

**Winter 2027**

**PHILOSOP 9505/ Cross-listed 4991G: Intimacy, Love, and Interpersonal Relationships**

**AREA**

Fem, MPL

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

What is love and what does it demand of us? What is intimacy and how does it shape our lives and persons? Why do our interpersonal relationships matter so deeply to us? How can we act well in these relationships, and what can philosophy reveal about the ways in which we can act poorly? How might novel technologies change how we understand love, intimacy, and relationships? In this course, we'll survey such questions and try to develop new answers to some of them. We'll begin our explorations by looking at longstanding debates about the nature of love and friendship. We'll then turn to emerging topics in the philosophy of interpersonal relationships, such as intimacy, abuse, parasocial relationships, stalking, online dating, polyamory, AI companions, and related topics of student interest.

**TEXTS**

All assigned readings will be available on the course Owl BrightSpace.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Participation (20%):** Class will be discussion based. Students should come to class having carefully done the readings and with some questions in mind (and ideally written down). If you will be missing more than one class, you must talk to me. As part of your participation grade, students will be required to lead a session (undergraduate students may pair up with another student and co-lead a session, if they prefer). This requires giving a brief (5-10 minute) overview of the readings, raising a handful of thoughtful discussion questions, and doing some fielding of discussion.

**2 Short Response Papers (20%):** Students will submit 2 short (2-4 page) response papers on 2 readings of their choice. These must be done in different weeks and must be turned in at least 2 hours before class. A response should raise and briefly develop one or two

significant criticisms of (or interesting questions about) a reading. Week 9 will be the last week to turn one of these in (so as to leave time for you to get some feedback before your final paper).

**Final Paper (40%):** Your final paper (12-20 pages) should develop a sustained argument, substantially engage with at least one assigned paper, and engage with at least some literature we did not cover in class. You may choose to build off of one of your short responses, should you think there is more to be developed there. You must clear your final paper topic with me (via email or office hours) by the end of Week 11.