self-Other relation, and the potential for love to serve as a discourse of alterity—all of which are central to love. You will develop a comprehensive understanding of the textual, filmic, ludic, and theoretical issues raised in the course, and you will develop appropriate analytical skills in the process. We begin with Plato's *Symposium* and will move on to recent theorisations and philosophies of love. Over the semester, we will be covering a variety of discourses and mediums: new materialist approaches, psychoanalysis, feminism, queer theory, and literary theory; filmic, ludic, and literary works.

Course Learning Outcomes

You will, by the end of this course:

1. Critically apply knowledge and understanding of the major trends in love studies to the primary literature/cultural works.
2. Evaluate and discriminate between the various philosophical and critical stands on love.
3. Synthesise the different positions taken by the various philosophical and critical stands towards formulating an argument/thesis
4. Extrapolate common ideological and thematic concerns related to love from the primary literature, and compare them across texts
5. Evaluate and engage with secondary sources critically and employ these sources in your own work.

Required Texts:

Fiction/Prose:

- Plato, ***The Symposium***
- Leslie Feinberg, ***Stone Butch Blues***
- Jeanette Winterson, ***Written on the Body***
- Lucius Apuleius, ***Amor and Psyche*** (to be provided)
- Excerpts surrounding **PinkDot SG** (to be provided)

Films/Video Games:

Films:

- Michael Haneke, ***The Piano Teacher***
- Marguerite Duras, ***Hiroshima Mon Amour***
- Wong Kar-Wai, ***In the Mood for Love***
- Yorgos Lanthimos, ***The Lobster***

Video Game:

- Game Grumps, ***Dream Daddy: A Dad Dating Simulator***

PDFs, excerpts, and suggested secondary readings will be uploaded onto NTULearn.

Films and video games should be sourced from online platforms such as Netflix and Steam.

Suggested General Reading:

- Rita Felski and Camilla Schwartz (eds.), ***Love, etc.: Essays on Contemporary Literature & Culture***
- Jennie Wang, ***Novelistic Love in the Platonic Tradition***
- Linnell Secomb, ***Philosophy and Love***

Assessment:

Term paper (40%)

- This is a 2500-2800 word long general essay assignment. You will be evaluated based on your depth of knowledge and understanding of different thematic, theoretical, and ideological concerns across texts. You will also be evaluated on the originality of your argument.

Preparation and Class Participation (10%)

- You are assessed based on your preparation and participation during weekly class discussions. You will be given specific topics to discuss and debate with your peers, and will give a short informal presentation of your findings/discussion results towards the end of class.

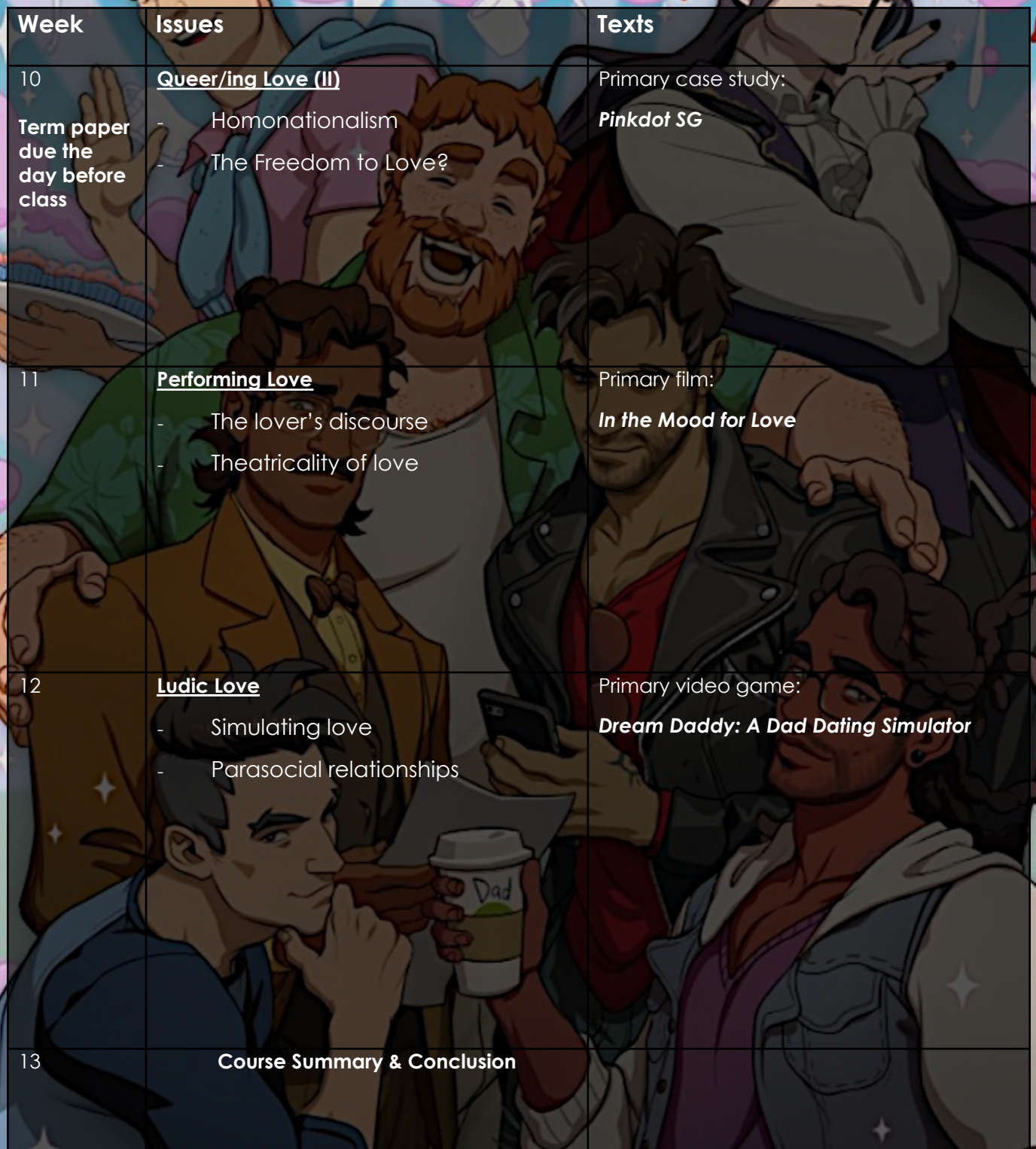
Final Exam (50%)

- The exam is divided into two sections. Section A comprises questions directed towards specific theories or philosophies of love. Each question will evaluate you on your depth of knowledge and understanding of a theory or philosophical stance, followed by the application of that stance towards critically examining a chosen literary text. Section B comprises questions that are more general (not specific to a single approach), which will require you to synthesise and apply more than one philosophy towards critically examining a chosen literary/cultural text in order to answer the question. You will be assessed on material covered throughout the entire semester.

Course Schedule:

Week	Issues	Texts
1	<u>Introduction to module</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Syllabus overview and course expectations- Survey of key themes, terms, and ideas	
2	<u>Wisdom and Problems of Love</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Philosophical journey to wisdom- Love as desire for knowledge- Love as birth and reproduction in beauty	Primary reading: <i>The Symposium</i>
3	<u>Love and Ethics</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Feminine/ist reformulations- Gendered positions within love	Primary reading: <i>Amor and Psyche</i>
4	<u>Love and Trauma</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fragmentations of subjectivity- Desire for wholeness in love	Primary film: <i>Hiroshima Mon Amour</i>

Week	Issues	Texts
5	<p><u>Desire and Jouissance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Erotic aggression- Obscenity- Psychoanalysis and love	<p>Primary film:</p> <p><i>The Piano Teacher</i></p>
6	<p><u>The Body in Love</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Body as erotic invocation- Assemblage thinking	<p>Primary reading:</p> <p><i>Written on the Body</i></p>
7	<p><u>Failure of Love</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scripting futurity- Surveillance within love's political economies	<p>Primary film:</p> <p><i>The Lobster</i></p>
	<p>RECESS</p>	
8	<p><u>Queer/ing Love (I)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Loving stone- In/organic desires- Scripting homosexuality	<p>Primary reading:</p> <p><i>Stone Butch Blues</i></p>
9	<p>Essay Consultations</p>	



Week	Issues	Texts
10 Term paper due the day before class	<u>Queer/ing Love (II)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homonationalism - The Freedom to Love? 	Primary case study: <i>Pinkdot SG</i>
11	<u>Performing Love</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lover's discourse - Theatricality of love 	Primary film: <i>In the Mood for Love</i>
12	<u>Ludic Love</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simulating love - Parasocial relationships 	Primary video game: <i>Dream Daddy: A Dad Dating Simulator</i>
13	Course Summary & Conclusion	

Course Policies:

Attendance and Participation:

Regular attendance is mandatory in this course, as seminars depend on collaborative engagement with your peers and the course material. If you must miss a session, please notify me via email in advance and inform your groupmates accordingly to avoid disruptions to collaborative work. Participation requires thorough preparation as well. Complete all the **assigned primary readings or viewings** prior to each seminar and actively contribute to class and small-group discussions. Students with accommodations or recurring conflicts should discuss arrangements with me by the second week of the term.

Late Submissions and Extensions:

All assignments must be submitted by the stated deadline. Late submissions will incur a penalty of **one-third of a letter grade per calendar day** (e.g., an essay originally graded as a B+ would drop to a B after one day, a B- after two days, etc.). Submissions will close seven calendar days after the original deadline, after which no work will be accepted. Extensions are granted **only in exceptional circumstances**, such as documented illness, hospitalisation, bereavement, or other emergencies. Plan ahead to avoid technical issues as late submissions due to internet or device problems are still subject to penalties.

Plagiarism and AI:

Do not appropriate others' ideas without proper citation. Self-plagiarism is also an academic misconduct. Please refer to the university's resources on plagiarism for further information.

Only with explicit written permission from me are GenAI and LLM tools permitted in this course to enhance your own learning. However, this is limited to:

1. Exploring counter arguments to enhance your essay's critiques
2. Refining grammar, syntax, and spelling
3. Organising your own extensive notes in preparation for the final exam

You must properly acknowledge the extent of use of these tools. You **are not** permitted to generate an essay even if the prompts contain your own ideas, nor are you allowed to generate ideas from scratch for use in your submissions. Additional guidelines to follow in Week 1's seminar.

Do remember that a well-defended, original argument cannot be simply generated from a resource that is trained on a body of already published or available work. Generated writing lacks flair and character, and it can often appear flaccid and vague. Essays with high plagiarism/AI scores in Turnitin will be reported accordingly.

Seeking Help Outside Class:

Our Language Communication Cube (LCC) has a range of resources available to assist students with their writing. Do make an appointment with them should you require help with your essay writing. I am also available for consultations (outside of Week 9).