Battle of the Sexes: love, desire, and war on the stage and beyond.

The theme of love is possibly one of the oldest in world literature. This course examines the ways this theme has been manifested on the stage and in poetry, spanning the period from antiquity to today. From the classics onwards what we may today consider as primarily a private expression and activity transpires as deeply embedded in broader historical and political narratives. The course looks at the constitutive relationships between private desire and public politics. The family unit and all its multiple manifestations acts as a microcosm that at once mirrors but also challenges dominant power structures. The relationships between the genders, between siblings, between parents and children all provide a fertile ground that helps to shape our personal subjectivity, but also our civic identity. This course looks at the ways great plays and poems have approached the theme of love in both its private and public dimensions, and also examines the formal and aesthetic experiments that resulted from this engagement. Authors covered will include: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats, Gertrude Stein, Lillian Hellman, Caryl Churchill and Tony Kushner.

Assessment:
- A short written assignment. 3-4 pages, 1st March, 20%
- Proposal and Annotated Bibliography, after Mid-term break, 30%
- Group Presentation, 10%
- Final written assignment or portfolio. 15 pages, end of term, 40%

Unit 1: Weeks 1-3: Happy Families
i. Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House* (1868), *Ghosts* (1881)
ii. August Strindberg, *The Father* (1887), *Miss Julie* (1888)

Reading: All of the above three plays

Unit 2: Weeks 4-6: Love, War and Empire
i. Aeschylus, *The Oresteia*
ii. Sophocles, *Ajax*
iii. Euripides, *Trojan Women*
v. Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9*

Reading: *The Oresteia* and *Cloud 9* and EITHER *Ajax* or *Trojan Women*
Poems to be distributed in class.

Unit 3: Weeks 7-8: The Muse
i. Euripides, *Helen*
ii. Robert Browning, ‘My Last Duchess’ (1842)
iii. Christina Rossetti, ‘In an Artist’s Studio’ (1856)
iv. H. D. *Helen in Egypt* (1961)
Reading: *Helen*, poems to be distributed in class.

**Unit 4: Weeks 9-10: Brothers and Sisters/ Sons and Daughters**

i. Sophocles, *Antigone*

ii. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*

iii. Anton Chekhov, *Three Sisters* (1900)

Reading: *Antigone* and EITHER *Measure for Measure* or *Three Sister*

**Unit 5: Weeks 11-12: Mad Love**

i. Euripides, *The Bacchae*; The Performance Group, *Dionysus in 69*

ii. Oscar Wilde, *Salome* (1891)

Reading: Both plays mentioned above.

**Unit 6: Weeks 13-14: The Love that Dare not Speak its Name**

i. Christina Rossetti, ‘Sappho’ (1858)

ii. Gertrude Stein, ‘Sacred Emily’ (1913)

iii. Lillian Hellman, *The Children’s Hour* (1934)


Reading: *Children’s Hour* and *Angels in America, Parts I and II*  
Poems will be distributed in class.

All editions of the plays are acceptable; for the Greek plays please select a recent translation.