

Love Stories

Fall 2017

♥ Stories of lovers uniting, parting, fighting, making up, figuring it all out, and reaching a happy (or not-so-happy) ending—they appear across history and across cultures. They sometimes seem frivolous, and yet, they are at the heart of nearly every culture’s stories about themselves. From the Hebrew Bible’s many love stories and verses (Samson and Delilah, David and Bathsheba, *Song of Solomon*) to the Japanese *Tale of the Genji*, the Hindu stories of Krishna, or Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, all the way up through *The Fault in our Stars* or the love plot of *Hamilton*, we can tell a lot about a culture from its love stories and love poetry.

♥ Specifically, you can learn a lot about how a culture comes to **set its norms, stage its debates, or imagine its own futures** about gender roles, sexual identities, or even family structures through the hopes and desires of its romantic leads. Sure, *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragic story of two lovers, but it’s also a glimpse into the role of marriages in Renaissance economics and politics, which might otherwise seem to have nothing to do with romance.

♥ If there’s anything that we can learn for sure by reading these stories, it’s that there is little written in stone about how love goes, how gender roles must be performed, or what sex looks like. Every culture and historical moment interprets these things differently, even while each story seems to set out its own ideals for us to internalize, its own dreamy heroes, wistful heroines, or longing heroexes (I made that word up, don’t worry!). Join me this semester in reading all kinds of love stories and poems from across cultures and history to see what lovers tell us about the worlds and times they live in, and what they can tell us about ours!

Texts:

This is a literature class, so these texts are our lifeblood. You are expected to have a physical copy of the day’s reading with you at every class! They are on order through the University bookstore.

- ♥ Jane Austen, [Pride and Prejudice](#)
- ♥ Caryl Churchill, [Cloud 9](#)
- ♥ David Henry Hwang, [M. Butterfly](#)
- ♥ Jeanette Winterson, [Written on the Body](#)
- ♥ Rita Dove, [Selected Poems](#)
- ♥ Jennifer Haley, [The Nether](#)
- ♥ Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, [Bodymap](#)

♥ Many stories and poems are found as PDFs on our eCampus site. They are marked on the syllabus with ***. You must print and bring relevant copies to class. Please do not plan to read them on your phones.

Instructor:

Professor Ryan Claycomb

Time:

MWF 12:30-1:20

Classroom:

Chitwood Hall 101

Office:

Colson Hall 138

Office phone:

304.293.8406

Email:

ryan.claycomb@mail.wvu.edu

Office Hours:

Friday 8:30-11:30
or by appointment

Objectives:

Course objectives are the things I hope you can do and not just know or see. By the end of this course, if you are successful, you will be able to:

- ♥ *Use the classroom vocabulary correctly.*
 - (Students will apply a range of terms related to gender, sex, and sexuality).
- ♥ *Read stories and poems in light of who wrote them, and where/when they were written.*
 - (Students will interpret texts within their historical and cultural contexts by engaging with a diversity of texts from a range of historical periods, national literary traditions, ethnic and cultural vantage points, and positionalities of gender, sex, and sexuality).
- ♥ *Write insightfully about those stories.*
 - (Students will locate the ways that romance plots encode norms, values and changing perceptions about gender, sex, and sexuality).
 - (Students will articulate how the way that language itself is configured in love poems and stories participates in this encoding).
 - (Students will identify and interpret tactics of invisible coding, active critique, and hopeful reconfigurations of gender, sex, and sexuality).
 - (Students will connect textual expression with issues of physical embodiment).
- ♥ *Read and write with feeling about the course's texts and issues.*
 - (Students will write expressively about love, romance, and desire in compositions [poetry, prose, drama] that articulate the student's own understanding of some aspect of gender, sex, and sexuality).
 - (Students will identify their own affective responses to cultural and literary texts on the grounds of aesthetics and cultural politics).
- ♥ *Remember that literary study is driven by curiosity, intellectual interest, and the simple power of ideas—above all, this should be interesting, engaging, and even (gasp!) fun.*

Assignments:

Participation (100 pts.): Much of this class will revolve around the free and ample exchange of thoughts, ideas, and feedback of each member of the classroom community. Therefore, be prepared for class, having done the reading, brought the materials, and ready to talk and listen respectfully, thoughtfully, and seriously. OK, not always seriously, but mostly. Participation will be graded in five 20-point increments spaced evenly throughout the semester. See attendance policy.

Short-writes (6 x 50=300 pts.): Beginning in the first week, seven short writing assignments (average 500 words) will accompany the work of classroom discussion. Each one will be distributed in class and posted on eCampus, and will be due at the beginning of class. You may drop the lowest *non-zero* score (meaning that you do not get a free pass for skipping one or plagiarizing).

Mid-term exam (150 pts.): At the beginning of week seven, we will have a mid-term exam that is based primarily on paragraph-style answers to questions about specific passages of text. Those will require little (if any) memorization, but will instead depend on your ability to apply concepts from class discussion to individual texts.

Major paper (200 pts.): Just before Thanksgiving break, you will write a 4-6 page paper (around 1500 words) that makes an argument that interprets one of the texts from class. Prompts will be distributed by late October.

Final Exam (250 pts.): On the last day of class, I will distribute a take-home prompt for your final. It will be due in class during our scheduled exam session on Monday, December 11 at 2pm, and will offer an opportunity to reflect on the intellectual work of the course. A brief in-class exam session will round out the final exam.

Grading criteria for written work and class participation in handout, also available on eCampus.

Total possible points= 1000

Grading Scale:

A range = 900-1000 pts.

B range = 800-899 pts.

C range = 700-799 pts.

D range = 600-699 pts.

F = 0-599 pts.

A+=965-1000 pts

B+ = 865-899 pts

C+ = 765-799 pts

A=935-964 pts

B = 835-864 pts

C = 735-764 pts

A- =900-934 pts

B- = 800-834 pts

C- = 700-734 pts

Schedule of Classes

This schedule is subject to minor changes after either in-class announcement or email announcement. Please check with me directly if you have any questions. Readings marked *** are on eCampus.

Date	Topic + Readings	Work Due
W Aug 16	Introductions Watch: "In a Heartbeat" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2REkk9SCRn0&feature=youtu.be	
F Aug 18	Expressing Cultural Norms: Love Poems Read: Poetry Packet "Love Poems 1: culture"***	Short-write 1: Implicit Values
M Aug 21	Love Poems Read: Poetry Packet "Love Poems 2: rhetoric"***	
W Aug 23	Love Poems: Expressive Writing Read: Poetry Packet "Love poems 3: imagery"***	
F Aug 25	Love Poems: Read out Read: "How to Write Love Poems" Four interviews https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69223/how-to-write-love-poems	Short-write 2: Write a love poem
M Aug 28	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> by Jane Austen Read: <i>P&P</i> pgs 3-94	
W Aug 30	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> Read: <i>P&P</i> pgs 94-130	
F Sept 1	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> Read: <i>P&P</i> pgs 130-166	
M Sept 4	Labor Day: No classes (keep reading!)	
W Sept 6	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> Read: <i>P&P</i> pgs 166-266	
F Sept 8	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> Read: "Feminisms" <i>P&P</i> 357-370.	Short-write 3: The Marriage Plot
M Sept 11	<i>Thomas and Beulah</i> by Rita Dove Read: <i>Selected Poems</i> , pgs 131-172	
W Sept 13	<i>Thomas and Beulah</i> Read: <i>Selected Poems</i> , pgs 173-204	
F Sept 15	"How to date a brown girl (black girl, white girl, or halfie)" by Junot Diaz Read: http://engl-boston-culture-course.wikispaces.umb.edu/file/view/Diaz,HowTo.pdf	Short-write 4: Masculinity

M Sept 18	Critiquing Norms: Anti-love poems Read: Poetry Packet "Anti-Love poems"***	
W Sept 20	Anti-love poems	
F Sept 22	"Lust" by Susan Minot Read: "Lust" ***	
M Sept 25	MIDTERM EXAM Come to class with a writing implement and paper to write on.	Study for Midterm
W Sept 27	Critique and Variation: <i>Cloud 9</i> by Caryl Churchill Read: <i>Cloud 9</i> , Act I	
F Sept 29	<i>Cloud 9</i>	
M Oct 2	<i>Cloud 9</i> Read: <i>Cloud 9</i> , Act II	
W Oct 4	<i>Cloud 9</i>	
F Oct 6	TBA	
M Oct 9	Conflicting Norms: <i>Dilemma of a Ghost</i> by Ama Ata Aidoo Read: "Dilemma of a Ghost" Act I ***	
W Oct 11	<i>Dilemma of a Ghost</i> Read: "Dilemma of a Ghost" to end ***	
F Oct 10	Conflicting Norms: two different perspectives Read/Listen: Doreen Baingana: "Tropical Fish"*** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ej2oqZGSsbY Read: Andrea Lee: "Dancing with Jozefina"***	Short-write 5: Reading for norms in tension
M Oct 16	<i>Written on the Body</i> by Jeanette Winterson Read: <i>WotB</i> 1-111	
W Oct 18	<i>Written on the Body</i> Read: <i>WotB</i> 1-111	
F Oct 20	<i>Written on the Body</i> Read: <i>WotB</i> 112-139	Short-write 6: The Narrator's Body
M Oct 23	<i>Written on the Body</i> Read: <i>WotB</i> 140-end	
W Oct 25	<i>Written on the Body</i>	
F Oct 27	Intersectionality Read: "The Toughest Indian in the World" by Sherman Alexie ***	

M Oct 30	<i>Bodymap</i> by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha Read: <i>Bodymap</i> section I and II: pgs 2-20	
W Nov 1	<i>Bodymap</i> Read: <i>Bodymap</i> section III and IV: pgs 21-63	
F Nov 3	Class Canceled: Work on Paper drafts	
M Nov 6	Draft Workshop	Complete draft due
W Nov 8	Thinking Transgender Watch: "Hir" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRLSgPQG0c4 Watch/ Listen: <i>As One</i> "Perfect Boy" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vaNi9uYFBH8&t=146s "To Know" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykH45bGIJq4&t=89s "Three Words" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGRcbUaXKuY	
F Nov 10	<i>M Butterfly</i> Read: <i>M Butterfly</i> Act I	
M Nov 13	<i>M Butterfly</i> Read: <i>M Butterfly</i> Act II & III	
W Nov 15	<i>M Butterfly</i>	Complete final draft of paper due at the start of class
F Nov 17	Class Cancelled: Have a great break!	
MWF Nov 20-24	Thanksgiving Break No Classes	
M Nov 27	Technology and Love Stories: It's complicated... Read: <i>The Nether</i> by Jennifer Haley (all)	
W Nov 29	<i>The Nether</i>	Short-write 7: Editorial
F Dec 1	Love Stories across Time and Culture Watch: <i>Sita Sings the Blues</i> by Nina Paley http://www.sitasingstheblues.com/	
M Dec 4	<i>Sita Sings the Blues</i> Distribute take-home final exam	
M Dec 11	Final Exam	Take-Home Final Due

Course Policies

Office Hours:

- ♥ My office hours are times that I am committed to being available to consult with students. Please note that I am always willing to review drafts with students in office hours, as well as to discuss any other concerns you may have about the class, its content, and its procedures. I am also around campus outside my stated office hours if you would like to make an appointment.
- ♥ Research suggests that students who are in the habit of seeking out additional contact with their teachers tend to do better, even if you're coming by to discuss how Taylor Swift released her whole back catalog on Spotify the day Katy Perry released her latest album (no she didn't!), or a good recipe for hamburgers. Point is: come by, have a cup of coffee, chat. It'll be good.
- ♥ Specifically: please stop by my office at least one time between now and September 1 to introduce yourself. If you cannot make the stated office hours, email me for an appointment. Accomplishing this will contribute to class participation points.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance for this class is required.

- ♥ If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to gather notes or make up any material.
- ♥ If you accumulate 6 absences for any reason, you will forfeit your entire class participation grade (100 points).
- ♥ If you accumulate 9 absences for any reason, you will fail the course.
- ♥ If a circumstance arises that drastically impacts your attendance, perhaps in all of your classes (serious illness, family tragedy, etc.), I'd strongly encourage you to contact Kimberly Mosby, Sr. Associate Dean of Students, at 293-5611 or Kim.Mosby@mail.wvu.edu.

Tardiness:

- ♥ Excessive tardiness is also a problem and will negatively affect your class participation grade. Assignments turned in late because of tardiness will be considered one day late.

Format for Papers:

All out-of-class assignments must adhere to the following criteria:

- ♥ typed or word-processed, Times New Roman 12-point font (or equivalent), double-spaced, 1-1.25-inch margins, spell-checked, page-numbered, and finally, stapled or paper-clipped.
- ♥ Please head your papers with your name, the date, the course, my name, and the word count, followed by a (creative) title that is centered above your essay.

Submissions that do not meet these requirements may be returned to the student to be resubmitted. *Please note: don't fiddle with the physical appearance of the paper just to achieve the illusion of length. There is an important difference between quantity of writing and quality of writing. A paper that is presented in an honest way will earn far more respect.*

- ♥ Grades on all assignments will drop 10% of their value for every weekday they are late.
- ♥ Work handed in more than a week past the due date will automatically be graded F (50%).
- ♥ Work handed in more than two weeks past the due date will earn zero points.
- ♥ A paper is not considered turned in until I have a hard copy in my hand: Electronic versions are unacceptable unless I give explicit permission beforehand.

Writing Feedback:

Students can receive feedback on writing by visiting office hours, making an appointment with the Eberly Writing Studio, and (for your major paper) participating in the mandatory guided peer workshop one week before your paper is due (note: not coming prepared or participating fully in the draft workshop or a mandatory conference will result in a 10% penalty for the assignment). For all written work (journals and major writing assignments) completed before the final exam, students will receive substantial written feedback within two weeks of the due date.

Social Justice:

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

More specifically to this course: Because of the course's content, we will be discussing issues that relate specifically to inclusion of others based on sex and gender identities. Please be particularly respectful of others' identities and stances. Please note: Some of the content in the course is graphic, and will likely create some uncomfortable moments in our class discussions. Just as I will work hard to create an equitable environment for discussion, I ask that you please approach this content as maturely as you can. If you encounter a text or issue that you simply cannot engage, please contact me outside of class discussion.

Academic Dishonesty:

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at:

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>

Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Sexual Misconduct and Resources:

West Virginia University (WVU) does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [BOG Policy 44]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff, but keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the Carruth Center, 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center (RDVIC), 304-292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

For more information please consult WVU policies at <http://titleix.wvu.edu>.

Grading Written Work

Grades on written work will follow the guidelines laid out below, guidelines used by the University's writing program:

A (90-100% of available points): This is an outstanding essay that reflects a perceptive and thoughtful response to the assignment. It is well organized with excellent development of its ideas. It reflects the writer's command of appropriate rhetorical strategies. The prose is vigorous and fresh, and the writer is clearly in control of the standard conventions of American prose.

B (80-89.99% of available points): This is a very good essay that fulfills the assignment and shows evidence of clear thought and good planning. It is well organized with good supporting details. The writing is fluent, and there are only minor errors in the mechanics of writing that do not interfere with reading the essay.

C (70-79.99% of available points): This is a standard, satisfactory essay that fulfills the assignment and is adequately developed. This is the basic grade from which all others are derived. Higher grades than this exceed the expectations for the assignment, and grades lower than this fail to meet some major component of the assignment. The writing is clear and coherent with relatively few errors in usage and mechanics, but the writer fails to demonstrate any particular strength that would distinguish an above-average essay.

D (60-69.99% of available points): This is a below-average essay that fulfills many components of the assignment but exhibits major problems in writing. It may have difficulty with the presentation of ideas (e.g., lack of a clear thesis, weak organization, poor development of ideas, or inappropriate diction, poor spelling) or be marred by enough errors in the mechanics of writing to seriously distract the reader.

F (less than 60% of available points): This is an essay that relates to the topic but is so poorly presented that it fails to fulfill the assignment. It fails to present its basic ideas, either because of poor organization and lack of clarity or because the writing reflects a lack of control over the basic conventions of standard American usage. Such an essay may have sentence boundary problems, poor use of idiom, inappropriate diction (words used incorrectly), agreement errors, or verb tense problems.

0: This is an essay that is either completely unrelated to the assignment, or that represents dishonest work by the student, principally the use of ideas or writing which are clearly not one's own work. Refer to the West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog for the University policy on Academic Dishonesty.

Class Participation Grading Scale

Since a major component of your grade is participation and one of the course requirements is that you participate in class discussions and activities in such a way that enhances learning for both yourself and your classmates. Here are some additional guidelines for what that means, and how your grade will reflect that.

C

You are on time, you have your books, and you have done all of the reading and assignments or homework for that day. In general, you are prepared for class. When called upon, you usually answer questions. You rarely participate in the discussion without my having to ask you to do so. During group work, you participate rather than being passive, or leaving work for your group members.

D

You have not, in some way, fulfilled all of the obligations for earning a C grade. You rarely speak in class. You have probably done something to earn negative class participation.

F

You have fallen far below what is expected of a student in this class. You are frequently late, don't have your books, or the assignments that are due, and you never speak in class. You likely have done much to earn negative class participation.

B

You have fulfilled all of the obligations of a C grade. You speak regularly in class without being overbearing. You occasionally offer intelligent insights to the discussion that are more thought provoking than the average response. You are not disruptive or rude in class.

A

You have fulfilled all of the obligations for a B grade. The insights you offer are frequently intelligent, thought-provoking comments, which demonstrate that you have thoroughly digested the reading for that day and have spent some time thinking about it. You ask intelligent questions that don't pertain merely to your own work. You are never disruptive or rude in class.

Negative Class Participation

Hopefully this will not even be a consideration for you. Doing any of the following, especially more than one, will ensure that you earn a negative class participation grade:

- Talking to someone next to you
- Sleeping in class
- Arriving late
- Offering inappropriate comments that do not further the discussion or the goals of this course
- Packing up early
- In general, showing disrespect toward the professor or toward any of your fellow classmates