

MARRIAGES MADE IN HEAVEN AND HELL
090.101.02

Instructor: Professor Louise Barnett
Class: TH 10:55-12:15, RAB 018
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Objectives:

Our seminar will explore the institution of marriage, the foundation of modern society, and—as Friedrich Engels pointed out—the first site of oppression. Laws and customs governing marriage differ from one society to another, often enormously, but historically, it has been an effective institution. Most human beings during recorded times have been married for some portion of their lives, and most marriages function more or less well—at least from the point of view of society.

We will not look at the general condition of “most marriages,” however. Instead, we will examine a very particular subset: marriages that work either unusually well or unusually poorly. Additionally, these marriages are those of well known people (or, in a few cases, fictional characters), and all the participants are now deceased.

While exploring the subject of spectacularly good and bad marriages, we will also be working on areas that are essential to success in this area of higher education and which also define college graduates to the general public. I mean, of course, speaking and writing. We will have class discussion and some short written assignments to polish these valuable skills.

Warning: Although it wasn't my intention, the unhappy marriages all involve some form of mental/emotional illness, and the consequences aren't pretty. The marriages are complicated and interesting, which is why I chose them.

Course Text:

Kate Moses, *Wintering*. Anchor Books paperback. ISBN 1-4000-3500-7. The Douglass Coop is stocking used copies of this book, no longer available new.

There will be other short texts posted at the sakai website for this course.

Requirements:

Regular attendance, reading assignments carefully, participating in class discussion, and handing in written work on time. For every class you should come prepared with a question or two about the text and a particular passage or two that you can talk about.

Tentative Schedule of Assignments

January 22	Introduction
January 29 on sakai)	Stories of Raymond Carver (posted
February 5 plus	<i>Wintering</i> , pp. 1-90, chs. 1-9, Chronology, pp. 293-313.
February 12	<i>Wintering</i> , pp. 91-189; chs. 10-24
February 19	<i>Wintering</i> , pp. 190-283; chs. 25-41
February 26	discussion of film <i>Adam's Rib</i>
March 5 sakai)	Lincoln/Davis (material to be posted on
March 12 Jerome Brust	guest lecturer on Mary Lincoln, Dr.
March 26 sakai)	T. S. Eliot (material to be posted on
April 2	I am out of the country at a professional conference.
April 9 <i>and Viv</i>	April 2 make-up; discussion of film <i>Tom</i>