

1000-E26;Philosophy of Love - Class A S

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Philosophy of Love - section A

University of Copenhagen / DIS

Fall Semester 2026

Class meetings: Tuesdays 10:15-12:45.

University of Copenhagen, South Campus, Room 7C-1-17.

Course instructor: Jakob Due Lorentzen, PhD

Email: jdl@teol.ku.dk (<mailto:jdl@teol.ku.dk>)

Live stream: <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/5260397601?pwd=TytjeitHZ2FFYjVHUUY5WmhnYk9xdz09> ➞ <https://ucph-ku.zoom.us/j/5260397601?pwd=TytjeitHZ2FFYjVHUUY5WmhnYk9xdz09>

Course content: It is hard to deny that love takes center stage in the great human drama. This ever-present, gripping, yet elusive force shapes our lives, ourselves, our pursuits, and, of course, our relations with others. Love even finds its way into our anxieties, our delusions, our hopes, and our greatest efforts at self-improvement. This course uncovers a European history about love that continues to shape the present in various ways.

As we follow love on various historical stages – from ancient Greece through the Middle Ages, the romantic era, the post-romantic period, and into the present – we pay close attention to the stories we have told ourselves about love. Our love stories reveal that we conceive of the human condition as desiring, striving, and longing, but also as avoiding reality and the concrete commitments that tie us to finitude. We read responses to this escapism in the form of a moral call to respond to the other, also when this means respecting difference and the other's independence. Throughout, we gain tools for thinking seriously about love today.

Learning objectives: Together, we will be aiming to: (1) gain an overview of the elaborate discussions on love in the European philosophical and literary traditions; (2) acquire academic skills in navigating and interpreting philosophical works and novels; (3) develop abilities in nuancing and articulating our own views and positions in dialogue with those of others; and (4) relate particular lived experiences of love to universal philosophical concepts that elucidate the human condition.

Language of instruction and discussion: English. (Papers, however, may also be written in Danish, Swedish, Norwegian).

Requirements for DIS-students

For undergraduate students (bachelor students)

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol). DIS must be notified, if you are absent two times or more. The syllabus volume and content are determined by the teacher. Weekly discussion posts are mandatory and two short papers are to be submitted to the teacher, as well as a final longer paper of 19,200-24,000 characters, i.e. 8-10 pages (1.5 line spacing), based on 400-500 pages of literature.

Requirements for KU-students (both Danish students and Exchange students)

For undergraduate students (bachelor students)

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol).

A final paper of 24,000-28,800 characters, i.e. 10-12 pages (1.5 line spacing), and based on 600-800 pages literature in agreement with the teacher. The teacher must approve the subject and literature. The assignment is assessed by the teacher and a grade is given in accordance with the 7-point grading scale.

For graduate students (kandidat/master students)

Active attendance (at least attendance in 75% of the sessions documented by protocol).

A final paper of 36,000-48,000 characters, i.e. 15-20 pages (1.5 line spacing), and based on 800-1,000 pages of literature in agreement with the teacher. The teacher must approve the subject and literature. The assignment is assessed by the teacher, and a grade is given in accordance with the 7-point grading scale.

Exam dates (final paper)

DIS students: 10 December, 2026

KU and Exchange students: 17 December, 2026

Discussion board posts: In preparation for each class, you will be asked to contribute to a discussion thread on Absalon. After having engaged with the assigned material, but before we meet in class, you will post your reflections and questions about the readings. This is a great opportunity to read your peers' posts as well. The discussion posts will serve as preparation for your final paper and will hone your thinking on the course topics in general. Discussion posts count toward your participation grade, and late submissions will negatively affect your grade.

Readings: Completion of reading assignments as scheduled is required and is a prerequisite for participating in class discussions.

Lectures and discussion: In general, class will be a combination of lecture, group work and class discussion. Class participation includes attendance, student presentations, and contributions that students make on discussion posts and in class.

Generative AI: The use of generative AI tools is not allowed in this course.

Plagiarism: Any student who plagiarizes will fail the course.

Grading breakdown (DIS students):

Attendance and posts: 15%

Short paper 1: 20%

Short paper 2: 20%

Final paper: 45%

Course texts:

These books should be purchased:

- Plato. *Symposium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-19-954019-8 (other versions are also fine).
- Bédier, Josph. *The Romance of Tristan & Iseult*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2013. ISBN 978-1-60384-900-5

Other class readings will be available in electronic form either on Absalon or through links to the royal library (access through KU-net).

Class readings include selections from the following:

- Badiou, Alain. *In Praise of Love*. London: Serpent's Tail, 2012.
- Carson, Anne. *If Not, Winther. Fragments of Sappho*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010.
- De Rougemont, Denis. *Love in the Western World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- Finglass, Patrick, and Adrian Kelly, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Sappho*. Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Goethe, J.W. *The Sufferings of Young Werther*. London: W.W. Norton, 2012.
- hooks, bell. *All About Love: New Visions*. New York: William Morrow, 2010.
- Illouz, Eva. *Consuming The Romantic Utopia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.
- Illouz, Eva. *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.
- Illouz, Eva. "Is Love Still a Part of the Good Life?". Rosa, H.; Henning, C. *The Good Life Beyond Growth*. Routledge. 2017.
- Irigaray, Luce. *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History*. London, Routledge, 2016.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *Either/Or, I and II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Concept of Irony*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968.
- Kierkegaard, Søren. *Works of Love*. London and New York: Harper Perennial, 2009.
- Levinas, Emmanuel. *Totality and Infinity*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969.

- Løgstrup, K. E. *The Ethical Demand*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.
- Muldoon, James. *Love Machines*, Faber, 2026.
- Oliver, Kelly. "The Look of Love". *Hypatia*, Vol. 16, No. 3, Summer, 2001, pp 56-78.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, María. *Matters of Care*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness*. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Spahr, Julianne. *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs: Poems*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- Stendhal. *On Love*. London: Hesperus Press, 2009.

Kierkegaard's writings online in English translation

(https://teol.ku.dk/bibliotek/sk_princeton/)(Princeton version) is available through the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre KU webpage (KUnet access needed). Danish readers should of course read Kierkegaard in the original Danish.

For DIS students:

The two textbooks, *Symposium* and *The Romance of Tristan & Iseult*, are available as e-books under Modules on the DIS canvas page.

Please make sure to read the "Academic Regulations" on the DIS website. There you will find regulations on:

- Course Enrollment and Grading
- Attendance
- Coursework, Exams, and Final Grade Reports

Oversigt over fag:

Dato	Nærmere oplysninger	Forfaldet
tirs 25. Aug 2026	 Lyrics of Longing https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259154&include_contexts=course_92798	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 1. Sep 2026	 Origins of Love https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259161&include_contexts=course_92798	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 8. Sep 2026	 No class, DIS academic tours https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259160&include_contexts=course_92798	0:00

Dato	Nærmere oplysninger	Forfalder
tirs 15. Sep 2026	 The Platonic Love Affair (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259159&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 22. Sep 2026	 Fatal Love (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259156&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
søn 27. Sep 2026	 Short paper 1 (DIS only) (https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/92798/assignments/269509)	forfalder 23.59
tirs 29. Sep 2026	 Romantic Love (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259155&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 6. Okt 2026	 No class, DIS academic tours (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259151&include_contexts=course_92798)	0:00
tirs 13. Okt 2026	 Commitment and Control (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259150&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 20. Okt 2026	 The Look of Love (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259153&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 27. Okt 2026	 The Look of the Other (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259158&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
tirs 3. Nov 2026	 No class, DIS academic tours (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259162&include_contexts=course_92798)	0:00
tirs 10. Nov 2026	 Care and World (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259152&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45
søn 15. Nov 2026	 Short paper 2 (DIS only) (https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/92798/assignments/269510)	forfalder 23.59
tirs 17. Nov 2026	 Love in the Digital Age (https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259149&include_contexts=course_92798)	10.15 til 12.45

Dato	Nærmere oplysninger	Forfalder
tirs 24. Nov 2026	 All About Love https://absalon.instructure.com/calendar?event_id=259157&include_contexts=course_92798	10.15 til 12.45
tors 10. Dec 2026	 Final paper (DIS) https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/92798/assignments/269507	forfalder 23.59
tors 17. Dec 2026	 Final paper (KU) https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/92798/assignments/269508	forfalder 12:00
	 Attendance https://absalon.instructure.com/courses/92798/assignments/269506	