

**True Love and Perfect Union:
Love, Marriage, and/as Social Theory**

**Kaplan Humanities Scholars Program
Winter 2011**

Instructors:

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Description: This course traces some of the manifold ways in which marriage has occupied a central place in American thinking about the Good Society from the mid-eighteenth century to the present. The premise is simple: marital theory was and is social theory. When Americans debated what the ideal marriage should look like, who should be able to enter into (or leave) it, how married and unmarried couples should be treated, and so on, they were also—and usually quite explicitly—expressing deeply held beliefs about citizenship, gender, race, economics, and the future of the Republic. In the process, they created new categories and new, often far more stratified, social hierarchies. This course invites students to think about those relationships from multiple chronological and disciplinary perspectives, to bring the best the humanities have to offer to bear on the question: what is the relation between private life and the public sphere?

Method and Requirements: This course consists of two, linked, equally weighted components: a lecture course and a seminar. Attendance is mandatory, as is participation when and as appropriate. There will also be several required activities outside of class hours. Students whose schedules do not permit them to participate in those activities must alert the teaching staff in the first week of the term.

Required Texts: The following texts are available for purchase at Comix Revolution (606 Davis Street):

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. Nellie McKay and Frances Smith (Norton Critical Edition, 2000). ISBN 0393976378

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* and *Passing*, ed. Deborah McDowell (Rutgers U. Press, 1986). ISBN 0813511704

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (NAL, 2006). ISBN 0451218590

Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2003). ISBN 0060512636

Dan Savage, *The Commitment* (Plume, 2006). ISBN 0452287634

If, for some reason, you choose to buy books elsewhere, be sure that you buy the editions indicated.

One required text, Metta Fuller's *Mormon Wives*, is only available in electronic format and can be easily accessed via NUCAT.

All other assigned readings will be available both on the course Blackboard site and in a reader available for purchase at Quartet Copies.

Academic Integrity: Kaplan Scholars are expected to familiarize themselves with and to abide by the University's policy on academic integrity, information about which is posted at:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/>

Determination that a student has violated the policy on academic integrity will constitute grounds for failure in the course.

Attendance and Participation: This course requires your active, informed, and energetic participation. Participation will count for 20% of your final grade. Any unexcused absence from seminar or lecture will negatively impact your participation grade. If you accumulate more than three unexcused absences, you will receive a failing grade for the course. Should you need to miss a class for a valid reason, please contact your instructors as soon as possible.

Grading Breakdown

Short Writing Assignments: 10%
Essay 1 (2-3 pp.): 10%
Essay 2 (4-5 pp.): 15%
Essay 3 (2-3 pp.): 10%
Final Essay (6-7 pp.): 25%
Performance Project: 10%
Participation: 20%

Reading Assignments: Reading assignments outlined below on the course calendar will be discussed in seminar on the day on which they are listed. Please read the assigned piece(s) by this date, and come prepared to engage in a lively discussion.

Short Writing Assignments: On the dates outlined on the schedule below, you will submit short writing assignments (2-3 paragraphs, or about 250-300 words maximum) related to lecture topics and seminar readings. The prompts will be posted on Blackboard. These assignments are due by 9 AM on the indicated dates and must be posted to the Discussion Board section of our Blackboard site. Late submissions will not be accepted. While these assignments are informal, you should always make reference to specific evidence from lecture or the course texts (in other words, you need to cite evidence to support your ideas). The purpose of this exercise is to help you focus your thoughts for class discussion and hone your writing skills. Review your colleagues' comments before seminar.

Essays: Prompts will be posted on blackboard. All essays must be submitted in hard copy form at the beginning of the class session in which they are due. Late assignments will be penalized. Because of the frequent writing assignments required for this course, and so that instructors can return your graded work promptly, extensions will not be granted except under extraordinary circumstances. Only typed papers will be accepted; please double space your essays, set your margins to one inch, and use a standard font (such as Times New Roman) at the 12 pt. size. Number your pages in the upper right-hand corner, only print on one side of each page, and staple your essay before turning it in. Be sure to give your paper a provocative title that speaks to the essay's argument (e.g. not "Essay 1"). Finally, you should employ parenthetical citations, as per the guidelines set forth in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, to incorporate textual evidence into your essay and to create a list of works cited. For details, please see the English Department Style Sheet, posted in the Course Documents section of our Blackboard site.

Final Performance Project: For this final project, you will be creating a 5-10 min documentary performance piece in small groups. Your performance should be creative, original, and challenging, but it should also do three specific things. It should pose a question regarding marital theory and social theory, present possible responses to that question, and ultimately make a statement about this issue that is your own. To identify a helpful question, think about any question that prompted lively discussion in class, or think about questions with which the authors or audiences of our readings wrestled. You should draw from the different workshops we've done as a class to find the best form and styles to explore your topic. Because you'll be graded as a group, be sure that the performance responsibilities (or "stage time") are shared equally.

SCHEDULE

Week One: The Defense of Marriage

1/3 Lecture: *Grand Themes, Big Questions*

1/4 Seminar: *Defending Marriage I*

Discuss: Ross Douthat, "The Marriage Ideal"; Douthat, "We're all Marriage Ideologues"; Douthat, "Sex, Marriage and Upper Class Obligation"; Family Research Council, *The Slippery Slope of Same-Sex Marriage*; Human Rights Campaign, *Answers to Questions About Marriage Equality*

1/5 Lecture: *Always Already Political: Marriage and Social Equality*

1/6 Seminar: *Defending Marriage II*

Discuss: *Baehr v. Lewin* (1993); *Baehr vs. Miike* (1996); *Baehr vs. Miike* (1999)

Short Writing Assignment Due

Week Two: Wives, Husbands, and Slaves

1/10 Lecture: *Peculiar Institutions*

1/11 Seminar: *Motherhood, Sexuality, and Slavery*

Discuss: Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Preface – Chapter 19

1/12 Lecture: *Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*

1/13 Seminar: *Harriet's Choice*

Discuss: Jacobs, *Incidents*, Chapter 20 – Appendix

Essay 1 Due

Week Three: Manifest Domesticity

1/17 NO CLASS: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

1/18 Seminar: *Mormon Wives*

Discuss: Metta Fuller, *Mormon Wives*, Introduction – Chapter 11

1/19 Lecture: *Free (and not so Free) Love*

1/20 Seminar: *More Mormon Wives*

Discuss: *Mormon Wives*, Chapters 12 – 22

Short Writing Assignment Due

Week Four: The Way We (Never) Were: Marriage and Historical Consciousness

1/24 Lecture: *Marriage and the Social Crisis*

1/25 Seminar: *Our Town*

Discuss: Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*; excerpts from *The Necessity of Theater*, Paul Woodruff

1/26 Lecture: *Love on the Rocks*

Discuss: Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

SPECIAL EVENT, 5-9 PM: STEPPENWOLF THEATER PRODUCTION OF WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

1/27 **PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP: MEET IN KAPLAN CLASSROOM**

Week Five: Marriage, Race, and the Nation

1/31 Lecture: *The Mirror Stage: Marriage and the Social Imaginary*

DINNER AND A MOVIE, 5-7:30 PM: THE BIRTH OF A NATION

2/1 Seminar: *Marriage, Race, and Making a Nation*

Discuss: D.W. Griffith, dir., *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)

2/2 Lecture: *Reorienting Marriage*

2/3 Seminar: *Miscegenation Law, Eugenics, and Other Ways to Improve Society*

Discuss: Peggy Pascoe, "The Facts of Race in the Courtroom;" *Racial Integrity Act of 1924 (The Sterilization Act)*; Jill Lepore, "Fixed"

ESSAY 2 DUE

Week Six: Social Hygiene

- 2/7 Lecture: "*Inconclusively White*"
- 2/8 Seminar: *The Consequences of Exposure*
Discuss: Nella Larsen, *Passing*, Part One
- 2/9 Lecture: *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*
- 2/10 Seminar: *Passing II*
Discuss: Larsen, *Passing*, Parts Two and Three

**SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE
CHOOSE GROUPS FOR FINAL PERFORMANCE**

Week Seven: Marital Bliss

- 2/14 Lecture: *Remapping the Reproductive Matrix*

10 PM, POST FINAL PERFORMANCE PROPOSALS ON BLACKBOARD

- 2/15 Seminar: *Marriage and Social Thought*
Discuss: Final performance proposals
- 2/16 Lecture: What does it mean to say "I do?"

DINNER AND A MOVIE, 5-7:30 PM: *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979)

- 2/17 Seminar: *Diatribes of a Mad Housewife*
Discuss: *Kramer vs. Kramer*

ESSAY 3 DUE

Week Eight: Public Vows

- 2/21 **PLANNING YOUR BIG DAY WITH FRANK ANDONOPLAS, 3:30-6:00**
- 2/22 Seminar: Brides in popular culture

Discuss: *Say Yes to the Dress* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfFzUs0giNE>);
My Fair Wedding: With David Tutera
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfzDSXxb6fE&feature=related>);
"The Rise of the Lavish Wedding," Cele C. Otnes and Elizabeth H. Pleck,
Cinderella Dreams: The Allure of the Lavish Wedding (NUCat ebook)

2/23 Lecture: *The Wedding Industrial Complex*

2/24 Seminar: Brides outside of weddings

Discuss: Pippa Bacca (<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/19/theater/19peac.html>);
Maria Yoon (<http://www.mariathekoreanbride.com/index.htm>); "Her Special Day"
(<http://johnnyknightphoto.com/JKPsd1a.html>)

DRAFT OF FINAL PERFORMANCE SCRIPT DUE

Week Nine: Defending Marriage...Again

2/28 Lecture: *Civil Unions*

Be prepared to discuss: Dan Savage, *The Commitment*

3/1 Seminar: In-class performance and critique

3/2 Lecture: *Away We Go! On Not Getting Married*

3/3 Seminar: In-class performance and critique

Week Ten: Thinking Socially

3/9 FINAL PERFORMANCE AND...END-OF-THE QUARTER DINNER! (3:30-7PM)

3/14 FINAL PAPER DUE IN KAPLAN OFFICE (NOON)