

# Love in India

Fulfills Writing Requirement  
(SASt 9)

**Professor Christian Lee Novetzke**

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**Office Hours: By Appointment**

**Spring Semester 2007**

**Tuesdays, 1:30-4:30pm**

**Location: Williams Hall 826**

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**Course Aims:** As a writing seminar, this course is all about writing. We have a theme—Love in India—but our goal will be to write a lot, read each other’s writing, and write some more. There are no tests or exams, and grading is not based on how well you write, but how you progress as a writer, and how you engage with the texts (written and visual) of the course.

**Course Synopsis:** Perhaps no subject has received as much literary and creative interest across cultures as has the matter of love. In India, poets, saints, philosophers, aestheticians, novelists, and filmmakers, among all religious and linguistic communities, have reflected in multiple media on the nature and expression of love. This course explores some of the most interesting examples of these expressions, from ancient India to the present, and provides students with an opportunity to contribute their own voice into that moment when writing and love meet. A caveat: love in this course is also about sex, heterosexual and homosexual, and the readings, and discussions, may often be frank and explicit.

**Course Plan:** The course is based on two premises: good writing is fostered by 1) writing a lot and regularly and 2) receiving constructive feedback from others about your writing. For this reason, we will have regular in-class writing assignments (to be completed with pen/pencil and paper) along with writing assignments to be completed outside of class. I will usually tell you of these writing assignments once you reach class. You will also have three writing partners throughout the semester, for four-week intervals, whose writing you will read and who will read your writing.

**Requirements and Grading:**

- Attend all classes, do all the reading, and be engaged in class discussion (15%).
- Complete various in-class writing assignments throughout the semester (25%).
- Complete a creative writing assignment in the first third of the class, 5-7 pages (15%).
- Complete a descriptive essay in the second third of the class, 5-7 pages (15%).

- Complete a final critical essay on a book or film about love, 10-12 pages (20%).
- Present and lead discussion at least once in the semester (10%).

All papers should be printed and placed in my mailbox in Williams 820, and an exact copy emailed to me, both by the due date.

**Materials:**

The books listed below are available at House of Our Own for purchase and will be read in their entirety, or almost in their entirety, except for the two books accompanied by an asterisk (\*). Of these books, we will read approximately half. All readings are on reserve. All readings not within the “required” books will be available online through the course’s blackboard site; there is no printed bulkpack. You are required to bring copies of all readings to class whether or not you purchase the materials. You are responsible for screening the three films on the syllabus on your own; they are on reserve at Rosengarten.

Books:

Amaru. *Erotic Love Poems from India: Selections from the Amarushataka*. Translated by Andrew Schelling (Shambhala Press, 2004).

Jayadeva. *The Gitagovinda*. Translated by Barbara Stoller-Miller (Columbia University Press, 1977).

Kakar, Sudhir, ed. *Indian Love Stories* (Roli Books, 1999).\*

Maimon, Elaine. *A Writers Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2003). **[Required for all writing seminars]**

Manjhan. *The Madhumalati*. Translated by Aditya Behl and Simon Weightman. (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Selby, Martha. *Grow Long Blessed Night* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

Vanita, Ruth and Saleem Kidwai, eds. *Same-Sex Love in India: Readings from Literature and History* (St. Martin’s Press, 2000).\*

Vatsyayana, Mallanga. *The Kamasutra*. Translated by Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Films:

*Mughal-e-Azam* (1960, K. Asif, dir.)

*Fire* (1996, Deepa Mehta, dir.)

*Rules: Pyaar ka Superhit Formula* (2003, P. Balagopalin, dir.)

## Syllabus

I.1/9: Introduction

### **Love and Lust: *Kama* and *Shringara***

II.1/16: *The Kamasutra* of Mallanaga Vatsyayana, translated by Wendy Doniger and Sudhir Kakar, and “Vaysyayana’s *Kamasutra*” from Vanita and Kidwai (VK)

III.1/23: *Erotic Love Poems from India: Selections from the Amarushataka*, trans. Andrew Schelling, entire; “Introduction: Ancient Indian Materials,” by Ruth Vanita.

### **CREATIVE WRITING PIECE DUE ON 1/23**

### **Love and Longing: *Prem* and *Viraha***

IV.1/30: *The Gitagovinda* by Jayadeva, translated by Barbara Stoller-Miller; “Somadev Bhatta’s *Kathasaritsagara*: Kalingasena and Somaprabha,” from VK.

V.2/6: *Grow Long Blessed Night*, translations by Martha Selby.

VI.2/13: Songs from Mirabai, Antal, and Mahadeviyakka; “Ayyappa and Vavar: Celibate Friends” and “Jagannath Das,” from VK.

### **Love, Real and Metaphorical: *Ishq* and *Mohabbat***

VII.2/20: *The Madhumalati*, by Manjhan, translated by Aditya Behl and Simon Weightman; “Siraj Aurangabadi: The Garden of Delusion” from VK.

### **DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY DUE ON 2/20**

VIII.2/27: *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960); “Amir Khusro” from VK; “Ziauddin Barani: The Khaljis in Love,” from VK; “The Mirror of Secrets: ‘Akhi’ Jamshed Rajgiri,” from VK; “‘Mutribi’ Samarqandi: The Fair and the Dark Boys,” from VK; “Haqiqat al-Fuqara: Poetic Biography of Madho Lal Hussayn,” from VK.

IX.3/13: The Urdu *ghazals* of Ghalib (1796-1869), from *The Oxford India Ghalib*, edited and translated by Ralph Russell.

### ***Pyaar, Pyaar, Pyaar: Modern Love***

X.3/20: *Fire* (1996); no reading.

- XI.3/27: Selected love stories from *Indian Love Stories*:
- “The House Combustible” by Subodh Ghosh
  - “Stains” by Manjula Padhmanabhan
  - “Back to Square One” by Gauri Deshpande
  - “The Game of Chess” by Kamala Das
  - “Housewife” by Ismat Chughtai

Selections from VK:

- “Introduction: Modern Indian Materials.”
- “Rekhti Poetry: Love between Women”
- “M. K. Gandhi: Reply to a Query”
- “Ismat Chughtai: Lehri Lakeer”
- “Shobhana Siddique: ‘Full to the Brim’”
- “Vijay Dan Detha: ‘A Double Life’”
- “Vikram Seth: Poems”
- “Inez Vere Dullas: Poems”
- “Hoshang Merchant: Poems for Vivan”

- XII.4/3: *Rules: Pyaar ka Superhit Formula* (2003); no reading.

**COMPLETE DRAFT OF FINAL CRITICAL ESSAY DUE ON 4/3**

- XIII.4/10: Workshop with half of class

- XIV.4/17: Workshop with other half of class

**FINAL ESSAYS DUE 4/30**