

ANG 2310: FORMS OF FICTION FALL 2011

ANTI-ROMANCE POETICS AND THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY NOVEL

INSTRUCTOR: TAIWO ADETUNJI OSINUBI

TIME: MONDAY 4-7 PM

VENUE: PAV. JEAN-BRILLANT B 4280

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY 14.00-15.30 & TUESDAY 16.15-17.30

We are all familiar with the marriage plot. An essential component of romance novels and romantic comedies, it connects diverse plot elements and directs them into the “happy end.” It is also often regarded as an essentially feminine space since it supposedly facilitates female social mobility. But does it? In this course, we want to rethink the troublesome alliance between the marriage plot and the novel by questioning some of its key components. Why should it be the woman's social mobility that is at stake? Why is the hero always a man? Why is the marriage plot often tied to the development of the family, the nation, or of a woman? What comes after marriage? And how can the marriage plot accommodate non-normative sexualities? In short, what kinds of cultural work do variations of the marriage plot perform? To answer these questions, we will analyze films and novels that reconfigure romance and the marriage plot.

Reading List.

Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*.

Chinua Achebe, *No Longer at Ease*.

Tracy Nwuabani, *I Do not Come to You by Chance*.

Valerie Martin, *Property*.

Andrea Levy, *The Long Song*.

Nadine Gordimer, *The Pickup*.

Films.

Blue Valentine, dir. Derek Cianfrance.

Splice, dir. Vincenzo Natali.

These books have been ordered at the university bookstore. Students are advised to watch the movies attentively and bring summaries to class for discussion.

Reading Schedule:

WEEK 1: September 12 th	INTRODUCTION <i>Blue Valentine</i> .
WEEK 2: September 19 th	Evelyn Waugh, <i>A Handful of Dust</i> .
WEEK 3: September 26 th	Chinua Achebe, <i>No Longer at Ease</i> .
WEEK 4: October 3 rd	Achebe, <i>No Longer at Ease</i> . Nwuabani, <i>I Do Not Come to You by Chance</i> .
WEEK 5: October 10 th	Tracy Adaobi Nwuabani, <i>I Do Not Come to You by Chance</i> .
WEEK 6: October 17th	IN CLASS EXAM
WEEK 7: October 24th	READING BREAK
WEEK 8: October 31 st	Valerie Martin, <i>Property</i> .
WEEK 9: November 7 th	Valerie Martin, <i>Property</i> . Andrea Levy, <i>The Long Song</i> .
WEEK 10: November 14 th	Andrea Levy, <i>The Long Song</i> .
WEEK 11: November 21 st	Andrea Levy, <i>The Long Song</i> . Nadine Gordimer, <i>The Pickup</i> .
WEEK 12: November 28 th	Nadine Gordimer, <i>The Pickup</i> .
WEEK 13: December 5 th	<i>Splice</i> .
WEEK 14: December 12th	IN CLASS EXAM

EVALUATION: Mid-Term Exam 30%; Final Exam 30%; Research Paper 30%; Participation 10%.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course requires student participation; we will spend part of each class discussing individual responses to the readings and films. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings. The Mid-Term, worth 30% of your final grade, will cover the reading list up to October 10.

While the In-class Exam, another 30% of your final grade, focuses on the second half of the term, the questions will require knowledge of the critical terms we have acquired over the course of the whole term. The Research Essay, also 30% of the final grade, gives you the opportunity to write an 8 page essay on a topic of your choice. You will write a comparative analysis of a theme in any two books we will read in the course. This essay will be graded on the basis of 1) the quality of the argument, 2) the attention to textual analysis, 3) the use of critical concepts we would have used in the course, and 4) the organization of the essay. You are expected to use at least TWO critical (i.e. academic) sources. Your source does not have to be directly about your two authors—it could, for example, provide some background information on the topic you have selected. **PLEASE PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAYS BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THEM!**

Conduct

All students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes an effective learning environment and according to university rules and regulations on classroom behavior. Since this is a fairly large class, our discussion will work best when everyone gets a chance to participate. This means that we all need to watch the length of our interventions. The best comments tend to be pertinent to readings/discussions and offer insight into the ongoing inquiry. The most helpful questions also tend to be focused. It is sometimes better to avoid long comments or anecdotes that offer no specific insights or state succinct questions.

Academic integrity/Plagiarism

The unacknowledged use of another author's work will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to department and university regulations. Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the policies of the FAS: www.fas.umontreal.ca/plagiat. All students are also advised to consult the pages on plagiarism in the FAECUM agenda 2011-2012. If I find evidence of any form of plagiarism, you may receive a failing grade on an assignment or for the course.

Communication

We shall use several lines of communication throughout the course. You may send me emails regarding any course related issues you would like to discuss, but please allow a window of at least 24 hours—excluding Saturdays and Sundays—for me to respond to your emails. **DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY EXPECT ME TO READ AND RESPOND TO YOUR EMAILS ON THE WEEKEND!** Students are also welcome to meet or call me during my office hours. I will be sending all email communications concerning the course to the Université de Montréal (umontreal.ca) addresses that I receive from the department. It is the duty of each student to reroute emails to other Internet addresses—if they do not use their U de M addresses.

Evaluation policies

Assignments must be submitted in class on the due date unless students request (and receive) an extension. Requests for extensions must be made in writing **before** the due date. Late submissions will be penalized—I deduct 5% for each late day including Saturdays and Sundays. Students unable to write quizzes or exams on the fixed dates need to notify me a week in advance. Those students have to submit a formal request for accommodation.

Please do not email or fax assignments to me.

Assignments that cannot be handed in to me personally should be submitted in the English department main office (C8132-Pavillon Lionel-Groulx) or put in my mailbox.