This seminar aims to introduce students to rigorous academic work in the humanities disciplines by focusing on a theme that allows participants to develop their own ideas, bibliographies, and research papers in relation to it. All of us will read the same texts, but we will also branch out individually into other texts that we will bring back to the group through formal presentations and informal discussions.

This year, our theme is Love and Ethics. What makes a decision ethical? When is love unethical? Can there be a universal definition of either concept? Is the love associated with Romanticism inherently redeeming, or fundamentally egotistical and harmful? We will be dwelling primarily on two central texts: the philosophical dialogue *Symposium* by Plato (427-327 BCE) and the novel *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910). Both of these works interrogate the being of Love (*what is it?*), the kinds of love, and the ethical implication of our understandings of love. And of course they do so in vastly different ways, Plato’s, through a conversational, philosophical “dialogue” form; and Tolstoy’s through the form of the novel, which he influenced and changed. Later in the semester, we will turn our attention to two cultural objects from the twentieth century – from more or less “our” time – in order to interpret them through the insights into ethical thinking and ideas of love we gain from working with Plato and Tolstoy and their interpreters. These two objects are the films: George Cukor’s 1940 “The Philadelphia Story” (Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart), and Billy Wilder’s 1959 “Some Like It Hot” (Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis). If time permits, we will also read the 2003 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court same-sex marriage ruling. That decision was the first high court decision that legalized same-sex marriage in an American state, and it relied on a particular, and particularly modern, understanding of the nature of love, and the meaning of ethical relationship and community.

Students in this seminar will be a part of running the seminar, and this means that for each meeting, everyone should be prepared with questions, notes, tentative interpretations, etc. The bulk of our work is of course done out of class (reading and rereading, finding appropriate secondary texts, taking copious notes, writing up presentations and paper). Each new session is an occasion for us to present our questions to the group, to initiate discussion of particularly important points, and to report on the current state of our work. Every student will present at least three times during the semester, and each presentation should be about 20 to 30 minutes in length. In addition to presentations, each student will prepare an annotated bibliography, a research proposal, and a research paper. These assignments will be discussed in detail in seminar.
Course Time-table

Sept. 3   Introduction
Sept. 10  Plato, *Symposium*
Sept. 17  Plato, *Symposium*
          Luce Irigaray, “‘Sorcerer Love’: A reading of Plato, *Symposium*, Diotima’s Speech” from *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*
          X and X bring in one article/book chapter each, and present on them next week. (Email to Catherine up to the morning of class, and I will print and photocopy for you.)
          X and X bring in one article/book chapter each on Plato, and present on them next week. (Email to Catherine up to the morning of class, and I will print and photocopy for you.)
Oct. 1    Finishing Plato, beginning Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
          X and X bring in one article/book chapter each (on AK), and present on them next week. (Email to Catherine up to the morning of class, and I will print and photocopy for you.)
Oct. 8    (MALS external review): No class
Oct. 15   Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
          X and X bring in one article/book chapter each, and present on them next week. (Email to Catherine up to the morning of class, and I will print and photocopy for you.)
          **Research proposal due (with bibliography).**
Oct. 22   Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
          X and X bring in one article/book chapter each, and present on them next week. (Email to Catherine up to the morning of class, and I will print and photocopy for you.)
Oct. 29   Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
          X and X bring in one article/book chapter each, and present on them next week. (Email to Catherine up to the morning of class, and I will print and photocopy for you.)
Nov. 5    Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*
          **Class ends at 3:20 today.**
Nov. 12   “Philadelphia Story”
          **Annotated bibliography due.**
Nov. 19  “Some Like It Hot”

Nov. 26  Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 3  Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Ruling (available at: http://www.massresistance.org/docs/marriage/sjcruling.html)

Dec. 10  Last day of classes: papers due, with updated annotated bibliography.