

CLST 3608, Love and Friendship in Greek and Latin Literature • Spring 2025 (draft)

Joseph Farrell, instructor

The writers of ancient Greece and Rome speak of love in ways that are immediately familiar to us, but also in ways that are hard for us to understand. Some of their attitudes differ from one another, and we can even see the Romans learning about Greek attitudes and consciously adopting them, or pretending to. The same process of learning about and adopting, both consciously and unconsciously, inform our own ideas about love and related phenomena, such as friendship, loyalty, jealousy, and possessiveness. The course will acquaint students with some lesser-known literature and reacquaint them with more familiar works from a new point of view. We will emphasize discussion in class and in supplementary small groups as analytical tools.

Skills

The course will develop student skills in the following areas, all of which are essential for success in most kinds of knowledge-based, managerial, and executive work as well as in university education:

Dependability: This course puts a premium on regular attendance and contribution and aims to support and reward students who commit to these activities.

Preparation: The same is true of students who not only attend and contribute, but who come prepared to make a positive impact on the day's work.

Analytical reading: Intense, insightful reading is indispensable to making a contribution to any are of the humanities.

Group discussion skills: Real understanding arises not from groupthink, but from differences of opinion. The course will encourage students to bring different perspectives to bear on the reading and to work both as a class and in small groups to articulate contrasting interpretive possibilities.

Writing: Individual writing assignments of different lengths will provide opportunities to make significant progress in expository writing.

Evaluation

Your work in the course will be evaluated according to these criteria:

Participation: This begins with regular attendance and contribution to in-class discussion, which is a matter not just of frequency but also of impact.

Short-form writing: Four brief (3–5 pp.) “close reading” analyses of short assigned passages from assigned reading.

Group work: The class will be divided into four working groups. In the first half of the course (before spring break) each group will be given responsibility, not more than once per week, for discussing specific issues related to the day's reading assignment. In the second half of the course, each group will prepare one joint presentation of a topic supplementary to the general assignment for a given day. These topics and the relevant dates can be found in the Schedule of Assignments below.

Long-form writing: A term paper on a topic of the student's choosing will be due at the end of exam period. The paper may be on one or more of the readings previously assigned or, with the instructor's approval, on a topic not on the syllabus.

Each of these criteria will be worth 25% of your final grade.

Schedule of Assignments

Week 1, Introduction

R Jan 16, Love, Friendship, Family, Country (and Their Opposites)

Homer, *Hymn to Aphrodite*

Week 2, Homer on Love and Friendship

T Jan. 21, *Iliad*, selections

Books 1, 4, 6, 9, 16, (20–22), 24

R Jan. 23, *Odyssey*, selections

Books 1, 3–7, (8), 10, 19, 23

Week 3, Lyrical expressions

T Jan. 28,

Archilochus, Semonides, Alcaeus, Theognis

R Jan. 30, Alcman, Sappho, Anacreon, Mimnermus,

Week 4, Athenian attitudes (1), the 5th century

T Feb. 4, Tragic Love

Sophocles, *Women of Trachis*

Euripides, *Medea*

R Feb. 6, Comic Love (1)

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

Week 5, Athenian attitudes (2), the 4th century

T Feb. 11, Platonic Love

Plato, *Symposium*

R Feb. 13, Practical Love

Lysias, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*

Week 6: Love at First Sight, and Other Conventions

Feb. 18, Minor genres of love

Hermesianax, *Leontion*

Theocritus, *Idyll* 11

Callimachus, *Acontius and Cydippe*; *Epigrams* (selections)

Various Authors, *Epigrams* (selections)

Feb. 20, Neo-Epic love

Apollonius, *Argonautica*, Book 3

Week 7, Comic love 2: Between Greece and Rome

Feb. 25, All in the family?

Menander, *The Girl from Samos*

Feb. 27, Mistaken identity

Plautus, *The Brothers Menachmus*

Week 8: The Roman Politics of Love and Friendship

Mar. 4, Catullus

Poems

Mar. 6, Cicero

Oration for Marcus Caelius; On Friendship; Letters (selection)

Week 9, Spring Break

Week 10, Special topic group preparations (schedule TBD)

Week 11, Pathologies of Love

Mar. 18, Practical Love (2)

Lucretius, *On the nature of things*, Books 1 (lines 1–61) and 4 (lines 906–1287);

Horace, *Satires* Book 1, poems 2, 4, 6, 9; Book 2, poem 7; *Epodes* 1, 8

Mar. 20, The Disease of Love

Vergil, *Georgics*, Books 3–4

Week 11, Epic love (2)

Mar. 25, Dido and Aeneas

Vergil, *Aeneid*, Books 1–4

Mar. 27, From Epic to Novel

Ovid, *Heroides* (selections)

Group presentation 1

Week 12, Elegiac love 1: Propertius

Apr. 1, Cynthia

Propertius, Book 1 (entire); Books 2–4 (selections)

Apr. 3, Cynthia's literary descendants

Dante, *Vita nuova*; Petrarch, *Sonnets* (selections); Sydney, *Sonnets* 1–27;

Goethe, *Roman Elegies*;

Group presentation 2

Week 13, Elegiac love 2: Ovid

Apr. 8, Love Lessons

Ovid, *Amores* 1–3; *The Art of Love*; *Antidote for Love*

Apr. 10, Epistolary Love

Ovid, *Heroides*

Group presentation 3

Week 14, Novelistic love

Apr. 15, From “Boy Meets Girl” to “Happily Ever After”

Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*

Apr. 17,

Group presentation 4

Week 15, Christian ideas about love

Apr. 22, In theory: the Biblical lexicon of love

Readings from Hebrew Bible and New Testament (selection)

Apr. 24, In practice: varieties of early Christian experience

New Testament, Apocrypha, and Patristic writings (selection)

Week 16, What’s love got to do with it?

Apr. 29, Retrospective discussion