CW216-15 Love Will Tear Us Apart - The Contemporary Realist Romance

25/26

Department
SCAPVC - Warwick Writing Programme
Level
Undergraduate Level 2
Module leader
Gonzalo Ceron Garcia
Credit value
15
Module duration
9 weeks
Assessment
100% coursework
Study location
University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

The module will engage with the evolution of love from the ambivalence of modernism (constituting critiques of the possibility of oneness in amorous fantasy - questioning the relation between redemption and love) to contemporary forms, namely amorous negativity and its reconfiguration of affective, sexual and historical relations of affiliation. Love is violent, jealous, divisive and destructive - and possibly untenable. But there is hope yet, as Ashley Shelden suggests in Unmaking Love , because 'the untenable alternative is better than the constraining ideology of oneness'. Indeed, 'in contemporary literature the meaning of love can no longer be taken for granted.' Through this lens, we will look at 'individual desire' as a possible ground of resistance; personal and collective memory, and its relationship to trauma and healing. Readings will contextualise the topic by analysing various expressions of the genre, with a focus on practice-led research in a creative writing workshop environment.

The module features weekly reading and writing tasks.

Module aims

The module is aimed at Third Year students (optional module for the English Literature pathways).

It will focus on studying the narrative traditions of romance, making narrative connections classic texts to their contemporary presentations, taking into account the impact these narratives now have. The principal aim is to provide students with an understanding of how these narratives fit into the wider scope of contemporary narrative productions (for example, understanding their connections to counter-culture writing, youth identities and movements, including digital impact), and crucially the practice of said narratives, taking into account unique characteristics in the medium, such as conflict-driven narrative, objective characterisation based on desire, unreliable point of views, and love as a metaphor for wider social-political conflicts.

Along with the primary materials, we will engage with theoretical concerns involved in contemporary presentations of love, as well as reflect on the evolution of various discourses presented in contemporary fiction and their interplay with real life, including their responses to current politics, postmodernity, gender issues and race relationships.

Given its practice-led focus, students will submit writing to be workshopped after Reading Week.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

WEEK 1: Love and Desire (characterisation methods and narrative structure)
Caleb Azuman Nelson, Open Water
Megan Nola, Acts of Desperation

WEEK 2: Love as a metaphor of conflict (contextualising narratives related to the theme of love)
Olivia Sudjic, Asylum Road

WEEK 3: The Individual vs The World (understanding subtextual links between relationships and social commentary)
Alejandro Zambra, Ways of Going Home
Xiaolu Guo, 20 Fragments of a Ravenous Youth

WEEK 4: Broken Hearts and Antiheroes (analysing the tradition of 'anti-heroes' as expressed through the theme of love)
Iosi Havilio, Petite Fleur
Milan Kundera, 'The Hitchhiking Game' in Laughable Loves

WEEK 5: Where has love gone?! (love and desire in modernity - analysing the effects of late capitalism).
Eliza Clark, Boy Parts

WEEKS 7-10:
Workshops

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of how to write a compelling contemporary realist

narrative centred on love and conflict.
- Demonstrate a creative and critical participative approach to contemporary realism its trends.
- Demonstrate practice in the writing of contemporary realist fiction, experimental takes on fiction and critical responses to the genre.
- Demonstrate an understanding of current narrative trends and of where their work fits into them, as well as what they can do differently.

Indicative reading list

Reading lists can be found in Talis

Research element

Students will be given research related to each of the week's topics (and expected to do independent research).

International

The reading list will include a plethora of authors from non-UK backgrounds.

Subject specific skills

Writing, editing, communicating research, organising information, sense of an audience.

Transferable skills

Writing, editing, communicating research, organising information, sense of an audience, project management, creativity.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour 30 minutes (26%)
Private study	36 hours 30 minutes (72%)
Total	50 hours

Private study description

Reading, research, editing and writing for workshops.

Costs

Category	Description	Funded by	Cost to student
Books and learning materials	Module costs will be dependent on the availability of books in the library. (Currently calculated to £3 per week, assuming students purchase all the novels).	Student	£27.00

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

Assessment component	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Fiction portfolio 5000 words of contemporary fiction	100%	100 hours	Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

In seminar; individual consultation with tutor; email; Moodle; Tabula.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing