

## **Late Nineteenth-Century American Fiction: Love, Sex, and Friendship**

ENGL 5326-001

Fall 2018 Syllabus

Tuesday 2:00 – 4:50 p.m. Life Science 428

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### **Course Description:**

This course will examine fiction by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, Constance Fenimore Woolson, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, Edith Wharton, and Willa Cather (written in the period 1852-1925). Some of these writers had troubled marriages, while others remained unmarried, and most of them at one time or another enjoyed intimate relationships and shared living arrangements outside of marriage. We will focus especially on their exploration of alternatives to the nineteenth century novel's conventional marriage plot. While these texts do portray marriages, they also explore the possibilities of love outside of traditional marriage, including representations of "Boston marriages" and loving friendships, same-sex relationships and unconventional attachments between men and women. They depict many characters who never marry; we will explore the cultural values associated with unmarried men and women, bachelors and spinsters. These fictions also feature strong, independent female protagonists, figures of fascination and identification for both male and female writers, and for us as readers. A broader context for the course will be ideas about gender and sexual identity around the turn of the nineteenth century, a time of profound transition: we will discuss changing norms for femininity and masculinity, and codes for marriage, divorce, and adultery, as well as emergent ideas about homosexuality. We will also consider genre and narrative form, particularly in terms of how these aspects of literary writing take on gendered meaning in the period.

### **Course Texts:**

Willa Cather, *The Professor's House* (Vintage)

Mary Wilkins Freeman, *A New England Nun and Other Stories* (Penguin)

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* (Oxford)

Henry James, *The Bostonians* (Penguin)

Sarah Orne Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (Penguin)

Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (Oxford)

Constance Fenimore Woolson, *Miss Grief and Other Stories* (Norton)

Additional readings will be available as e-texts. I have created a UTA Box folder for the course, where you will be able to access and download them.

## **Course Requirements:**

1. Eight response papers. Minimum two full pages double-spaced. Response papers should engage with the week's readings, especially emphasizing critical/theoretical readings as well as primary literary texts. You should address the arguments of the scholarly texts we read, but you can also use these papers to explore your own ideas about the readings (critical or literary). Topics for your seminar paper may emerge out of your response papers.

**Note:** Response papers should be submitted by email prior to the class meeting in which we will discuss the readings they address. These short papers will not be graded individually—I will give them an aggregate grade at the end of the course. However, I will let you know if your response papers are not at least B-level work.

2. Seminar paper. A substantial research paper (minimum 15 pages) drawing on readings and issues from the course. Students will give a presentation based on their papers at the end of the course. The final class meeting(s) will be set aside for this purpose.

3. Participation. In addition to presentations of final papers, each of you should sign up to present in one class meeting, introducing the critical reading(s) and raising questions for discussion.

**Note:** All required work must be completed in order to pass the course.

## **Course Grade:**

Eight response papers	25%
Participation and presentations	15%
Final paper	60%

## **Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students will become familiar with literary works by the authors covered in the course, as well as with important critical issues, particularly related to the course thematic, that have shaped scholarship on these writers individually, and in relationship to each other. Students will also acquire knowledge about a range of relevant contexts, including literary historical accounts of fiction in the period, and critical, historical, and theoretical approaches to various gender studies topics, including friendship and other nonmarital same-sex and opposite-sex relationships, conceptions of masculinity and femininity, adultery and divorce, and same-sex sexuality. Students will be able to produce original scholarship according to accepted academic standards, reflecting an awareness of existing scholarship on their topic.

## **Attendance and Participation:**

**UTA policy statement:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I have established the attendance policy described below. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F,

faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

**Course policy:** Because this is a graduate seminar that meets once a week, absences will only be excused in the case of truly unavoidable circumstances. Two or more absences will have an effect on your final grade. I expect you to come to class each week having carefully read the texts for that day's meeting, prepared with questions, comments, thoughts, enthusiasms, or objections. Participation for the course includes informal contributions to class discussion as well as presentations.

### **UTA Drop Policy:**

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

### **Academic Integrity:**

Students enrolled in all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>. Faculty are encouraged to discuss plagiarism and share the following library tutorials <http://libguides.uta.edu/copyright/plagiarism> and <http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/>

The policy for this course is that any assignment found to involve plagiarism or other significant academic dishonesty will receive a zero.

**Disability Accommodations:** UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** <http://www.uta.edu/disability/> or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability).

Let me know if you have a disability, and we can work together to ensure that you are able to participate fully in the course.

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos).

**Title IX Policy:** The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Michelle Willbanks, Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-4585 or [titleix@uta.edu](mailto:titleix@uta.edu)

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

I will use your UTA email address for course announcements, as well as to contact you individually if necessary. Please be sure to check your MavMail account frequently.

**Campus Carry:** Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

### **Student Feedback Survey:**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

### **Final Review Week:**

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. (In this course, there is no final exam.) During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

### **Emergency Exit Procedures:**

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

## Reading Schedule

**Note:** There may be minor changes, additions, or deletions in the course readings.

- 8/28 Introduction: Whitman and Friendship  
Walt Whitman, "Calamus" poems and "From Pent-Up Aching Rivers"
- 9/4 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*  
Selections from utopian manifestoes; Hawthorne letters to Sophia Peabody  
Joel Pfister, "Plotting Womanhood: Feminine Evolution and Narrative Feminization in 'Blithedale'"
- 9/11 *The Blithedale Romance*  
Peter Coviello, "The Tenderness of Beasts: Hawthorne at Blithedale"
- 9/18 Michel Foucault, from *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1  
Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual"  
Recommended: John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, from *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*
- 9/25 Henry James, *The Bostonians*  
Critical reading TBA
- 10/2 *The Bostonians*  
Peter Coviello, "Made for Love: Olive Chancellor, Henry James, and *The Bostonians*"
- 10/9 Woolson, "St. Clair Flats," "Felipa," "Sister St. Luke," "Miss Grief," "A Florentine Experiment," "Miss Elisabetha"  
Critical reading TBA
- 10/16 Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, "A White Heron"  
Heather Love, "Spinster Aesthetics"  
Sarah Ensor, "Spinster Ecology"
- 10/23 Freeman, "A New England Nun," "Louisa," "The Revolt of Mother," "One Good Time," "The Amethyst Comb"  
Monika M. Elbert, "The Displacement of Desire: Consumerism and Fetishism in Mary Wilkins Freeman's Fiction"
- 10/30 Wharton, *The Custom of the Country*  
Emily J. Orlando, "Edith Wharton and the New Narcissism"
- 11/6 *The Custom of the Country*  
Arielle Zibrak, "The Woman Who Hated Sex: Undine Spragg and the Trouble with 'Bother'"
- 11/13 Wharton, "Roman Fever," "Autre Temps," "The Last Asset"  
Debra Ann MacComb, "New Wives for Old: Divorce and the Leisure-Class Marriage Market in Edith Wharton's *The Custom of the Country*"

11/20 Cather, *The Professor's House*  
Cather, "Paul's Case," "A Wagner Matinee"

11/27 *The Professor's House*  
Heather Love, "The End of Friendship: Willa Cather's Sad Kindred"

12/4 Presentations

**Final paper due Tuesday, December 11 (by email)**