

WS 2160a: Intimate Relations: Sex, Gender, Love
Fall 2018
Monday 4:30-7:30 SH 3345
Professor Katherine McKenna
Office Hours: Lawson Hall, Room 3246 Monday 2-3 pm
Lawson Hall 1204 Wednesday 11am–12pm
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Course Description

This course focuses on how expectations of intimacy and relationships rely on particular understandings of love, sex, sexuality and bodies to shape how we experience ourselves as gendered and sexual beings. The course considers how intimacy (sexual, maternal, familial, affectionate) is understood in relation to history, society and popular culture.

This course approaches the broad theme of intimacy from multiple perspectives and through a variety of topics, many of which will be presented by a guest lecturer who is a specialist in the relevant field of study. Topics include issues of locating and understanding intimate relations in history, the development of heterosexual intimacy, the history and contemporary practice of Queer intimacy, sexual assault law, the politics of abortion and birth control, the influence of the media on love, sex and women's health, interracial relationships, and the politics and practice of marriage, motherhood and the family.

Course Objectives

- Reflect upon and communicate the multiple ways that expectations of intimacy and relationships rely on particular understandings of love, sex, sexuality and bodies to shape how we experience ourselves as gendered and sexual beings.
- Identify different ways of understanding intimacy (sexual, maternal, familial, affectionate, and so on) and explain how they differ from one another.
- Consider intimacy in relation to history, philosophy, health, society, law, popular culture and race.
- Critically reflect upon the significance of the way intimacy and intimate relationships are represented in different media/contexts.
- Compare and appreciate multiple theoretical and disciplinary perspectives and viewpoints concerning intimacy, intimate relationships and their influence on our gendered and sexual self-understandings.

In addition, students will develop their written, oral, and critical skills in these ways:

- By posting in on-line discussions through the term, students will develop skills of critical analysis, critical writing, and interactive engagement with others concerning course material.
- By participating weekly in in-class discussions, students will become stronger and more confident speakers.
- Through tests and examinations designed to promote the synthesizing and consolidating of course material, students will sharpen their critical writing and critical thinking skills.

Assessment

1. Participation in on-line discussions (30%). You will be expected to post comments in an OWL discussion about the assigned readings six times during the course.
2. Mid-term in-class test (30%) Test format: essay style, short and long answer
3. Final Examination (40%) to be scheduled during the official examination period. The final examination will be 3 hours in length. The test format will be similar to the in-class test, but will include a longer essay question.

Further details of these will be posted on the course website.