

GHC Special Topics: Humanities
What is Love? Exploring Romance in the West

Honors Contract



Plan of Study

In our class, we examine how the definition and practice of romantic love has changed over time. Students first become open to the idea that there can be more than one way to define and experience this emotion. Then through examination of philosophical and literary texts, student begin to examine how a culture can influence the way a person views and practices a romantic relationship. While the rest of the class focuses on how different cultural time periods view love in different ways, [REDACTED] is going to build off that historical perspective and do research on how different religions try to redefine love for their followers. Her research will culminate in an annotated bibliography with at least 8 sources and an 8–12-page research essay comparing the ways different religions try to shape the whole idea of coupling.

Meeting Dates

We already met once on Feb, 23rd to talk about ideas and what an honors project requires. We will meet again on March 15th after she has the bulk of her research done to talk about scope and structure. We plan on meeting at least two times after that to discuss the drafts.

Honors Experience Components

The rest of the class consists of a short analytical essay of a song or movie that uses no outside sources other than the ones we cover in class, a creative project of the student's choosing, and a table where they break down the texts and theories we examine each week into eight common themes associated with romantic love.

I am giving [REDACTED] a wide berth in the early stages of this project. All religions are on the table (at first), and she can explore any structuring topics associated with them. Those topics can include (but are not limited to) the following: gender, prescriptive rules, dating and wedding rituals, origin or purpose myths, underlying philosophies, and influence of the parents or wider church bodies on the relationships. This is obviously far too much information to cover in an 8–12-page essay without it becoming too shallow and sporadic. Therefore, the first major honors skill we are going to work on is using initial research to find the proper scope for a

research article. We will then move to structure, depth, and clarity. In other words, how do we start to say something significant about a subject that can be so big?

Her project will not simply be writing an essay for the sake of writing an essay. Her research will be taking the next step in where the students can go with the subject. The religions she will explore would be like adding columns to the class's love table and the structuring topics would be like adding rows to it. She would be expanding the class. In other words, if she were teaching the class, the work she is doing for this project would function as the basis for another unit in the study.