

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH STUDIES  
FR 2112G  
**Sex and Seduction in the French Novel**  
**Winter 2014**

**Instructor:** Chris Roulston

**Lecture times:** Wednesdays 10:30-12:30

**Room:** HSB 11 (Health Sciences Building)

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 14:30-15:30 or by appointment

**Course Description:**

What is the relationship between seduction and the French novel? From its beginnings, with Mme de Lafayette's *Princesse de Clèves* (1678), the French novel has developed as a narrative of seduction, with sex, either explicitly or implicitly, at its centre. Yet sex also represents a form of impossibility; it is that which is gestured towards but can never be fulfilled. While all narratives can be said to be acts of seduction, the development of the novel in France examines the different possibilities of sex and seduction: as romance, as power, as alienation, as submission. Desire is fundamentally dangerous; it threatens the social order as well as the rules of gender. In these encounters between sex, seduction and the social, "love unceasingly prepares its own disappearance, acts out its dissolution" (Gilles Deleuze). This course will examine the relations among sex, seduction and the French novel through a mix of canonical and lesser-known works from the seventeenth century to the present day.

**Books to buy**

*Course Package* (available at the UWO Bookstore)

Mme de Lafayette, *The Princesse de Clèves* (1678)

Choderlos de Laclos, *Dangerous Liaisons* (1782)

Pauline Réage, *The Story of O* (1954)

**Assignments:**

Class participation	5%
1 textual analysis (750 words)	15%
1 midterm test (1.5 hours)	15%
1 essay (2000 words)	30%
1 oral presentation (10 minutes)	10%
1 final exam (2 hours)	25%
Total	100%

## Course Policies

**Prerequisites:** There are no prerequisites for FR2112G.

**Participation and Attendance:** Students are expected to attend both the main lecture and the tutorial class regularly and come to the tutorial prepared to discuss the week's readings. Should a student need to miss class, a courtesy explanatory email is appreciated.

**E-mail Policy:** Emails by the instructor will be responded to within 48 hours.

**Medical Policy:** Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness see: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2011/pg1117.html> and <http://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>.

**Assignment Submission:** All assignments must be submitted in hard copy, to the instructor, in class. Assignments not submitted in class must be delivered to the Women's Studies drop-box, located outside the WSFR main office in Lawson Hall, room 3260. Assignments will NOT be accepted via email or on OWL.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will only be accepted without penalty if a prior agreement with the instructor has been made, or if a valid medical certificate is provided. In the event that a student is unable to meet a deadline, for medical or other reasons, it is the student's responsibility to negotiate an alternate deadline with the instructor, prior to the original assignment deadline. Revised deadlines will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students who submit late assignments without making a prior agreement with the instructor will be penalized 2% for every 24-hour period after the assignment due date. The 2% penalty also applies to students who fail to submit an assignment on the agreed upon alternate date.

**Turnitin.com:** All assignments for this course must be submitted to turnitin.com on or before the assignment due date. Submissions can be made via link on the course OWL page. "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently

between the University and Turnitin.com. (<http://www.turnitin.com>)  
(<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/exam/courseoutlines.pdf>)

**Scholastic Offences:** "Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:  
<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2009/pg113.html>.

**Plagiarism:** "Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see the 'Scholastic Offense Policy' in the Western Academic Calendar). Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking." - U.W.O. Senate statement on plagiarism.

***This course will:***

- \* provide an historical overview of key French texts through an analysis of gender and sexuality
- \* develop an understanding of governing paradigms in French literary culture
- \* help to develop critical reading practices and interpretative skills
- \* provide a basic understanding of narrative theory

**THIS OUTLINE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITH SUFFICIENT PRIOR NOTICE.**

**Sex and Seduction in the French Novel (FR2112G)  
Course Schedule (Winter 2014)**

**Week One: Wednesday 8 January**

*Introduction: Sex, Seduction and Narration*  
Judith Roof, *Come As You Are* (1996)

**Week Two: Wednesday 15 January**

*The Seventeenth Century*  
Resisting Seduction: How to Read Madame de Lafayette's *The Princesse de Clèves* (1678)  
Anne Callahan, "Mediation of Desire in *La Princesse de Clèves*"

**Week Three: Wednesday 22 January**

Sex, Seduction and the Construction of Gender in *The Princesse de Clèves*  
Lewis C. Seifert, "Masculinity in *La Princesse de Clèves*"  
**Textual analysis handed out (15%)**

**Week Four: Wednesday 29 January**

*The Eighteenth Century*  
The Seduction of Power and the Power of Seduction: Choderlos de Laclos's *Dangerous Liaisons* (1782)

**Week Five: Wednesday 5 February**

From *Dangerous Liaisons* to *Cruel Intentions*: *Dangerous Liaisons* in the Twentieth Century  
Brigitte Humbert, "*Cruel Intentions*: Adaptation, Teenage Movie or Remake?"

**Week Six: Wednesday 12 February**

FILM: Roger Kumble, director, *Cruel Intentions* (1999)  
**Textual analysis due**

**Week Seven: 17-21 February**

**READING WEEK**

**Week Eight: Wednesday 26 February**

**MIDTERM TEST (15%)**

**Week Nine: Wednesday 5 March**

*The Nineteenth Century*  
Domestic Alienation and Romantic Desire: Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857)  
Suzanne Leonard, "The Americanization of Emma Bovary: From Feminist Icon to Desperate Housewife"  
**Essay topic handed out (30%)**

**Week Ten: Wednesday 12 March**

*The Twentieth Century*

BDSM, French Style: Pauline Réage, *The Story of O* (1954)

Peter Rabinowitz, "On Teaching *The Story of O*. Lateral Ethics and the Conditions of Reading"

**Week Eleven: Wednesday 19 March**

*Desire and Textual Seduction*: Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1984)

[extract]

Jane Gallop, "Roland Barthes, Amatory Maladjustment, and Emotion"

**Week Twelve: Wednesday 26 March**

Oral presentations

**Week Thirteen: Wednesday 2 April**

Oral presentations/Conclusions

***Essay topic due***

***April 2014: Final Examination (25%)***