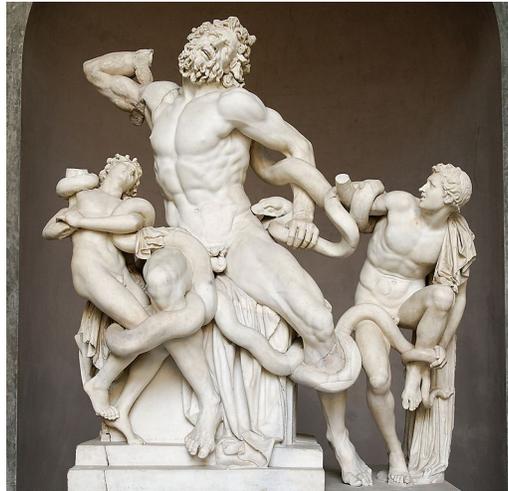


# ***Eroticism in the Ancient West***

CPLT 201: Major Texts, Ancient to Medieval  
Emory University  
Fall 2015



Instructor: Andrew Kingston

Location: Callaway Center N106

Meeting Times: M/W/F 12-12:50pm

Office Hours: Mondays, 2-4pm, Callaway N106 (by appointment)

Email: [REDACTED]

## **Course Description:**

*Eroticism, it may be said, is assenting to life up to the point of death.*

—Georges Bataille

What is erotic love? Is it synonymous with sex, or is there perhaps a darker side to it? What kind of philosophical and theoretical problems might be altered or cast in a new light by the contradictions of eroticism? How might it challenge hierarchies of knowledge? After outlining these questions in more detail—questions of the (impossible) relation of sex and death and knowledge—we will turn to some paradigmatic examples of eroticism in Ancient Greek, Roman, and Medieval French literature. The semester's readings will include selections from Plato, Sophocles, Diogenes the Cynic, Ovid, and Virgil, as well as more modern thinkers like Sigmund Freud, Georges Bataille, Luce Irigaray, and others.

## **Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, you will:

- Be able to articulate and critique at least two conceptions of love.
- Have a working knowledge of representations of love in the ancient West.

- Have a broadened understanding of the problems and possibilities posed by the concept of eroticism.
- Have written a research paper and read some things.

### **Required Texts**

*Erotism*, by Georges Bataille

*Selected Dialogues of Plato*, Translated by Benjamin Jowett

*Sayings and Anecdotes*, by Diogenes the Cynic, Translated by Robin Hard

*Three Theban Plays*, by Sophocles, Translated by Robert Fagles

*The Metamorphoses*, by Ovid, Translated by Allen Mandelbaum.

All other readings will be provided electronically.

Suggested Texts (you don't have to buy these):

*Plato: Complete Works*, Edited by Cooper and Hutchinson

*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, by Sigmund Freud

*The Aeneid*, by Virgil

### **Reading Policy**

You should do the readings. It really will help you. I promise. Plus, if you don't, it will be very obvious to me and it will hurt your grade.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attend Class. There will be a sign-in sheet, which it is your responsibility to sign. You get 4 free absences to accommodate for illness, personal issues, or travel (this includes sports, so don't ask). After four absences, I reserve the right to lower your grade. More than 10 absences and you fail the course. There are *no* make-ups for any in-class work.

### **Late Work**

Late work will be penalized by 10%, and then an additional 10% for each week that it remains late. For example, if you have late work that takes you under a week to turn in, it will be penalized 10%; after a week it will be penalized 20%, and so on.

## **Electronics Policy**

Please try not to text or check email/social media during class. If this gets to be a problem, I will completely ban electronics and take points out of your participation if you use them.

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

Do not be academically dishonest. If you are unsure what this means, please consult the Emory honor code ([http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor\\_code.html](http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policy/honor_code.html)). Above all, do not plagiarize. Should you plagiarize in any way, you will fail the course, or worse.

## **Public Nature of the Course**

When you write anything for this course (and in general), please be aware that it might be seen by anyone—not just me. So don't confide your deepest darkest secrets unless you are comfortable making them public. But also, don't worry about what others might think. #YOLO

## **Assignments and Grade Breakdown**

Attendance and Participation: **20%**

In-class writing: **10%**

Encomium: **5%**

Midterm Exam: **20%**

Presentations: **10%**

Abstract: **5%**

Final Research Paper: **30%**

## **Major Assignment Details**

- In-class writing: Each day that we have a reading, at the beginning of class you will write down your thoughts about it on a sheet of paper. For instance, you might highlight a part of the reading that you found of particular interest, analyze it, and describe why you think it is important in relation to the theme(s) of the course. Like a paragraph or two, nothing fancy.
- Encomium: After/while reading Plato's *Symposium*, you will write your own encomium on love, mimicking the characters in Plato's dialogue
- Midterm Exam (3-4 pages): A brief exam asking questions about the readings. Both multiple choice and free response. It should be a breeze if you do the readings.

- Presentation: After picking your topic for your research paper, and after performing some preliminary research, you will give a brief (~5 minute) and informal presentation to the class, with the purpose of specifying your abstract (which will be due soon after the presentations) as well as honing your public speaking skills and gathering important feedback from your peers. Please don't worry too much about this presentation; it is only meant to facilitate communication. Here—and not in your formal writing—is where you might resort to wild speculation and/or non-scholarly sources (such as Wikipedia, etc.).
- Abstract for Final Paper: A short, approximately one paragraph abstract, outlining the argument you will make and the resources that you will use in your final paper.
- Final Research Paper (7-10 pages): This will be your opportunity to engage with the course theme(s) on a broader, more exploratory level. The paper will require multiple scholarly resources, appropriate citation, critical thinking, a coherent composition, and a polished argument—i.e. more than Wikipedia-book-report-level knowledge is required. Ultimately, the purpose of this paper is to give you a chance to think through some of the issues that we cover in class in a way that is personally helpful for your own projects and concerns.

### Grading Scale

Percentage Scale:

Percentage	Letter Grade
90.00-100	A
86.00-89.99	B+
80.00-85.99	B
76.00-79.99	C+
70.00-75.99	C
66.00-69.99	D+
60.00-65.99	D
0-59.99	F

Emory Grade Point Scale:

Points	Letter Grade
4.00	A
3.70	A-
3.30	B+
3.00	B
2.70	B-
2.30	C+
2.00	C
1.70	C-
1.30	D+

1.00	D
0.00	F

### **Explanation of Letter Grades**

A: An excellent response to the assignment. Demonstrates a *sophisticated* use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, argumentation, and design.

B: A good response to the assignment. Demonstrates an *effective* use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, argumentation, and design. May have some minor errors and mistakes.

C: An average response to the assignment. Demonstrates *acceptable* use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, argumentation, and design. Generally follows instructions, but may have errors and mistakes that distract from the overall quality of the composition.

D: A poor response to the assignment. Demonstrates a *lack of* rhetorical knowledge and writing and argumentation and design. May have major errors and mistakes.

F: A failure to respond to the assignment appropriately. May have an *unacceptable* number of errors and mistakes.

### **Student Resources**

Emory provides a lot of ancillary resources for its students, *which you pay for* with your tuition. I encourage you to take advantage of them. Some of the more relevant ones for this course are listed below:

- **Disability Resources**

Students with medical/health conditions that might impact academic success should visit Access, Disability Services and Resources (ADSR formerly the Office of Disability Services, ODS) to determine eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students who receive accommodations must present the Accommodation Letter from ADSR to your professor at the beginning of the semester, or when the letter is received.

- **Emory Writing Center**

The Emory Writing Center offers 45-minute individual conferences to Emory College and Laney Graduate School students. The EWC is located in Callaway N-212. We encourage writers to schedule appointments in advance as we can take walk-ins on a limited basis only. We require hard copies of traditional paper drafts and encourage you to bring a laptop if you're working on a digital or multi-modal text. Please bring a copy of your assignment instructions, too. In addition to our regular conferences in Callaway, we host Studio Hours every Tuesday from 7-9 pm in Woodruff Library 214. Studio Hours provide a supportive, focused workspace and are open to all students. EWC tutors circulate to encourage writers, provide resources, and address questions. For more information about the EWC, or to make an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.emory.edu>.

## ▪ Tutoring for Multilingual Students

If you are a multilingual student and English is not your first language, you may benefit from working with trained ESL Tutors. These tutors are undergraduates who will support the development of both your English language and writing skills. Like Writing Center tutors, ESL tutors will not proofread your work. ESL tutors will meet with you in designated locations on campus for 1-hour appointments, and they will help you at any stage of the process of developing your written work or presentation. You may bring your work on a laptop or on paper.

For instructions on how to schedule an appointment, links to ASST, and the policies for using the service, go to:

<http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/learning/esl/tutoring/index.html>. If you do not have a scheduled appointment, you may use the Academic ESL Skills Lab, located in Room 422 of Woodruff Library (next to the Language Center). Here, you may have less time with a tutor if other students are waiting, but you can find drop-in support just when you need it. To view the lab hours for the current semester, go to: <http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/learning/esl/lab.html>. For information about other ESL services available to undergraduates, go to: <http://college.emory.edu/home/academic/learning/esl/index.html> or contact Jane O'Connor, Director of ESL Services ([jcoconn@emory.edu](mailto:jcoconn@emory.edu)) or Denise Dolan, Assistant Director of ESL Services ([denise.dolan@emory.edu](mailto:denise.dolan@emory.edu)).

## ▪ Emory Counseling Services

Free and confidential counseling services and support are available from the Emory Counseling Center (404) 727-7450. This can be an invaluable resource when stress makes your work more challenging than it ought to be. Visit <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/>

## Final Exam

The exam period for this semester is December 10-19. We will not have class during this time. There is no final exam for this course!

## Schedule

### [Unit 1: Eroticism as Anti-Platonic Love]

Wednesday, 8/26: Introductions, go over syllabus

Friday, 8/28: "Against Interpretation", Susan Sontag (PDF)

Monday, 8/31: Plato's *Phaedrus* (pp. 111-160) (esp. ~130-160)

Wednesday, 9/2: Plato's *Symposium* (pp. 199- 240)

Friday, 9/4: Plato's *Symposium* (pp. 240-277)

Monday, 9/7: NO CLASS!! (Labor Day)

Wednesday, 9/9: Plato's Allegory of the Cave (in *The Republic*) (PDF)

Friday, 9/11: Plato's Allegory of the Cave (in *The Republic*) (PDF)

Monday, 9/14: **Encomium Due**, Luce Irigaray's "Plato's Hystera" in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Readings TBD) (PDF)

Wednesday, 9/16: Gaston Bachelard's *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* (Introduction and Chapter 1) (PDF)

Friday, 9/18: Werner Herzog's *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*

Monday, 9/21: Georges Bataille's "Rotten Sun", "The Solar Anus", and "The Language of Flowers", Excerpts from *Lascaux* (PDF)

Wednesday, 9/23: Georges Bataille's *Erotism* (Introduction)

Friday, 9/25: Georges Bataille's *Erotism* (Chapters 1, 2, 3)

Monday, 9/28: Georges Bataille's *Erotism* (Chapters 4, 5, 9, 13)

Wednesday, 9/30: Documentary: *À perte de vue*

Friday, 10/2: Return to Plato's Allegory of the Cave

Monday, 10/5: Lee Edelman, *No Future*, pp. 1-9

Wednesday, 10/7: Diogenes the Cynic, pp. vii-xvi, 3-6, 19-32

Friday, 10/9: Diogenes the Cynic, pp. 32-57

Monday, 10/12: NO CLASS!! (Fall Break)

Wednesday, 10/14: Midterm Review Day

Friday, 10/16: **Midterms** ☹

## [Unit 2: Love Stories]

Monday, 10/19: Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*

Wednesday, 10/21: Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*

Friday, 10/23: Freud's Oedipus Complex (PDF)

Monday, 10/26: Sophocles's *Antigone*

Wednesday, 10/28: Sophocles's *Antigone*

Friday, 10/30: Sappho, Selected Poems + Anne Carson's *Eros: The Bittersweet* (PDF)

Monday, 11/2: Lacan's "The Mirror Stage as Formative Function of the I in Psychoanalytic Experience" (PDF)

Wednesday, 11/4: Ovid's Tiresias Myth + Narcissus Myth

Friday, 11/6: Ovid's Orpheus and Euridice; Excerpt from Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (PDF)

Monday, 11/9: The Death of Orpheus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; Excerpt from Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (PDF)

Wednesday, 11/11: **Presentations**

Friday, 11/13: **Presentations**

Monday, 11/16: **Presentations**

Wednesday, 11/18: **Abstract Due**, Conferences

Friday, 11/20: Conferences

Monday, 11/23: Conferences

Wednesday, 11/25: Conferences

Friday, 11/27: NO CLASS!! (Thanksgiving Break)

### **[Unit 3: Erotic Knowledge and the Christian Tradition]**

Monday, 11/30: Laocoön in Virgil's *Aeneid* (PDF) + Ovid's Arachne

Wednesday, 12/2: Myth Excerpts from Augustine's *City of God* (PDF), Excerpts from Augustine's *Confessions* (PDF)

Friday, 12/4: Bataille on Christianity and Mysticism (*Eroticism* pp. 117-124, 245-251)

Monday, 12/7: St. Teresa and Angela of Foligno (PDF)

Wednesday, 12/9: NO CLASS but **Research Paper Due**

*(This class schedule may change as the semester progresses.)*

### **Deadlines**

Encomium: 9/14

Presentations 11/11-11/16

Paper Abstract: 11/18

Research Paper: 12/9