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# ENG 2009G-003: Studies in Passion: Literature of Love, Hate, and Obsession

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ENGLISH 2009G (#003)  
 Spring 2007  
 MW 3-4:15 Coleman 3691

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### **Studies in Passion: Literature of Love, Hate, and Obsession**

*There is love of course. And then there's life, its enemy.*  
 -Jean Anouilh

*[The study of literature can provide us with] a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us.*  
 -Adrienne Rich

This course will examine texts that negotiate and explore the complex, contradictory realm of human desire. We will consider how understandings of meaning, ourselves, our wants, and others are bisected by cultural notions of gender, sexuality, race, politics, identity, technology, aesthetics, and notions of history. Toward that end, the course will explore tropes of "love" "hatred" and "obsession" in prose, dramatic, and cinematic works as they reflect anxieties about cultural politics (race, class, gender), epistemology (our ability to understand or represent the world), and ontology (our theories about what the world consists of, who created it, whether it has any meaning, etc.).

The syllabus is made up of texts that span genres and time periods, and, among the authors, you may recognize some of the usual suspects (William Shakespeare, Ernest Hemingway) side by side with less familiar names (Jeanette Winterson, Patrick Marber). Although not conceptualized as a survey, the course is reading and thinking intensive, necessitating a commitment to class discussion (beyond merely showing up) and courageous consideration of ideas about art, interpretation, culture, existence, and desire. The format of each class will be relatively fluid, changing with regard to the material, my ideas, and your interests. There will be some discussion as well as the occasional informal lecture. However, this course should focus primarily on you, your questions, and opinions. Remember this is not MY class but ours and should be understood as an ongoing conversation. The learning outcomes for the course are as follows:

1. To provide strategies for reading, viewing, and appreciating works of art for the insight they provide about history and our own time.
2. To allow each member of the class to engage the significant issues and questions raised by the texts through writing, performance, and class discussion.
3. To assist in the development of skills of critical thinking and argumentative writing.

Texts: William Shakespeare, Othello  
Patrick Marber, Closer  
Jeanette Winterson, The Passion  
Kazuo Ishiguro, The Remains of the Day  
Dashiell Hammett, The Maltese Falcon  
Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" (handout)

### Assignments:

- \*A critical paper (4-5 pages) that focuses on a particular issue that has provoked, challenged, or disturbed your thinking during the course and can be generated from seed papers. Writing guidelines will be handed out in advance.
- \*Manifesto paper (4 pages)----details to come.
- \*Active, Engaged Participation in Discussion --- defined as TALKING productively.
- \*Two short pieces of writing (2-3 pages) called "seed papers" in which you pose a productive question which relates to the inquiry issues of the course about the text and then attempt to answer it. You may be asked to present and stimulate class discussion with your question during the semester. *No* late seed papers will be accepted. You will be required to write two.
- \*Midterm and Final Exam

### Other sundry ground rules:

#### Attendance

I expect you to be in class awake and prepared every Monday and Wednesday. In other words, arrive on time with your reading/writing assignment completed, prepared to participate in discussion. If you are not a "late afternoon" person, it is important to realize that now and switch into one of the other sections. Because so much in this course relies upon in-class work, frequent absences and habitual lateness will adversely affect your course performance. Attendance will be taken at each class session – you are allowed **two** unexcused absences before your grade is negatively affected. After two, each unexcused absence will lower your participation grade by a letter. **More than four unexcused absences will result in a "0" for participation. More than six unexcused absences will result in a grade of no credit for the course.** Students missing or more than five minutes late to conferences or peer critique sessions will lose points from that paper grade and, if missed, receive no comments on their draft. Please notify me by email if there is unexpected illness or an emergency that causes you to miss class. Do **not** get in touch asking "for the assignment" or a "rundown of what you missed." My responsibilities as an instructor lie with the students who do come to class.

**\*\*If you have a *documented* disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.**

### **Class Participation**

You should come to class having completed and prepared to talk about the reading for that day. Your own questions and comments about the plays are integral to the success of the course. If you have not done the reading or are not prepared to discuss, it is better not to come to class.

### **Email**

You should get into the habit of checking your email daily. There will be a class list on which I will post changes in assignments (if they arise), course-related announcements, and ideas which expand upon what happens in class. This list is also a great way for all of us to interact outside of class; that is to say, if you have a question or query, the miracle of technology offers us a way to discuss and address it.

### **Lateness**

Since coming late or leaving early is extremely disruptive, I request that you do not come to class if you are more than ten minutes late or if you plan to leave early.

### **Conferences**

I am regularly available to meet with you during my scheduled office hours or by appointment. To make an appointment, speak to me after class or contact me via email.

### **Grading**

Critical Paper	25%
Final Exam	25%
Manifesto	10%
Two seed papers	10%
Midterm exam	10%
Participation	20%

### **Plagiarism**

Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author--that the wording and major ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by either quotation marks and/or citations. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of others' materials (words and ideas). We will discuss how to avoid it. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an F in the course, and a report filed with the dean.

### **Class Participation**

You should come to class prepared to talk about the reading for that day. Each class session will be a mixture of informal lecture and discussion; thus, your own questions and comments about the plays are essential to the success of the course. You will also need to have completed the assigned reading and (when noted) your typed "seed paper." If there are no questions or a lagging discussion, I will assume that you understand the text perfectly and will give a **quiz** worth as much as a seed essay.

## Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments

January	8	Course Introduction
	10	Handout / <b>Response Paper Due</b>
	15	Shakespeare's <u>Othello</u> Act One <b>Seed Due</b>
	17	<u>Othello</u> Acts Two and Three <b>Seed Due</b>
	22	<u>Othello</u> Act Four <b>Seed Due</b>
	24	<u>Othello</u> Act Five <b>Seed Due</b>
	29	Winterson's <u>The Passion</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	31	<u>The Passion</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
February	5	<u>The Passion</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	7	<u>The Passion</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	12	Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants"
	14	<b>Essay #1 Due</b>
	19	Ishiguro's <u>The Remains of the Day</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	21	<u>Remains</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	26	<u>Remains</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	28	<u>Remains</u>
March	5	Midterm Review
	7	<b>Midterm</b>
HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!!!!!		
	19	Hammett's <u>Maltese Falcon</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	21	<u>Falcon</u>
	26	<u>Falcon</u>
	28	Marber's <u>Closer</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
April	2	<u>Closer</u>
	4	<u>Closer</u> <b>Seed Due</b>
	9	<u>Closer</u>
	11	<b>Manifesto Due</b>
	16	<u>Closer</u> (film)
	18	<u>Closer</u> (film)
	25	Final Exam Guidelines and Preparation
23	Final Exam Review -- FINAL EXAM DATE TBA	