Fall 2017 First-Year Seminar ~ Love: The Sociology of Intimacy
This seminar uses sexually explicit reading and visual material. If you are not comfortable with this, please choose another seminar.

Instructor: Professor Deirdre A. Royster Course Meeting Day/Time: Mondays, 12:30-3:00pm
Office hours: Wed. 2-5PM (We can also meet by appointment, including via Skype session Deirdre 0212)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

If a toddler does not receive physical affection and companionship from a caregiver, it will die—but even the mere sight of a caregiver, on a daily basis, can avert the tragedy of death (from lack of social and physical intimacy). Love is a powerful social force; this course provides an opportunity for students to read, learn, think, write, and talk about research, theories, and essays about Love—mostly from a sociological perspective (but with occasional forays into other fields). Yes, that's right; love—with a special focus on romantic relationships and pairings. So much has been written about love, and from every conceivable point of view, but Sociology asks some very specific things about how social contexts influence patterns in how people love across different times, societies, groups, and so forth. American society has been undergoing many changes that have had profound effects upon how we love—including what forms we expect our relationships to take; when we expect to form enduring relationships with romantic partners; and what it may take to move from exploration to commitment. Sociology de-bunks many “love” myths that we’ve told ourselves as a society and instead highlights realities we’ve lived but not understood well—providing clarity on the distance between “idealized” and “realized” love. A perfect class for the skeptic and romantic alike—this course asks students to develop their own sociological theory about what love will look like as their generation shapes it anew.

I’m betting that sounds pretty interesting, but here's the catch: in choosing this discussion and writing intensive course on love, you must learn to assiduously avoid cliches and other writing "no-nos" while focusing analytically on a topic that, for most of us, is ruled by emotion. Now, how will we accomplish this? I offer a simple answer: DISCUSSION and PRACTICE. We will talk, think, and write about how sociologists (and other scholars) see and analyze love and romantic relationships. At the same time, we’ll work hard to increase the power and effectiveness of your writing for academic audiences. Hopefully, by the end of the semester you (and I) will be better at both writing and being intentional and aware in our love-related choices.

For this class, you are required to discuss and to lead discussion on course readings and to work on improving your writing, with peer support (which counts toward the final paper grade) a with a focus on writing for the social science, rather than general, audience. You will write two shorter essays and a longer (10-12 page) final paper. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class and assess your preparedness and class participation level toward the middle and at the end of the semester.

Each of the course assignments is designed to facilitate your development as a writer and presenter of ideas and to serve, in some way or another, as a building block for your final paper. What will the assignments be like? Your first assignment (due Monday, September 17th) is to write an essay answering the question: How has love changed over the last two generations? You will examine how expectations, circumstances, and understandings about love have differed between your grandparents’, parents’, and your own generation. This will get you thinking about how your generation may “do love” differently. This essay should be about 3 pages long (double-spaced/1 inch margins/titled but with no cover page or wasted space/use a fun pseudonym instead of your real name) and may include quoted material from family members. Its focus should be on key changes that you identify. Your thesis should connect the themes identified in the assignment and indicate the direction(s) you intend to take in the essay. Your moderate stake assignments require you to identify three fascinating, empirical, peer-reviewed, journal articles. You’ll choose the most fascinating of the three to present (orally) to the class and you will write about the other two, both of which should be useful for your final paper, in a 5-page paper. For the bulk of your high stake writing effort, you will assemble a 10-12 page research-based paper in which you develop an argument about LOVE AND YOUR GENERATION (broadly defined and more creatively
It must: weave together demographic, historical and/or survey data that sets the scene for loving in the 21st century; introduce highly relevant theoretical perspectives and scholarly research on love to buttress your case; and finally, you must identify a set of hypothetical empirical observations a 22nd century sociologist might observe that would lend support to your thesis about love in your generation (you may be able to use humor in this speculative section of your paper, but don’t go overboard). I use the word "assemble" in regard to this paper, because you will work on and complete some parts of the paper in stages, with your earlier assignments helping you to refine and develop your best ideas.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1) Introduce students to sociological ways of thinking about love.
2) Introduce students to very basic research methods within sociology.
3) Help students to develop their critical thinking and independent learning skills using sociological research.
4) Assist students in becoming more powerful academic writers.
5) Assist students in becoming more comfortable presenting and discussing ideas publicly.
6) Help students to become more aware and intentional about their choices in the realms of writing and loving.

**READINGS**

There are several required books for the course and there will be shorter readings and worksheets posts on NYU Classes as well. ALWAYS bring the book or shorter readings that we are currently discussing to class with you. The required books (not in any particular order and feel free to purchase the latest editions on line) include:

- *New Desires, New Selves: Sex, Love and Piety among Turkish Youth* (2015) by Gul Ozyegin
- *The End of Sex: How Hookup Culture is Leaving a Generation Unhappy, Sexually Unfulfilled, and Confused about Intimacy* (2013) by Donna Freitas

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

1. 140 points or 10%-- 1 Low-stake writing assignment
2. 280 points or 30%-- 2 Moderate-stake assignments presentation-writing (worth 10% and 20%)
3. 400 points or 40%-- High-stake final paper (30%) with 2 required peer reviews (3% & 7%)
4. 80 points or 5%-- Writing Exercises (Easy-to-do & will build upon your existing skills)
5. 100 points or 15%-- Attendance, preparedness & participation (10%) & Discussion Lead (5%)
1000 points total for assignments.


**Discussion Leading:** Since many students are quite shy and others can be a bit too forthcoming, I’ve found it useful to create some structure for class discussions. As part of your preparedness/participation effort, you and a classmate are required to lead at least one class discussion that will have a few elements. You’ll need to briefly identify and review important themes, connect the readings to those which came before, introduce questions for class discussion, and facilitate your peers’ exploration and understanding of the
reading. You can include these elements in any order you choose—emphasizing whichever element(s) you feel is most useful for the class.

**Moderate Stake Assignments:** You must locate 3 journal articles (in peer-reviewed social science and/or humanities journals) that you intend to use for your final paper. Reserve one of the 3 articles (must be empirical research) to present to the class—the one you think is most interesting is usually best to present. You will have 8 minutes to present the article in its entirety (worth 10%). Summarize the other 2 articles using about 5 pages, aim for roughly equal space per article, but weave the two summaries together by using a first paragraph to meaningfully connect the two articles, at least one transition sentence between your summaries, and a short paragraph at the end to remind the reader why you selected these articles and what the main conclusion of each was (worth 20%).

**More on the Final Paper:** Your final paper must be 10-12 pages (including 1 page of references). It needs to advance an argument about Love/Loving in Your Generation. It must include certain elements: 1) a discussion of theoretical perspectives about love in your generation, 2) a presentation of demographic, historical, and/or survey data that is pertinent to your argument, 3) descriptions of at least five scholarly articles that help you to advance your argument about love, and finally 4) explore what kinds of hypothetical research findings of a 22nd century sociologist would lend support to your arguments about love in your generation. On the last day of class, each person is required to turn in a first complete draft of the final paper to be exchanged with another student (of my choosing). You then have about 30 hours to provide a written evaluation of your assigned paper—you must send (via e-mail) to me and to the student whose paper you have evaluated a single-spaced page of serious critique (I’ll provide guidelines on this). You have until the end of the final exam period scheduled for this course to revise your own paper for final submission to me. The final paper itself is worth 30% of your grade, peer reviews a total of 10%.

**Schedule for LOVE: The Sociology of Intimacy**

**Week One (Sept 10th)**  
**Topic: How Sociologists Think About Love & Its Varied Contexts**  
Read— Chs.1-6, pp. Intro-103 “Marriage, a History” (On NYU Classes website & sent to enrolled)  
Brainstorming Session about effective writing & Assignment #1: 5-page Low-Stake (Distributed)

**Week Two (Sept 17th)**  
**Topic: Modern Ideals v. Historical Realities**  
Read -- Chs. 7-12, pp. 104-215,”Marriage, a History”  
LOW Stake Assignment #1 (worth 10%) DUE (Bring an extra copy for Peer Exchange)  
**In-Class Mini-Workshop** Finding (REALLY COOL) Sociological Research on Love

**Week Three: (Sept 24th)**  
**Topic: The Future of Marriage…Will Your Generation Marry? For Love?**  
Read– Chs. 13-conclusion, pp. 216-314, “Marriage, a History”  
LOW Stake Peer Review (not graded but evaluated) DUE (Bring 2 copies of Peer Review)  
**In-Class Mini-Workshop** Exploring the Parts of an Empirical Sociological Journal Article (Bring in one of your articles and we’ll explore its parts & their functions.)

**Week Four (Oct 2nd)**  
**Topic: Love and Romantic Choice Markets…**  
Read—Chs 1-3, pp. 1-103, “Why Love Hurts”  
GRADED LOW Stake Assignment #1 & Peer-review feedback RETURNED to STUDENTS  
**In-Class Mini-Workshop** Refining Your Searches for the Right Articles & Writing and Presenting about Journal Articles: Short & Long Versions
Week Five (Oct. 9th) Happy Fall Break! ~ No Class

Week Six (Oct 16th) Topic: Love and the Vulnerable Self…

**In-Class Mini Workshop** The “Garbage Can Model of Paper Outlining” How to capture every topic you want to explore in your paper and organize all your sub-topics effectively?

Week Seven (Oct. 23rd) Topic: Why Societal Context Matters: How Turkish College Students Love

**Journal Article Presentations (MOD Stake #1 ~ 10%)**

Week Eight (Oct 30th) Topic: Vulnerability and Piety: Constructing New Gendered Selves
Read– Chs. 2-3, pp. 107-227, “New Desires, New Selves”

**GRADED MOD Stake #1 Returned**

Week Nine (Nov. 6) Topic: Constructing the Desirable Self
Read – Chs. 4-conclusion. pp. 243-326, “New Desires, New Selves”

**MOD Stake #2 DUE (20%) ~ 5-page paper on 2 additional articles**

Week Ten (Nov. 13th) Topic: Why Societal Context Matters: How Turkish College Students Love
Read—Chs Intro-4, pp. 1-96

**MOD Stake #2 GRADED & RETURNED**

Week Eleven (Nov. 20th) Topic: Can Today’s College Students Opt Out of Hookup Culture?
Read—Chas 5-conclusion, pp. 97-188

**HIGH Stake Paper ROUGH Draft (at least 6 pages & outline) Due For Peer Exchange**

Week Twelve (Nov. 27th) Topic: Technology & the Birth of Women’s Pleasure

Week Fourteen (Dec.4th) Topic: “Sociologizing” the Modern On-line Search for Love & Romance
Read—Chs. Intro-4, pp. 1-148

Week Fifteen (Dec. 11th) Topic: Critical & Demographic Analyses of Coupling
Read—Chs. 5-Conclusion, pp. 149-252

High Stakes Paper Draft 2 (at least 9 REVISED pages, inc. bibliography) Due for Peer Exchange

- **PEER REVIEW (worth 6%) DUE to PEER/ROYSTER within 30 hours of receipt**

**FINAL PAPER (POLISHED DRAFT worth 30% of your grade-DUE by END OF EXAM PERIOD (Tentatively DEC. 17)**