

Introduction to Literary Study: Intimacy

ENGL / CPLT 190, SECTION 01

FALL 2021

TUESDAY/THURSDAY 10:10—11:25AM

WRIGHT MUSEUM OF ART - LOGAN SEMINAR ROOM (2ND FLOOR)

GOOGLE CLASSROOM CODE: DKM4EHH

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Wright Museum of Art 203

Course Description

What does it mean to “love” a fictional character? Does literature love us back? In novels, characters often confess to us their closest held desires and beliefs. We get to go deeper inside the minds and hearts of people than we ever could in real life. What do we learn about the nature of love when we have this kind of access? Poetry is often first and foremost love poetry. What does it mean for a poet to treat a lover as an occasion for writing while expecting someone else—us—to be the audience actually reading? This course will introduce students to literary analysis and close reading by exploring the intimate relations that literature offers. On the one hand, we will explore how love, sex, desire, and friendship are represented in literature. On the other, we will study how readers and communities have fallen in love with literature and used it for both personal and political ends. How do women and queer people re-write narratives of sexuality? How can sex, intimacy, friendship, and love be politicized?

As we explore these questions, you will develop and hone skills in three main areas.

- First, you will refine your close reading skills, which means slowing down your attention to texts and films we study in order to zoom in on, describe, and analyze the rhythms of language and moving images alike.

- Second, you will practice building arguments from your close readings in order to make claims of cultural significance about topics including gender, power, identity, emotions, and politics.
- Third, you will share your insights with and learn from the insights of others in the classroom by participating in discussions and presentations. Conversation is itself a skill, as we learn to listen and build upon the thoughts of others in our co-creation of knowledge.

These skills have importance beyond your ability to do well in the class. By asking you to engage in creative and critical ways with the texts and with each other, this class aims to prepare you to be an effective communicator and collaborator. Learning to think about cultural objects from multiple perspectives, and learning to share these with others, will make your mind versatile and adaptive to multiple future workplace and intellectual settings.

The focus of this course will at times bring our attention to challenging topics including sexual violence. At times, our readings can be upsetting. So, too, may be our class discussions, because difficult material can produce conversations whose trajectories are not knowable in advance. Careful attention to the material and to each other as we participate in the co-creation of knowledge will be our rule. However, even this cannot make a guarantee against surprises. Please read through all of the syllabus now so you know what lies ahead. I urge you to come talk with me about any concerns you may have about participating fully in this class before the course drop deadline.

Course Readings

Many of the assignments for this course and supplementary readings are available in our class site on Google Classroom. Please download them and print off or annotate on your computers and bring to class. In addition, I ask you to rent/borrow/purchase these texts. I am not particularly fussy about the edition, so feel free to find what is cheapest.

- *If Beale Street Could Talk* by James Baldwin (ISBN 978-0307275936)
- *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith (ISBN 9780375703867)

Because so many of our readings are digital, I realize many folks will be bringing tablets or laptops to class. As long as you're just looking at the readings, go for it. But I also know there's a lot of research that says having screens on in class distracts from both your learning and the learning of your classmates, so we'll also be having dedicated "no screens" time in class when our discussion doesn't require reference to the readings. Please be prepared to put your machines to the side.

Course Requirements

Grade Determination

Your grade for this course consists of participation, 8 worksheets, 4 group "annotated bibliographies," and 3 essays.

- Discussion Participation: 20%
- Weekly Essay and Discussion Preparation Worksheets: 20%
- Annotated Bibliography: 10%
- One 3-page essay (due week 6): 10%
- Two 5-page essays (due weeks 9 and 14): 15% each
- One group presentation with personal reflection: 10%

Attendance & Participation

The success of this discussion-based seminar depends upon your participation and preparation. Please come to class having read the material and prepared to talk about it. Contributing to discussion means both listening to others and building on what they have said; it means both leaning in and leaning back to facilitate a community process of knowledge formation. Participating can mean commenting on the text or commenting on someone else's contribution. It can mean asking follow-up questions of someone or synthesizing the comments of those who have contributed before you. It also means participating in group work, where we are teaching each other in a more intimate context.

In our classroom community, we want to hear everyone's voice, and we want to support everyone to participate. If you are finding it difficult to join discussion, please come visit office hours so we can brainstorm strategies for you to jump in.

Absences

If you're going to be absent for a good reason, please let me know 48 hours ahead of time. More than one absence will make it much harder for you to develop the skills and knowledge you need to succeed in this course; more than two absences will directly lower your grade by 1/3.

Essay and Discussion Preparation Worksheets

Beginning the second week of class, you will have a worksheet due (almost) every Thursday, by 8:00am, that asks you to engage with the text assigned that day in a particular way. Worksheets are distributed and collected through Google Classroom.

The first four worksheets will help prepare you for your first essay. The remaining worksheets will prompt you for class discussion.

- Week 2: Close Reading
- Week 3: Making a Claim
- Week 4: Providing a Warrant
- Week 5: Structuring a Paper

- Weeks 7-15: Leading Discussion

The discussion worksheets will give you an opportunity to indicate what you're curious about in our readings so that we can spend time in class focused on what interests you. This is why they are due a couple hours before class starts, so I can look at them and organize our discussion in line with them.

Annotated Bibliography

Four times throughout the semester, you will work together in small groups outside of classtime to deepen your literary knowledge. Your work in groups will mostly focus on diving deeper into literary terminology for the analysis of the texts we read. To do this, groups will work on and submit an annotated bibliography of literary terms. The purpose of this assignment is to increase your fluency in literary terminology. You will learn how to identify and name literary devices in the texts we read. More detailed instructions are available in Google Classroom.

When scheduled, we will randomly divide into groups of 4–5 students at the end of our class sessions on Thursdays. Students will then have time to schedule a time to do the groupwork together before the next class (the following Tuesday).

These assignments are graded pass/fail. To submit:

- Everyone submits their whole group's document to the appropriate assignment on Google Classroom, so I can see it.
- Individually, each member submits a "private comment" to the assignment on Google Classroom explaining, in 1-2 sentences, the distribution of work in the group. This is to ensure there are no inequalities in the group. It can be as simple as "everything went well" to "we had problem finding a date to meet, and a couple folks were late, but it came together in the end." *If you do not submit a personal evaluation, I will assume you did not contribute to the group and you will receive a 0.*

Essays

You will receive prompts for your essays about three weeks before they are due. Each essay will be graded according to the same rubric, which will be distributed with the prompt. However, the first essay is both shorter and worth less of your overall grade. The purpose is to provide you a lower stakes entryway into writing so that we can pinpoint strengths and weaknesses before you have to write something longer.

Please submit essays to Google Classroom *before class*. Microsoft Word or Google Documents format preferred.

Each essay should be in 12-pt Times New Roman, double spaced, one inch margins, with MLA format and citations. Go to <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> for detailed citation instructions and a very helpful sample MLA-format paper. Below are some suggestions on structure.

An Introduction (first paragraph) should:

- Include the title in italics, the author, and genre of the text. (E.g., “Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* is a modernist novel that...”)
- Provide some textual background to an audience you should assume has not read the text as closely as you have.
 - Note: You should not summarize the *entire* text, but should instead provide the necessary background information for your reader (a) to understand the passages you’re analyzing and (b) to be convinced by your thesis.
- Define your argument’s key terms in the context of the text. (For example, if you are talking about a tension related to family, then you need to explain what family means in the context of *Mrs. Dalloway* rather than providing a general definition that comes from a dictionary.)
- Propose a main claim that responds to the prompt.
 - Remember that a main claim should make an argument that is debatable and is not simply a description or observation.

Each body paragraph should:

- Be organized around one sub-claim that helps support your main claim or provides another step in your argument.
- Use quotations from the text to support your sub-claim. This is your evidence.
- Analyze the quote, i.e., making explicit which aspect of the quote supports your claim in which way. This is your warrant.

A Conclusion (final paragraph) should:

- Summarize the paper’s main claim (the argument), telling us what we learned about the identified text from your argument.
- State the stakes or implications of your analysis. (This will answer the questions “so-what?” or “why does the argument matter for our understanding of the text?”)

Presentations

In the 11th week of class, we will break up into groups of 3-4 students. Each group will prepare a presentation for the last day of class. More guidelines will be provided closer to the presentation date, but each group will have two options:

1. Select a music video of your choice and discuss how its lyrics, sound, and visuals convey a particular ideology, fantasy, or critique of intimacy. You must draw connections with at least two other texts we have read/seen/heard in class.
2. Write a manifesto, drawing inspiration from the manifestos assigned in 10th week. Your topic and format are up to you, but it should address themes familiar to the class.

In addition, each individual will write up a few sentences reflecting on the group process. This is in part to ensure the equal participation of each member.

Academic Resources

College-level analysis and writing pose challenges to all students. To help you meet these challenges, you may find it helpful to utilize some of the services provided by the college. Various professional staff and advanced students are committed to helping you address academic challenges in a variety of ways. Please let me know if there are any resources I can help you find to ensure your success in this class.

I strongly encourage you to visit the Writing Center website at <https://www.beloit.edu/writingcenter/> to learn about tutoring and mentoring options, guidance on study skills and time management, and one-on-one assistance to ensure that you are using the best possible strategies for success in your course work. The Writing Center has appointments available Sunday-Thursday 3-10pm. Try not to wait until the last minute—there is often a lot of work to be done after a session. At an appointment, you will bring in the assignment, related reading, and any previous work on which you've received feedback. Please try it out! It is so helpful to be able to sit down with somebody to dissect your assignment prompt, discuss the related reading, generate ideas and make a plan, revise drafts, and edit sentence-level issues. And you don't need to have writing done to find a session useful—sometimes it's great to have an appointment just to get started!

Accommodations

I aim to make this class accessible and inclusive by meeting the needs of each student. That means I'm happy to meet with you or respond to your e-mails if you have any concerns about the class. I just ask that you get in touch sooner rather than later so we can work toward solutions together as soon as possible. I also welcome requests for accommodation; just check out <https://www.beloit.edu/dss/enrolledstudents/accommodations/>.

Late Papers

Turning in papers on time allows me to provide feedback in a timely manner. However, I understand things come up in life and sometimes a couple extra days to work on a paper can make all the difference. If that happens, what's most important to me is that we stay in good communication so we have a plan on when you can turn in a paper and when I can return it to you. Please reach out to me sooner rather than later if you foresee a challenge.

Office Hours

I love talking with students and having the opportunity to think out loud with you in real time. That means the best time to discuss any questions you have with me is in class or during office hours. I am available over e-mail to answer brief clarification questions or to set up office hour appointments, but please come to office hours or set up an appointment to discuss anything more substantive. Please also schedule an office hour appointment at least 2 business days in advance. That means if you want to meet on Tuesday, you should be e-mailing to schedule on Friday.

Please also note that this syllabus gives you detailed information about due dates and readings. Read it and refer to it often. Answers to many questions are already provided here.

Please note I do not usually check e-mail after 5pm on weekdays and only rarely over the weekend. Please do not expect prompt replies at this time. However, I will make every effort to reply to your e-mail within 24 hours.

Reading and Discussion Schedule

1 Intimacy: Some Working Definitions

Tuesday, August 24: Introductory (no reading)

Thursday, August 26: What Can Intimacy Do?

- Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic” (Google)
- Michel Foucault, “Friendship As a Way of Life” (Google)

2 Kinds of Intimacy

Tuesday, August 31: *If Beale Street Could Talk*

- Read pages 1–70

Thursday, September 2: *If Beale Street Could Talk*

- Read to page 109
- Worksheet #1: Close Reading due in class

3 Modernist Connections

Tuesday, September 7: *If Beale Street Could Talk*

- Read until the end.
- Annotated Bibliography #1 due. Using the Annotated Bibliography instructions in Google Classroom, annotate the following terms with examples from *Beale Street*:
 1. Sensory Language
 2. Allusion
 3. Cumulative Sentence
 4. Colloquialism
 5. Metonymy
 6. Synecdoche

7. Foreshadowing OR Flashback
8. Expletive

** First essay prompts distributed**

Thursday, September 9: *White Teeth*

- Read pages 1–102 (chapters 1–5)
- Worksheet #2: Claims due in class

4 Postmodernist Connections

Tuesday, September 14: *White Teeth*

- Read pages 103–218 (chapters 6–10)

Thursday, September 16: *White Teeth*

- Read pages 219–340 (chapters 11–15)
- Worksheet #3: Warrants due in class

5 Falling in Love with Love

Tuesday, September 21: *White Teeth*

- Read pages 341–end (chapters 16–20)

Thursday, September 23: Edmund Spenser

- Read Sonnets 5, 7, 8, 12, 15, 22, 23, 29, 35, 40, 41, 44, 45, 49, 50, 54, 60, 65, 67, and 74 from the *Amoretti* (Google)
- Worksheet #4: Structuring a Paper due in-class

6 Missed Connections

Tuesday, September 28: William Shakespeare

- Read *Twelfth Night*, acts I and II
- Annotated Bibliography #2 due. Using the Annotated Bibliography instructions in Google Classroom, annotate the following terms with examples from Edmund Spenser's sonnets:

1. Apostrophe
2. Couplet
3. Iamb
4. Simile
5. Metaphor
6. Anaphora
7. Eye rhyme
8. Exact rhyme

Thursday, September 30: *Twelfth Night*

- Finish *Twelfth Night* (acts III-V)
- First essay due

7 Contemporary Love

Tuesday, October 5: New Loves

- Read selected poems from Mónica de la Torre, Suji Kwock Kim, Srikanth Reddy, Brenda Shaughnessy, and Richard Siken from *Legitimate Dangers* (Google)
- Annotated Bibliography #3 due. Using the Annotated Bibliography instructions in Google Classroom, annotate the following terms with examples from *Twelfth Night*:
 1. Soliloquy
 2. Volta
 3. Invective
 4. Blank verse
 5. Prose
 6. Double Entendre
 7. Dynamic Character
 8. Static Character

Thursday, October 7: Desire

- Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Google)
- Worksheet #5: Discussion due

Second essay prompt distributed

8 Fall Break: No Class 10/12 and 10/14

9 Writing Conferences

Instead of class this week, we will meet one-on-one to discuss your first and second essays. Please come to our meeting with a thesis statement for and outline of your second essay.

10 Intimacy and Representation

Tuesday, October 26: *Watermelon Woman* (screening in class)

- Read “Film Terms Glossary” before class
- Second essay due before class

Thursday, October 28: *Watermelon Woman*

- Discussion of the film shown in class on Tuesday
- Worksheet #6: Discussion due

11 Politicizing Intimacy

Tuesday, November 2: Manifestos

- Read the following manifestos from our Google Classroom:
 - Valerie Solanas, “SCUM Manifesto” (1967)
 - Carl Wittman, “A Gay Manifesto” (1970)
 - Radicalesbians, “Woman-Identified Woman” (1970)
 - “The Combahee River Collective Statement” (1978)
 - “Queers Read This” (1990)
 - Gloria Anzaldúa, “La Conciencia de la Mestiza” (1999)

Thursday, November 4: Poetry of AIDS

- Read the following poems from Google Classroom:
 - Paul Monette, “Worrying” and “Manifesto” from *Elegies for Rog* (1988)
 - Thom Gunn, “The Hug,” “Philemon and Baucis,” and “The Missing” from *The Man with Night Sweats* (1992)
 - Tim Dlugos, “Parachute” and “Sleep Like Spoons” (1990)

- Timothy Liu, “SFO/HIV/JFK,” “Sodom and Gomorrah,” and “The Quilt” from *Vox Angelica* (1992)
 - Essex Hemphill, “American Wedding,” “For My Own Protection,” and “Heavy Breathing” from *Ceremonies* (1992)
 - Melvin Dixon, “Silent Reaper” and “Into Camp Ground” from *Love’s Instruments* (1995)
 - Reginald Shepherd, “Two or Three Things I Know About Him” and “Paradise” from *Angel, Interrupted* (1996)
- Worksheet #7: Discussion due

12 Migratory Intimacies

Tuesday, November 9: Visualizing Desire in *Sexile*

- Read *Sexile* by Jaime Cortez (2001)
- Annotated Bibliography #4 due. Using the Annotated Bibliography instructions in Google Classroom, annotate the following terms with examples from the AIDS poetry.
 1. Enjambment
 2. FreeVerse
 3. Vernacular
 4. Euphemism
 5. Zeugma OR Malapropism
 6. Slang
 7. Neologism
 8. Inversion

Third essay prompt distributed

Thursday, November 11: *Sexile*

- Continued discussion
- No discussion worksheet today, but come to class with a proposal for our class-elected movie viewing.
- I will reserve the second half of class for groups to meet about their final presentations

13 Translating Intimacy

Tuesday, November 16: *Arabian Nights*

- Read “Introduction” (pp. xi-xxxvi) and pages 3-80 (Foreword, Prologue, Nights pages 1-27) (Google)
- Read “The Storyteller” by Walter Benjamin (Google Classroom)

Thursday, November 18: *Arabian Nights* and storytelling

- Read pp. 416-518 (Nights 201-271) (Google Classroom)
- Worksheet #8: Discussion due

14 Intimacy in Popular Culture

Tuesday, November 23: Class-elected movie screening in class

- No class Thursday (Thanksgiving)

15 Intimacy and Beyond

Tuesday, November 30: Discussion of class-elected movie

- Third essay due before class

Thursday, December 2: Presentations