Course Description

This course will introduce students to anthropological perspectives on love and literacy. In the first part of the course we will focus on the debate concerning which aspects of romantic love are universal and which are culturally particular. We will then examine differing cultural conceptions of romantic love around the world and will discuss the intersections among love, politics, economics, and history. In the second part of the course we will turn our attention to literacy, especially the debate between the autonomous and ideological approaches to the study of literacies in various societies around the world. Finally, we will bring the two parts of the course together in a study of love letter writing in Nepal.

Requirements

There will be two short essays, a final term paper, and four unannounced pop quizzes on the readings. Only your three best quizzes will count. Final grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop quizzes (10% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essays (20% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final term paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No credit will be given to students who are absent on the days of the pop quizzes, and there will be no make-ups for the quizzes, since only the best three of the four quizzes will count. There will be penalties for essays and final term papers that are turned in late. The final term paper is due Monday, May 13th.

The first essay will be an analysis of personal ads; the second essay will be an observation exercise in which you will observe, record, and analyze literacy practices; and the final paper will be a comparison of Nepali love letters with love letters from a different time and/or place. (Anthologies of love letter correspondences will be on reserve at the Alexander Library as resources for this assignment.)
Readings

The following four books have been ordered for the course. They can be purchased at Recto & Verso Bookstore, 90 Albany Street, New Brunswick (732-247-2324), and will be on reserve at the Alexander Library:


Of these four books, the first (edited by Barton, et al.) is the source of several of our readings; it is therefore required. You will read the second book (by Ahearn) in its entirety, so it is also required. The third and fourth books (edited by Barton and Hall, and by Street) are optional sources of supplementary readings for extra credit. All the books are on reserve at the Alexander Library. *Your grade will largely depend on how well you keep up with the reading. The reading load will be heavy but, I hope, enjoyable.*

In addition to the required readings from the first two books listed above, there will be several additional required readings that will be on electronic and regular reserve at the Alexander Library. Whether the readings are from one of the books or from an article on reserve, you are required to complete them *before* the date for which they are listed on this syllabus.

We will be watching one video, “You’ve Got Mail,” on April 19th and 23rd. If you miss the classes in which this video is screened, you are responsible for viewing it on your own. Unfortunately, the film is not owned by Rutgers, so you will have to find your own copy to view if you miss the in-class screening. Even if you have seen the film before, I recommend that you view it again in the context of the themes we will be discussing in class.

Although this class has too many students to be considered an intimate seminar, you will have many opportunities to ask questions and engage in debate, both in small groups and as an entire class. Participation will improve your overall grade, as will regular attendance and respectful listening (both to the professor and to your classmates). And remember, the only dumb question is the one you don’t ask.

Daily Reading Assignments *(Please complete before the class meeting indicated.)*

Unit One: The Multiple Meanings of Love

Tuesday, 26 March

Introductory lecture; no reading assignment

Friday, 29 March

Tuesday, April 2

Friday, April 5

Unit Two: Literacies in their Social Contexts

Tuesday, April 9

Friday, April 12

Tuesday, April 16

Friday, April 19
No reading assignment; first essay (an analysis of personal ads) due; in-class screening of video: “You’ve Got Mail”

Unit Three: Nepali Love Letters

Tuesday, April 23
Ahearn, Laura M. *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal*, Part I (pp. xi – 64)
Completion of in-class screening of video: “You’ve Got Mail”

Friday, April 26
Ahearn, Laura M. *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal*, Part II (pp. 67 – 145)

Tuesday, April 30
Ahearn, Laura M. *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal*, Part III (pp. 149 – 260)

Friday, May 3
No assignment – second essay (an observation of literacy practices) due.