

**ENL 200 Studies in Literature**  
**“It’s Complicated”: Fictions of Love**  
Spring 2019 7-week Online Session  
Professor O’Dell  
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**Course Description:**

This course explores recent fiction, poetry, and film about love and relationships. We will look at what these texts teach us about how we define and redefine love in response to technological changes and transforming cultural norms. What do these depictions of love help us understand about their historical moment and our cultural or personal values? How do depictions of forms of love—from romantic to platonic—change depending upon historical and cultural contexts? By closely analyzing what these works say about human connection—and how they say it—we will begin to unpack the deeper meanings that recent depictions of relationships reveal to us. Moreover, this course will give you the skills to interpret literature and pop culture alike, helping you to appreciate and understand movies and books in new ways.

**Course Objectives**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate how literature (fiction, poetry, drama and literary nonfiction) both reflects and helps shape culture, society, and history.
2. Explain how a text’s literary form, style, and content express its meanings using appropriate disciplinary terminology.
3. Evaluate the rhetorical and contextual elements of ideas presented by literary texts and respond to them critically and analytically.
4. Explain the ways in which literature expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences.

**What We’ll Read and Watch:**

The following books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore and on reserve in the library\*:

- M.T. Anderson, *Feed* (Candlewick Press, 2002)
- Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Latest Penguin Edition)
- Other shorter assigned readings are available on myCourses

We will watch the following films and shows\*\*:

- *Her* (Spike Jonze, 2013)
  - Rent or Own on Amazon.com or iTunes
- *Moonlight* (Barry Jenkins, 2016)
  - Available free through Kanopy at UMassD Library
- *Vertigo* (Hitchcock 1958)
  - Rent or Own on Netflix

\* If you decide to buy these books from a website, such as Amazon, please get the same editions. I assign readings based on these editions, and it will be much easier to keep up with assignments if the page numbers are the same. You may also use a kindle or other e-book device to read texts, but it will be your responsibility to translate page numbers into “percent complete” or “location” if no page numbers are available.

\*\* For most films, there are multiple options, so choose the one that works best for you. You may wish to register for a [6-month Amazon Prime student trial](#), which will give you cheaper access to the films. *I leave it to you to decide how best to acquire and watch these assignments, but I will expect you to have watched them before the online lesson and considered them as carefully as you would an assigned reading.* Should you encounter any difficulties finding or watching these materials, it is your responsibility to contact me well before the viewing is due to troubleshoot the issue.

**What to do if you have questions:** If you have any questions about the class (readings, assignments, schedule, the website, etc), post them to the question and answer board on the class’ myCourses site. I check the board regularly and will respond to your question. Posting questions on the public board is a good idea because other students can benefit from seeing them. You may also wish to check the public question board to see if your question is already answered. Please keep in mind that questions posted after 7 p.m. will not be answered until the next morning.

**Email:** If you need to ask me a question directly or you have an urgent issue, you can email me at [jodell@umassd.edu](mailto:jodell@umassd.edu). I will do my best to get back to students on the same day of their e-mail, but I go to bed earlier than many of you do, so e-mails received after 7 p.m. will be answered the following day. I can get back to you faster during the week than on the weekends, so don’t wait to ask questions about work that is due early in the week.

### **Course Policies:**

**Reading/Viewing:** Each day’s lesson will introduce you to what we’re reading or viewing and how it connects to the course unit and the course’s overall themes and objectives. You are expected to keep up with the assigned reading/viewing and **to be prepared** to discuss these texts with each other. This is not a course in which I dictate your learning. Your grade will directly reflect **your** efforts in grappling with the course material. I have certain expectations of your dedication, understanding, and ability to discuss material. However, if there is something you do **not** understand, I expect you to do whatever is necessary to gain understanding (i.e., bring it up on the course web discussion board, do outside reading, email me, etc). You are expected to complete all readings/viewings before responding to assignments and discussion board activities.

**Formal Written Work (not discussion posts):** I expect that written work will be submitted on time and completed in a thoughtful, professional manner. When writing papers for this class, be sure they are double-spaced with one-inch margins, in size 12 Times New Roman font, with sources documented in MLA format. Online courses hold to the same requirements as a face to face class; thus, assignments (papers; projects; etc.) that are turned in later than 48 hours are

**not** accepted and will receive a failing grade. Work turned in a day late will be dropped by 1 letter grade. Work turned in two days late will have two letter grades deducted. Worked turned in more than two days late will automatically fail.

**Extension Policy:** Each student is allowed to take one extension on a formal written assignment (not discussion board post). If you don't need the extension, you certainly don't have to take it, but it's there for you to use once if it will help you do better on an assignment. To use the extension, you should email me at least 48 hours before the assignment due date to inform me of what you need your new deadline to be.

**Discussion Activities:** Since this is a seven-week class designed to familiarize you with a full semester's worth of material, we will move quickly through each lesson. You need to stay on top of the discussion questions and requirements for interactions with your classmates. There will be regular discussion board posts and responses in which you are expected to participate. Prompts will be included for each discussion board post. Response posts will not have a prompt; they require you to address the concrete details used in one peer's previous post and show how those details and ideas connect to that day's reading.

**Plagiarism:** In any situation, plagiarism is a serious offense and may result in a failing grade in this course. Since some of your work in this class requires the use of an outside source, the citation of sources is mandatory. I expect every student in this class to understand the necessity of citing your sources in all academic work in order to avoid plagiarism. For a thorough explanation of plagiarism, see

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r\\_plagiar.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/print/research/r_plagiar.html) For the UMass Dartmouth academic policy, see:

<http://www.umassd.edu/studenthandbook/academicregs/ethicalstandards.cfm>

Formal assignments will be turned in through SafeAssign, which checks your assignment against all other UMass Dartmouth work and internet websites. If more than 30% of an assignment appears to be copied, you will receive a "0" and not be able to make it up. Though discussion posts are not run through SafeAssign, be aware that I am familiar with the Spark Notes and online study guides for the texts we discuss – and signs of plagiarism will be cause for a penalty to your grade and possibly failing the course.

**Course Incomplete Policy:** According to the university catalogue, an incomplete may be given only in exceptional circumstances at the instructor's discretion. The student must be passing at the time of the request or be sufficiently close to passing. If the work is not completed within one year of the recording of the incomplete grade, the grade will become an F(I). The incomplete policy for this course is that at least 70% of the course must be already completed and an exceptional circumstance (i.e. medical issue) must exist. If you feel you require an incomplete for an exceptional reason, you need to email me and state your reasons for the incomplete in writing. We will then decide on a course of action and complete the required paperwork.

**MLA Documentation:** With each of your written assignments, your in-text citations and works cited pages will be checked. Remember, with each assignment, you need to include a Works Cited page and follow proper MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation. There will be an MLA resource area on the course site to assist you if you have questions.

**Disability Services:** If you require accommodations for a documented disability, please contact the **Center for Access and Success** for support:

<http://www.umassd.edu/dss/resources/students/informationforonlinelearning/>

**Student Technical Help**

<http://umd.echelp.org/>

**UMass Dartmouth Library**

<http://guides.lib.umassd.edu/libraryservices/>

**Required Assignments:**

**Discussion Board Postings:** Discussion boards constitute much of the work you'll do for this class. They help us to establish conversations about these texts (much like we would in an in-person class), and they present you with an opportunity to share your thoughts, engage with others, and learn more about the material. You will be responsible for 7 posts for this course. I will always provide you with instructions for each post. Be sure to read them carefully and make sure you're responding to the prompts I provide. Most of these discussion activities will ask you to post responses to questions. For each post, you can receive up to FIVE points and the *lowest* grade will be dropped at the end of the semester. I do not grade these posts like I grade your written assignments. Your writing doesn't need to be completely polished and grammatically correct, but it does need to be clear to your readers and properly cited.

This is how the FIVE points are awarded for each post:

- **1 point for:** answering the question asked in the prompt with a response that supports your answer.
- **2 points for:** Supporting the answer to the prompt with concrete details from the assigned reading or viewing. This means bringing in (and citing correctly) quotations from the reading or descriptions from the film. You needn't summarize, in most cases, so make sure that rather than general plot summary, you are including specific evidence to support your answers.
- **2 points for:** Analyzing the details you've provided in order to show how the evidence you cite helps you to answer the question. This should not be paraphrasing what you cite, but rather explaining *how* your evidence develops your answers to the question and your ideas about the text.
- **Late Policy:** You will lose ½ a point for every 12 hours that your post is late. After 48 hours, your post receives a 0 and you cannot make it up.

**A word of advice:** Please take time to plan accordingly. Because we never meet face to face, the boards are where we generate the classroom conversations that typically occur in the face-to-face classroom. Your voice is vital to the development of our communal knowledge about the issues and readings we will address in the next seven weeks. At times, discussions may ask you to do some research, so plan accordingly.

**Response Posts:** Response posts are much like discussion board posts, but they ask you to connect that day's new reading/viewing assignment to one peer's post from the previous class' discussion board. You will create three response posts for the semester that are due by midnight the day they are assigned. You can receive up to FOUR points per response post. Points are awarded for the following:

- **2 points for:** Addressing a specific claim or detail in your peer's post when answering the prompt. You should mention the claim or detail directly in your response and indicate clearly how the new reading/viewing assignment adds to, complicates, contradicts, or relates to what your peer wrote.
- **2 points for:** Bringing in concrete evidence from that day's assignment to prove how your peer's post connects to your ideas about the new material.
- **Late Policy:** You will lose ½ a point for every 12 hours that your post is late. After 48 hours, your post receives a 0 and you cannot make it up.
- Just like discussion posts, I do not grade these posts like I grade your written assignments. Your writing doesn't need to be completely polished and grammatically correct, but it does need to be clear to your readers and properly cited.

**Quizzes :** You will take FOUR short quizzes to assess your understanding of the material and to make sure you're keeping up with the assignments. Questions on the quizzes can be drawn from the reading, online lectures notes, my videos, and the discussion boards. Be sure you're keeping up with all of the material in order to be prepared for the quizzes. Quizzes are multiple choice and short answer and are usually timed, so do not begin quizzes until you are prepared to complete them in one sitting. Naturally, you should not use your book, notes, or the online lecture material when taking quizzes. The lowest quiz grade is dropped at the end of the semester.

**Close Reading Assignment:** You will perform a close reading of a short passage or poem by submitting an annotation and a short-essay response. This will show that you're developing the skills of close reading needed to succeed on the final project. For the close reading assignment, you will closely analyze the language and literary techniques in a particular text and discuss how features of that language help the text to express a particular idea, theme, or issue. More detailed instructions will be posted separately.

**Final Exam:** The semester will end with a final exam comprised of 2 short-essay questions and 5 identification questions. The exam is "take home" and open book and will be released one week before the deadline to give you time to prepare your answers.

**Please note:** I will provide grading criteria for each of the assignments.

**Grading:**

Discussion Board Posts	30%
Discussion Board Responses	15%
Close Reading Assignment	15%

4 Quizzes (5% each)	20%
Final Exam	20%

## Course Schedule\*

\*This calendar is subject to revision. Any changes will be announced and a new version of the calendar will be posted to myCourses.

- *Texts are to be watched or read by the day they are listed and before doing the online course lesson*
- *All articles, excerpts, and short-stories are available as PDFs on myCourses*

### WEEK 1

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#### **Mon 6/17.: Course Welcome**

#### **Assignments Due by Midnight:**

DISCUSSION BOARD POST #1

#### **Thurs 6/20.: Conventions of Love: the Romantic Comedy**

**Reading to Complete:** Chloe Angyal, “Gender, Sex, and Power in the Post-Feminist Romantic Comedy”; Angyal, “I Spent a Year Watching Rom Coms and this is What I Learned”; watch **Rom Com Trailers Playlist**

#### **Assignments Due by Midnight:**

RESPONSE TO CLASSMATES, POST#1

DISCUSSION POST #2

### WEEK 2

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#### **Mon. 6/24.: Conventions of Love: Flipping the Script**

**Reading/Viewing to Complete:** Jhumpa Lahiri, “Sexy”

#### **Assignments Due by Midnight:**

RESPONSE TO CLASSMATES’S POST #2 – follow prompt posted in lesson area

#### **Thurs. 6/27 Conventions of Love: The Sonnet**

**Reading to Complete:** “Norton Intro to Lit” document: “Introduction,” “Poetry,” “Sonnet”

**“Poetry” document:** William Shakespeare, “My mistress’ eyes are

nothing like the sun” and “Let me compare thee to a summer’s day”; Harryette

Mullen, “Dim Lady”; Todd Boss, “My Love for You Is So Embarrassingly”;

Edna St. Vincent Millay, “I being born a woman and distressed”; Noah Eli

Gordon, “Out of Touch Screen”; Jason Schneiderman, “Stories About Love”

#### **Close Reading Assignment Instructions**

#### **Assignments Due by Midnight:**

DISCUSSION POST #3

### WEEK 3

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#### **Mon. 7/1: Love in the Digital Age, Part 1**

#### **Reading to Complete:**

*Her* (dir. Spike Jonze)

#### **Assignments Due by TUESDAY 7/2, Midnight:**

QUIZ #1 (covers viewing due 7/1 and any course lecture material posted up until 7/1)

**Class on Wednesday, 7/3 – no “class” on 7/4 Holiday**

Wed. 7/3: Love in the Digital Age, Part 2

**Reading to complete:**

*Feed*, 1-134

**Assignments due by midnight:**

DISCUSSION POST #4

WEEK 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**MONDAY 7/8, Midnight: Close Reading Assignment Due**

Mon. 7/8: Love in the Digital Age, Part 3

**Viewing to Complete:**

*Feed* 134-300

**Assignments Due by Midnight:**

RESPONSE TO CLASSMATES' POST #4

**Assignment Due by TUESDAY 7/9, Midnight:  
Close Reading Assignment**

Thurs. 7/11: Love and Interiority, Part 1

**Viewing to Complete:**

*Moonlight* (dir. Barry Jenkins)

**Assignment Due by FRIDAY 7/12, Midnight:**

QUIZ #2 (Covers viewing due 7/11 and online lecture material posted since the last quiz)

WEEK 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Mon. 7/15: Love and Interiority, Part 2

**Reading to Complete:**

Junot Díaz, “Drown”

**Assignments Due by Midnight:**

DISCUSSION POST #5

Thurs. 7/18: Love and Fairy Tales

**Reading to Complete:**

Carmen Maria Machado, “The Husband Stitch”

**Assignments Due FRIDAY 7/19 by Midnight:**

QUIZ #3 (Covers reading due 7/18 and online lecture material posted since last quiz)

WEEK 6 \_\_\_\_\_

**Thurs. 7/22: Love and Psychological Realism, Part 1**

**Viewing to Complete:**

*Vertigo*

**Assignments Due Midnight:**

DISCUSSION POST #6

**Thurs. 7/25: Love and Psychological Realism, Part 2**

**Reading to Complete:**

Nella Larsen, *Passing* Parts 1 & 2

**Assignments Due by FRIDAY 4/26, Midnight:**

QUIZ #4 (covers reading due 7/25 and online lecture material since last quiz)

WEEK 7

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**Mon. 7/29: Love and Psychological Realism, Part 3**

**Reading to Complete:**

*Passing* Part 3

**Assignments Due by Midnight:**

DISCUSSION POST #7

**Thurs. 8/1: Course Conclusion**

**No Reading to Complete – work on final exam**

**Tuesday 8/6 FINAL exam due at NOON**