

ENGL 230: Sexting Through the Ages

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Course description:

What does poetry have that dick pics don't?

People have been writing about sex almost as long as they've been having it. We use words to describe sex, celebrate sex, get better sex, and seduce. By some accounts, all of literature can be accounted for as sexual display, as a means of showing off to potential partners. At a fundamental level, wordplay *is* foreplay.

But what makes one sext steamy while another is just clinical or, worse, comical? Sex is fun and often funny – can erotic writing also be fun and funny? Sex is often about pleasure, life, joy – but what about when it is also about death, suffering, and pain? We'll find out how different writers use words to achieve new effects. Is gay erotic writing significantly different from straight erotic writing? What about writing that crosses over or does not fit easily into such categories? What's the relationship between sex and self, between erotic writing and self-discovery?

Proposed assignments:

Multiple Choice Exams – 2 x 20% each = 40%
Short Response Project – 10%
Final Project – 20%
Final Exam – 30%

Proposed reading list:

A coursepack including readings will be available from the bookstore. It will include some or all of the following, plus more, from ancient Babylonia to the present:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biblical erotica• Aristophanes• Homer• Vergil• Chaucer• Shakespeare• John Donne• Christina Rossetti | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Marquis de Sade• Oscar Wilde• James Joyce• W. H. Auden• Nadine Gordimer• Pat Califia• Pauline Réage• Gore Vidal |
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