NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study
WRITING ABOUT LOVE
UG 1370
Fall, 2013
Mon/Wed 9:30-10:45 am
GCASL, Rm. 375

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Office: One Washington Pl, Rm 416
Hours: Mon/Wed. 8:45-9:30 am

Advanced Writing: Writing about Love

Rather than focus on one genre in their reading and writing, student writing in this course will be inspired by a theme: the nature and meanings of romantic love as both private feeling and social ideology. Love has assumed an enormously important place in Western culture in the last two centuries, shaping expectations of what the good life should be, as well as evoking anxiety about how to achieve the fulfillment of that dream. Students will try varied forms of writing about romance in our modern world, such as writing about their own emotions and experiences, literary analysis, cultural observation, and opinion. Accordingly, our texts will likewise be diverse, including fiction and poetry, letters and diaries; the philosophy of love; sociology of gender and romance; and cultural theory about dating. Classes will be devoted to sharing in-class writing, analyzing the assigned texts to elicit ideas for essays, intensive workshopping of drafts in student groups, and personal conferences with the instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. In their creative work, students will demonstrate their understanding of and adherence to essential principles of essay development and revision.

2. In classroom discussions and peer reviews, students will produce useful, relevant, and informed critiques of fellow students’ work.

3. Students will demonstrate depth of understanding about the subject of the cultural and literary forms of romance from varied perspectives.
REQUIRED TEXTS TO BUY:

Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love* (trans. Peter Bush)


Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body*

ADDITIONAL TEXTS (These are handouts or files posted on NYU Classes; bring printed copy to class):

Excerpt from Sarah Kane, *Crave* (handout)

Excerpts from Diaries and Letters, Part II of *Women and Romance*, ed. Susan Weisser, pp. 67-109

Merri Lisa Johnson, “F--- You and Your Untouchable Face,” from *Jane sexes it up: True confessions of feminist desire*, Ch. 1, pp. 13-52


Lorrie Moore, “How”

Selected Love Poetry

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Students will produce:

a) in-class and ungraded writing; you will be writing in class every week

b) at least two drafts of four graded essays, minimum of five pages each (no maximum)

We will alternate free-writing; analysis of the reading and discussion of issues; critique and revision of essays in a group setting (writing workshops); and individual conferences. All writing will be geared to the topics of the reading and discussion for that week.

In-class freewriting about the reading or other subject will be shared but not graded. The purpose of freewriting is to stretch your writing muscles, so to speak. You may want to use some or all of your freewrite in your drafts.

Just as the texts are in mixed genres of fiction, poetry, memoir and social analysis, you will be expected to write across genres as well. However, you will have a great deal of choice as to the type of writing you would like to do. As long as you produce at least ONE work of creative writing (memoir or fiction) and ONE academic essay in response to any of the texts we read, you
may decide for yourself what form the other essays will take: fiction; autobiographical essay; literary analysis; cultural analysis; argument/opinion, with or without secondary sources. All writing must be in essay form.

The total number required is four pieces of graded writing, of at least five pages each (no maximum).

Individual conferences with the instructor are voluntary and take place during group workshops. After the first week, you may sign up for as many conferences as you wish.

OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Good attendance is necessary to the workshop process! The instructor reserves the right to count excessive absence (more than two meetings absent without medical documentation), late papers, and general inattention in evaluating students for grades. Please use the e-mail address below to communicate about problems, questions, absences, the meaning of life, etc.

Note that missing a class does not excuse you from the due date of a writing assignment; please email your paper to me and to your fellow students in the event of your absence. It also doesn’t excuse you from your editorial duties – you must obtain your peer group’s essays and produce commentary on them as usual. You may bring hard copy of your commentary to the next class or in case you miss more than one class in a row, email the commentary.

Please try to stay in the classroom for our 75 minute class, unless it is really necessary to leave. If you must be late, email before class if possible so I know you are coming. If you come in late, do remind me to erase your absent mark.

MEANS OF EVALUATION:

The first drafts of essays are not graded, and there is ample opportunity to revise all essays for higher grades until the very end of the semester. There are no exams in this course; your understanding of the reading is expected to emerge in class discussions and/or in written critical analysis. For that reason, class participation in discussion is important.

The final grade is the average of grades on essays, with consideration of class participation, which includes both class discussion of readings and editorial work on the writing of others.

4 Graded Essays = 80%

Editorial Work = 10%

Participation = 10%
TECHNICAL MATTERS:

All essays must be typed, double-spaced, and stapled. First drafts must be at least four pages. Please label all essays by number as well as number the drafts at the top of the first page: it should be clear which assignment and which draft it is. Also, number all pages for easy reference during editorial readings. Be sure to proofread for errors, even on first drafts!

First (Workshop) draft: The first draft is collected but normally not read by the instructor except in conference. It is assumed that the draft is a work in process, and the idea is for you to use your peers to get initial feedback. When a first draft is due, you will bring a designated number of copies to class, including one for the instructor. Please don’t leave copying until the last minute! You may also email your draft to your group in time for them to read it before class if you wish. Remember to give me hard copy of your workshop draft on the day it is due.

Second draft: The second draft, accompanied by first drafts with editorial comments by students, should be turned at the next class after the workshops end. This draft is the first to be graded. You may choose to accept this grade, or you may try to raise it by redrafting (or even entirely rewriting) the essay.

Third and Subsequent drafts: Only first and second drafts are mandatory. If you choose to do more redrafting, there is no need to resubmit peer comments, but do clip on the previous draft with my comments attached to the new draft. It’s helpful if you highlight or otherwise indicate where improvements were made on the paper. Grades are raised only when there is substantive improvement to the last draft (beyond technical corrections).

ALL REVISIONS (i.e. beginning with Draft #2) MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PROCESS NOTE (brief letter to the instructor), attached to the essay, with any or all of the following information: how this assignment went for you, how satisfied you are with your progress on it, what you see as the areas you’d like more work on, what questions or doubts you have about it...or anything else you’d like to communicate. The Process Notes in this class must also explain how your essay is related to the readings for that topic. The Process Note is helpful for both of us: please remember to do this.

Third and subsequent drafts, should you choose to do them, have no due date; you may hand them in (hard copy) any time until the very end of class.

All final revisions will be due at the end of the semester, at a date TBA.

Please do not email papers for me to print without permission, as the printing of your papers is too much of a burden on me and on Gallatin.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html).
Advanced Writing: Writing about Love

CLASS SCHEDULE

This schedule is provisional and subject to change according to class need.

Week 1:
Sept 4  Introduction to the course

Week 2:  Topic I: The Nature of Love
Sept 9, 11  Reading Due: Diaries and Letters in Women and Romance (link in NYU Classes; see instructions as to selections there)
            Writing Due: Writing Assignment (short, ungraded)

Week 3:  Reading Due: Badiou, In Praise of Love
Sept 16, 18

Week 4:  Writing Due: Essay #1, Workshops/Conferences begin
Sept 23, 25

Week 5:  Topic II: Obsession
Sept 30, Oct 2  Reading Due: Kane, Crave (handout)

Week 6:
Oct 7, 9  Turgenev, First Love

Week 7:  Writing Due: Essay #2, Workshops/Conferences
Oct 14, 16

Week 8:  Topic III: Relationships and Gender
Oct 21, 23  Reading Due: Johnson, “F—You”; Moore, “How”

Week 9:  Reading Due: Coontz, “The New Fragility of Marriage”
Oct 28, 30
**Week 10:** Reading Due: Winterson, *Written on the Body*
Nov 4, 6

**Week 11:** Writing Due: Essay #3, Workshops/Conferences
Nov 11, 13

**Week 12:** Topic IV: The Poetic Expression of Love
Nov 18, 20 Reading Due: Selected Poems (see file on NYU Classes)

**Week 13:** Selected Poems, cont’d
Nov 25, 27

**Week 14:** Writing Due: Essay #4, Workshops/Conferences
Dec 2

**Week 15:** Workshops and Conferences on Revisions
Dec 9, 11

NOTE: The date of final revisions will be announced!