

“A love that is more than love”:

On the essence of our deepest emotion – perspectives from psychology and philosophy

Gid'on Lev

Fall semester

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

Love has become commonplace. It is to be found everywhere in the public sphere, from movies to pop songs to commercials about soft drinks or cars. Alongside this trend, love seems to have become rarer in the private sphere. People are looking desperately for it, but loneliness and alienation are ever on the increase. Romantic love has become a sort of a threat or trap, attracting strongly while also arousing suspicion. In academic research, it is often explained away as a by-product of hormones, brain activity or social conditioning. In this course, we will try to detect a deeper core to love. Studying ideas and descriptions offered by philosophers and psychologists, from Plato and Kierkegaard to Freud and Fromm, we will try to enhance our understanding of what does it actually mean to love. We will ask whether there is such a thing as a “true” love, different from its superficial portrayals in popular culture, and can one attain, as Edgar Ellen Poe suggested in his last poem, a state of “a love that is more than love”?

Assessment:

Two response papers (5% of final grade, each).

Short midterm paper (15%).

Final paper, 6 to 8 pages (75%).

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. One absence is permitted; for the second and third absences permission is required, otherwise each absence will be penalized by 2% of the final grade. In case of more than three absences, for whatever reason, the student cannot qualify the course.

Academic conduct:

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.

Additional requirements:

Required reading is mandatory for each class. Phones are to be turned-off while in class.