

**Junior Tutorial**  
**Spring 2018**  
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**“Reader, I married, divorced and forgot about him”: 275 years of the marriage plot**



*"I'm having my wedding ring melted down into a bullet."*

**Course description:**

The marriage plot has played a central role in the development of the English novel. Starting with Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, this course examines the centrality of marriage to the novel form in England and North America, and explores how over the past 275 years, writers have reimagined, interrogated and challenged the marriage plot. It asks how far the marriage plot forms an alternative to or intersects with other kinds of plots, and why female characters in novels have so often been constructed through the search for a husband. The course also explores to what extent the novelistic relationship between female characters and marriage has changed—or failed to change—in response to historical, political and social developments.

## **Tutorial goals:**

This tutorial will build towards students writing a 20-25pp paper at the end of the semester, exploring a research question that they have developed through their reading of a wide range of marriage plot novels and critical responses to such novels. The tutorial aims to enable students to understand the novels they read in their historical and literary contexts, and to introduce them to a variety of theoretical approaches, such as narratology, feminist and queer theory. It will prepare students to use these theoretical approaches—and others—in their further study of literary texts.

More generally, the tutorial will introduce students to the practice of scholarly writing at an upper-division level, guiding them through the process of designing a research question, developing an annotated bibliography, putting secondary criticism in dialogue with their own ideas and making a critical intervention.

## **Assignments and grade breakdown:**

- Response paper (Week Two, 1 page, ungraded): Summarise the argument of **either** *The Rise of the Novel* **or** *Desire and Domestic Fiction*.
- Response paper (Week Four, 3 pages, 10%): Write a response to one of the novels we've read so far, engaging with one or more of the secondary sources
- Prospectus and annotated bibliography (Week Seven, 2-page prospectus, 10 sources, 15%)
- Presentation (Week Ten, 10%): Each student will give a 10-15 minute presentation on a novel of their choice that relates to their final paper).
- Full draft of final paper (Week Eleven, 10%)
- Final paper (Due at the end of reading period, 40%)

The success of the tutorial will depend hugely on students' dedication to keeping up with the reading and engaging enthusiastically with the material and with one another. Participation therefore comprises 15% of the final grade, and includes participation in the three junior tutorial workshops held in weeks two, four and six (marked on the syllabus).

**NB Passing this course requires submission of the final essay.**

## **Readings:**

- *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson (1740)
- "Fantomina" by Eliza Haywood (1725)
- *Emma* by Jane Austen (1815)
- *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1847)
- *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys (1966)
- *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert (1856)
- *Quicksand* by Nella Larsen (1928)
- *Tipping the Velvet* by Sarah Waters (1998)
- "Brokeback Mountain" by Annie Proulx (1997)
- *The Magnate's Marriage Merger* by Joanne Rock (2017)
- *How Should A Person Be?* by Sheila Heti (2010)

I'm happy to alter the readings according to your interests and/or previous reading experience. I'm especially happy to swap in other novels by the same writers, provided they're in the vicinity of the marriage plot (e.g. we could replace *Emma* with *Pride and Prejudice* or *Tipping the Velvet* with *Fingersmith*).

When secondary texts are not very easily available online, I will provide you with PDFs of the relevant passages.

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## SCHEDULE

### Part I: Developing the marriage plot

#### Week One:

*Pamela* by Samuel Richardson (Volume I) (1740)  
"Fantomina" by Eliza Haywood (1725)

Genre Theory: *The Rise of the Novel* by Ian Watt (excerpts)

#### Week Two:

*Pamela* by Samuel Richardson (Volume II) (1740)

Genre Theory: *Desire and Domestic Fiction* by Nancy Armstrong (excerpts)  
Feminist Theory: "Rape and the Rise of the Novel" by Frances Ferguson,  
*Representations*, 20 (Autumn 1987), 88-112 (excerpts)

**In addition to meeting as a group, this week I will hold individual meetings so I can get to know your individual interests and hopes for the course.**

**\*\*Junior tutorial workshop\*\***

#### Week Three:

*Emma* by Jane Austen (1815)

Narratology: *Narrative and its Discontents* by D.A. Miller (Introduction and Chapter 1, "The Danger of Narrative in Jane Austen")  
Narratology: *Romance's Rival* by Talia Schaffer (Chapter 2, "Historicizing Marriage")

#### Week Four:

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1847)

Feminist Theory: *The Madwoman in the Attic* by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Chapter 10, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress")

**This week we will preview the rest of the primary texts in the course, so that students have a better opportunity to design a research question relating to those texts, and can get the most out of our upcoming library visit.**

**\*\*Junior Tutorial workshop\*\***

## **Part II: Reimagining the marriage plot**

### **Week Five:**

**\*\*Library research visit\*\***

*Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys (1966)

Postcolonial Theory: “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” by Gayatri Spivak, *Critical Inquiry*, 12:1 (Autumn 1985), 235-61

Postcolonial Theory: “Burning Down the House: the Revisionary Paradigm of Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*” by Caroline Brody, in *Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure*, ed. by Alison Booth

### **Week Six:**

*Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert (1856)

**Please use the Geoffrey Wall translation, published by Penguin.**

Use the library catalogue to find some Flaubert criticism that interests you, and bring an article or a book chapter to class. Be prepared to talk about which parts of the argument you found effective, and which parts you found less so

**\*\*Junior Tutorial workshop\*\***

### **Week Seven:**

*Quicksand* by Nella Larsen (1928)

Critical Race Theory: *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text and Tradition in Black Women’s Fiction* by Ann duCille (excerpts)

### **Week Eight:**

*Tipping the Velvet* by Sarah Waters (1998)

“Brokeback Mountain” by Annie Proulx (1997)

Structuralism: *A History of Sexuality Volume I* by Michel Foucault (Part One, “We Other Victorians”)

Queer Theory: *The Epistemology of the Closet* by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (excerpts)

### **Part III: Two Directions for the Marriage Plot (and sharing your research)**

#### **Week Nine:**

*The Magnate's Marriage Merger* by Joanne Rock (2017)

Reception Theory: *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature* by Janice Radway (excerpts)

Reception Theory: *Loving Literature* by Deidre Lynch (excerpts)

#### **Week Ten:**

Each student will choose a novel on which to give a 10-15 minute presentation. The novel should be something that relates to your final paper.

#### **Week Eleven:**

*How Should A Person Be?* by Sheila Heti (2010)

Feminist Theory: *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*, ed. by Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland (Introduction)

#### **Week Twelve:**

**\*\*Draft workshop\*\***

Please come to class having read your classmates' drafts, and prepared to discuss them.

#### **Week Thirteen:**

We'll choose a book to read together to conclude the semester. Below are some suggestions, but you should feel free to make your own.

*Evelina* by Fanny Burney

*The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James

*The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton

*A Room with A View* by E.M. Forster

*Women in Love* by D.H. Lawrence

*Mrs Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf

*Excellent Women* by Barbara Pym

*Tar Baby* by Toni Morrison

*The Marriage Plot* by Jeffrey Eugenides

*The Love Affairs of Nathaniel P.* by Adelle Waldman

*10.04* by Ben Lerner

*Fates and Furies* by Lauren Groff

*Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid

*No Other World* by Rahul Mehta

**\*\*FINAL PAPER DUE AT THE END OF READING PERIOD\*\***

## **POLICIES**

### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or writing without giving them proper credit. Consequences of plagiarism can range from failure on the paper to dismissal from the course to even more serious actions. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with Harvard FAS's Honor Code:

*Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.*

### **Collaboration:**

You are absolutely encouraged to talk with other students about the course and its readings, and to read each other's work. In individual assignments, academic collaboration and external sources should be always cited.

### **Attendance:**

Your attendance in tutorial is vital to your own success as well as to the success of the class as a whole; so is your attendance in Junior Tutorial General Meetings and at other required events. You have one "free" tutorial absence to be used in case of sickness, travel, etc., with no explanation necessary (although advance notice is always appreciated!). Missing more than one class (without a medical note) will decrease your participation grade, and excessive absence could result in failing the course. If you have extenuating circumstances, you should communicate with me in a timely manner so that we can discuss how to deal with it.

### **Due Dates:**

Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 5pm on the day before our meeting. Please submit a hard copy of all assignments to my mailbox.

### **Extensions:**

Short extensions may be granted in some circumstances, but should be requested 48 hours in advance.

### **Email:**

Outside our meetings, I'll communicate with you primarily through email. You are responsible for checking your email on a daily basis. If you have a question that you need to ask me by email, be sure to give me at least 24 hours. Also, please let me know if you'd like to use a non-Harvard email address.

### **Office hours:**

Come and see me!

**Accommodations for students with disabilities:**

You are encouraged to request accommodation as soon as possible from the Accessible Education Office (AEO). Here's their line on it:

*Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term... Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.*