

THE EROTIC EXPERIENCE IN ANCIENT GREECE

Classics Capstone Seminar (CL 191, Fall 2018), Professor Bryant Kirkland

Thursday, 2:00 - 4:50 pm, Dodd Hall 248

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:30 am - 1:30 pm (Dodd 247M)

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Sleeping Eros, Hellenistic Bronze (3rd-2nd C BCE), Metropolitan Museum of Art

“... art is what, at the level of thought, does complete justice to the event.”

— Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*, p. 78

Description. What did *erōs* mean to the ancient Greeks? What connections did Greeks draw between love and sex, love and philosophy, love and politics, and love and divinity? What made *erōs* different from other kinds of love? Although we may feel we know something of them in our own lives, how, as scholars, ought we to place love and sexuality into historical context? Analyzing mostly literary evidence, from Homeric epic to Sappho’s lyric poetry to Plato’s philosophy to the ancient Greek novel, this capstone seminar studies ancient representations of erotic and sexual experience, including same-sex desire and sociality. Reading ancient sources in dialogue with works of scholarship, this course also asks how modern theorists, critics, and translators have defined notions of desire and sexuality, and how constructions of ancient Greek culture have functioned in their thinking.

Course Aims. In addition to achieving various intellectual aims, I hope this capstone course will help you strengthen your communication skills, both written and oral, and your analytic abilities in evaluating evidence and arguments both ancient and modern. Alongside regular discussion of course material, you will undertake in-class presentations of scholarly material, and your research efforts will culminate with a substantial (15-20 pp.) paper. Please note that the subject of this seminar is vast, and constraints of time prevent us from covering many worthy topics that you may still choose to research, in consultation with me.

Required Texts (available at the UCLA bookshop).

1. Emily Wilson (trans.). *Homer: the Odyssey*. WW Norton, 2017.
 2. Andrew Miller (trans.) *Greek Lyric: an Anthology in Translation*. Hackett, 1996.
 3. C.D.C. Reeve (trans.) *Plato on Love: Lysis, Symposium, Phaedrus, Alcibiades, and Selections from Republic and Laws*. Hackett, 2006.
 4. Diane Svarlien (trans.). *Euripides: Alcestis, Medea, Hippolytus*. Hackett, 2007.
 5. Helen Morales (ed.) *Greek Fiction: Callirhoe, Daphnis & Chloe, Letters of Chion*. Penguin, 2011.
- Optional:** Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*. Dalkey Archive, 1986.

Evaluation.

- Attendance: 10%
- Preparation and conversational engagement: 10%
- In-class presentation on scholarly article or book-chapter: 15%
- Research report (oral): 15%
- Research paper (15-20 pages): 50%
 - Topic of research project submitted by week 6; abstract and preliminary bibliography by week 7; draft by week 9

Note: The final paper is due Friday, December 14 online, via the Turn-It-In link on CCLE, no later than noon. The deadline is firm. There will be **no extensions**.

SCHEDULE (may change with advance notice). Readings with an *asterisk are optional.

Week 1: Sept. 27 — Introduction to (Greek) Love

{Introductory Mini-Lecture from the Instructor}

Ancient Reading:
the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite*

Scholarship: Skinner 2015 (introduction), Carson 1986 (selections), *Bergren 1989, *Most 2013, *duBois 1992

Week 2: Oct. 4 — Epic Loves

Ancient Reading:
the *Odyssey* (esp. books 1, 5, 6, 8, 10-11, and 18-23)
selections from the *Iliad* (PDF online)

Scholarship: Foley 1978, Zeitlin 1996, *Wohl 1993, *Felson and Slatkin 2004, *Bergren 1983 (esp. pp. 79-82)

Week 3: Oct. 11 — Lyric Erōs

Ancient Reading — Selections from Miller, *Greek Lyric*:

Archilochus (all, but esp. nos. 12, 13, 14, 20, 21, 26, 35, 39, and 196a)

Mimnermus (nos. 1, 2, and 3)

Alcman (all)

Pindar (*Enkomion* for Theoxenos, Fr. 123, and *Enkomion* for Xenophon, Fr. 122)

Scholarship: Calame 1992, Swift 2015, Rawles and Natoli 2013, *Stehle 2009, *Griffith 2009

Week 4: Oct. 18 — Lyric Erōs II: Sappho

Ancient Reading:

Sappho (all of *If Not, Winter*)

Sappho in Miller (all)

Scholarship: Greene 1994, Lardinois 1994, Winkler 1990, *Most 1996, *Greene 1996, *Boehringer 2013

Week 5: Oct. 25 — Interlude: Male Same-Sex Desire and Sociality

Ancient Reading:

Aeschines, *Against Timarchus* (PDF online)

Thucydides 6.54-59 (PDF online)

Scholarship: Foucault 1985 (pp. 35-93, 215-25), Dover 1978 (19-39), Halperin 1990, *Ormand 2013, *Richlin 1998

Week 6: Nov. 1 — Platonic Loves [Research Topic Due]

Ancient Reading:

Plato, *Symposium* (in Reeve)

Scholarship: Halperin 1990 (pp. 113-51), Ferrari 1992, *Konstan 2015, *Corner 2013

Week 7: Nov. 8 — Bodies of Desire [Visit to Getty Villa] [Abstracts Due]

Ancient Reading:

Images online and at Villa

Scholarship: Stewart 1997 (ch. 2), Clarke 2013, Glazebrook 2011, *Stewart ch. 8

Week 8: Nov. 15 — Diagnosing Love

Ancient Reading:

Euripides, *Hippolytus*

*[PDF] Selections from the Hippocratic Corpus: *On Generation, On Diseases of Virgins*

Scholarship: Hanson 1990, Sissa 1990, *Carson 1990, *Dean-Jones 1992, *Zeitlin 1996

Week 9: Nov. 29 — Novel Romance [Paper Drafts Due]

Ancient Reading:

Longus, *Daphnis & Chloe* (in Morales, *Greek Fiction*)

Scholarship: Konstan 1994, Zeitlin 1990, *Goldhill 1995 (ch. 1), *Goldhill 1995 (ch. 3)

Week 10: Dec. 6 — Final Session [Student Presentations]**Select Course Bibliography**

(**indicates volume has been requested for reserve at Powell Library*)

Below is a *select* bibliography, roughly arranged by subject. Remember that especially with edited volumes, themes and coverage can range widely. The co-edited volume Halperin, Zeitlin, Winkler (1990) has, for instance, essays on satyrs, notions of feminine pollution, erotic vase painting, and treatises on women's health. Accordingly, when pursuing your research questions, it is good to nose around in different books. The tables of contents and index are your friends, and often just reading something that intrigues you, even if you don't *think* it is the scholarly piece you're seeking, can be helpful.

General

Foucault, M. *The History of Sexuality*. 3 vols., R. Hurley (trans.). New York.

*Halperin, D., Zeitlin, F.I., and Winkler, J.J. (eds.) (1990) *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*. Princeton.

* Hubbard, T.K. (ed.) (2014) *A Companion to Greek and Roman Sexualities*. Malden, Mass.

* Konstan, D. (1994) *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres*. Princeton.

* Larson, J. (2012) *Greek and Roman Sexualities: a Sourcebook*. London.

* Richlin, A. (ed.) (1992) *Pornography and Representation in Ancient Greece*. Oxford.

* Sissa, G. (2008) *Sex and Sensuality in the Ancient World*. New Haven.

* Skinner, M. (2005) *Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture*. Malden, Mass.

* Winkler, J.J. (1990) *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. London.

Women

- *Blundell, S. (1995) *Women in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Cohen, E. (2015) *Athenian Prostitution: the Business of Sex*. Oxford.
- *Fantham, E., et al. (eds.) (1994) *Women in the Classical World: Image and Text*. Oxford.
- Foxhall, L. (2013) *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge.
- Glazebrook, A. and M. Henry (eds.) (2011) *Greek Prostitutes in the Ancient Mediterranean, 800 BCE–200 CE*. Madison.
- *Haynes, K. (2003) *Fashioning the Feminine in the Greek Novel*. London.
- Keuls, E. (1993) *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens*. Berkeley. (online thru UCLA library)
- * Kolowski-Ostrow, A.O. and C. Lyons (eds.) (1997) *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology*. London.
- * Pomeroy, S. (1975) *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York.
- * Rabinowitz, N.S. and Auanger, L. (eds.) (2002) *Among Women: From the Homosocial to the Homoerotic in the Ancient World*. Austin.
- * Rayor, D. J. (1991) *Sappho's Lyre: Archaic Lyric and Women Poets of Ancient Greece*. Berkeley.

Same-Sex Love

- *Davidson, J. (2007) *Greeks and Greek Love: A Radical Reappraisal of Homosexuality in Ancient Greece*. London.
- *Dover, K.J. (1980) *Greek Homosexuality*. New York.
- *Halperin, D. (1989) *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*. London.
- Hubbard, T.K. (2003) *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents*. Berkeley.

Philosophy, Politics, Ethics

- * Ludwig, P. (2002) *Eros and Polis: Desire and Community in Greek Political Theory*. Cambridge.
- Nussbaum, M. and J. Sihvola (eds.) (2002) *The Sleep of Reason: Erotic Experience and Sexual Ethics in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Chicago.
- * Wohl, V. (2002) *Love among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens*. Princeton.

Accommodations. If you are registered with the Center for Accessible Education (CAE), please notify me promptly so that appropriate arrangements for test-taking can be made. If you are not registered but have a documented need, it is imperative that you contact CAE well in advance of any quiz or exam. Contact the CAE at: <http://www.cae.ucla.edu>.

Statement on Title IX Responsibilities. As a member of the faculty I am legally obligated to share certain kinds of information with UCLA's Title IX coordinator Mohammed Cato (mcato@equity.ucla.edu) if such information is disclosed to me. Such information includes but is not limited to: reports of sexual assault, relational or domestic violence, and/or stalking. My obligation is part of UCLA's effort to ensure the safety and well-being of its students.

Electronica. You may not use laptops in class unless their use is sanctioned by CAE. Audio or video recording of class sessions is not permitted. Please put cell phones and similar electronic devices away.

Academic honesty. Always credit ideas that are not your own. You may wish to consult UCLA's policy on academic honesty, as it contains the standards to which we are all accountable: <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Academic-Integrity>. If you have questions about how these standards are to be observed with respect to particular assignments, please ask me.

ABSTRACTS of STUDENT PAPERS

Cristina Berron - "Glorified Prostitution: The Problematics of the Pederastic Relationship"

In ancient Athens, sexual relations varied among classes and genders. Such relations were comprehended and applied inconsistently when it came to homoerotic relationships between older and younger males. In Plato's *Symposium*, Pausanias argues that the performance of eros between an older male (*erastes*) and younger male (*eromenos*) is only justified if they participate in their proper roles of exchanging values and knowledge. In this paper, I will argue that Pausanias uses a shift in language and rhetoric to propel his own ethics in justifying pederastic relations and to hide his exploitation of younger boys. Along with this, I will compare Pausanias' rhetorical techniques to the speakers in two forensic speeches, *Against Simon* by Lysias and *Against Timarchus* by Aeschines. In both speeches, the main speakers use arguments similar to Pausanias' to establish their own pederastic relationship as a set ethic to counteract their opponents. As much as the pederastic relationship was defended and glorified by Pausanias and the other speakers, the *erastes* and *eromenos* relationship's permissibility was uncertainly situated within the hazy boundaries of the Athenian laws and could be seen to threaten the stability of the polis. Ultimately, the relationship contains multiple problematic elements, which required Pausanias and the other speakers to describe pederastic relationships in terms of "heavenly love" and as a valid form of educational mentorship.

Kevin Chang - "Beauty, Reproduction, and Ethical Love in the *Symposium* of Plato"

Ancient Greek philosophy is no exception to the heavy permeation of *eros* in the many works and disciplines of the ancient Greek world. Plato's dialogues are a primary example of philosophy's quest in attempting to answer the questions posed by the concept of love and the mysterious nature of desire. Specific to Plato's *Symposium*, the question most prominently extracted from the Socratic dialogue is: what is the ultimate, or correct, form of love? Considering that the character Diotima of Mantinea, a woman, is the one whom Plato chooses to deliver his philosophical ladder of love, and therefore, define Platonic love, one is also inclined to ask: does this erotic concept fall subject to ancient Athenian misogyny given its appropriation of the feminine identity?

Throughout this paper, it is my aim to explore the implications of having a female character in Plato's *Symposium* convey this idealistic form of loving. Previous scholarship (Halperin 1990 and White 2004) has explored the role of Diotima and her effect in the dialogue overall; it has even proposed that Plato's use of her fictional character emanates from the misogynistic nature of Athenian social norm. In association with such scholarship, I too will analyze the role of this mysterious character in the dialogue and even attempt to answer what it truly means for Plato to use her in order to portray his own philosophy, by examining the effect her femininity has on the philosophical message. Furthermore, I include the character of Alcibiades in my analysis to determine the manner in which Plato also manipulates him to convey his concepts. Ultimately, I

argue that given the exploitation of both characters of different sexes (and the message behind the philosophy itself), Plato's philosophical love offers an escape not only from the constraints set by the physical erotic experience, but also from the misogynistic norm of ancient Athens.

Sam Hersch - "When Women Craft: The Union of *Mētis* and *Eros* in the *Odyssey*"

At various times during their two decades of absence from each other, Odysseus and Penelope are presented with alternatives to their lawful spouses. However, both Odysseus and Penelope are endowed with *mētis*—creative intelligence—and their alternative partners are not. Rather, these partners—the suitors and Calypso, respectively—are presented as grossly abusive, failing to respect the innate *mētis* of both Odysseus and Penelope. In this paper—through close readings of scenes from Books 2 and 5 of the *Odyssey*, as well as brief examinations of later scenes—I will argue the importance of *metis*: *mētis* is not only the quality that they both share, it also motivates their desire to reunite with each other, and once that is accomplished, it is shown to be the foundation of their marital life. Scholars on the subject of *mētis*, such as Ann L. T. Bergren (1983), Froma Zietlin (1995) and Kathryn Sullivan Kruger (2001), have only gone so far as to analyze the craftiness of Odysseus and Penelope separately, and to say how strong craft is as a symbol in the *Odyssey*. While following on from their arguments, I will argue that *mētis* is far more layered in the poem, and that it finds its way into some of its erotic undertones. In a broad sense, I will argue why Odysseus and Penelope's alternative partners would not work, and how *mētis* constantly emerges as a symbol throughout the poem as an agent, aspect, skill, quality and ancestor (as in The Symposium 203b-203e5) of *erōs*, constantly pushing the well-endowed, like-minded couple back to each other until, finally, both of them re-consummate their marriage on their stable marriage bed.

Natalie O'Connor - "Sappho and the Circularity Between *Eros*, Death, and Immortality"

Since antiquity, scholars and classicists have analyzed Sappho and her collection of poems primarily within the confines of her femininity and homosexuality, contemplating how these elements influence the portrayal of *eros* in her lyric poetry. While such subjects undoubtedly help to define Sappho's corpus, I will instead focus on the topic of death (*thanatos*) and explore the ways in which it permeates and shapes our perceptions of Sappho and her work. Furthermore, I aim to elucidate how Sappho projects herself onto her corpus and how she recurrently intertwines the three themes of *eros*, death, and immortality within the text. In doing so, Sappho presents a complex relationship between these themes that mirrors the complexity that is inherent to each of these concepts, thereby asserting that there is no singular meaning of *eros*. By placing the arguments of various classicists (Fernández-Delgado 2015, Hardie 2005) in conversation with each other, I will integrate their assessments of Sappho's poetic immortality with the notions of *eros*, death, and immortality, revealing the circular relationship that Sappho maintains both with her corpus and the thematic elements that are encompassed within it. Through a focus on Fragments 31, 55, 94, and 95, I will argue against scholars like Harold Zellner and prove that Sappho has a profound attention to death and a respect for its ability to acutely reflect a multitude of sentiments and even the author herself.