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English 498

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ENGL 498, Lara Farina, Fall 2007

Love, Sex, and Gender: from Antiquity to the Renaissance

Honors Seminar 498I, Fall 2007

Professor Lara Farina

We may think of it as a universal emotion, but love has a history. The experience of "being in love" has been perceived, theorized, and represented in ways that are intimately linked to shifting cultural norms and social institutions. This course will survey some of that dynamic history, examining how love, desire, and sexuality have been represented in Western Europe from roughly 700 BC to 1700 AD. This is a sweeping amount of time to cover, so we will focus on selected subtopics such as: Love and Platonic Idealism, Narcissism, Lovesickness, Gender Subversion, and Courtly Love. Further, we will be especially concerned with two key transitional periods: the third and fourth centuries AD, when early Christian

writers confront and reshape traditional Greek and Roman sex/gender systems, and the twelfth century AD, when the popularization of romance literature and the development of “affective” piety bring discourses of love to cultural predominance.

Readings will be in modern English translation, except for Shakespeare’s Sonnets.

Required Texts:

Abelard and Heloise. *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*. (Penguin)

Boccaccio, *The Decameron*. (Penguin)

Guillame de Lorris, *The Romance of the Rose*. (Cal-Prince)

Marie de France, *The Lais of Marie de France*. (Baker)

Margaritte de Navarre, *The Heptameron*. (Penguin)

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*. (Penguin)

Plato, *The Symposium*. (Penguin)

Additional readings will be placed on electronic reserve or are available on the Internet. Please print these out and bring them to class when we are scheduled to discuss them.

Required Coursework:

Six 2-page Reading Responses (25%)

One 5-page Essay (20%)

One 7-8 page Research Essay (30%)

Class Participation (25%)

Course Policies:

Late Work: I will not accept late responses. If you have written a response, but then find that you can’t make it to class, you may email it to me before our scheduled class. I can negotiate essay deadlines up to two days before the essay is due. If you haven’t

arranged a later deadline with me, I will deduct a full grade for every day your essay is late, beginning with the class period. Note that there will be no extra credit options in this class, so don't ask for make-up work if you have missed or done poorly on required work.

Attendance: Past experience has taught me that students who do not attend class do not pass—without exception. Therefore, to keep everyone on track, I have a strict attendance policy. You may be absent twice without your grade suffering. Additional absences will affect your class participation grade negatively. At six absences, you will fail the class. In general, I do not care why you are absent and do not want to see any notes. The only exceptions to this are cases where some serious condition requires you to be absent for a week or more or on an exam day.

Social Justice: WVU is committed to providing students with equal access to educational opportunity, regardless of race, class, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief. I share that commitment and expect classroom interaction to be respectful and fair.

Contact Info:

My drop-in office hours are from 3:00-4:00 Tuesday and Thursday in 357 Stansbury Hall. If you can't make these hours, please feel free to make an appointment to see me at another time. You can email me via MIX or at Lara.Farina@mail.wvu.edu. I will email important announcements or schedule changes to the class via MIX, as well as announce these in class. Do not email me for class notes: get in touch with another student for these.

Schedule:

Tu. 8/21 Introduction

Th. 8/23 Poems of Sappho and Archilochus (handout)

Tu 8/28: Plato, *The Symposium*

Th. 8/30 *The Symposium*, cont'd

Tu. 9/4 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Th. 9/6 *Metamorphoses*, cont'd

Tu. 9/11 *Metamorphoses*, cont'd

Th. 9/13 Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (e-reserve)

Tu. 9/18 *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*

Th. 9/20 *Letters*, cont'd

Tu. 9/25 Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermons on the Song of Songs* (e-reserve)

Th. 9/27 Mysticism and Eros (e-reserve materials)

Tu. 10/2 **5-Page Essay Due**

Th. 10/4 Marie de France, *Lais*

Tu. 10/9 *Lais*, cont'd

Th. 10/11 Cappellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love* (e-reserve)

Tu. 10/16 Guillaume de Lorris, *The Romance of the Rose*

Th. 10/18 *The Romance of the Rose*, cont'd

Tu. 10/23 *The Romance of the Rose*, cont'd

Th. 10/25 Christine de Pisan, letters on *The Romance of the Rose* (e-reserve)

Tu. 10/30 Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love* (e-reserve)

Th. 11/1 Article review (from Handbook of Medieval Sexuality)

Tu. 11/6 Boccaccio, *The Decameron*

Th. 11/8 *The Decameron*, cont'd

Tu. 11/13 Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptameron*

Th. 11/15 *Heptameron*, cont'd

Thanksgiving Break

Tu. 11/27 Research Paper conferences

Th. 11/29 Research Paper conferences

Tu. 12/4 Paper Discussions

Th. 12/6 Paper Discussions

7-8 Page Essay Due on Date of Scheduled Final Exam

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