

LOVE IN AMERICA

In the past 30 years, scholars have increasingly turned their attention toward the "private lives" of men and women by exploring alterations in the ways in which primal emotions such as fear, anger and sexual desire have been controlled and expressed. This course will address many of the issues raised by this new interest in the history of "sentiments" by examining the emotional lives of American men and women from the 17th century to the present. Specifically, its goal is to critically analyze enduring and innovative views on the nature of love and delineate changes in the cultural forces that have created a social context for its "legitimate" and "illegitimate" expression.

In pursuit of this goal we will examine the ideas and institutions that have been primarily responsible for socializing the emotion called love, most notably those associated with courtship, marriage and family life. We will also analyze the relationship between prescriptive ideology, embodied in informal codes of conduct, advice literature, civil laws and religious edicts, and the actual experiences of men and women as they explored their own desires, pursued the objects that inspired them, and created relationships designed to satisfy them. Finally, in order to obtain a balanced picture of the emotional dynamics of private life in the past as well as in the present, we will note the ways in which social variables, such as class, age, gender, region, race and ethnicity, have created distinctive variations in these explorations, pursuits and relationships.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Karen Lystra, Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in 19th-Century America
Kevin White, The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America

These titles can be purchased at the campus bookstore. In addition, all readings marked with an asterisk (*) are on two-hour reserve at the Reserve Book Room on the first floor in the campus library (please consult supplemental reserve reading list). In addition, one of the reading assignments for 2/27 (the Emma Spaulding Bryant letters) can also be found on-line at the following web address: <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/bryant/#letters>.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

There will be two midterm exams and one final exam. The essay questions that you will be asked to write on will be entirely derived from the material explored in the assigned readings, lectures, and class discussions. The first midterm exam will count for 10% of the course grade and the second midterm and the final exam will each count for 40%. The remaining 10% of your final grade will be based on class participation and attendance. The goals of these exercises are two-fold. First, they are designed to enhance students' critical skills by providing the opportunity to analyze primary documents for their meanings and secondary sources for their arguments and their methodology. Second, they aim to enhance students' communication skills by providing the opportunity to analyze and synthesize class materials and create informed and thoughtful arguments both orally and in writing.

Midterm #1 is scheduled for **2/25/03**, and midterm #2 is scheduled for **4/15/03**. Both will take place at the beginning of the classes scheduled for those evenings. The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, **5/27/03 (7:30-9:20 p.m.)**. **Make-up exams will only be given in cases of extreme health or personal emergencies.**

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Introduction

2/4 EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF THE EMOTIONS

II. The 17th Century

2/11 THE COLONIAL BACKGROUND

Readings: ***Donald M. Scott and Bernard Wishy**, eds., America's Families: A Documentary History, pp. 20-21, 37-44, 72-73, 79-82, 85-90.

III. The 18th Century

2/18 THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE RISE OF "AFFECTIVE INDIVIDUALISM"

Readings: ***Jan Lewis**, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 44(October 1987)4:689-721.

IV. The 19th Century

2/25 VICTORIAN COURTSHIP AND THE EMERGENCE OF ROMANTIC LOVE

Readings: **Lystra**, Searching the Heart, chapters 1, 2, & 6; * Emma Spaulding Bryant letters (July 25 1873 to August 19, 1873, inclusive).

3/4 VICTORIAN MARRIAGE, ROMANTIC LOVE, AND THE COMPANIONATE IDEAL

Readings: **Lystra**, Searching the Heart, chapters, 5, 7, & 8.

3/11 FEMINIST RESPONSES

Readings: ***Nancy F. Cott**, "Passionlessness: An Interpretation of Victorian Sexual Ideology, 1790-1850," Signs 4(Winter 1978)2:219-236; **Lystra** Searching the Heart, chapters 3-4.

3/18 RADICAL RESPONSES

Readings: ***Marx Edgeworth Lazarus**, Love vs. Marriage, pp. 77-88; ***Thomas Low Nichols**, "The Wrongs of Marriage," pp. 128-135; ***James Clay**, "Free Love; or, Love in Freedom," pp. 332-343, and ***Victoria C. Woodhull**, "Tried as By Fire," pp. 352-373 in Taylor Stoehr, ed., Free Love in America: A Documentary History (New York, 1979); **Jesse Battan**, "The 'Rights' of Husbands and the 'Duties' of Wives: Power and Desire in the American Bedroom, 1850-1910," Journal of Family History, 24(April 1999)2:165-186.

3/25 REGIONAL VARIATIONS--THE SOUTH

Readings: ***Steven M. Stowe**, "The Thing Not Its Vision" A Woman's Courtship and Her Sphere in the Southern Planter Class," Feminist Studies 9(Spring 1983)1:113-130; ***Eugene D. Genovese**, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1974), pp 450-481; ***Vicki Howard**, "The Courtship Letters of an African American Couple: Race, Gender, Class, and the Cult of True Womanhood," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 100(July 1996)1:65-80

4/1 **SPRING BREAK**

4/8 REGIONAL VARIATIONS--THE WEST

Reading: ***John Mack Faragher**, "The World of the Family," Chapter 6 in Women and Men on the Overland Trail (New Haven, 1979), pp. 144-178.

Film: **Heartland**

4/15 REGIONAL VARIATIONS--URBAN/WORKING CLASS

Readings: ***Christine Stansell**, "Women and Men," Chapter 5 in City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (New York, 1986); White, The First Sexual Revolution, pp. 80-105.

V. The 20th Century

4/22 CONTINUATIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS: REVOLUTIONS AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONS IN PRIVATE LIFE, 1920-1945

Readings: **White**, The First Sexual Revolution, pp. 1-79, 106-189.

Film: Our Modern Maidens

4/29 CONTINUATIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS: REVOLUTIONS AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONS IN PRIVATE LIFE, 1945-1965

Readings: ***Elaine Tyler May**, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era (New York, 1988), pp. 183-207.

Film: Heavy Petting

5/6 THE REFORMATION OF DESIRE: THE COUNTER-CULTURE OF THE 1960S

Reading: ***Nena And George O'Neill**, Open Marriage: A New Life Style for Couples (New York, 1984), pp. 165-184, 239-259.

5/13 POPULARIZATION OF THE COUNTER-CULTURE IDEOLOGY

Readings: ***Lillian Rubin**, "Changing Expectations: New Sources of Strain," Chapter 7 in Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family (New York, 1976); ***Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess and Gloria Jacobs**, "Fundamentalist Sex: Hitting Below the Bible Belt," in Remaking Love: The Feminization of Sex (New York, 1987), 134-160.

5/20 BACK TO THE FUTURE? THE PURSUIT OF FREEDOM AND INTIMACY AND THE BACKLASH FROM THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Readings: ***Christopher Lasch**, "The Flight from Feeling: Sociopsychology of the Sex War," Chapter 8 in The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations (New York, 1978); ***George F. Gilder**, "The Myths of the Open Marriage," in Sexual Suicide (New York, 1973), pp. 46-59; ***Roger Scruton**, "The Sex Files," National Review, October 12, 1998, pp. 49-50.