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LS 495.01: Same-Sex Love in Indian and English Literatures

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Spring 2001

Same-Sex Love in Indian and English Literatures
LS 495  ENLT 495  WS 494
Dr. Ruth Vanita

Wednesday 3-6 p.m.

Office: LA 146A  Tel. 243-4894  Email: rvanita@selway.umt.edu
Office Hours: TR 11 a.m. to 12 noon, and by appointment.

This course will compare representations of same-sex desire in a selection of Indian and
European literary texts, from the fifth century BC onwards.

Texts

1. Sappho, The Poems
2. Plato, Symposium and Phaedrus
3. Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature ed. Byrne R. S. Fone
4. Chloe plus Olivia: An Anthology of Lesbian Literature from the Seventeenth Century
to the Present ed. Lillian Faderman
5. Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History ed. Ruth Vanita and
Saleem Kidwai

Requirements

Students are required to
(a) attend class regularly. Please inform me in advance if you are unable to attend a
class. More than one unexplained absence will affect your grade;
(b) keep up with the assigned reading, bring the text to class, and actively participate in
discussion;
(c) make a five to ten-minute class presentation on one or two texts, raising questions for
discussion. The presentation may become the basis for one of the papers;
(d) write a short paper on any one text (4-5 pages double-spaced typed);
(e) hand in a written abstract of the final paper, with bibliography, and discuss it with me
during office hours;
(f) write a long paper (8-10 pages double-spaced typed).
(g) Topics for presentations and papers must be decided in individual consultation with
me.
(h) Graduate students must write longer papers – 8-10 and 12-15 pages respectively, and
must demonstrate more background reading.
Grades

The short paper will be worth 30%, the long paper 30%, class attendance and participation 25% and the presentation 15%. Handing in papers late without satisfactory explanation will result in a diminished grade.

If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, that will make it difficult for you to complete the work as I have outlined it, please notify me in the first week of class.

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with any changes.

January 31 Introduction; reading and discussion of some fables and poems by Katherine Mansfield and Suniti Namjoshi.


February 14 Plato, The Symposium; Phaedrus pp. 65-70 (But of beauty, I repeat...leave you a fool in the world below”); extract from the Kamasutra (photocopied).


March 7 “Platonic Dialogues” and Ficino pp. 127-136, Marlowe pp.168-81, Barnefield pp.184-89, Shakespeare pp.189-93 (Fone); Donne (photocopied); Montaigne pp.9-11, Katherine Philips, Sor Juana, The Ladies of Llangollen (Faderman); “Abru: Advice to a Beloved,” Sarmad, Dargah Quli Khan, (Vanita-Kidwai). Title of short paper due.


March 19-23 Spring Break.
March 28 Christina Rossetti, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman pp.76-88, Katherine Lee Bates, Michael Field (Faderman); “Romantic Friendship” pp. 265-301, Thoreau, Whitman, Bayard Taylor, Verlaine and Rimbaud (Fone); “Introduction to Modern Indian Materials,” Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Gopabandhu Das, Shri Ramakrishna, Sharada: “Farewell,” (Vanita-Kidwai).


April 11 Radclyffe Hall, Virginia Woolf, Hilda Doolittle, Katherine Mansfield, Muriel Rukeyser, May Swenson (Faderman); Amrita Sher-Gil, Ismat Chughtai, V.T.Nandakumar, Bhupen Khakhar (Vanita-Kidwai); Constantine Cavafy, D.H.Lawrence, J.R.Ackerley, W.H.Auden, Hart Crane, Gore Vidal, Allen Ginsberg, (Fone). Title of long paper due.

April 18 Film Fire and discussion. Abstract due.

April 25 Shobhana Siddique, Kamala Das, Nirmala Deshpande, Vikram Seth (Vanita-Kidwai and photocopies); Rita Mae Brown, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Judy Grahn, Monique Wittig, Olga Broumas , Pat Parker (Faderman). Page and Susan presenting.

May 2 Inez Vere Dullas, Hoshang Merchant, Vijay Dan Detha, Ambai (Vanita-Kidwai); Shanti, “Tired of the Broom,” Qamar Roshanabadi (photocopies); Chrystos, Namjoshi and Hanscombe, Cherrie Moraga, Marilyn Hacker, Dorothy Allison, (Faderman); Michael Rumaker, 744-746, Ed White, 77-85, Thom Gunn 795-801 (Fone). Jennifer presenting.

May 9 Conclusion. Long paper due.

Supplementary Readings placed on reserve in the Mansfield Library

1. Love Between Women : Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism
   by Bernadette J. Brooten Paperback - 424 pages (September 1998)
   University of Chicago Press (Trd); ISBN: 0226075923
2. Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality : Gay People in Western Europe
   from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century
   by John Boswell Paperback (July 1981)
   University of Chicago Press (Trd); ISBN: 0226067114
3. Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe  
   by John Boswell  
   Paperback Reprint edition (June 1995)  
4. Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past  
   by Martha Vicinus, George Chauncey, Martin Duberman  
   Paperback Reissue edition (November 1990)  
5. Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present  
   by Lillian Faderman  
   by Lillian Faderman  
   Paperback Reprint edition (June 1992)  
   Penguin USA (Paper); ISBN: 0140171223
7. To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done For America - A History  
   by Lillian Faderman  
   Houghton Mifflin Co (Trd); ISBN: 0618056971 $15.00
8. The Apparitional Lesbian  
   by Terry Castle  
   Paperback - 307 pages 0 edition (May 15, 1995)  
9. Facing the Mirror: Lesbian Writing from India  
   ed. Ashwini Sukthankar  
   (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1999)
10. Yaraana: Gay Writing from India  
    ed. Hoshang Merchant  
    (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1999)
11. Nineteenth Century Writings on Homosexuality: A Sourcebook  
    by Chris White (Editor)  
12. The Well of Loneliness  
    by Radclyffe Hall (November 1990)  
    Anchor; ISBN: 0385416091 $12.95
13. Giovanni's Room  
    by James A. Baldwin  
    Mass Market Paperback Reissue edition (December 1985)  
    Laureleaf; ISBN: 0440328810 ; $6.95
14. The Complete Kamasutra translated by Alain Danielou  
    (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 1994).