The History of the Modern Romance Novel

History 88S | Spring 2020 | University of California, Los Angeles

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Course Description

This course will discuss the history of the modern romance novel. It is a history course, which will not require students to read entire novels. Instead, we will use romance novels to understand broader historical trends like changes in gender roles. We will first examine the rise of the romance novel from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. From this, we will see the inclusion of other marginalized groups (based on class, sexuality, and race) in the romance novel genre through the late twentieth century, analyzing both its shortcomings and future. Finally, we will take a closer look at modern romance novels, which will culminate in collaborative group projects that aim to derive further insight from the romance novel genre.

History or one’s perception of history never merely exists but is made to exist for an explicit purpose. The romance genre is unique in primarily being made by women for women, which have historically been long ignored and repressed. Tracing the historical context, we will gain newfound insight on society and culture that reverberates to modern day. For a long time, the romance genre has been dismissed by academics and society alike, which we aim to explore.

Learning Outcomes

● The course aims to investigate the evolution of the modern romance novel.
● Over the quarter, students will appraise the changing societal attitudes and opinions of scholars on the value and meaning of romance novels.
● By the end of the quarter, students will be able to develop their own collaborative project that utilizes and engages with the course material, demonstrating their understanding.

Requirements and Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on the following four sources:

1. Attendance: 25%
2. Participation: 25%
3. Group Proposal: 15%
4. Final Presentation: 35%

**Per USIE policy, >2 unexcused absence/ >73% will lead to the person failing the course**
# Lectures and Readings (TENTATIVE)

## History of Romance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: Why Study Romance?</th>
<th>An Ode to Romance Novels (5:53) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0l5yEY_IJY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0l5yEY_IJY</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2: What is a Romance Novel?</td>
<td>Pride and Prejudice Part 1 &amp; 2: CCL (22:56) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xTh44G6RYs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xTh44G6RYs</a></td>
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<td>Week 4: How has the RN changed?</td>
<td>Sex Explained: Sexual Fantasies, Netflix (18:54)</td>
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## Redefining Romance

| Week 5: How do we consume the RN? | Marxism! The Whole Plate (19:02) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFMiuAtbMQ0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFMiuAtbMQ0)  
What Does Late Capitalism Mean? [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7zZPqar34w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7zZPqar34w) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 6: Is the RN queer? | The rise of young adult books with LGBTQ characters — and what's next (10 min. read)  
| Week 7: Is the RN racially inclusive? | Fifty Shades of White (20 min read)  
Do You Have A Racial Preference? (2:38) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjSh_esW9W4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjSh_esW9W4) |

## A Closer Look

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<th>Week 8: How do see Romance now? Freeform Discussion (Movie)</th>
<th>Dear Stephenie Meyer (19:09) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8O06tMbIKh0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8O06tMbIKh0</a></th>
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<td>Week 9: Does Fanfic Fix Romance?</td>
<td>Read a Fanfiction of Your Choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10: Final Projects/Reflection</td>
<td><strong>No Reading!</strong></td>
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Assignments

1. **Group Proposal**
   - List Members of Group
     - Roles for Each Person
   - **Two** Potential Topics (100 words each)
     - It must incorporate the broader themes of the course, while paying special importance on the historical context.
       - Ex: Does it support or undermine societal norms?

***All projects must be approved by the Seminar Facilitator***

2. **Final Project**
   The final project is meant to be an opportunity for students to engage in self-reflection and work collaboratively, incorporating material from the course. It is meant to be cumulative, building upon several themes of the course. The final project is intentionally left flexible, allowing students to creatively engage with the material. This can range from acting out a fanfiction to a group presentation on analyzing Twilight through the lens of race and class. All presentations will have a reflective paper, which will be no longer than 3 pages double-spaced and explain the group project’s connection to the broader themes of the course.

Class Policies

- **Communication:** Students are encouraged to come visit me during office hours should they have any questions. If you have a time conflict, however, I am willing to accommodate you. Email communication is best. As a general policy, I ask that you expect a 24-36-hour reply period.

- **Code of Conduct:** At times, this course may generate discussions in which diverse points of view emerge, particularly over certain subject material. In the classroom, everyone does not need to respect someone’s opinion, but they must still respect one another. To provide a space for fruitful exchange and an optimal learning environment, we will all work toward creating a comfortable environment where everyone can participate, share, and exchange opinions. This ensures that we will all grow intellectually and ethically.
Campus Resources

Undergraduate Writing Center:
The Writing Center is staffed by peer learning facilitators (PLFs) and offers UCLA undergraduates one-on-one sessions at any stage in the writing process. Make an appointment by visiting www.wp.ucla.edu.

The Center for Accessible Education (CAE):
If you are already registered with the Center for Accessible Education (CAE), please request your Letter of Accommodation on the Student Portal. If you are seeking registration with the CAE, please submit your request for accommodations via the CAE website. Please note that the CAE does not send accommodations letters to instructors--you must request that I view the letter in the online Faculty Portal. Once you have requested your accommodations via the Student Portal, please notify me immediately so I can view your letter. Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations should submit their request for accommodations as soon as possible, as it may take up to two weeks to review the request. For more information, please visit the CAE website (www.cae.ucla.edu), visit the CAE at A255 Murphy Hall, or contact us by phone at (310) 825-1501.

Bruin Resource Center:
Includes services for transfer students, undocumented students, veterans, and students with dependents. http://www.brc.ucla.edu/

TITLE IX:
Title IX prohibits gender discrimination, including sexual harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. If you have experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence, you can receive confidential support and advocacy at the CARE Advocacy Office for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, 1st Floor Wooden Center West, CAREadvocate@careprogram.ucla.edu, (310) 206-2465.

LGBT Campus Resource Center:
This resource center provides a range of education and advocacy services supporting intersectional identity development. It fosters unity; wellness; and an open, safe, inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex, transgender, queer, asexual, questioning, and same-gender-loving students, their families, and the entire campus community. You can find the center at 220 Westwood Plaza B36, Students Activities Center, (310) 206-3628, or via email at lgbt@ucla.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):
This is a multidisciplinary student mental health center for the UCLA campus. CAPS offers an array of free services, including individual counseling. If you suspect you are experiencing mental health problems or just need to talk, you can make an appointment at John Wooden Center West (facing Drake Stadium, second floor), over the phone 310-825-0768, or their website counseling.ucla.edu.