Course Objectives
This course looks at different conceptions of “love” and how it shapes plot in nineteenth-century literature. The readings bring together important theoretical strains with exemplary works of literature to challenge our ideas about the love plot. Topics under consideration include courtship, marriage, adultery, incest, and queer desire. While our primary focus is Russia, we will also consider works from France and England, as those literary traditions were an important source of inspiration and influence for the Russians.

This course is open to graduate students and upper-level undergraduates. There are no specific prerequisites, but anyone taking the course should have experience studying literature already. For undergraduates enrollment is by permission (this is to make sure no one accidently signs up who is new to literary studies). Please email me if you’re interested and I can help you enroll.

Structure of the Course and Policies
Given the exceptional nature of this semester, our primary mode of engagement will be weekly Zoom discussions as well as online exchange. Because the class is very small, my hope is that we can create the same level of comfort and engagement over Zoom as we would have had sitting around a seminar table. As this is a 500-level course, discussion is central to our mission and everyone should be prepared to speak, to try out ideas, to take intellectual risks. We will foster an environment of respect and trust as we work together to push our knowledge forward.

In preparation for the Zoom meetings, each week one student will be responsible for preparing some thoughts and questions on each of the secondary readings. Those should be posted on myCourses by 5:00pm the day before our meeting (i.e. Tuesday by 5) so that everyone will have a chance to read them and reflect. Anyone who is not able to be on Zoom is expected to offer a reply on myCourses by Wednesday morning so that I can integrate all these thoughts into our Wednesday discussion. During our meeting, the student in charge for that week will help guide our discussion. Everyone in the class is also required to write a reading response about the primary text that raises some questions or observations for us to discuss. These should be posted on myCourses by 7:00am on Wednesday morning.
Communication Plan
I will be holding office hours via Zoom on Tuesdays 4-5. If you would like to meet with me, but are not available at that time, please email me and we can set up another time to meet. I can also be reached by email: anna.berman@mcgill.ca I will do my best to reply promptly, but please remember that even professors sometimes observe evenings or weekends as non-work time 😊

Assignments
- Written responses to the secondary readings (on a rotating schedule)
- Written response to the primary texts (weekly)
- Participation in live/Zoom discussions or online forum (weekly)
- Midterm writing assignment – engaging with a wider audience. For this assignment, you are asked to think about how themes in the course are relevant today and to write a 1000-word essay about one of the works we have read that could be submitted to an online blog/forum. The goal is to work on writing in a manner that breaks beyond the bounds of academia, an important skill as academic job markets tighten. Guidelines will be posted on myCourses. If you’re pleased with the result, we can talk about forums for sharing it with a wider audience.
- Final presentation: This is a chance to practice your presentation skills and to get feedback from peers on your ideas for your final paper. If you are not able to participate to do this live on Zoom, you will be asked to upload a video of yourself for us to watch and give feedback.
- Final paper: This is a 5,000-word essay on any topic related to the themes of our course (please run your idea by me for approval before you start writing). Guidelines will be posted on myCourses. The paper should be emailed to me as a word doc or docx.

Grade Breakdown
- Participation in Zoom discussions or online forum 10%
- Weekly writing response to the primary text: 10%
- Written responses to theory and secondary literature 15%
- Midterm Paper 25%
- Final Presentation 10%
- Final Paper 30%

Required Texts
As many texts as possible will be made available in our course pack (also available in electronic form) or will be posted on our myCourses page as links to e-books. The book store has ordered Polinka Saks (trans. Michael Katz, the only English translation), Anna Karenina (trans. Pevear and Volokhonsky) and Can You Forgive Her? (Oxford World’s Classics, recommended if you want the same pagination as me).
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

McGill University is on land that has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

1. **September 2**
   Welcome. Introduction to the course and its themes.
   Plato’s *Symposium* (esp. the speeches by Aristophanes and Socrates) and *Phaedrus* (excerpts) [all in course pack]

2. **September 9**
   Theories and histories: how do we conceptualize love and its plots
   Singer, De Rougemont, Boone, Stendhal, Shelley, Flaubert [all in course pack]

3. **September 16**
   Mimetic desire
   Dostoevsky, “The Eternal Husband” (1870); Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel* [all in course pack]

4. **September 23**
   Incestuous desire

5. **September 30**
   The child bride
   Druzhinin, *Polinka Saks* (1847) [link to e-book on myCourses]; Greene, “Mid-Nineteenth-Century Domestic Ideology in Russia” [in course pack]
6. October 7
The domestic ideal
Dickens, *The Child Wife, from David Copperfield* (1850, this version created 1878) [on myCourses]: Hager, *Dickens and the Rise of Divorce* (Chapter 4) [in course pack]

7. October 14
Psychoanalysis
Turgenev, *First Love* (1860); Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love* [all in course pack]

8. October 21
Queer Theory
Trollope, *Can You Forgive Her? Vol. 1* (1864); Marcus, *Between Women* (Chapter 6); Furneaux, “Charles Dickens’s Families of Choice” (just skim for the main idea) [course pack]

**Mid-Semester Writing Assignment due Monday, October 26 by 9am (via email)**

9. October 28
English Family Novel

10. November 4
The Adultery Novel
Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina Parts 1-2* (1875-8); Tanner, *Adultery in the Novel* (excerpts); Dumas, *L’Homme-Femme* [course pack]

11. November 11
Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina Parts 3-5*

12. November 18
Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina, Parts 6-8*; Mandelker, *Framing Anna Karenina* (Chapt. 6); Morson, “Anna and the Kinds of Love” [course pack]

13. November 25
Final Presentations

Final papers due Monday, December 7 by noon via email