**English 0510W**

**Coupling: The Literature of Courtship**

MWF 2:00-2:50 Professor Aeron Hunt

Sayles Hall 012 email: Aeron\_Hunt@brown.edu

Office hours: W 10:30-12:30 and by appt. Office: 70 Brown St. Rm. 211

Phone: 401-863-3705

This course will examine the history of the courtship plot in the Anglo-American literary tradition from the eighteenth century to the present. Among the questions that will motivate our discussion are: How has courtship changed over time, and how have the stories told about it changed? What is the relationship of courtship to the stories a culture tells about itself? How (and why) have love and marriage come to bear the kinds of cultural burdens that they have? How have writers conceived of courtship in relation to the development of the gendered self? How have writers explored challenges to the traditional courtship plot, which has as its endpoint the union of man and woman in marriage? Authors we read include Samuel Richardson, Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and Jeffrey Eugenides. Secondary readings include historical and sociological accounts of courtship, marriage, and the history of sexuality; literary critical and philosophical analyses of the courtship tradition; and feminist and queer responses to the courtship plot.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

Students will learn to

* Analyze a literary tradition
* Integrate historical perspectives and literary analysis
* Integrate theory and criticism into literary analysis
* Write a research paper that integrates literary analysis with theory, history, cultural studies

**Texts:**

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (Oxford World’s Classics)

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Longman Cultural Edition)

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Broadview)

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (Penguin)

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt)

Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Marriage Plot* (Picador)

These texts available at Brown bookstore; other readings are on Canvas.

**Course Requirements:**

Discussion questions (4 total): 20% (5% each)

Short response papers (2-3 pages each, 4 total): 20% (5% each)

Annotated bibliography for final research paper: 5%

Draft introduction for final research paper: 5%

Research essay (8-10 pages): 35%

Class participation (attendance, informed discussion,

any in-class written work, etc.): 15%

**Grades: ABC/No credit**

**DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Discussion questions:** Thisassignment represents a way for us to share responsibility for classroom discussions, for you to clarify issues that emerge in your readings, and for us to have conversations about what kinds of question are likely to generate good literary critical arguments in preparation for your final project. You will be responsible for four discussion questions over the course of the semester. Plan to space these over several novels. Signup will happen in the first week of the semester. These questions can be phrased as questions, or they can be phrased as topics for discussion. Along with the question/topic, you should write some preliminary ideas about how you would respond to it, making particular note of passages in the text(s) that you think merit attention. This “answer” doesn’t need to be long—a good-sized paragraph is fine; no more than a page—and it can be more exploratory than polished. (However, please do use full sentences! Try to use your writing to develop thoughts and connections clearly.) I will not comment extensively on these, but will grade them based upon the thoughtfulness of the question and the connections to textual evidence suggested in the answer.

Please submit the question, including any specific passages (page numbers, scenes) you think would be useful to consider—but not your thoughts on how to answer it—to Canvas by 5 p.m. the day before the class period in which we will use the question. Everyone should check before class in order to have time to consider the questions. At the end of the class in which we discuss your question, please turn in your question and the notes you have made on how to answer it (hard copy, please).

**Short response papers:** These offer a chance for you to engage, in writing, the literary texts and the secondary readings. Use these as occasions to articulate a succinct argument about a work (or at most two). You may respond to a critical reading, explore connections between a nonliterary text and a literary text, develop a reading (or locate a puzzle) about a particular passage in a literary text, etc. There are no set dates for these, but you are responsible for making sure you complete four over the semester. Please give them to me in class, in hard copy.

**Class participation:** Learning to talk about literature, as well as write about it, is one of the aims—and pleasures—of being an English major. Therefore, class participation is a crucial part of the course. Come to class prepared, with the reading done. Remember that good reading is *active* reading: underline or take notes on things that strike you, that you have questions about. Look up words and references you don’t know. I may occasionally assign *short* preparatory tasks in class, and may collect these for consideration in the participation grade. Make sure to look at Canvas before class to give yourself a chance to consider any discussion questions.

Attendance is a crucial part of the class, but it is expected: it’s the baseline, not by itself enough to give you a good participation grade. Missed classes will affect your participation grade.

**Research essay, annotated bibliography, draft introduction:** I will suggest topics for the final research paper, but you may also develop your own in consultation with me.

**Annotated bibliography:** This represents a preliminary bibliography; your final bibliography will likely be longer. It should include at least five items other than your primary text(s). At least three of these should be annotated with a brief (one or two sentence) summary of the main point, and a sentence or two on what you think of the argument. Do you disagree or agree? Why? Does it miss something that your essay will help to fill in? This annotation will help you to begin to develop your sense of the critical conversation you are entering, and it will help you develop your sense of the stakes of your project. Finally, it will give you practice zeroing in on and briefly summarizing critics’ main points—a skill you will be using in your final paper.

**Research essay, 8–10 pages:** Your final essay should articulate a good, sustained literary critical argument, organized around a compelling, significant thesis—one that moves beyond mere description of the text and that doesn’t leave the reader thinking, “So what?” We will spend some class time discussing what makes a compelling, significant thesis, and will use the **draft introduction** assignment to help hone the thesis and framework of the essay. Essays must support their claims with textual evidence, generated through close reading and textual analysis. Essays must incorporate secondary research. This may come from course readings, but should also incorporate other research in historical materials (secondary and primary), literary criticism, theory, and so forth. I will expect a “Works Cited” list, in proper MLA format. I also expect your essays to be logically organized and clearly structured, with correct grammar and spelling.

**COURSE PROCEDURES AND ETHICS**

**Communication:** I will use your Brown email address for correspondence about this course. Be sure to check your Brown account if it isn’t your primary email account.

**Assignments:** Annotated bibliography/prospectus and final papers can be turned in electronically. Discussion questions should be posted to Canvas by 5 p.m. the day before the discussion question is due. Short reflection papers should be in hard copy. Instructions on draft introduction assignment will follow. Please use MLA bibliographic style. All written assignments should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

**Late Assignments:** There will be a penalty for late assignments, roughly equivalent to 1/3 grade per day late. Things happen, I know. If you anticipate a problem completing an assignment on time, please try to discuss the possibility of an extension in advance. I will give one grace extension per semester.

**Academic Honesty:** Doing literary criticism involves you in a community of scholars, and that community requires trust. Breaching that trust by representing another’s work as your own is one of the most serious offenses you can commit as a college student and a scholar. The consequences are significant.

For information on English Department and Brown policies on academic dishonesty, see The Brown Academic Code, accessible at <http://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/policies/academic-code>

This does a good job of explaining norms and expectations, as well as explaining the procedures and consequences should lapses occur. If you have questions at any point about what constitutes appropriate citation, paraphrasing, etc., please talk to me.

**Accommodations for Disability:** Please inform me if you have a disability or other condition that might require some modification of any of these course procedures.  You may email me, or speak with me after class or during office hours.  For more information, contact Students and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or [SEAS@brown.edu](mailto:SEAS@brown.edu).

**Positive Learning Environment:** The class is a collaborative space, with a shared, reciprocal expectation that discussions, written communications, office hour conversations, and so forth will be conducted with respect, civility, and sensitivity.

**Schedule of Readings (subject to minor revision)**

**Readings other than novels are available on Canvas**

**WEEK 1**

**W SEPT. 3** Introduction; *New York Times,* “Vows”

**F SEPT. 5** Selections from Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, *All the Rules: Time Tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right; How to Woo*

**WEEK 2**

**M SEPT. 8** Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*

Joseph Allen Boone, “The Emergence of a Literary Ideal of Romantic Marriage: A Historical Perspective” from *Tradition Counter Tradition* (31–64)

**W SEPT. 10** Richardson, *Pamela*

**F SEPT. 12** Richardson, *Pamela*

**WEEK 3**

**M SEPT. 15** Richardson, *Pamela*

Ruth Bernard Yeazell, “Modest Blushing.” *From Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel,* pp. 65–80.

**W SEPT. 17** Richardson, *Pamela*

**F SEPT. 19** Richardson, *Pamela*

**WEEK 4**

**M SEPT. 22** Nancy Armstrong, from *Desire and Domestic Fiction,* pp. 108–34.

**W SEPT. 24** Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Vol. 1

From Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries,* pp. 97–109

**F SEPT. 26** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

**WEEK 5**

**M SEPT. 29** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, to end of book

Readings on female and male character and conduct from Longman Cultural Edition, pp. 384-407

**W OCT. 1** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

**F OCT. 3** Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

**WEEK 6**

**M OCT. 6** Claudia Johnson, “*Pride and Prejudice* and the Pursuit of Happiness,” from *Jane Austen: Women, Politics and the Novel* (73–93)—and bring Marilyn Butler

**W OCT. 8 Formulating research topics: a workshop**

**F OCT. 10** Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (to end of chapter 10)

Excerpt from Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The Daughters of England* (in Broadview edition)

**WEEK 7**

**M OCT. 13** **NO CLASS (FALL BREAK)**

**W OCT. 15** Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (to end volume 2)

**F OCT. 17** Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

Michel Foucault, “We ‘Other Victorians’” and “The Repressive Hypothesis” from *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1,* pp. 3–13, 17–35

**WEEK 8**

**M OCT. 20** Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (to end of book)

Nancy Armstrong, “Figures of Desire: The Brontës,” from *Desire and Domestic Fiction,* pp. 186–202

**W OCT. 22** Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

From Rachel Ablow, *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot*

**F OCT. 24** Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

Joseph Allen Boone, “Uneasy Wedlock and the Counter-Tradition’s Contribution to Open Form,” from *Tradition Counter Tradition,* pp. 141–51

**WEEK 9**

**M OCT. 27** James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex”

**W OCT. 29** James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

**F OCT 31** James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

**WEEK 10**

**M NOV. 3** James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

**W NOV. 5** James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

From Sharon Marcus, *Between Women*

**F NOV. 7** James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

**WEEK 11**

**M NOV. 10** Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

**W NOV. 12** Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

**F NOV. 14 NO CLASS**

**WEEK 12**

**M NOV. 17** Annamarie Jagose, “Remembering and Forgetting: The Memorialization of Homosexuality in *Mrs. Dalloway,*”from *Inconsequence: Lesbian Representation and the Logic of Sexual Sequence,* pp. 77–100

**\*\*ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE\*\***

**W NOV. 19** Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

**F NOV. 21** Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

**WEEK 13**

**M NOV. 24** Vivian Gornick, “The End of the Novel of Love”

From Laura Kipnis, *Against Love*

**W NOV. 26** **THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS**

**F NOV. 28** **THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS**

**WEEK 14**

**M DEC. 1** Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Marriage Plot*

**W DEC. 3**Eugenides, *The Marriage Plot*

**\*\*DRAFT INTRODUCTION DUE\*\***

**F DEC. 5** Eugenides, *The Marriage Plot*

**WEEK 15 READING PERIOD**

**FINAL RESEARCH ESSAYS DUE DECEMBER 11**